

line, thus formed the base of a flattened wedge or cone thrust forward against the Ashantis, who in turn formed a semicircle or crescent of resistance on every side of the wedge except its base.

Behind this base was Quarman, held by a company of West Indians, and about thirty men of the native regiments. Four miles still further to the rear was Insarfú, another entrenched post, containing the baggage of the fighting force, the reserve ammunition, the food convoys, the field hospitals, an immense number of carriers and baggage people, whose rear extended another three miles along the track to Akankawassie. This was the vulnerable point of the situation. Launch against Insarfú and Akankawassie two columns of Ashanti warriors, and it might be difficult to save the rear of the position. That something of this idea occurred to the Ashanti general is evident, for he did attempt Quarman and Insarfú late in the afternoon; but these attacks were not made in strength, and when they were made the main body of the army had already been broken and put to rout in front of Amoafú.

It was nearly 12 o'clock when the town of Amoafú was carried by the Highlanders. An hour or two later, the flank attacks on Egginassie had ceased; the great crescent in which the Ashantis had concentrated five-sixths of their force had been defeated at all points, and only its shreds and patches remained to fall upon our rear at Quarman and Insarfú, causing nevertheless, as we shall presently see, much disorder and confusion along the communications.

A letter of Colley's describes these final efforts of the Ashantis to attack the rear of the British force.

He had been with the headquarters at Egginassie throughout the fight in the earlier part of the day. He spent the afternoon and night in clearing the remains of the Ashanti army from the road in rear, between Quarman and Insarfu, and in getting a great convoy of baggage and provisions through from the latter place.

After having seen a great part of the convoy started, I pushed on to try and reach the head of the column. I had got within a few hundred yards of the head and about half a mile from Quarman, when suddenly the fire reopened from and round that post more vigorously than ever, and immediately afterwards a volley was fired from the bush into our advanced guard and head of the column. The next moment all the carriers in front of me came sweeping down in the wildest panic, throwing their loads in all directions. I was swept into the bush at first, and had some difficulty in recovering myself. I tried for some time to stem the torrent and force them forward, but the fire in front was heavy and increasing, and I soon found my attempts were useless; the carriers only became wilder in their terror and more anxious to free themselves of their loads.

I then passed the word back to return to Insarfu, but that any carrier coming in without his load was to be stopped; and collecting some of the steadiest men about me I tried to make our retreat as quiet and orderly as possible. Late at night, taking with me a company of the Rifle Brigade, Baker's police, and about 200 carriers, I returned to Quarman, collecting every package we could find on the road. After leaving all the loads we had collected at Quarman I pushed on to Amoaful. The firing at Quarman had ceased before I returned to it, but later at night after I had passed through, the Ashantis again opened fire on it.

It was midnight when Colley reached Amoaful. He had thus been engaged incessantly for eighteen hours. In addition to the long fight at Amoaful, where he had acted as staff-officer, he had in the

afternoon and night gone back to Quarman, had a fight there, gone further back to Insarfu, got the immense baggage train together, then taken it to within a few hundred yards of Quarman; he was then forced back again to Insarfu, went out again to recover the lost baggage, and finally reached Amoaful at midnight; thus covering at least seventeen miles of track, besides sustaining the enormous exertion involved in all the bush fighting at Quarman, and in forming up a baggage column five miles long at Insarfu. Yet his work did not end at Amoaful. 'Colonel Colley,' writes Captain Brackenbury in his 'Narrative of the Ashanti War,' 'with that boundless energy which he always displayed, started back along the road at a quarter to five in the morning, having arrived at Amoaful at midnight, and spent most of the night in writing.' This astonishing record stands, as far as my experience goes, alone, and when it is remembered that these thirty hours' continuous work was done in the worst climate known to man, the stress of the labour can be better understood. One might have imagined that now he could lie down and rest, but the diary shows this was not the case. In the evening (February 1, the day after Amoaful) 'bad accounts from neighbourhood of Fommanah and Moinsey; convoys fired upon. Started late to see to this. Reached Akankawassie at 3 A.M. Started again at daylight. Found Fommanah attacked; had to fight my way in.'

In a letter written on February 7 from Fommanah, on the homeward march from Coomassie, I find the following reference to this attack of February 2:

The next day bad news from the rear of convoys interrupted and fired upon, took me back all the way to Fommanah. On arrival there I found it closely attacked and had to fight my way in with my escort. On taking command I found the Ashantis attacking all round in considerable force; the position a long straggling village with no defences, and the stores at one end and hospital at the other—very awkward to hold. The attack continued for about four hours, and even after it had ceased, when we sent down a party for water we were received with a volley. Captain North and Captain Duncan, two of my transport officers, were wounded. Also several convalescents, European and West Indian.⁵

Owing to the extent of the village and the smallness of the garrison (140 native troops and West Indians and twenty-four sick soldiers and sailors) the enemy were able to reach the houses in some places and the town was soon in flames; but the entrenched post at the north end of the village was safe, and as soon as Colley had taken command his first care was to pull down the houses nearest to it.

By 1 o'clock the attack had ceased, but the really serious result was that it completely upset the transport operations for the next four days; and these days were the extremely important ones which held within them the occupation of Coomassie. He started again for the front, gathered up every pound of food he could find between Fommanah and Amoaful, and added it to the scanty stock now with the fighting force at that place. So we find in the little diary this entry: 'February 3. Started (from Fommanah) at night with escort, reached Amoaful at five, pushed on to Agemmanu, found headquarters started, overtook them on road to Dah; tedious day's march, checked by constant ambus-

⁵ Fommanah, February 7, 1874, to his sister.

cares ; bivouacked on the Dah, night of heavy rain.'

Here, again, we have in these few sentences a wonderful record of work. He had marched, as we have seen, all through the night of the 1st, fought and worked all day at Fommanah on the 2nd, and now he has marched all through the night of the 2nd, and has covered thirty miles by the evening of the 3rd, when he lies down on the soaking bivouac on the Dah river, ready for the fight which is to take place on the following day before Coomassie. In the last four days he has fought at Amoaful, at Quarman, and at Fommanah. He has marched incessantly day and night. If he has slept, then he must have been walking in his sleep.

The little army, now reduced by fight and fever to 1,600 of all ranks, occupied on the night of February 3 a singular position. Communication with its base was interrupted ; Fommanah, the scene of yesterday's fight, was more than thirty miles distant. In the intervening forest only detached posts were held by small bodies of our native troops, and between these posts the enemy could do what they liked in this vast forest, which raised its walls of vegetation to cover them on every side. There was no possibility of getting a convoy of food through to the fighting force for many days, and the forest in front was still full of savages, whose resistance at every step of our advance was as determined and apparently as formidable as it had been at Amoaful four days earlier. But ten miles forward in the forest lay Coomassie, the source and centre of the Ashanti power. On the morning of February 1, the general commanding had made his decision, and from that decision nothing could move

him. It was to leave at Agemmanu, fifteen miles from Coomassie, his weak and sickly men and the heavier portion of his baggage, then forming a small column to push on for Coomassie with four days' food. The capture of the city would alone end the war. The King must either sign the peace or have his capital and palace destroyed. 'The Prah rolls to the sea and does not come back, neither can the white man come to Coomassie.' So ran the favourite proverb of the Ashantis for many generations. 'We can cut our way in,' said the general at the council which assembled on the night following Amoaful, 'and if necessary we will cut our way out again.' There were some at that council who held different views; and looking at the situation from the standpoint of abstract rule and principle of war, they could not be blamed for doing so. But in these things there can be no fixed rule. War is a game of chances in which the result to be achieved must be measured against the risk in achieving it. We may think as we will of the policy of wars such as this Ashanti expedition—wars in countries the climate and conditions of which are so hostile to the existence of the white man, but it is impossible not to see in the execution of the expedition, and particularly in this final movement on Coomassie, with the unknown in front and flanks and the too well known in rear, a brilliant example of the best qualities of military genius, where the commander, rising above the accidents of the moment and the precepts of the past, strikes out for himself his own road to victory.

After a night of incessant rain the force broke up from its wet bivouac on the Ordah river, and advanced against the Ashantis posted in the usual

dense cover midway between the river and the village called Ordahsu. The nature of the attack was different from that tried at Amoafu. This time there were no flank columns, a single advance along the main track, the ranks (well closed up) firing into the bush—in front, and on both sides. Before this storm of bullets no one could remain near the track; the thin wedge sheeted with fire moved on, and the village of Ordahsu was won. This was about 10 A.M. Then took place the movement of the transport column, upon the success of which everything depended. The general, lining the road from the river to the village with the 42nd, passed up the long baggage column from the rear at the river, to the front at Ordahsu. Behind the last transport carrier marched the Naval Brigade, closing 'like an iron shield' the rear of the long line of bearers. This admirably conceived and executed movement really decided the campaign; for the Ashantis, finding that they could not stop the advance in the front, had swung round on both flanks expecting to find an easier enemy in rear. But to no purpose. The carriers of the four days' food for the force were now safe and sound in the village of Ordahsu, the supplies were packed and guarded, and the Naval Brigade with Wood's and Russell's regiments stood between the enemy and their expected prey.

All being now secure at Ordahsu, the word was given to clear the road to Coomassie. On went the Highlanders and Rait's artillery; the men cheered as they advanced, the bagpipes played above the crackling of rifles; the louder roar of the Ashanti muskets and the deep boom of the Houssa gun as it threw case

shot along the forest path were heard; the *débris* of Ashanti defeat lay thickly around—the state stools of chiefs, empty powder kegs, the large coloured umbrellas of the war captains, and here and there the dead bodies of slaves and soldiers. Into and through the little villages which now succeeded one another at short intervals, until the last village before Coomassie was reached. Firing had ceased, flags of truce were coming in, but it was too late to resort to diplomacy within sight of the long-expected goal. At half past five the Highlanders crossed the foul marsh of the Soubang and entered Coomassie. Night was already closing over the gloomy forest and the still gloomier city.

The war against the savage enemy was over, there remained the more fatal enemy of the climate to be fought; and still before the transport commander lay the removal of the sick and wounded, of stores and supplies, along the homeward road.

‘Marched early,’ he wrote on the 4th; ‘fight at Ordahsu; in the afternoon pushed on to Coomassie, reached it just before dark; heavy day’s work.’ A heavy day’s work it had indeed been, nor was there time for rest even here, when the goal of the enterprise was won. On February 5 we read:— ‘Coomassie: visited palace and collected convoy of wounded, spare carriers, &c. Under escort of Wood’s and Russell’s regiments reached the Dah. Pushed on myself to Agemmanu—tremendous rains.’ But he was glad to get away from that foul and cruel croom; for Coomassie, despite all that had been written about it, was found to be only a larger, a filthier, and far more blood-stained collection of mud

and wattle hovels than any other village in the forest.

I had only a few hours of daylight in Coomassie, and not ten minutes to spare. I ran hurriedly through the King's palace, and the general impression that and everything left on me was of the most horrible charnel-house one could conceive. Drums hung with skulls and smeared with blood, stools clotted with blood as if smeared afresh after each sacrifice, impaled bodies—unbearable stench of human sacrifices and victims in every direction. I never was so glad to get out of a place again.⁶

Thus he wrote from Fommanah on the 7th, while the tired but triumphant troops were filing along on the return march to the sea, and again on the same date :

As regards my work, the fighting has now of course entirely distracted attention from the transport, but I have the intense satisfaction of feeling every day more and more how favourably my work is viewed at headquarters. I feel it in many ways, but especially in the perfect confidence Sir Garnet seems to repose in me ; he has hardly ever asked me a question about anything I do, but if I say so-and-so has been done or shall be done acts on it at once. It is curious that while always remaining a combatant officer I should have had such a wide range of military duties to perform—engineering, surveying, educational, and now supply.

And with all the events of the past week still fresh in memory, he thus ended his letter :

I shall be curious to see whether full justice will be done in England to the splendid pluck of Sir Garnet's last advance on Coomassie, when he knew his communications and supplies from the rear to be uncertain, had only five days' food with him, and had already learnt by the battle of the 31st how obstinately the enemy could fight ; yet he

⁶ Fommanah, February 7, 1874, to his sister.

determined to force his way on, fighting every day if need be, and holding to the golden maxim of never giving an enemy (and a savage enemy especially) breathing time.

Dark as the forest was, there are glimpses of native life scattered through the correspondence full of the grotesque animal humour of the African :

I am afraid one's idea of the majesty 'that doth enshroud a king' is not exalted in this country. At one station on my way down I heard a row in camp during the night, and next morning sent to inquire what it was. A native police corporal of mine, a first-rate fellow, came up and saluted. 'Heard row in Mankassin camp last night, sir. Found King making great noise, gambling with his subjects; very bad form, sir. Gave King great thrashing, sir.'⁷

Even at this distance of time it is satisfactory to know that there was at all events one of the monarchs with us in this Ashanti expedition who received in some degree his due.

An offer of the Governorship of the Gold Coast, '4,000*l.* a year, a large house, steam yacht, a military secretary, aide-de-camp, and brigade-major, and the option of holding it for three months, a year, or the full time, as I thought fit,' had been the last event in Colley's service on the Coast.

I told Sir Garnet that, though ready to risk my health on any professional service, I was not prepared to do so in a service entirely unconnected with my profession. Another reason which I think influenced me somewhat was that I see no prospect of putting affairs there on a satisfactory and permanent footing, except by that personal rule of influence which can only be established by a man residing there many years. And it was quite time for me to be leaving the country. There is a popular theory that all work done in that climate is so much taken out of

⁷ Cape Coast, February 26, 1874, to his sister.

you which cannot be replaced there. If a man comes out with a full stock of English health and strength and energy, and nurses it carefully, he may go on for a long time; but if he draws on it largely he will soon exhaust it; and, really, it seems to be quite true. I used to be complimented at headquarters on being made either of iron or whalebone, and astonished myself at the amount of hard physical work I was able to do and keep up; but when I came down to the Prah the whalebone was well nigh gone, and on the way down, a walk of a mile or two used to tire me. I weighed under ten stone, and my legs and arms were the most miserable spindles you could imagine. Nearly everybody was in the same condition. But it is wonderful to see the change a few days of a fresh N.E. breeze have produced already.⁸

He was right. The difficulty that lies in the road to a civilised Central Africa is not the negro nor the fetish, the hideous 'customs,' the cannibalism, or the cruelty. These might all be overcome in time, but—there is no time. Death shuts the master's book before the lesson is half finished.

The men who can recollect Colley in Ashanti are now a small band, for nearly a quarter of a century has since elapsed, and in a few years none of them will remain. But by the latest left of those who watched his work and saw the manner of its accomplishment he will be remembered as the choicest type of British officer—calm, resolute, with energy superabundant, of immense resource, absolutely unsparing of self, and withal so quiet, so modest, never a mishap finding him unprepared, never a moment too preoccupied to bear in mind the needs or rights of others.

I find among the papers dealing with the

⁸ 'Manitoban,' March 9, 1874, to his sister.

transport work, then at its utmost tension, one bearing date January 29. It was the day of the general advance. He had only reached Fommanah late the previous evening from a forced march to Prahsu and back, seventy miles in two days; to-morrow, or at latest the day after, is to see the battle of Amoaful; and the subject of this letter is to call attention to the services of two of his transport officers, Lieutenant Gordon and Lieutenant Bolton, 'during the late difficulty consequent on the desertion of the carriers.' No hastily dashed-off letter, but a carefully written account of what they had done, and how. 'From the letters and reports received from these officers, showing the distances travelled and the places actually visited, from independent testimony from other sources, and from the success of their efforts and the number of men sent in by them, I can speak to the zeal and ability displayed in executing the task entrusted to them.'⁹

Letters of this nature are usually sent in at the close of a campaign; but Colley would not wait for that. The next day might bring the battle; his own part in the campaign was more than hazardous; he will leave the names of these two subordinate helpers safe, no matter what may happen.

It was during one of these days that the writer of these pages first saw him. Pale and worn of face, with cheeks hollowed by fever and fatigue, and eyes unusually large and lustrous, but still with every feature and fibre of face and frame betokening an immense reserve of resolution—Colley's aspect would have struck the most casual observer with the sense that he was different from most men. There was on

⁹ To the Chief of the Staff.

the coast, acting as correspondent for the 'Times,' a remarkably keen observer of men, an African traveller of no mean distinction, and a writer whose name was then well known in the world of letters—the late Mr. Winwood Reade. This is how that keen and often severe critic of men wrote of Colley and his work :

'Colley was an extraordinary man ; he dashed about all over the country, sometimes using persuasive words, sometimes burning a village. In a marvelously short space of time he had carriers in hundreds along the road. When the march to Coomassie commenced he travelled backwards and forwards, bringing up convoys himself, now and then taking part in a battle or a skirmish—his only kind of holiday. Much of this travelling was through parts of Ashanti infested by parties of the enemy. He had very narrow escapes ; his servant was shot. As one of his officers said, " he seemed to bear a charmed life." More than once I have heard the remark, " What should we have done without Colley ? "'

CHAPTER VIII

SOUTH AFRICA IN 1875

Promotion—Visit to America—With Wolseley to Natal—The Cape Dutch—Mission to the Transvaal—Delagoa Bay—The Boers.

THE spring of 1874 came to Colley as a pleasant reaction to the labours just ended on the Gold Coast. Its greater part was spent among the scenes of his earlier life in Ireland, where rest and native air soon restored the health and strength lost in Ashanti. Reward and promotion had come, too, as rapid results of the service so freely given, and in the 'Ashanti Gazette' of March 31 he was promoted full colonel and made Companion of the Bath. He was thus, at the age of thirty-eight years, well on the road to the highest grades in his profession, while in his regiment he was still only a captain. But almost of more importance than actual army rank was the position he had established in the minds of his professional contemporaries. After the Ashanti War he came to be looked upon by the advanced school of military men as the 'coming man' of the service. He had, in fact, proved in practice the possession of rare qualities of action and endurance not always found associated with the highest theoretic knowledge.

By this time had begun the strong personal friendship between Colley and his chief which lasted

unbroken to the end. 'Sir Garnet was in wild spirits,' he writes soon after the return from the Gold Coast. 'He is such a good fellow. I know you are not very favourable to the army, but I think if you knew him you would relent!'¹ And the same note of affection for Sir Garnet frequently recurs in his correspondence.

In the summer of 1874 Colley visited America, and made an extensive tour in the United States. He travelled north and south, visited most of the battlefields of the Potomac, went to California and Canada, and was received everywhere with that open-hearted hospitality always characteristic of America, but which was never more boundless than in the decade following the Civil War. His letters and diaries during his four months' sojourn in America contain many graphic bits illustrative of the transition period following the war. Being well provided with introductions, he had access to nearly all the prominent persons in the Northern and Southern armies. He met Sheridan, Hood, Longstreet, McDowell, Wady Hampton, McCook, and many others. Times had changed with the Southern commanders:

Such curious positions as one found these great warriors in. A wizened-looking old clerk, whom I saw in an office, was Jeff Thompson, after Morgan almost the most distinguished guerilla leader in the South. Hood is in business here; Beauregard is a commission agent; Jeff Davis is something similar; and General Taylor is agent for a sewing machine! I dine with General Hood to-morrow—a tall handsome-looking soldier and gentleman, with a fine head, a deep and clear eye, and a very pleasant and courteous smile; but terribly shattered, having lost a leg and the use of one hand, besides other wounds.²

¹ Ferney, May 24, 1874, to Miss Hamilton.

² New Orleans, October 28, 1874, to his sister.

In another letter we read of 'a Colonel McCook, who, with his father and eight brothers, volunteered and fought on the Northern side, all distinguishing themselves, and all rising to high commands, the father and five brothers being killed. He is now in good practice as a lawyer.' So the vicissitudes of fortune were not all on the side of the South. In a letter already quoted we find an instance of the good sense and generosity with which North and South, victors and vanquished, settled down to peaceful life after the war :

I have been pleased to find that among the best of the army officers there seems to be a very friendly feeling towards their old opponents. I was walking to-day with a nice young cavalry officer, A.D.C. to the General, and nearly all the men he stopped to speak to and introduce me to were Confederate officers.³

Returning to England at the close of 1874, Colley rejoined his regiment in Dublin. He was still only a captain in the 'Queen's,' and thus there was seen about this time the almost unprecedented incident of a full colonel in the army performing the ordinary duty of orderly officer of the day in barracks, on the same roster or duty list as the subalterns of the regiment.

On February 16 he was at this work in Ship Street Barracks when a telegram reached him from Sir Garnet Wolseley asking him to come immediately to London and to be ready to go abroad at an early date. He reached London the next morning, and at the War Office heard the particulars of the service required. He was to start

³ New Orleans, October 28, 1874, to his sister.

in a few days for Natal, whither Sir Garnet Wolseley, with a small staff, was about to proceed on a special political mission as Governor of Natal and High Commissioner in South-Eastern Africa. On March 20 they reached Table Bay. H.M.S. 'Raleigh,' Captain Tryon in command, was detached from the Flying Squadron at Simon's Bay and placed at the disposal of Sir Garnet Wolseley for his further voyage to Natal. On the 28th the 'Raleigh' was off the coast of Kaffraria, the weather calm and fine, the whole range of the Amatolas being in view over the green hills of Kaffirland. The shore was but a few miles distant, and the eye could easily distinguish the mouths of the different rivers and the chief features of the landscape—the mountain called Macomo's den, the hill that marked the Yellow Wood Drift, and the rock frontlet of Keishama's Hoek rising clear over the strip of yellow shore. Twenty years had gone by since Colley had made his first essay in the business of active command amid these hills and kloofs. 'It seemed so strange,' he wrote, 'to see the Amatola Mountains and all my old haunts again.'

In an earlier chapter mention has been made of the circumstances under which we had acknowledged the right of the Boers to govern themselves in the regions north of the Orange and Vaal Rivers. The previous history of these Dutch colonists, whose national development was destined to play such an important part in the life of the subject of this memoir, may now be sketched.

More than two hundred years ago, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, some 150 Huguenots and their families selected the Dutch settlements

in South Africa for their future home. Many of them bore names such as Joubert, Jourdain, Bertrand, which a century later were to figure in that long roll of marshals and generals of France which Bonaparte and the Revolution gave to fame. These Huguenots intermarried among the Dutch, and the all-conquering mother tongue had its inevitable triumph. Nevertheless, they made an indelible mark upon the community in which they established themselves, and in their settlements on the Berg River such names as Rochelle, Normandy, Languedoc still recall the homes from which they came. From the first the settlers, Dutch and French, chafed against the rule of the Dutch East India Company. Many among them early trekked into remoter districts, until within ninety years of the time of their arrival in South Africa they had spread to the Orange River on the north and the Great Fish River on the east, more than 500 miles from the parent colony at Capetown.

The history and surroundings of these pioneers of the wilderness could not fail to continue instincts of liberty in the mind of succeeding generations. Literature save the Bible they had none, but that book they knew by heart, and thus, as they wandered deeper into these vast plains and rugged mountains, there gradually grew up in South Africa the people whom to-day we call Boers—a homely, stolid, manly race, full of faith in Providence, but trusting also to 'roer' gun and stout arm to meet and beat whatever odds might be against them.

It was not for some time after the second conquest of the Cape in 1806 that the English officials and the Dutch of the interior came into contact.

In 1815, however, during the government of Lord Charles Somerset, trouble arose between them in the extreme east of the colony upon certain rights guaranteed to the Dutch settlers by the Convention of 1806. This first outbreak of discontent was easily suppressed, but not without tragic occurrences, which marked it as the source of a long series of political troubles. The next twenty years were full of grievance and disturbance, and ultimately, in 1835, 'a swarm of Boers, many thousands strong, packed their goods into waggons, gathered their flocks and herds around them, and struck off for the unknown wilderness to the north of the Orange River.'⁴ At first we refused to recognise the independence of these emigrant Boers; we pursued them and fought them; but at last, in 1854, as already related, we resolved to leave them in undisturbed possession of the country lying north of the Orange River.

After this acknowledgment all had run smoothly for a time; and the fifteen years since Colley had quitted the country had been singularly uneventful in war. The Dutch farmers devoted themselves to pastoral and semi-nomadic life, the inhabitants of the small villages that sprang up to minister to the wants of the scattered burghers were partly of Dutch and partly of English origin, and in the peaceful exchange and barter of a life so far removed from contact with the outer world the animosities of race were gradually disappearing; while those slow and silent growths which do more for nations than their most fevered efforts had worked unlooked-for developments. Happy would it have been for South Africa if

⁴ Froudo.

nothing had occurred to break in upon that state of pastoral semi-isolation and introduce new forms of race antagonism. But now the Greek saying that Africa always brought forth something new was again about to find its verification.

About the year 1871 diamonds were discovered south of the Vaal River on ground then within the area of the Orange Free State. In less than a year from the date of the discovery, the territory on which the mines were situated was declared British. The Government of the Orange Free State vehemently protested, the articles of the Convention of 1854 had been violated, they said. But no notice was taken, and the colony of Griqualand West, with its new capital town of Kimberley, became incorporated into the British Empire. Although the Boers did not appeal to arms, contenting themselves with protest against the seizure, they laid the lesson to heart, and all the old slumbering feelings of discontent and suspicion awoke again among them. Nor did the Diamond Fields, as they were called, prove a source of unmitigated advantage to the English Government. A danger soon arose directly traceable to the new possession. The working of the mines brought together vast numbers of natives, who were paid by their masters in guns and ammunition. To possess the arm which he has ever identified with the success of his enemy against himself has always been the strongest inducement to the black man to try again the fortune of war with his white conqueror. At the date we have arrived at, March 1875, an outbreak had recently occurred in a Zulu tribe (living within the borders of Natal), whose chief Langalabalele refused to register the guns

his people had obtained in payment for their labour in the diamond mines. The authority of the English Government had been soon re-established, but this disturbance was followed by repressive measures on the part of the Natal Government which were considered by Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Minister, to be opposed to English law. A radical change was required, he thought, in the constitution of Natal under which such breaches of legal form had taken place. The Governor was recalled, and Sir Garnet Wolseley sent out in his stead. The whole system under which the natives were governed was to be overhauled; all matters of administration, taxation, and relations with the Dutch Republic were to be examined and reported on; and certain organic changes introduced into the constitution of Natal.

This, then, was the object of the sudden telegram of February 16 and the subsequent voyage to the Cape. Colonel Colley was the senior officer of the four selected by Sir Garnet Wolseley to assist him in this special mission; he was the only one who had had previous acquaintance with that part of the Empire. 'My position is charmingly vague,' he wrote on arrival at Cape Town. 'I only know I am to take Sir Garnet's place in case of any accident and to have a command in case of military operations, and meantime make myself generally useful. As far as I can see there is no chance of military operations, and our mission is a purely civil one.' Then he explains its scope and object, the chief point being to induce the Legislative Council

to pass a Bill with a good grace tying their own hands, either by altering the constitution of the Council to one consisting of an equal number of nominated and elected

members, or by giving the Crown control over all the taxes raised directly from the natives, now amounting to about one-third of the whole revenue.

It is not a pleasant kind of work, and I think Sir Garnet would have been glad to have kept out of it, only he was asked in a way that made it impossible for a public servant to refuse.⁵

Landing at Durban on March 30, the party proceeded to Maritzburg, and were soon comfortably settled in Government House (five years later to become Colley's home) and at work upon their novel duties. He writes a week later :

Give me a soldier's life for variety! My present duties are :

1. Superintend construction of a lawn tennis ground in our garden.
2. Relieve the General of military details and correspondence, not onerous, as the whole garrison is not as strong as one regiment.
3. Treasurer and Paymaster-General of the Colony; preparing estimates and budget for Council.
4. Postmaster-General of the Colony.
5. Superintend invitations for balls, &c
6. Write the *menus* for our dinner parties every evening, as I am credited with writing the neatest hand.

Whether Sir Garnet is successful in his mission or not, it certainly will have been to us a most amusing as well as a most interesting trip. We all live together in this nice little house, work hard most of the day, and about 4 or 5 o'clock turn out to lawn tennis or go out for a walk or a ride; then a dinner party, and lastly an hour's chaff and discussion before going to bed.⁶

As for Sir Garnet, I feel that if I work long with him I shall lose all calm judgment of his character and abilities in their fascination. Nothing ever seems to put him out: work, play, difficulties, annoyances, all seem to be the same

⁵ March 18, 1875.

⁶ Maritzburg, April 8, 1875, to his sister.

fun that a good run is to a hunting man. It is enough to make one feel twenty years younger to hear him, after working hard from perhaps six in the morning till five in the afternoon, run upstairs three steps at a time, singing like a schoolboy, and turn us all out for a game of tennis or a gallop.

The climate is simply perfection : bright warm days and cool nights, with fresh mornings that make one jump out of bed and just thank God for living. Then there is the luxury—to me, perhaps, the highest of all—of working hard with men who are all equally eager, working in perfect harmony for the general aim and not for themselves, and equally devoted to their chief. At the Gold Coast I had that luxury, but then it was clouded by the constant illness of those around me, and the knowledge that their very ‘gameness’ was doing them harm. Here every one is in perfect health and spirits.⁷

Thus ran in pleasant contrast of work and amusement the month of April until the time came for the much-talked-of meeting of the Legislative Council. It met early in May—the discussion upon the Bill began at once. The picture we get of this colonial assembly is by no means an unfavourable one.

I confess I am agreeably surprised at the tone of the debates. Though not a business-like assembly, there are some able men and good speakers among them, and Major Butler says they compare favourably with the representatives of very much larger colonies—such, for instance, as Canada. One of the most telling speakers I have heard is an old Dutchman named Boshoff. He was for many years President of the Orange Free State, and is commonly known as Hangman Boshoff, because of an Englishman whom he had hanged on his own responsibility after the jury had failed to agree at the trial. A very resolute-looking old gentleman and a nervous (in the strong sense) and impressive speaker.⁸

⁷ Maritzburg, April 19, 1875.

⁸ Maritzburg, May 16, 1875.

The second reading took place on May 20. All the Government members had spoken except Colley. It had been arranged that he should be the last speaker, for his unremitting attention to public business, and the improvements he had already introduced into the postal arrangements of the colony, as well as the thorough manner in which he had mastered all the details of the public revenue and of taxation, had impressed even the extreme opponents of the Government with a sense of his high character and mental power. The history of this night's debate is best told in his own words, and we give it because it illustrates his characteristic truthfulness and complete subordination of self to anything he believed to be the line of duty to his chief or to the State.

Pride comes before the fall! We had our debate on the second reading of the Bill. The debate was carried on with an ability and good taste I was hardly prepared for. I was put up nearly at the close of the debate to make what I suppose was intended to be *the* speech on our side, and after stammering a few sentences broke down so completely that I had to sit down. So much for taking up a line that one was never cut out for.

However, we carried the second reading, and I am not sure that any amount of talking would have made any difference beyond perhaps reducing the small majority we had; and it is Sir Garnet's success, not mine, that I care for in this matter. If they would only have made me angry I think I could have spoken, but they were so courteous to us personally, and the one usually most violent alluded to Major B. and myself as 'two distinguished officers whose presence had lent a dignity to these debates that they had never before known, and which they could only regret was likely to be of such short duration.' I don't mean to be beat if I can help it, and if there is another fight on the

third reading, as we anticipate, will have another try ; but I wish I was acting, and had done with talking. Meanwhile the only thing I can get comfort from is my post office, where there *is* something to be done occasionally.⁹

At last the Bill was carried, by a very narrow majority, and after considerable modifications in committee. 'I am too glad to have it passed on those terms,' wrote Colley, 'for the one thing to be avoided was to oblige Lord Carnarvon to go to the Imperial Parliament for compulsory legislation.' And now he turns to other and perhaps more congenial work :

I start in a few days for the Transvaal, on a mission to the President of that Republic, thence to the gold fields, and, if I can manage it, back by Delagoa Bay. There is, however, a belt of country between the mountains and Delagoa Bay, which, owing partly to the tsetse fly, and partly to its extraordinary unhealthiness, seems to defeat most efforts to cross it. I calculate on being away about a month on this trip. Meanwhile Sir Garnet is not a man to let one weary of idleness, and I am on committees for putting nearly everything in the colony—its finances, its public offices, its magistracy—to rights.

I have also before me an inquiry into some charges, made by Bishop Colenso, against one of the principal magistrates here ; and if the bishop is as pertinacious and argumentative in his attacks on the magistrate as he is in his attacks on Moses, it will not be a light task. I feel rather sad at parting from our very pleasant party ; no work ever seemed too heavy or wearisome when one had those merry dinners and pleasant evenings to look forward to.

Just at present the Boers of the Transvaal have sent out a large commando against the Zulus, and my movements will probably be watched with very suspicious eyes. One object of my mission is to try and get them to cede to us a

⁹ Maritzburg, May 27, 1875, to his sister.

disputed tract of land lying between them and the Zulus, and which is the cause of constant quarrels between the two. I hardly expect, however, to succeed in this, and perhaps may not even broach it.¹

In addition to conferring with the President of the South African Republic upon postal and telegraphic questions, Colley was confidentially required to examine the relations between the Boers and their native subjects, and the sentiments of the Boers themselves in relation to England and to confederation with Natal. He was also to report upon their resources and their methods of 'commando' warfare; upon the relative proportions of Dutch, English, and natives; upon the influence of the English colonists, and whether it was likely to exercise a determining weight upon the conduct of public affairs; upon the railway projected between the Transvaal and Delagoa Bay; in fact, upon almost every subject connected with the country and the people.

On June 17, Colley, accompanied by one officer, started for the Transvaal, his journey being apparently of ordinary tourist interest. On the morning of the 20th he left Newcastle, following the road over the Ingogo River, and by the foot of Majuba Mountain to Lang's Nek—a road destined to become memorable just five and a half years later, but now lying in the silence and solitude of a land from which the Kaffir had almost disappeared, and to which the white man had only sparsely come. I find these few miles of road leading from Natal to the Transvaal thus briefly noticed in the diary of the day: '20th, Sunday. Left Newcastle 7.15, crossed Buffalo about 9.45; fair road; longish hill up from

¹ Maritzburg, June 13, 1875.

Newcastle. Afterwards some good flat ridges.' The 'longish hill' was to Lang's Nek, and on one of the 'flat ridges' at the foot of the Majuba Mountain is the grave of General Colley to-day.

Reaching Wakkerstroom on the afternoon of the 20th, Colley heard that the Dutch 'commando' had started on its road to the Amaswazi country; learning also that the acting President of the Republic was absent from Pretoria, he changed his route, determined to try and overtake the commando, then push on for Delagoa Bay and return *via* the gold fields to Pretoria. An account of this trip subsequently written gives so many interesting glimpses of Dutch and native life, and of the country through which the route to Delagoa Bay lay, that I give a great deal of it.

Secured the only places in the gold fields' mail cart. Had a very good dinner at the inn kept by Jan Montine, who described himself as the best hunter in South Africa, and gave most cheering accounts of our journey to Delagoa Bay—could walk it easily in six days, unless the immense quantities of game we should see actually jostled us out of the road. For all his good news and encouragement he duly charged in his bill—and I fear he lies.

Started at dusk in a tumbledown cart, with one spring broken, and a very drunken Hottentot driver; the contractor informing us confidentially as we started that though the boy was very drunk he thought he could find his way. Smith, who is an old driver, was put into the front seat with him to keep him straight. He was proud of his knowledge of the country, and to show it would every now and then take a wide sweep across country in the pitch darkness—nominally to avoid a bad bit in the road, but really to show how he could hit the road off again; occasionally we got into difficulties, and twice had all to get down, and, up to our knees in water, to pull the cart out of bogs. Providentially

the second time one of the horses knocked him down and danced on him, and after that he was a shade sobered. . . .

From Bushman's we began to see game in considerable quantities, groups of antelope of different kinds. I shot a koran. When we got to a series of large ponds called the New Scotland pans the game exceeded anything I had ever seen; in one basin, little over half a mile square, there were at least a thousand head blesbok, springboks, wildebeests, &c., wheeling, galloping, careering, and throwing up clouds of dust, like some great cavalry field day—really a magnificent sight. Baker had a few shots, but without success. Sometimes a great herd would come cantering across the road ahead of us; then, as they found the post cart coming up to them, they would quicken their pace to get across before it, till the column would tail out, the pace grow quicker and quicker, and the last pass only a few yards from our horses' heads at a mad tearing gallop. From this to Clarke's, which we reached about sunset, the whole road was lined with herds of game, and the ponds covered with wild fowl. Passed Lake Christie, a considerable sheet of water about ten miles long by one to two across. Clarke's, a trading station, was the terminus of our post cart travelling—the post cart (a weekly one) runs on to Leydenberg and the gold fields, distant about 120 miles, but our plan is to turn off at Clarke's and strike across country for Delagoa Bay.

June 22.—Heard unwelcome news that Mr. Bell (to whom we had been recommended as the best person to provide us with guides) was away with commando, and would not be back for a week. Determined, however, to push on with or without guides and carriers, and follow the track of the commando if necessary. Clarke, a regular Job's comforter, laughed at the idea of our starting on such an expedition without waggons or equipment, without guides or interpreter; said we should find the distance 230 miles instead of 150, no game on the road, and the Kaffirs all too much frightened by the commando to supply us with food or carriers. . . .

At Hamilton (Mr. Bell's) heard that the commando had assembled there as rendezvous—about 320 burghers

with four guns and sixty-five waggons—and after waiting there a few days to concentrate had marched off three days before for the Umswazi king's kraal to confirm the present king, who has only just succeeded. A good dinner and beds, and made the most of them, thinking they were likely to be our last civilised ones for some time to come.

June 23.—A hard white frost—bad look-out for sleeping out. Mrs. Bell kindly provided two of her servants to carry for us till we overtook Mr. Bell. Reduced our kit to two moderate bundles, principally blankets; wrote to Leydenberg and gold fields to secure seats in the post cart of July 12—to the great amusement of Clarke and Mrs. Bell, who have much doubt of our ever reaching Delagoa, and utterly disbelieve our returning within the time. Walked about twelve miles; halted for a rest by a stream, and were passed by a waggon going to Hamilton and carrying a sick man down with Delagoa Bay fever. The owner of the waggon, a magnificent burly Scotchman, stopped to have a chat with us and asked where our waggon was. When he learnt we meant to walk, he took off his hat and scratched his head for some minutes before he could speak again. When we asked why we shouldn't, he could only answer, 'But ye're nae fit for it,' which amused us, as Baker is at least six feet two and very powerfully built. However, he told us how many had been ruined by the fever and died, and asked us to take a look at his patient, who was once as fine a man as Baker. Were overtaken by a waggon going our road, so took a lift for six miles to Henderson's, the last European habitation on our line. . . . At 10.30, when the moon was up, pushed on again ten miles along a rather wild and rocky valley to the drift we had selected for our halting place, and slept under a rock there.

June 24.—Found a trader's cart at the drift going the same direction as ourselves, the driver a nice intelligent young Scotchman called Gifford. Started early and made twenty miles walking, with occasional lifts in the cart. Reached Buchanan's waggon at the Hiambanzati. Made a frugal breakfast off tea, a very small bit of bread, and a partridge between four; afterwards started with our

guns in search of game, but without success; the passage of the commando seems to have frightened all away. In the evening we all dined together at Buchanan's waggon, but as both he and Gifford seemed short of meat, we modestly declined any share in a most inviting-looking piece of cold beef. I don't know what our faces showed, but I know what our feelings were, when, after dinner, Gifford began to cut off delicious hunks of meat that we would gladly have given ten shillings apiece for, and chucked them to his dog!

June 25.—After about ten miles sighted the waggons of the commando—a very pretty sight as the train, quite two miles long, wound slowly up the zigzag ascent of Buffel's Hill. . . . After about fifteen miles of rough walking, much through grass above one's head, and wading a river about 100 yards broad, reached the king's kraal an hour after dark. In a regular beehive hut, stifling hot and reeking with smoke, we found Mr. Bell, Rudolph, and the leaders of the commando collected, drinking native beer. Tired as we were with our twenty-nine miles, we could not stand the atmosphere of the hut, and rolled ourselves up in our blankets outside.

June 26.—From an early hour the Amaswazi warriors began collecting at the kraal. They came in in companies of from forty to eighty strong, formed in two ranks, with about three paces between the ranks, keeping excellent line and time, and wheeling and manœuvring very prettily; generally they moved at a springy run, the captain in front, and before him again one man, 'the buffalo,' bounding, shouting, singing, and going through all kinds of antics, the rest accompanying his movements with a war song, or sometimes an alternate hum and hiss, which, coming with admirable precision from a number of voices, has a most striking effect. The men were curiously bedizened and covered with skins, feathers, and ornaments of all sorts. As a rule, they had hanging from their waists all round, a mass of small skins—tiger cat, wild cat, monkey, &c.—enough to furnish a furrier's shop; a tiger skin over the shoulders, on the head a mass of ostrich feathers, mixed with cocks' feathers, rising in two heavy plumes, and then falling in a hanging mass

halfway down the back ; brass ornaments and bands of skin round their wrists, elbows, knees, and ankles ; the oval shield of black and white ox hide, with a bundle of assegais in the left hand, and usually a wand, with bits of skins, animal tails, or bunches of feathers tied to it, carried upright in the right hand, and waving like so many lance-heads or flags over them. The effect of a long line, all with the handsome tiger skins trailing down their backs, and the masses of black waving plumes, was sometimes very fine, and not at all unlike that of a Highland regiment in full dress.

As the companies came in they collected in regiments, and were formed up one at a time in the large enclosure for inspection. At the upper end sat a number of the principal chiefs and councillors, squatting Kaffir fashion on the ground, with the old warriors continuing the circle on each side. Behind the chiefs were the lads of the king's regiment, all of the same age as the king, who only turn out when he does himself, and seem to have something of the privileges of Eton boys. Behind them, again, a thick background of spectators, men whose regiments were not undergoing inspection, and women. Across the lower end of the enclosure the regiment was drawn up in line, singing a war song. Presently a man would bound out of the line, go through a sort of war dance, killing imaginary enemies, and relating the deeds of himself and his company, while the war song would rise and fall in unison with his movements ; after passing up and down the line, he would make the tour of the circle, sometimes creeping as if stalking an enemy, sometimes in a series of wonderful bounds ; and, drawing up before the inspecting chief, tell him how many men he had killed, and beg to be led again against the Basutos or some other enemy. Our friends the Eton boys were very free in their criticisms ; sometimes they applauded and joined in the war song, but if the performer was awkward, or was not believed in, the chaff was furious, and sometimes very good. Occasionally the feelings of one of the old men would get the better of him, and he would get up and go round the circle, making a feeble attempt with his wizened limbs to imitate the bounds and gesticulations of the others, and

relating all he had done in his day. When this had gone on for a quarter of an hour or so, the commander of the regiment would receive orders to bring up his men by companies; each company would advance to where the chiefs sat, receive a few words from them, then wheel off with a very pretty and rapid wheel, and rush out through the narrow entrance with a charge and shout. After that they would remain outside, break into companies, and execute little private war dances and imitation fights. This went on nearly all day; the king himself did not appear; he was to wait till the Dutch commando was all assembled.

In the afternoon the Dutch began to come in, and form their camp on the other side of the stream, about a mile away; and Bell, Rudolph, and the rest of us moved off to join them. The train was long, and took nearly two hours coming, each field cornet at the head of his ten or twenty men, followed by his waggons; the camp was pitched in the regular 'laager' fashion in which the Dutch have so often resisted the Kaffir attacks—the waggons in a circle, touching each other, and forming a large enclosure, within which the cattle and horses were driven at night. In olden times each wagon carried a bit of palisading (stakes secured together by cord), which was put up between the wheels, and made a complete barrier.

The commando were altogether a rough-looking lot (about one-half Englishmen and mixed nationalities, the rest regular Dutch Boers), difficult to manage, but formidable against any Kaffir army, every man being well mounted, well armed, trained all his life to roughing it and shooting game, and with a strong sense of superiority over his adversary. The organisation is simple in the extreme. Every field cornet of a district receives orders to attend at a certain place and time with so many men, provided with waggons and supplies for so many days. He selects the men—unmarried men, between twenty and thirty, being taken first—and those who have not to serve personally are called on to furnish the material; one man provides a wagon and span of oxen, another so many slaughter cattle, another so many pounds of sugar, coffee, flour, according

to their several means. When they meet, the field corn ts assemble and elect their commandant. The principal characters of our commando were: first, Mr. Rudolph, for nearly twenty years an official in Natal, then offered the post of Landdrost of Utrecht by the Transvaal Government, with higher pay, and a sort of understood position of manager of native affairs for that Government. He was the political leader, decided where the commando should go, and carried on all the palaver, but had not to do with the discipline; an intelligent man, very fair judging, but in rather a difficult position, as the Dutch mistrusted him on account of his English proclivities and training, while the English contingent complained that he favoured the Dutch. Associated with him was the Commandant-General of the commando, a regular old Dutch Boer, who had emigrated in the early days from British rule, fought in the old wars of Dingaan and when Retief and his sixty companions were all slaughtered, and emigrated again from Natal when the British assumed sovereignty. Then there was a 'member of the Executive Council,' a sort of commissioner, such as the Dutch Republics in old times sent to watch their generals, but whom nobody here paid any attention to. Then we had a German captain, an ex-officer or non-commissioned officer of the Prussian Guard, who had come out to organise their artillery for them; a curious character, with a wonderful capacity for drink, who had tried to dress up his motley crew and make them resemble his beloved 'Guard Artillery,' and was especially proud of his band, consisting of two fiddles, a concertina, and a guitar—an unfortunate family of wandering half-breed musicians, who were playing their way through the Transvaal, when by a happy inspiration they were 'commandeered' and sent off with the expedition. In the evening the captain gave us a small entertainment in his tent—whist and music. Rudolph insisted on our drinking up his gin to save the captain getting drunk on it, and we emptied his bottle; but as we saw the captain open another bottle after we left, and Rudolph complained of a bad headache in the morning, I am not sure that the manoeuvre was

successful. Camp discipline was amusing. Returning from our entertainment the bugle sounded 'lights out.' A field cornet on duty, passing a waggon with a light in it, calls out, 'Now, then, put out that light there;' answer from within, 'If you want to put this light out you had better bring a precious big stick in with you.' . . . Had a good deal of interesting talk with Rudolph and Bell about native affairs; also about chances of federation.

June 27.—Started from camp. Rudolph had provided two carriers, warriors in feathers and skins, to take us as far as Josan's, with orders to that chief to forward us to Delagoa Bay.

June 28.—Made fifteen miles' rough walking before breakfast, afterwards entered on the country where no cattle or horses can live on account of the fly, but a rich game country. About sundown came to the foot of the Lebombo ridge of hills, and an hour later reached Josan's kraal, about halfway up, after a tough march of twenty-nine miles. Josan at first proposed that we should go on to another kraal, two miles distant, but we sat down in front of his hut and declined to move; while our boy, on whom it had been strongly impressed by Rudolph and Bell that we were not ordinary traders, but great English chiefs, held forth on our state and dignity to Josan. Finally he had a hut cleared out for us, and treated us very well.

June 29.—Started with two carriers, one a willing intelligent fellow, the other very unwilling; climbed the steep slope of the Lebombo (about 800 feet), then across a broken stony plateau all day. On the road our unwilling Kaffir dropped his bundle and ran away, carrying Baker's coat with him. Held a council, and determined we could not afford to turn back for anybody, so carried the bundle on our own heads, Baker and myself taking it mile about. Had some pleasant experience of carrying fifty pounds on one's head over loose stones on a hot day. Met a party of hunters, and our carrier so worked on their feelings as to the disgrace of two great English chiefs having to carry their own kit through the country, that one of the hunters turned back with us, and engaged to carry to Delagoa Bay for a

blanket. After many hours of most trying walking, barely doing two miles an hour over the loose rolling stones, we reached the other side of the Lebombo plateau, and commenced a steep knee-breaking descent. . . Only made twenty-two miles. Guides declare we cannot reach Delagoa Bay in less than three days, but we mean to do it in two, and as yet we have kept our time day by day, despite of every one.

June 30.—Started early, well supplied with meat by last evening's sport, and commenced crossing the 'deadly belt'—a damp flat, covered with long grass and mimosa. Passed great herds of quagga, all kinds of antelope, and buffalo.

July 1.—Had to wade Umbolus River, which is here about a hundred yards across, and nearly waist deep.

Climbing ridge, found ourselves in sight of Delagoa Bay, but on the other side of the bay from the town. After about eight miles skirting bay came to Lorenzo Marquez.

Actual distance from Clarke's, as we travelled it, 200 miles, but, by avoiding some unnecessary *détours*, and not going to the king's kraal, might be reduced to about 180.

July 2.—Visited town, a poor little place, built on a mud or sand bank, at the foot of the hill, forming almost an island, being surrounded (all but a little neck) by sea or swamp; site apparently chosen for defence against Kaffirs, the hill above offering an excellent and healthy site for a town, which, if the place improves, will certainly be made use of. A magnificent bay and sheet of water, with plenty of depth almost everywhere. Called on the Governor, a young sailor, who has taken the appointment for three years, to gain a step in rank, nice-looking, nice-mannered, speaks English perfectly, and very civil; presented my letters from Sir Garnet. Talked over arrangements for proposed introduction of labourers from these parts into Natal, and promised to get us carriers to go on to the gold fields. Rather astonished and somewhat mystified at a veteran of my age and rank wandering about the country in this style; in a recent despatch he had spoken of the English as 'our energetic, but insidious, allies;' and I think he will be more than ever convinced of our energy and insidiousness.

At Delagoa Bay great difficulty was experienced in getting carriers for the journey to the gold fields. But they determined to start on the 5th at daylight—with or without carriers—carrying a reduced kit between them if necessary; meantime three carriers turned up and they started with blankets and eight days' provisions.

July 5.—A little before sundown reached a rocky stream and slope, at the foot of the first rise from the dead plains we had been crossing since leaving the bay; halted there for the night; total, twenty-four miles. Jack, as we have christened the big carrier, very useful in constructing a hut of boughs and grass. While we were cooking, Baker took out the gun and got a small buck. About dusk lions began to roar about; later, one roared so close to the camp that our carriers crowded in on us and lit large fires all round, and could not be persuaded to go down to the river for water.

On the 6th the Lebombo range was crossed, the carriers complaining of the pace, and on the 8th they entered a different kind of country—'rocky conical hills (kopjes), stony ridges, and plenty of running water instead of the monotonous flat'—and spent the night in a trader's tent at the foot of Pretoria's Kop—a hill supposed to mark the boundary of the 'fly' country:

From this to the sea is infested by the tsetse fly, of which we saw many specimens—something between a common fly and a horse-fly in appearance, but with longer and more pointed wings. No domesticated animal has yet been able to live in this country—cattle, horses, mules, donkeys, and camels have all been tried, and have all died, and even dogs very rarely survive a trip across. Along the road we passed the skeletons of hundreds of these unfortunate animals, and also of carts and wagons that had

had to be abandoned in consequence. All goods, therefore, have to be sent up from Delagoa to Pretoria's Kop by carriers ; after that they can be fetched by waggons.

Our carriers are quite beat ; we had to wait at every stream to let them come up, and they have hardly energy enough now to cook their food. They complain to Mr. Rush that we are rather like quagga than white men—always trotting. Jack still tries to look cheerful, but his limbs move very stiffly, and he points pathetically to his thighs.

July 9.—Started early, and made eleven miles over a rougher country. Halted and bathed at the Sand River. Carriers quite unable to keep up with us. Made arrangements accordingly, dividing amongst us the necessary supplies. Baker, who, with his long legs and stride, is apt to be a little impatient and contemptuous of my more moderate pace, seized the heaviest bundle, and strode manfully up the hill, at a pace I did not attempt to keep up with.

Baker, however, took a wrong track ; he and Colley lost sight of each other, and in spite of Baker's pace Colley reached Mac-mac (the first of the gold diggings) fully twenty-four hours earlier, after a long and perilous scramble in the dark along a path which, though it saved fifteen miles, was ' the roughest night walk I ever attempted.'

First I floundered through a black reedy swamp, sometimes over my knees, then a long descent over rough boulders, then waded a river about waist deep, and then up the long and steep ascent of the Drakensberg, more than 5 000 feet high. Near the top I was nearly beat ; the path skirted under a high projecting peak along its nearly precipitous side, sometimes up, sometimes down to arid boulders. The peak hid the moon, and it was often impossible to distinguish the path. I got several heavy rolls, and occasionally had to feel up and down the side on hands and knees till I found the path again.

On the 10th Colley went up to Pilgrim's Rest, a famous diggers' camp, about 6,000 feet above the sea and in a wild and beautiful valley, and visited some of the claims.

I saw the commissioners and bank agents, and talked over some proposed arrangements for the conveyance of gold to Natal. Saw all the diggers returning from work—a rough-looking set, with the wildest of hats and costumes, a French or Italian military overcoat (light grey, with pink facings on the collar) being a favourite costume; but a wonderfully orderly, well-behaved set, with a large proportion of gentlemen, army men, university men, &c., among them.

At Leydenberg, which, as originally planned, he reached on the 12th, the journal breaks off into brief daily record. On July 13 he started in the post cart for Pretoria; next day it was lumbering along the high veldt region between Leydenberg and Nazareth. There is a record on July 12 of reaching a surly abusive Dutchman's in the afternoon, and a subsequent letter describes the incident, showing the feeling of the farmers in the centre of the Transvaal.

I had made no arrangement for carrying food, and we could get little to eat on the road. Most of the houses where we stopped to change horses belonged to Dutchmen, who were too proud to sell, and too inhospitable to give one anything but coffee; and the nights I spent out on the plains at an altitude of about 6,000 feet, with a bitter wind and sharp frost, were not pleasant. Some of the Dutchmen were inclined to be abusive; one old gentleman in particular asked me to come in and sit down, and then opened out on me—asked the driver why he had brought that 'karl' here; said he knew all about me and why I had come; that I was a spy looking out for the British Government to annex them; that he did not hate me so much, for I was merely

doing the orders of my Government. I thought we should have had a row, but his wife came in and effected a diversion, and it turned out, curiously enough, that she was a relation of the Macleans—English on her mother's side—and though the old gentleman continued to be very offensive I had to keep my temper on her account.²

Colley reached Pretoria on July 16, and stayed there four days. In this interval he met the acting President Joubert, and other officials :

I had some interviews with the acting President, and settled amicably some little matters between our two Governments. Before leaving he gave me a sort of banquet of honour, which was cooked by his wife, whose flushed face could be seen peering through the kitchen door now and again to see how we were getting on, and served by his son, who waited on us.

In reading this sentence, so full of the simple homestead life of these Dutch farmers, it is impossible to prevent the mind running on to a day a few years forward, when this same President Joubert will be Commandant-General of the Boer forces barring the road into the Transvaal against Colley's little army at Lang's Nek. There is another significant passage in this letter: 'At Pretoria I was most hospitably received by all the English residents. There, as in most of the Transvaal towns, the bulk of the population and all the principal merchants and traders are English, and looking forward to the country coming under English rule in some form or another.'

How long shall we continue to confuse the talk of the South African town with the feeling of the South African country? 'Because half a dozen grass-

² August 1, 1875, to his sister.

hoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chirp,' wrote Burke more than a century ago, 'while many great cattle repose under the shadow of the trees, chew the cud, and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field.'

CHAPTER IX

TO INDIA WITH LORD LYTTON

Transvaal Report—Aldershot appointment—Military Secretary to Viceroy
—Frontier policy—The active and passive schools—Mission to Khelat.

COLLEY reached Wakkerstroom on July 24, thirty-three days since he had left it to begin his journey to Delagoa Bay. In the interval he had walked 400 miles, and travelled by the roughest of post carts about 600 miles. At Pretoria he had met an old geographer named Jeppe, then engaged on a revised map of those countries to whom his surveys of the route to and from Delagoa Bay were valuable. 'I find,' writes Colley at the time, 'that the country we traversed going to Delagoa Bay is so little known that our undertaking it without guides and interpreters and carrying it out in the time we did was looked upon as a feat which made us famous.' The report which followed this rapid journey was of much immediate interest, nor do its suggestions and conclusions lose importance when read in the light of after events.

Colley described the Transvaal as a country in which there was growing up a strong English feeling, a British element likely to become dominant, and which was already rapidly supplanting that of the old Dutch Boers. So evenly were the parties divided that the pro-English side was estimated at two-fifths

of the whole white population; these two-fifths formed the great majority of the town and mining populations. In the country districts, however, the great bulk of the farmers were still of the old Boer type; and though among these people there remained much of the former prejudice against English government and Englishmen individually, the party was decidedly a decreasing one, both in numbers and animosity. The most serious obstacle to closer union with England was undoubtedly to be found in the suspicion and indignation which our annexation of the diamond fields had aroused. It was alike condemned by the English section and by the Boers. The glimpse Colley had had of the 'Commando' in the Swazi country had not been lost upon him. 'The true military strength of the Republic lay,' he thought, 'in its "Commando" system, and in the number of hardy farmers, trained from childhood to ride and shoot and undergo hardships and privation, which it counted within its borders.' On the whole the report conveyed the impression that the apple of the Transvaal would probably soon fall of itself, either to confederation with the remainder of South Africa, or to some other form of union with England. If Delagoa Bay could be obtained, the progress of union with Great Britain would be immensely accelerated. The feeling towards England in the Transvaal was much less hostile than it was in the Orange Free State; the Transvaalers had not the unity of the Free State, and they had, as yet, no strong nationality; the annexation of the diamond fields had affected them less directly. The primitive Dutch administration, suited to a pastoral people, was unsuited to the wants of an active and pushing commu-

nity, and if Delagoa Bay were once in English hands, a very short time would see the Transvaal a prosperous and wealthy English colony.

Such, briefly, was the substance of Colley's report.

It may be questioned whether this view of the Transvaal, ably though it dealt with to-day and to-morrow, took sufficient heed of the long yesterday which the Dutch of the Transvaal loved and lived much in. Out of that 'sleepy hollow of the past' they were ready to awake, not as Rip Van Winkle woke with rusty gun and rotten shot-belt, but with breechloading rifle in hand and well-stocked ammunition-pouch on shoulder, to fight, if needs they must fight, for their cherished independence.

While Colley was at work feeling the pulse of the Transvaal, another member of Sir Garnet Wolseley's staff had been sent to report upon the Orange Free State, and on the chances of colonial confederation in that Republic. Sir Garnet Wolseley had himself visited the outlying districts of Natal, the Tugela frontier, and the Zulu locations, and by August 12 all the members of the mission were again united at Maritzburg. Then came three weeks of report-writing, committee work, and social gaieties, the usual party at Government House being supplemented by Mr. Froude, the historian, then on his second political mission to South Africa. It was a strange coincidence which had brought to Maritzburg at this moment, when so much of importance was being done, the philosopher who but a little time before had been speaking to the Boers words old as the Roman world—but ever new in the ears of men—telling them that those who won in the end 'were not the speculators, the miners, and the storekeepers,

but the hardy yeomen, the peasants who fought for home and fireside ; ' telling them, too, that the labour of the diamond fields and the gold mines was ' unprofitable labour,' that the real wealth of the Republic lay in the development of their agricultural and pastoral resources, and that their national independence could only be kept intact by courage and self-denial and hardihood of life.

Confederation had for some time been the dream of the Colonial Minister, Lord Carnarvon, and Mr. Froude had come out in a semi-official capacity to urge it upon the people of South Africa. But the forces arrayed against the proposed union were powerful, and foremost among them was suspicion on the part of the Boers, both in the Free State and the Transvaal, of our sincerity in the matter. Confederation was but a cloak, they said, to hide designs against their freedom. When, early in September, Sir Garnet Wolseley left for England, Colley remained in South Africa in order to visit the Orange Free State and the diamond fields, and to gauge the feeling of those communities towards confederation. He started on his journey about the middle of the month, having meanwhile closed the Colenso inquiry already alluded to. Very cordial was his reception at Bloemfontein, where

. . . the ball in our honour did come off, and where we met such kindness and hospitality from the President (Mr. Brand) and his family as I really never experienced in my life. But that ball nearly killed me ; we had been on the road since four o'clock in the morning till seven in the evening, a very rough road and a hot dusty day ; and about three o'clock in the morning, when the ball was nearly at an end, and I was feebly attempting inane conversation with a new partner, she suddenly asked me, without any provocation

whatever, 'whether I believed there was such a thing as abstract truth, or whether we were not apt to be deceived by the reflex of our own individualities.' Lord Mandeville says he saw me suddenly turn pale, and was afraid something had happened. I don't know how I got to the end of that dance, but I know as soon as it was over I rushed to Mrs. Brand and put myself under her protection. I have since heard that the lady had sat next Mr. Froude at dinner one night, and had ever since believed herself to be intellectual.

. . . We were treated in true princely style at Bloemfontein; the post cart which ought to have started before daylight was detained for four hours that we might sleep off the fatigues of the ball, and the President and all his family turned out to see us off. Certainly among my pleasantest recollections of this country will be the hearty and unaffected kindness of that family.¹

As he neared Kingwilliamstown he passed many of the German villages which he had originally laid out, 'some, thriving settlements, others had altogether disappeared.' It was curious to see again the old scenes, and to meet former friends:

My old friend Kreli has been giving trouble in the Transkei, and 500 mounted police and two guns had just been sent up to protect the Indutsha location and keep the peace. Some of my old Kaffirs who happened to be within reach of Kingwilliamstown came in to see me, but I did not see any of my special friends, nor did I beg a cow this time.

At Durban he expected to get a steamer to take him, *via* Zanzibar and Aden, to join his regiment in India. But finding no chance of getting forward he turned back to Capetown, where he was laid up with an attack of illness, the result of hardship and

¹ Port Elizabeth, October 16, 1875, to his sister.

bad climate during his Delagoa Bay journey. Thus he missed the next east-coast steamer to India, and on November 22 all his plans were changed by the news of his appointment as assistant quartermaster-general at Aldershot. Three days afterwards he sailed for England.

He had remained long enough in South Africa to see the collapse of the much-desired conference on confederation, the Colonial Minister's first attempt at the creation of a single dominion in South Africa. Another passenger on board ship was Mr. Froude, who undoubtedly saw further into the Dutch difficulty than did most of the people on the spot, and this because he realised that the history that wears best is not woven on the loom of the Stock Exchange. In a letter written after this voyage, Colley describes the impression which close association with Mr. Froude had left upon his mind :

I came home from the Cape, and almost lived on the way, with Mr. Froude; a mind which I am sure you would have appreciated and enjoyed as thoroughly as I did. I don't know if you are as warm an admirer of his writing as I am; to me there is no English prose equal to some passages of his; such, for instance, as that about the middle of the first chapter of his history—'For indeed a change was coming upon the world.' It was rather a sad mind too, sometimes grand, sometimes pathetic and tender, usually cynical, but often relating with the highest appreciation and with wonderful beauty of language some gallant deed of one of his heroes of the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. He seemed to have gone through every phase of thought, and come to the end 'all is vanity.' He himself used to say the interest of life to a thinking man was exhausted at thirty or thirty-five. After that there remained nothing but disappointment of earlier visions and hopes. Thank goodness

I have not thought quite so fast! Sometimes there was something almost fearful in the gloom and utter disbelief and defiance of his mind.²

Colley took up his duties at Aldershot on the last day of 1875. But scarcely had he settled into the new groove, when there came one of those sudden calls by telegraph which had now become familiar to him. 'Telegraphed for to London. Saw Sir Garnet and Bulwer' is all the diary tells of it, and next day there is the entry: 'Saw Bulwer and Sir Garnet. Saw Burne at India Office.' That evening, February 4, he received the following short note from Lord Lytton:

Dear Colonel Colley,—I have much pleasure in offering you the military secretaryship in India. If you be willing to accept it, I should be glad to see you to-morrow.

Yours very truly,

LYTTON.

From Capetown two months earlier he had been on the point of starting for India to join his regiment in the modest *rôle* of junior major. He was now about to go there on the staff of the Governor-General in a position which was fraught with issues and possibilities of greater consequence than had perhaps ever before been attached to it.

The chief whose friend and close adviser he was soon to become was a man of rare attainments, and had the faculty of discovering and drawing out the powers of others. 'A man who keeps all parts of one's brain active,' Colley wrote of him on the voyage out; 'a poet and a statesman.'³ The union may not

² Paris March 5, 1876, to Miss Hamilton.

³ *Ibid.*

always prove so fortunate for fame as it perhaps deserves—the poet and the statesman appeal to differing audiences. But Colley, who in the brief sentence quoted had touched the character of Lord Lytton's genius, was able through his own width of intellectual life to appreciate the new Viceroy's varied gifts. Not less attractive was the brilliant humour which lit up those gifts, and which, as the intimacy grew between the two men, flashes out everywhere in their correspondence.

For a month following his appointment Colley was incessantly occupied, closing the work so recently begun at Aldershot and preparing to enter upon the untravelled path of his new duties. The journey came as a welcome respite. On March 2, he joined the Lyttons at Dover, *en route* for Naples, where steamer was to be taken for Bombay. At Paris there was a pleasant rest of five days; a week at Naples; and then a longer interval for study of the Indian question and Blue-book reading, while the 'Orontes' was making the usual slow rate of troopship progress towards Bombay. In a letter written during this outward voyage, I find a passage defining the effect upon his mind of work for work's sake, and work for ambitious objects:

I have worked both for ambition and for the pleasure of the work's sake, and though ambition is the keener stimulus, the other work was the most satisfactory even at the time, and far the most afterwards. Fifteen years ago I worked for ambition, and had all the success a man could desire at the Cape, at the Staff College, and in promotion. During the ten years which elapsed between my leaving the Staff College and the Ashanti Expedition, I felt myself dropping out of the race to a certain extent; and during the two years I spent at the Staff College as professor, I had almost given

up the idea of a career for myself. Yet I then enjoyed and I now look back on my work at that time with more satisfaction than at any other—when I was working, not for place, or for ambition, but for the sake of my work, of the profession I was so fond of, and of the influence I felt one could exert upon others by keeping them up to the mark. Since Ashanti, I have been again dragged into the race as it were, and yet, with every success I could ever have hoped for, have not the same real pleasure in the work.⁴

That this was no passing idea of the work that best repaid its own toil, another letter, written six months later, shows :

I still think you don't quite understand the difference I draw about working purely for the work's sake. Ambition is a very mixed quality ; there is always a strong personal element in it. An ambitious man likes good work because it is his, and is not pleased if some one else does it equally well, or gets the credit of his work. Undoubtedly success, visible success, has many charms, but has also many drawbacks. But there is another kind of work, when you are rather lending a hand than directing—cheering others, giving a shoulder now and then when there is a stick, doing odd bits here and there, when you work as I say for the love of the work and of seeing work well done—which, though it brings no great outward credit, I think in the long run gives more real satisfaction, and has one great recommendation, to me at least, that it is free from jealousies and heartburnings.

. . . I forget if I ever told you of General Lee. He has always been my greatest military hero, such a mixture of gentleness and everything that was sweet and tender with the grandest military qualities. When I was travelling in the Southern States they said everywhere, ' Oh, it was not so much for what Lee was during the war as for what he was to us after the war that we worship him ; ' and in almost every house I went to, I found letters of his, written

⁴ Paris, March 5, 1876, to Miss Hamilton.

after the war. Every man, woman, and child almost seemed to have written to him when in difficulties, and received encouragement, comfort, advice, as their case wanted.⁵

But whether he enjoyed more the old work when advancement seemed remote, or the new when almost any preferment was possible, mattered little so far as the quality of the work done was concerned. Lord Lytton had said to Colley when the military secretaryship was first offered to him, 'After all, an appointment is always what the man who holds it—makes it.'⁶ And that the present military secretary would give significance to any appointment is made evident by an able paper on the 'Military Aspect of the Central Asian Question,' which he wrote on the voyage to Bombay. No more comprehensive view of this immense theatre of operations has ever been grouped into the compass of a single document. The confidential nature of such a subject prevents any detailed reference to it here; but it may be observed that the twenty years which have elapsed since it was written have borne out the correctness of its conclusions as to the progress of events in Central Asia. The writer foresaw that nothing could stop the steady flow of Russian power from its base on the Caspian to the foot-hills of the Hindu Kush, and the measures he thought necessary to forestall or neutralise the effects of that movement upon our position in India still retain practical interest, and in some particulars have already been translated into fact.

This question of how to check the Russian advance in Central Asia was now engaging the

⁵ Simla, September 10, 1876, to Miss Hamilton.

⁶ August 5, 1877, to Miss Hamilton.