

up the Blood River, and save about forty miles.

At Dundee we found that the road was impassable, owing to the heavy rains, and I decided to make for Utrecht, where I knew good roads existed. This led to a fresh dispute with the officer, as he insisted upon travelling the shorter road. I explained to him that, as we had eighty wagons, the leading ones would cut up the road to such a degree as to make it exceedingly difficult for the following ones to get over it, and we would probably take twice as long in reaching Kambula, besides being utterly unable to draw the wagons close together in case of an attack. He flew into a violent rage, and threatened to place me under arrest and manage the wagons himself. I told him we could settle the matter on arrival in camp.

After that we went for some miles on very bad roads, where the wagons sank up to their axles, and it was a case of unloading, drawing the wagons on a little, and loading

up again, only to find the wagons sink slowly again in the mud after a few yards, forcing us to unload and reload all over again. Fatigue parties were told off to assist, and it took us a week to go three miles. I was kept busy galloping up and down the line directing the movements of wagons, or putting on extra teams to force them through. Sometimes the mud was ploughed up in front of the wagons by the efforts of thirty-two oxen, whilst yokeskeys, neck-straps, reins, were breaking in every direction. To make matters worse, it poured with rain, but the men worked through it like demons, digging, shouting, and urging on the tired oxen. At last we got on to good roads again, and travelled slowly until we arrived at Utrecht to allow the oxen to recover a bit.

We were joined here by twenty more wagons and some troops sent from Kambula to meet us. We then marched the thirty-six remaining miles to our destination without any event worth recording.

## CHAPTER VI.

ON the 27th of March a force made up of some of the Frontier Light Horse, Raafs' Corp, Weatherley Rangers, Baker's Horse, the Native Contingent, and other Volunteer Corps, under Col. Wood, started from Kambula to attack Zhlobane Mountain.

Col. Buller led the attack, and, when near the top, the Zulus opened a heavy fire. Several men and officers fell before the enemy were driven off. The rocky mountain swarmed with Zulus firing from krantzes and caves. It was estimated that there were about 10,000 of them, while our horse only numbered 600 besides the Native Contingent.

After a few hours' desultory firing from the summit a large body of Zulus appeared on the north side. Col. Buller rode off to attack them, but noticed presently swarms of natives climbing round the side of the mountain underneath him to cut off the retreat of our men from their only available means of descent. There was no doubt that the main part of the Zulu army had arrived, and he gave the order to retreat. It was an awkward place to descend, even at a slow pace; but the knowledge that they were surrounded by an overwhelming force impelled the men to dash down the steep rocky incline at full speed. An attempt to rally proved a failure, and the retreat rapidly became a panic. A Zulu lurked behind every boulder, and sprang out upon the white men, stabbing right and left.

Col. Weatherley, a gallant Colonial officer, his son a boy of fourteen, and sixty-six men were cut off, and every man, with the exception of six, was killed. The former was last

seen standing over the body of his dead boy, fighting bravely, a sword in one hand, a revolver in the other, until he fell pierced with assegais.

Our loss amounted to 120 men, and many acts of bravery were recorded, especially on the part of Col. Buller and Captain Cecil D'Arcy.

On the 29th we saw an enormous army of Zulus marching towards our camp. They moved in a dense mass, with a point or horn stretching out on either side. Bugle calls were sounded through the camp; orders were given to finish our meal in haste, and, as the enemy came nearer, the alarm sounded; tents were struck; and every man took up his position on and under the wagons which surrounded the camp. There was no noise or bustle, rather an ominous quiet. Boxes of ammunition were opened and put down next the men; horses saddled in case of need; and a look of grim determination seemed to

grow on the faces of the men, for the sight of the advancing Zulus called up memories of slain comrades at Isandhlwana and Zhlobane.

The great dark mass moving steadily on had now arrived quite close to us, and we could distinctly discern their dark forms, when suddenly another column of the enemy appeared over a rise on the opposite side of the camp. A mounted force was sent out to meet them in skirmishing order, amid hearty cheers. Advancing some distance, they dismounted, fired, and retired; this they repeated. It was done to draw the enemy on, and get them within range of the guns. The manœuvre succeeded, and shell after shell ploughed through their ranks. It was splendid to see how they pressed on without any regard to the galling fire of the artillery. Every time a well-directed shell exploded amongst the densest part, and those around fell dead or wounded, a cheer would ring out from the soldiers.

The other column now came up, and we were surrounded. However, we kept up an incessant fire, mowing them down like corn. On they came, making charge after charge, no doubt believing they would gain as easy a victory as before; but at length they were forced to retire under our withering fire. Nevertheless they struggled to get at us the whole afternoon, but finally gave up and fled the way they had come. They were not let go in peace; the artillery continued to pour shot and shell into their disorganised force; the cavalry pursued them for miles until dusk, shooting and cutting them down.

The Zulu strength that day was over 20,000, and nearly 2000 were slain, whilst of our side, numbering about 2500, only thirty were killed and fifty wounded.

The Zulus seemed to fire too high, for their bullets whistled thickly over our heads; and I should not be surprised, when they were quite close in, if some of them hit some

of their own men on the opposite side. They were the same force that attacked Isandhlwana, and had many Martini rifles, taken at the sack of the camp.\*

It was after this fight that a few of our men met death in rather an odd way.

Firewood being scarce, we proceeded to collect all the old muzzle-loading rifles and assagais of the dead Zulus. (This, by the way, was rather a ghastly task, as the Zulus seemed to stiffen in their death-struggles into the most extraordinary attitudes.) The stocks of these were chopped up for fuel by the soldiers, and the barrels were found to make excellent grates in the camp fireplaces. Oddly enough, it did not seem to occur to the

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\* It was here that I witnessed a man flogged, and believe it was the last time that this form of punishment was administered in the British army. The man was tied to a triangle, bared to the waist, and thrashed with a "cat" until he had received the number of lashes he was sentenced to. This was done in the face of the whole camp, who were drawn up in order to witness it.



men that some of these barrels might be loaded, and, consequently, on a fire being lit under them, many exploded, killing and wounding several men.

Shortly afterwards the Prince Imperial was killed. He, six men of Bettington's Horse, with Lieut. Carey, set out on a reconnoitring expedition. Having rested at a kraal to have some refreshment, they were about to mount their horses when a volley was fired at them out of some tambookie grass close by. Two troopers were killed, the others succeeded in mounting and getting away, with the exception of the Prince, who had a tall restless horse, which broke away from him. The Prince commenced to run, but was surrounded and assagaied. One pierced his eye, another pierced him in the side. In this instance they followed their common custom of ripping open the stomach. This is always done by the Zulus and other Kaffir tribes when they have time; they have been

known to cut out the heart of an exceptionally brave man, and eat it, from a belief that it gives them courage.

Individually, I could never see that Carey was to blame. He did not show any bravery, it is true, but one man's life is as good as another's, and this was clearly a case of *sauve-qui-peut*; he would certainly have been killed had he remained, and he could not have rendered the Prince the slightest assistance, as the natives were only twenty yards away when they fired. At the same time, it was a dangerous place to dismount, and showed a lack of military prudence. My opinion was the common one of soldiers at the time. Carey was, however, court-martialled, condemned, and sent to England under arrest, where he was released by the Queen at the request of the Empress Eugenie.

We had moved our camp some distance closer to a tributary of the White Umvolosi, and were consequently only a few miles from

General Newdigate's column which was quartered on the Buffalo River.

His force consisted of 17th Lancers, 21st regiment, 58th, a battery of 5th brigade Royal Artillery, a battery of 6th brigade Royal Artillery, Bengaugh's Native Battalion, Natal Pioneers, and Natal Carabineers.

Here we burnt the great Maquilizine Military Kraal, and captured 9000 head of cattle.

A month later we struck camp again.

During this time I had plenty of work to do in getting wagons into marching order, and in keeping those belonging to different regiments together.

General Sir Garnet Wolseley was now appointed to take charge of affairs in Zululand, both civil and military.

General Newdigate joined our column, and we moved towards Ulundi, where Lord Chelmsford's column was stationed.

At daylight, on the 4th of July, the



CETEWAYO.

British army crossed the Umvolosi River and camped on the high ground. Shortly after the halt had been made the enemy was seen approaching from two directions. Our troops were formed up in a hollow parallelogram, the Native Contingent in the centre with the ammunition wagons. The four sides were formed by eight companies of the 13th, five companies of the 80th, the 90th, the 58th, and 34th regiments, the 17th Lancers and Mounted Irregulars. At the corners and centres artillery were placed, Gatlings, 7-pounders and 9-pounders.

At 8 A.M., as the enemy was advancing, Buller's Horse met them: Cochrane's Mounted Basutos were sent to the right. In one hour the British opened fire, and the brave Zulus pressed silently on through the deadly hail of bullets. Once more they showed their utter contempt for death, and I feel sure there is no nation on earth that would advance steadily under such a terrible fire

as did they on that occasion. On they charged, until at a distance of no more than seventy yards, when they could face it no longer; a few rushed on, only to be shot down. The rest hesitated, wavered, and fled. Now was the time. The Lancers dashed out and bore down upon them like a whirlwind; the bursting shells, the roar of the guns, the loud crackle of the Gatlings and "ping" of bullets, made a most exciting scene. It was the last stand of the Zulu army, and about 1000 were killed. The battle over, the great Kraal was given to the flames. In it was the king's palace, which consisted of a thatched building of four rooms.

After this the Zulu warriors retired to their homes, and the king fled to the mountains. A force was told off for his capture, under the command of Major Barrow, who tracked him for many miles. Great activity was shown by Major Gifford, who nearly captured him, at length he was run to

ground by Major Marter, and escorted to Ulundi. From there he was taken to Port Durnford, put on board the s.s. *Natal*, taken to Cape Town, where he was imprisoned in the Castle.

Peace was proclaimed, settlements made, and the camp broke up.

I left in charge of a large convoy of surplus stores for Natal, where they were sold. There I received my pay, and left with a good sum of money for the Old Colony.

## CHAPTER VII.

REACHING East London, I went by train to King William's Town, bought a horse, saddle, and bridle, and was once more a wanderer.

At Adelaide, where I stayed a few days, I met a gentleman who had lately arrived from England and started ostrich farming fourteen miles from the town. He was in want of a sub-manager, which post he offered to me. I accepted it, promising to be with him in a week's time. My salary was to be £5 a month ; this, though small, was better than nothing. Mounting my horse the next day I rode seventy miles to Cradock to see Mabel. When the week expired I rode back, to enter upon my new duties with Mr Parker.



I did not like the place from the first ; it was wretchedly small, and the birds were few, and not by any means good. He was a good sort : knew very little about farming, and would not take anybody's advice on any subject. He had four incubators, and we incubated all the eggs. This I protested against, explaining that weak chicks would be the result of forcing the birds to lay. He paid no heed to my advice, but maintained that if the birds be highly fed, no weak chicks could be born. I said no more, and simply let things take their course. As I had anticipated, most of the chicks were born decrepit and died ; the adult birds suddenly stopped laying, and six months ensued before they started again. In trying to get a large number of chicks in the year, we only got a few, although we had hatched out more than anyone else around. It was a case of killing the goose with the golden eggs. After this, he came to the conclusion

that I knew more—at least about ostriches—than he did, and let me have my own way.

He had begun to take a keen interest in racing, and was busy seeing to the erection of large stables for his horses. He spent most of his time now at race meetings, and ill luck seemed to attend all his ventures. One thing was clear to me—as the farm was not paying well, and he was dropping large sums over horses, things could not go on for long as they were. A severe drought followed, and we were obliged to buy grain at high rates to keep the birds alive. At length one day he came to me and said he would be obliged to sell out, as his resources were exhausted. Two months afterwards the sale was held, and I left once more for Cradock. There I met a Mr Gill, who offered me a post on his farm to manage his incubators. I was to be paid at the rate of twelve one-month-old chicks per season, including board and lodging. Twelve chicks a month old

at that time were worth £100, so I reckoned that in a few years I would be able to start a farm of my own with the birds that lived, and in the meantime it would be easy to get someone to take them on the half-profit system. This system helped a great many poor farmers, both Dutch and English.

In due time I went to Mr Gill, prepared the incubating-room, boiler, etc., and a month later was busy collecting the eggs from the nests, dating them, and putting them into the incubators. The season was just drawing to a close, and we did not think many more eggs would be obtained, when the Basuto War broke out.

I had worked hard and done well, and Mr Gill was highly pleased on seeing a fresh "clutch" turned out every ten days, and there seemed every prospect of its being the best chick season for him on record.

The new war caused considerable excitement, and orders came that burghers were

to be called out, and proceed to the front. Men were picked between the age of sixteen and fifty, starting by names commencing with the first letter in the alphabet. I knew I would not be called out, as I was not in the district when the names were taken.

The men were allowed 4s. 6d a day, with rations and ammunition. Each man had to find his own horse, or, failing to do so, was supplied with one, and the value duly docked out of his pay. He could evade going by finding a suitable substitute; many did, but it cost them from £20 to £100.

One morning, as I had just finished turning the eggs in the incubator, and was standing idly at the door looking down the valley, I saw someone come galloping along the road leading to the house. Every now and then the rider would disappear among the trees at a bend of the road, to reappear, leaving a cloud of dust behind. I waited

awhile, and then saw that it was a lady. On coming nearer, I recognised Ethel Brown, a pretty little governess in a family some miles off, who was engaged to my best chum and oldest friend, one of the finest fellows in the Colony.

I hurried forward to meet her. She jumped off her horse without waiting for my assistance, and exclaimed :

“I can't come in—I only wanted to see you. Walk back part of the way with me, and I will tell you why. I'm so glad I found you at home.”

I took the horse and led him. After a few minutes she said :

“Of course you've heard about the Basuto War?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Well, George has been called out,” and breaking suddenly down she added, “what shall I do? Oh, what on earth shall I do?”

“ If he does not want to go he can find a substitute.”

“ Yes ; but I'm afraid he *will* want to go ; and, besides, a substitute costs such a dreadful lot.”

“ What does he say about it ? ”

“ He is away, and does not even know he is called out, and he has to be ready in a week.”

“ Oh, that's nothing,” I remarked, unthinkingly. “ A fellow could get ready in twenty-four hours.”

“ What an unfeeling brute you are ! What about me ? Am I only to see him just a few hours before he starts, and perhaps never see him again ? You forget we were to be married in a month's time ”

Here she broke down completely. I felt an awful brute, and said the first thing that occurred to me

“ I beg your pardon, Ethel, I never thought of that. If it comes to that, he need

not go at all, you know, or trouble to find a substitute either."

She looked up with a start of hopeful surprise, explaining: "Oh, what do you mean?"

"Just what I say."

"But he must, Egie; he cannot get out of it."

"Oh yes, he can. Suppose I go instead?"

She exclaimed incredulously, "You don't really mean it!"

"Indeed I do," I said. "I've just about finished with the incubators, and I can easily come to some arrangement with Mr Gill, and so get away for a few months."

Ethel threw her arms round my neck and kissed me, crying: "You darling old boy! you dear! how good of you! I can't say how grateful I am to you."

"Oh, I shall enjoy it immensely," I said. 'I've been sticking so closely to my work here that a few months' shooting, even at Basutos, will be a relief."

“Poor old boy! I don’t half like your going. I’m afraid I’ve been very selfish.” She grew suddenly graver. “I have not even told you some news I heard about Mabel; but you must not be upset about it, it is sure to come right in time.”

“What have you heard?” I inquired anxiously. “No trouble, I hope.”

“Well, you see, her people never liked her engagement to you; they have always wanted her to marry Col. Sinclair, and it seems they promised him to further this as much as possible. Now that your engagement has become public, and he has to go to the Basuto War, they want her to declare her engagement off with you, and marry him in a fortnight before he starts. That is the latest I have heard about it. Poor Mab is very fond of you, and is very much cut up; but what can she do?”

“She might refuse to marry him.”

“Oh, yes; but she would never disobey



them. She is like most Colonial girls : she will marry whoever she is told to, and I don't think tears will help much in this case."

I was too distressed to talk any more. I wanted to be alone and think, so I got rid of Ethel as soon as I could. I took my rifle, went along the river, and sat down under a mimosa tree. There was only one thought uppermost in my brain. He was going to the front—so was I. He might be killed in action. The strangest reasonings dashed through my head. All sorts of voices prompted me ; I just sat and listened to them as if they were inside me, reasoning and weighing chances, and telling the results to me, a passive listener.

Supposing that during a fierce engagement I were to see him close to me? Supposing I were to find myself alone with him? Supposing he was in range of my revolver? . . .

The kook-a-vic was piping his shrill note in a bush hard by. "Kook—a—vic," kook—a—vic, kook—a—vic." It seemed to me it called, "Shoot—him—quick, shoot—him—quick, shoot—him—quick." I felt half frightened at my own fancies, at the involuntary impulses that awoke in me, and walked hurriedly home. I passed quite close to a steinbok and a duyker, and only realised it afterwards. I never once thought of firing at them.

## CHAPTER VIII.

IN the market square of Cradock some 400 burghers were assembled. All the inhabitants of the town and the country people for twenty miles around were there for the purpose of saying "Good-bye" to their fathers, or sons, or lovers, or friends, as the case may be.

In a low phaeton, in front of the courthouse, sat Mabel and her mother. Colonel Sinclair leant over the side and chatted with them. It seemed to me she was paler than usual, and her eyes were searching anxiously through the crowd of men. It was not easy to distinguish anyone amongst them, as they were all dressed alike—

corduroy uniforms, wide-brimmed felt hats with red pugarees, a cartridge belt slung round them, and carbine in hand. They were mostly gathered in small groups: a few galloped about the town saying "good-bye" to such friends as could not leave their desks or houses to see them off. It was a glad day to some and a sad one to others. Twelve o'clock was the time appointed for the muster. At a quarter to twelve I walked quickly down the square, leading my horse, determined at all events to say good-bye to Mabel. I shook hands with her, and holding out my hand to her mother said: "Good-bye, perhaps for the last time," but she merely bowed. With an expressive look at Mabel, and a slight nod to Sinclair, I turned away. Sinclair seemed rather amused; he had a slight smile on his face. I cursed him as I went, feeling as miserable as any fellow could feel. Being so well known, every one came and shook hands

with me, and wished "God speed!" and, feeling as I did, I was thankful to see the hands on the court-house clock point to twelve. As the hour was striking the men formed a long line, and a fine lot of fellows they looked—all Africanders, all good shots, sitting well on their saddles, resting the butts of their carbines on their thighs. The captain, accompanied by the sergeant-major, walked down the front of the line and read the roll. Every man answered, and, as the town band struck up, the men waved their hats, passed in sections round the square and down the road towards Basutoland.

What a long miserable journey that was to me! I often felt inclined to put spurs to my horse and gallop off anywhere.

We walked our horses along the hot dusty roads for 450 miles; we could not have gone more quickly had we desired, as our baggage-wagons only travelled at the rate of fifteen miles a day.

I was in a kind of daze—one thought uppermost. If I could not marry her myself, I was determined to do my best to prevent Sinclair from doing so. I felt more of a man, more aged, and took things more seriously. For a youngster of not nineteen, I had been through a good deal; had seen and experienced more than falls to the lot of most lads; I was old for my years.

Meanwhile we had camped outside Aliwal North, a town on the Orange River, the border of the Cape Colony and the Free State.

There were few incidents on the march worth recording; the routine was monotonously the same, day by day. The morning march started at seven o'clock until twelve, a halt, and on again at three until seven.

At length we arrived at Wepener, presenting a very different appearance to the smart body that set out. Our neat uniforms were

mud and travel stained, our hats and pugarees awry, our hands and faces tanned to a dark brown.

There we heard the news of the breaking out of the Boer War. This caused much discussion amongst the Dutch and English burghers of whom our force was composed, not always of an amicable nature. In the evening, when the men returned from the town, having drunk a good portion of "Cape smoke," a fight ensued, the outcome of an argument as to the merits of the English and Dutch between two of those nations, and ended in a general scrimmage, which lasted over an hour. Of course the English proved best with their fists, and the Dutch were driven out of the camp howling. The officers were powerless to do anything; indeed, as they were for the most part Dutchmen themselves, they preferred not to interfere in the row. The Dutchmen as a rule are not plucky.

At Wepener we waited for reinforcements. They flocked in almost daily from Somerset, Graaf Rienett, Middleburg, Bedford and Colesburg ; and when about a thousand had joined, we struck tents and marched on. A few miles brought us over the boundary into Basutoland proper. The wagons were drawn four abreast, no matter how rough the ground over which they had to travel. The men, each with 200 rounds of ammunition, rode on either side. An advance guard of six men rode half a mile in front, the officer in charge being allowed a certain amount of discretion. The train was also followed by a similar and rear guard ; scouts rode parallel with the column on either side. We had proceeded a little more than half way to our destination when the advance guard was attacked under a sugar-loaf-shaped hill, called Kalbani Kop. We heard their firing ; the alarm was given, and the men stood with loaded carbines in front of their horses, laggard oxen were



thrashed up by frightened native drivers, and in the space of a few minutes the wagons formed in a compact mass. The advance guard soon came galloping in, and two or three hundred of the enemy made their appearance. Upon these we promptly fired, without making any visible effect. Coming to the conclusion that there was not a stronger force of them in the background we moved on, slowly and carefully, but they harassed us for many miles, taking advantage of every scrap of cover to send bullets amongst us. One man was shot through the head and four wounded; several unfortunate oxen were dropped, which caused delay; we had no time either to take the meat on with us, which would have been useful, but contented ourselves by dragging them out of the way of the rear wagons. We had yet twenty-one miles to go before reaching our destination, and ten miles a day was good travelling under such circumstances.

I remember that it was very hot, and that there was a good Cape thunderstorm in the afternoon. It poured cats and dogs, and we slept that night round the wagons on the wet ground in our wet clothes, with belts and pouches full of cartridges, with our carbines by our sides, fully expecting an attack. However, the Basutos were kind enough to give us time to rest, and we were up and stirring at first glimpse of daylight. The day that followed was a lovely one, the roads were good, and the enemy not very troublesome. Now and then a stray shot would be heard from the advance or rear-guard, and we could always see some of them hovering round out of range.

At about seven o'clock that evening we arrived at Mafeteng, where I found, to my surprise, that Col. Sinclair was in charge of the garrison, which consisted of all the Cape Yeomanry and some native levies under Captain Bowker. We went on about two

miles further, and camped on a low flat hill with a fine lagoon at the foot of it. Then with the usual bustle the wagons were formed into a square; an outer square surrounding this again was made by building a sod wall, four feet high, with a space of twenty yards between it and the wagons, our tents being pitched in this space. For the next week, and indeed during most of the campaign, it poured with rain. There was mud everywhere, and our clothes were always wet.

The whole country round was dotted with ant-heaps, averaging a circumference of ten feet. These were always perfectly dry, as the outer surface is smooth, hard, and waterproof. The inside resembles a huge honey-comb; thousands of tiny passages intersect it in every direction; these passages are almost filled with minute pieces of dried grass. We made holes in the top in which we placed our pots and kettles, then broke a hole in the

crust at the foot, and lit a fire there. The whole ant-heap would soon become like a furnace, cooking our meals excellently. A good-sized ant-heap would serve as an excellent stove for a whole week. After these gave out we were in sore straits for fuel, the enemy doing their best to prevent us from getting any, and generally succeeding. We burnt grass roots and dried the droppings from the cattle; the latter made good fuel, and competition for it was keen.

A day or two after our arrival I rode over to the Mafeteng camp, and met a few fellows I knew. We had a great deal to tell each other. They had evidently had a rough time of it. When they formed camp they mustered a small force — three hundred with the artillery. The Port Elizabeth infantry were under Col. Carrington, and were near Dephiring; the rest at Maseru. The Mafeteng camp was surrounded at once. It was almost certain death to fetch water from the

spring close to it. Relief was so slow in coming that they had run short of provisions and were eating their horses, and Boer brandy was more plentiful than water.

If a horse happened to stray it was soon seized by the Basutos, who dashed out on their smart little ponies and seized it. These natives are, I may add, always mounted. They are the horse-dealing tribe of South Africa.

Two officers of the Yeomanry played a trick on the enemy. One night they went a short way out of the camp with a horse, and having hobbled him, hid in some bushes. Just after daylight the horse was noticed by the Basutos; three of them dashed down, dismounted, and were taking the hobbles off when they were shot by the officers, who hastily mounted two of the Basuto ponies and galloped back to camp, amidst the cheers of a crowd who witnessed it. Such were some of the stories with which I was entertained.

A few nights afterwards I was asleep in my tent when I was roused by several shots being fired by the sentries. I was half dressed, and seizing my sword and revolver rushed out. The men were rushing from their tents, and crowding to the outer wall, firing off their carbines at random in the darkness. At least the Dutch were. We did our best to check them, but as they were not used to discipline, and the greatest cowards imaginable, it was of little avail. The guard was questioned. He said he had seen several black forms creeping towards him, that he had stuck to his post and fired several shots at the enemy. There was no doubt of it. the man was in a state of abject fear without any real cause for alarm. I walked back disgusted to my tent, the Dutchmen having fired several hundred rounds out of sheer fright. The enemy must have been rather amused at our expense, for they have, I fancy, some sense of humour.

One miserable dark wet night they tied a lantern to the neck of an old lame horse and let him loose, about half a mile from the camp. The swaying about of the light gave the Dutch an idea that the enemy were advancing for a night attack ; accordingly, they kept up an incessant fire. But the old horse fed stolidly on, unheeding the bullets flying around him. The captain, Mynheer Van Wyk, was much excited, and showed great bravery on that occasion—actually had the daring to exhibit himself over the wall. When daylight came the old horse was seen quietly feeding, little realising the excitement and acts of bravery of which he had been the innocent cause. Some of the Dutchmen actually wrote home to their wives, telling them how they fought the enemy in the dead of the night and beat them off, and nothing could persuade them to the contrary. No doubt it was very amusing to the fellows in the other camp as well as to the enemy, but I was getting heartily sick

of the whole thing. These night alarms occurred several times; but at last one day the men had an opportunity of fighting in earnest. Orders came from Col. Carrington that 300 burghers were to be at his camp at daylight the next morning for a reconnoitring and wood-collecting expedition. The captain was on the sick list, so I was told off to take charge. I may state I now held a lieutenant's rank, and was about the only one who had seen any active service. Starting at half-past two A.M., we arrived in good time, and were immediately joined by a company of the Cape Mounted Rifles, some artillery with four 9-pounders, also an ambulance wagon, and three transport wagons, the latter for the loading of firewood. About an hour after we had set out (we were riding in sections along a ridge), some 2000 Basutos appeared on the top of another ridge close by they had evidently no intention of leaving us un-



molested. We halted, and waited till the whole body came well in sight. Our 9-pounders, concealed by a body of Cape Mounted Rifles, were got ready for action, under Captain Giles. Orders were then given to us to retire in the opposite direction, the guns remaining. The ruse acted admirably, as the enemy thought we considered their force too strong for us. We had scarcely begun to disappear when the remainder of the force followed us. The Basutos poured down the hill in a black mass. Our guns were halted, and at a distance of about 500 yards opened fire with good effect. The enemy retreating, we galloped back and pursued them. We could hear the shells whizz through the air over our heads like giant bumble-bees, and see them burst on the opposite hill. There was a general scatter of the Basutos whenever a shell exploded amongst them, and they would rush in another direction, only to be met by a fresh

shell. This demoralised them, and by dint of hard galloping we managed to cut off about fifty of them. At a distance of sixty yards we sprang off our horses and sent a volley amongst them that unhorsed several ; then suddenly, to my surprise, they wheeled quickly round and charged us, waving their assagais in the air, and yelling out something I could not catch. The reason for this change was soon apparent ; just behind us the entire body of the Basutos was bearing down on our small force. I saw that there was only one course open to charge and meet the smaller force, cut through them, and get back to the wagons. I wished in my soul that I had Englishmen under me instead of Dutchmen, as I knew they were not to be relied upon in a case of this kind. Plucking up heart, I shouted out the order ; but it was of no use, the men simply turned and fled to the left, down the valley. There was nothing left for me to do but go also,

cursing them soundly. I almost felt as if I could willingly have joined the Basutos and helped them to fight.

There was now a body of the enemy on either side of us, coming ahead like the wind ; their active ponies, used to the rough country and unhampered by harness or heavy riders, were cutting us off with ease. Suddenly I saw another body of horse coming towards us. My heart sank, and I felt that all was up if they turned out to be more of the enemy. I was determined to blow my brains out rather than be taken prisoner. Stories were common of the treatment received : how one man had all the tendons in his legs and arms cut and torn out ; another was stuck with assagais by the children until he died a lingering death, and so on. A moment later I thanked God that this new body of horse was the Cape Mounted Rifles coming to our assistance. It became simply a mighty race for life ; four troops of horsemen racing as

hard as ever they could go. A collision was inevitable, so, gripping our revolvers, we crashed into the thick of them. It was a tangle of men and horses. As far as I could see, the Dutchmen seemed neither to attack nor defend themselves, but simply dug their spurs in their horses' sides and endeavoured to get away. I emptied my revolver, then slashed about with my sword; assagais were flying thickly. Two lads, sons of a farmer I knew well, were both killed just in front of me. An assagai struck me on my side, but only made a flesh wound, as my sword belt saved me. One fellow rushed at me with his assagai raised, but I succeeded in cutting right through his hand and the shaft with a cut from the left shoulder.

We would, undoubtedly, have lost heavily but for the timely arrival of the Cape Mounted Rifles, who finally routed them. We lost six men and had eight wounded.

After that we found it utterly impossible

to get any wood from the sides of the hills, as the Basutos were all round us, and harassed us on every quarter. Fresh bodies, too, were arriving every moment to strengthen their force. We then returned to camp, and, as a matter of course, I was blamed because the men bolted.

A fortnight after that we had a similar outing, without, however, coming to such close quarters.

On this occasion the Dutchmen distinguished themselves by their shooting, and bowled over a good many at remarkably long ranges.

Affairs were getting desperate. After another interval we sallied forth again—this time with a much stronger force—to attack a stronghold. These strongholds were made on the sides of the most rocky hills, and were rendered almost impregnable by the erection of a series of short stone walls, or “sconces,” overlooking every point of vantage

behind which the enemy were sheltered. The Basutos were armed with the best rifles, and owned any amount of ponies and cattle. They are the most wealthy of all the native races in South Africa.

We went out eight hundred strong to take one of these places. I saw, with not a little satisfaction, that Sinclair was to join with some of his Yeomanry. After marching a few miles, the enemy came out to meet us as usual, and welcomed us with a few shots, which we answered with our 9-pounders. This little exchange of amenities was kept up for the next five miles, until we arrived, at eleven o'clock, close to the place we purposed attacking. The spot seemed quite deserted, but we knew well that behind those little stone walls amongst the rocks thousands of black fellows were safely ensconced with loaded rifles, besides fragments of rock ready to hurl down on our heads.

We had no sooner reached the outer wall

when the whole place swarmed with black figures, and a terrible fire opened on to us. However, over we went, scrambling over the rocky walls, stopping every now and then to fire a shot. Shells were flying overhead from the guns and mortars : the explosion of these, combined with our determined rush, had the effect of making the enemy bolt. We had actually taken this wonderful stronghold that was so much talked about ! It was however, of no use to us just then, so we destroyed a good deal of it, leaving about 200 of the Basutos dead. As the enemy were in great force that day, we expected some more fun. Shortly after this we saw about 100 natives on a low hill watching our movements. It was right in our line of march, and, on coming near them, the order was given to charge. We were in the centre, the Cape Mounted Rifles on our right wing, and the Yeomanry on our left. We had ridden a little more than half-way

up, when suddenly about 8000 Basutos poured over the top of the hill. Of course my men turned and bolted like rats, but the native ponies cut them off in a minute, notwithstanding the shelling. The wings closed in, and then we had our toughest bit of fighting. It was a hand-to-hand struggle for fifteen minutes. How I escaped being killed was a wonder. During all my feeling of intense excitement, the thought of Sinclair kept coming to me, and I was searching for him all the while—I did not know clearly why.

Meanwhile I received a blow from a battle-axe that nearly struck off my knee-cap, but did not inconvenience me until afterwards.

Someone dashed against me from behind and nearly unhorsed me. I felt intuitively that it was Col. Sinclair. I had one cartridge left in my revolver, and I raised the latter. I could not help it; I was not master of my actions; something impelled me to fire—urged



upon me that it was my duty. I pressed the trigger—the whole thing did not take a second. As I pressed it, a Basuto close behind hurled an assagai at me ; it struck me just below my forage cap, and was fast imbedded in my skull. Following up his throw, he rushed at me with a *knob-kerrie*, and dealt me a thundering blow on my head, which felled me to the ground. The fighting continued for a few minutes longer ; I was semi-unconscious. I felt one of the enemy seize hold of me, strip me of my sword-belt, and take the revolver, of which I still had a grip. I was lying on my face, the blood pouring from the wounds in my head, so that my face was in a puddle of it, yet I was unable to move ; indeed, had I done so, it would have been certain death, as the enemy kept passing, almost trampling me with their horses' hoofs.

Finally the natives were beaten off. It was getting late and misty, and a slight drizzling