

tell him those cattle must all be returned at once. His impi must retire beyond our agreed border ; otherwise he is to take his police and at once expel them, however many there are. The King will see the necessity of this, otherwise it is possible, the white men getting irritated, his expedition may never return to Buluwayo at all.'

Jameson saw that if the impi stayed it must come to war ; but he did not want a fight, and thought that Lendy could get rid of the impi without fighting. So much is clear from these messages.

But this time Lendy could not get rid of the impi. He interviewed indunas, he chased small parties, he ordered them to go, but he did not drive them out. On July 13 Jameson started for Victoria on horseback, and he telegraphed to Lendy, 'Keep the induna till my arrival. Tell him I will give a reply to the King's orders myself.'

On the 14th Captain Lendy went out with the patrol in search of the Matabele leader, and of the letter. After he had gone, about eleven o'clock in the day, the induna Manyow, with about twelve more, came to the outskirts of the town and gave Vigers the fateful letter. Asked why they had not delivered the letter sooner, but had left it till all the damage was done, they excused themselves: 'the boy with the letter had a thorn in his foot.'

All they wanted now was that the King's Mashonas should be given up to them, and they would go away and not trouble the settlers any more. And Manyow added, 'I will not kill them in the town, and dirty the place ; but I will take them into the bush lower down and then have them killed.'

'If you have any charge to make against these

people,' Lendy replied—for by this time he had returned—'I will hear it as a magistrate, and if I find your charges correct I will hand them over to you to be dealt with ; but you must point out to me the men you charge. I will not give up the women and children, as they have not committed any crimes.'

'All these Mashonas are the King's,' said Manyow, 'and he wishes to punish them. When you wanted Kafirs who had committed crimes, the King at once handed those men over to you. Why should not you do the same for the King?'

Manyow was told that the Mashonas would not be given up to him and he left in anger. Captain Lendy's decision was inspired by a previous message sent to his second-in-command by Jameson :—

'You can give up nothing. On Lendy's arrival the induna can lay his complaint against him as a magistrate.'

II

The distance from Salisbury to Victoria is 188 miles, and most of that way Jameson rode, with William Napier¹ for company.

But at Moroki, some way to the north of Victoria, he was met by Mr. Bouchier Wrey,² with a cart and eight mules. And Wrey tells us that Jameson was at that time suffering so much from his painful

¹ Napier, a Victoria merchant who had been in Salisbury on business. Afterwards senior Captain in Major Wilson's Victoria Column.

² Then consulting engineer of the Mashonaland Agency, now Sir Philip Bouchier Wrey (of an old Devonshire family and eleventh Baronet of his line).

malady of piles that he could not sit in the cart, but could only lean against the back of the seat in a half upright position. Wrey thought of Jameson's ride of 150 miles on horseback, and silently marvelled at his pluck.

As they drove through the Victoria District Jameson could see for himself the state of affairs. He saw Mashona kraals burning on both sides of the road, and Matabele, armed with shield and assegai, and laden with plunder, crossed the road in front of the mules.¹ Both Jameson and Napier describe a little incident which may be given in Napier's words:—

'We had outspanned our cart, and saw a rush of Mashonas to the kopjes. They had previously been talking to us. They shouted that the Matabeles were coming. The Mashonas saw the Matabeles coming $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles off, and took refuge in the rocks. They were in hopes that the Matabeles would not attack them, as they had left one of their prettiest girls on the rocks with a calabash of food.'

Fortunately the Matabele did not notice this black Andromeda sitting on her rock and passed on without attacking the kraal.

Jameson arrived at Victoria on July 17. By that time the whole white population of the district and many of the Mashonas as well were either in the fort or in laager beside it. The wagons of the farmers were drawn up in a hollow square under the south wall of the fort. This fort was not the fortified camp put up by the pioneers near the head of Providential Pass, but a new fort to guard the town of Victoria—a large square building with four square flanking towers, one at each corner, stables for the

¹ Jameson's evidence before Newton, C. 7555, p. 19.

horses of the police round the inside walls, and a gateway facing the north.¹ It was surrounded by barbed-wire entanglements, and two Maxims and a Gatling were mounted on the towers. All work was at a standstill. The white men of the settlement, to the number of about 400, had been armed, and most of them were organised in two forces, the Victoria Rangers, commanded by Lord Henry Paulet, afterwards Marquess of Winchester, and the Victoria Burghers, under Commandant Judd. There were besides seven police—all the regular garrison that Jameson's economies had left in Victoria. Of horses in camp there were only 82; and of these only 50 were fit for cavalry work.

Such was the state of the fort and town of Victoria when Dr. Jameson arrived. As to the feeling of its inhabitants, it may be gathered from the *Mashonaland Times*. Its notes for the week describe the 'Rev. Sylvester' (whose servant had been assegaied) preaching from an ammunition case on Sunday (the 16th) 'that the sons of Ham would all be cleared out,' and it reports a public meeting on Saturday, the 15th, in the Market Square 'called to ask Dr. Jameson (who had not yet arrived) what protection farmers, prospectors, traders, and others might expect from the Company.' The burden of the speeches was that Victoria could stand these incursions and massacres no longer and that 'Dr. Jameson must settle the Matabele question at once, now and for ever.'

On July 18 the indunas, Manyow and Umgandan and the rest, answered the Doctor's summons. It was about noon when they came, and before they arrived Jameson had telegraphed to the High Com-

¹ Of this fort only part of the walls remain; but one of the flanking towers has been preserved and is now used as a belfry.

missioner: 'The indunas have failed to appear; probably frightened. Kraal-burning still going on, which means more killing of women and children, so I am now sending out a mounted party to get rid of the impi. I feel sure they will retreat across the border and it will only be a local matter.' But he was wrong.

They came up towards the fort armed, with two or three hundred men; but only the indunas were allowed to approach, and then only after they had laid down their weapons. Jameson sat on a chair before the gate of the fort with a group of his officers behind him. Napier interpreted; Brabant, the native commissioner, who also knew Matabele well, stood by, and we have from these and several other witnesses, including the induna Manyow, a full account of what passed.

The Doctor by all accounts was very short with them, and by all accounts also Umgandan was truculent and threatening.

'What do you mean,' Jameson asked, 'by coming here and doing what you have done?'

'I was sent by the King,' Manyow replied, 'to punish the Mashonas for stealing the King's cattle.'

There was some little debate about the King's orders and about the border, in the course of which Jameson told Manyow that he lied. The young induna, Umgandan, broke in, but Jameson said he spoke not with boys but with men. He then asked Manyow if it were not true that he had no control over his young men.

'Yes,' said Manyow.

'Very well then,' said the Doctor, 'you go with the older men, and I will deal with the younger men who do not go.' And Jameson pointed at the guns and his men behind them on the wall.

There was afterwards some dispute about the length of time Jameson gave Manyow to get over the border. But, according to all the witnesses, Jameson gave Manyow 'an hour' or 'an hour and a half' or 'a short time,' *not* to cross the border, which was about thirty miles away, but to start.¹ The truth is that the Matabele have no time, but only the sun. The *indaba* took place at noon, and Napier pointed to where the sun would be an hour or two later.

When we remember that unmounted men could not reach those swift-footed warriors, and that Jameson had at the most only fifty men he could mount, then we begin to realise what chances Jameson was taking. He spoke to these indunas not as a man might be expected to speak who could send out fifty against three thousand, but as one who commanded the situation. According to Manyow, 'When Dr. Jameson had finished, he said, "Now go, or I will drive you across."'

Manyow got up and went; but Umgandan said, 'Very well, we will be driven across.'

They all felt the threat of Umgandan's attitude, and Brabant, for one, fully expected an attack on the Victoria laager that night, for he heard Umgandan saying, as he was walking away from the Doctor, 'We must collect all our men, and drive the white men out of this.'²

¹ 'That is absolutely false. Any such order, apart from the truth of the story, would have been ridiculous.'—Dr. Jameson's evidence. 'The impression I got was, they had an hour to make their preparations to clear. It could never have occurred to any one that they were meant to be over the border in an hour.'—Napier's evidence. Brabant's evidence is to the same effect.

² Jameson's own account of the end of the interview agrees with Manyow's: 'Umgandan, the induna of Euxna kraal, sitting next to Manyow, jumped up and said, "Then we will be driven."'

Such was the famous *indaba* of the Victoria Fort. It lasted about twenty minutes, and a painter might reconstruct it from the evidence—the Doctor on his chair before the fort, very stern; the indunas squatting opposite; Manyow deprecatory; the truculent Umgandan with his feathered head-dress, interrupting at every turn; the pioneers crowding the ramparts of the fort craning their necks to hear; a little way off some hundreds of the Matabele watching and waiting, and in the distance little pillars of smoke rising from the burning kraals.¹

Jameson made up his mind upon the instant. 'I then told Captain Lendy,' he said, 'to get fifty mounted men, or as many up to that number as horses were fit for, and to have them saddled up in about a couple of hours for patrol duty. I then went to lunch and the men also.'

After lunch, according to Sir Philip Wrey, they could still see a crowd of Matabele squatting with their shields and assegais on a granite slope or *idwala*, on the western side of the flats, or commonage as it is called in the evidence, and Jameson said, 'I am sorry for you fellows, but there is only one thing to do. Out you must go!'

Jameson's account is a little different:

'When Captain Lendy had paraded his men about two hours afterwards, I gave him orders as follows: "You have heard what I have told the Matabele; I want you to carry

¹ Sir Philip Wrey, who was present, told the writer that when the indunas appeared, the little troop was mounted and set going in an unbroken file out of the gate of the fort, round the wall, and in again. He took this to be a ruse to impress the Matabele. On the other hand, we know that just before the indunas arrived Jameson had ordered out the mounted party, so that Wrey may possibly have mistaken the purpose of what he saw.

this out. I do not want them to think it is merely a threat. They have had a week of threats already with very bad results. Ride out in the direction they have gone towards Magomoli's kraal. If you find they are not moving off, drive them as you heard me tell Manyow I would, and if they resist and attack you shoot them."'

Thirty-eight men rode away from the fort under Captain Lendy. They rode out in half-sections, along the road and across the rough flats to the west, sometimes at a walk with an occasional canter. The witnesses disagree about the distance. Brabant says they went three miles before they came in touch with the Matabele; another witness says seven; Sergeant Chalk says they rode along for about an hour. The rough hills where the action took place seemed to the writer, looking at them from Victoria, between four or five miles away. It appears that the impi was taken by surprise. They were scattered about killing and plundering. Manyow says he went towards Magomoli's kraal which the Matabele had been besieging, and found his young *majakas* driving away the Company's trained cattle 'at the point of their spears.' He remonstrated; but in vain. Many were at Magomoli's kraal, some had surrounded Makoombi's kraal, about five or six miles to the west of Victoria. 'My kraal,' says Makoombi in his evidence, 'is on a stone kopje, and the Matabele were besieging it on the day the white men went out. . . . The Matabele were at my kraal on that afternoon, saying, "Come out, we want to kill you." They ran away as soon as the white men fired the shots.'

Thus the Matabele were taken both red-handed and unprepared. At the western side of the lowlands among the rice-fields under the granite slopes

the patrol came upon parties of the invaders. Some were driving white men's cattle; others were making for Makoombi's kraal; others were crossing over from Mazibili's kraal (to the south of Victoria) burdened with loot. At the sound of the bugle—'Commence fire'—the police cantered into skirmishing order and advanced upon the kopjes, firing as they went. The party was armed with repeating rifles, and it is probable that almost every man was a crack shot. The Matabele began to drop. Umgandan, conspicuous in his white feather headdress, stood up, shook his assegai, and fell in his tracks. The extended line cantered, dismounted, shot, mounted, and cantered again. The Matabele had never before been so treated since their fathers fought the Boers in the Northern Transvaal. They put up no fight: they turned and fled. How many were killed it is impossible to say. Manyow said nine; Makoombi, who was watching the fight from his kopje, said three Matabele and the rest 'dogs' (i.e. *maholis* or slaves). No estimate puts the number shot at more than thirty. It was, in fact, a chase, and Lendy, fearing he might be drawn into an ambush, sounded the recall before it had gone very far. Tired and triumphant, driving Dunlop's recaptured red oxen before them, they returned to the Fort before sundown.

It was, if we fairly consider it—forty men sent out against three thousand—a notable action. And on the point of courage, it might serve as a puzzle to choose between the men who did such a thing, and the man who told them to do it.

Dr. Hans Sauer happened to be in Victoria at the time, and when the fight was over, Jameson turned to him and said, 'There are some Dutchmen in the

town. Go and ask them how many men they think it would take to fight the Matabele nation.'

Sauer went, and they all said, 'One thousand men.'

Then Sauer returned to Jameson and told him what the Dutchmen had said.

'I'll do it,' said Jameson.

Jameson then went to the telegraph office, and telegraphed to Rhodes that he proposed to fight the Matabele. Rhodes replied, 'Read Luke xiv. 31.' Whereupon Jameson looked up his Bible and found this text:—

'Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand.'

Jameson replied that he had read Saint Luke, and that it was all right.¹

The people of Victoria had pointed out to Jameson—what Jameson saw as clearly as they—that they must either fight or shut up shop. For their Makalaka servants had fled to their caves and fastnesses in the hills, and their Shangan labourers from the East Coast were either leaving or threatening to leave. Moreover, the settlers feared that when the next rains came, and they were cut off from succour by the flooded rivers, the Matabele would return and massacre them all.

Rhodes pleaded that the coffers of the Company were empty. He had already spent all his own ready money in setting up the telegraph line. In

¹ Michell says that this exchange took place *before* the action, but this seems improbable, the more as Wrey tells the present writer that *after* the action Jameson spent the whole evening at the telegraph office arguing out the point with the High Commissioner and Rhodes.

short, he had no money for this new adventure, and did not know where to get it.

But to all this Jameson replied, 'You have got to get the money,' and he kept on repeating, 'You have got to get the money. By this time to-morrow night you have got to tell me that you have got the money.'¹

III

On the morning of July 19, Jameson rang up Major Forbes, the Magistrate of Salisbury, and Mr. Duncan, Chief Official of the Company after himself, whom he had left in charge at that place.

Jameson telegraphed, as Forbes reports the message, that if they were to remain in Mashonaland, they must settle the Matabele question once and for all. 'He had thought it all out,' Forbes goes on, 'and his plan was that 250 men should advance from Salisbury, Victoria, Tuli, respectively, the former under myself, those from Victoria under Captain Lendy . . . and those from Tuli under Captain Raaff, Resident Magistrate of Tuli, while I was to assume command of all the Company's forces when joined.'

'The Doctor further said,' says Forbes, 'that his idea was that the whole force should be mounted, should start simultaneously from the three places, and march on Buluwayo. We were to take no wagons, but to take three or four days' food on the horses, after which we would live on native produce; 100 rounds ammunition per man, and, he added, he counted on our reaching Buluwayo, having done all that was required, before Christmas.'

'He then asked,' Forbes continues, 'if I was wil-

¹ Wrey's narrative to the author.

ling to go. I, of course, agreed at once, and the expedition was then and there determined on. The Doctor told me to let him know that evening what I should require in the way of horses, arms, equipment, clothing, etc., to complete the Salisbury column, and then went off to consult with Mr. Rhodes who was at Cape Town.¹ Rhodes found the money by selling 50,000 of his own shares in the Chartered Company, and in the evening Major Forbes reported from Salisbury that he had everything necessary for 250 mounted men except 250 horses.

Then Jameson directed Commander Raaff, Ziederberg, the contractor, and Argent Kirton to buy 1000 horses, where they were to be got—which was chiefly in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. But horses were hard to get. And doubts began to assail Major Forbes and his friends when they further considered Jameson's plan. They feared, in particular, that without wagons they could not carry sufficient ammunition, or provender which they feared the horses might not find upon the veld at that time of the year. Therefore, they pressed upon Jameson that they should take wagons, and to this Jameson agreed. Then they also put in for artillery, for swords for the mounted men, for bayonets for the unmounted men, for native contingents, and for other things, all of which meant time and expense.

¹ Major Patrick William Forbes was born at Whitechurch, Oxon, on August 31, 1861, and was educated at Rugby and Sandhurst. After joining the Inniskilling Dragoons he went out to South Africa in 1880. He was seconded for the British South Africa Company's service in November 1889, and was second in command of the British South Africa Company's Police when they entered Mashonaland. His account of the Matabele War forms the main part of the book called *The Downfall of Lobengula*.

As for the Army, almost every white man in Mashonaland volunteered upon terms, not of money, for the Company had none left, but of loot, the terms being—a farm of 3000 morgen (6000 acres) free of occupation; twenty gold claims; and a share of all cattle taken. The Volunteers were also guaranteed their existing mining claims in Mashonaland for six months after the war was finished.

After what had happened, Jameson, who knew the politics of Matabeleland, could hardly have expected peace. It is certain that he did not want the sort of peace he could have had. On July 22 he telegraphed to the Cape Town office of the Company: 'Three years of negotiations had only induced them (the Matabele) to encroach more. Work is absolutely stopped; many wagons have off-loaded machinery at Matipis and gone back to Middle Drift; people and Government have lost large numbers of cattle, and I am sure work will not be recommenced, or even transport carried along the roads till some definite action on our part is taken.'

Nevertheless, Jameson did make one attempt—possibly for form's sake—at a negotiated peace. On July 19 he sent out a patrol which reported that the Matabele had recrossed the Border. Jameson thereupon telegraphed to Palapye a message for Lobengula informing him of what had happened and demanding compensation for the damage done. This message reached Lobengula before his impi returned, and he replied in a humble and conciliatory fashion. But when his soldiers arrived they told the King lies to excuse their own defeat: that they had first been asked to disarm for the indaba, and then when disarmed had been attacked and shot down. And they told him also—what was the

truth—that Jameson had refused to deliver up the Mashonas who had gone into Victoria for refuge. Now Lobengula never was able to understand the feeling of the white men about the Mashonas. To a Matabele these other tribes were ‘dogs,’ ‘slaves,’ ‘cattle,’ without any title to live. It is not altogether a surprising point of view when we consider that for millions of years in the history of man the limit of the tribe circumscribed the humanity and the morality of its members. When Jameson refused to give them up, Lobengula thought himself robbed: ‘Are the Amaholi then yours, including their cattle?’¹

Dr. Jameson thereupon made an end of all parley with the King and prepared for action. But Sir Henry Loch still busied himself to make peace. He was somewhat damped, however, by Lobengula’s replies. As for example:—

‘I shall return no cattle or compensate anybody for either cattle captured by my impi or damage done to property until such time that Rhodes first returns to me all the captives, their wives and children, cattle, goats, and sheep which were given protection to by the Victoria people, and had I known at the time when I despatched my impi . . . what I know now, I would have ordered them to capture and loot all they could lay their hands on belonging to the whites to compensate myself for the people and their property which were withheld from me.’

The High Commissioner continued to negotiate, but the die was cast. Colenbrander asked for horses. ‘The King,’ he wrote, ‘told Dawson that it would be as well for him and others to be away, as the hearts of his people were sore. . . . When the King

¹ C. 7171, p. 67.

fears his own people, it is time for us to clear out, if not already too late.' The King did not want war, but he could not keep peace. Jameson knew there was no longer any sense in talk; but Loch, with a pacific Government and a critical parliament at the other end of the wire, continued to hope and delay.

These dallings were vexatious to a man certain of himself and of his plans, and Jameson feared above all things that the rains might come with flood and fever to disconcert his combinations.

On August 10, 1893, he writes to his brother Midge (who had left Egypt for Capri), offering him money 'as I suppose you must be getting hard up':—

'With this slump and our Matabele troubles of course I have lost a good deal—having just put all spare cash I could into this country; but still I can always manage a little to help you along. I am having a pretty lively time of it, as you may imagine, at present. Loben. on his hind legs in Matabeleland; the High Commissioner very nice, but won't let one do anything. . . . Of course, the military swells are preaching to me disaster from my plans, but one must cut one's coat according to the cloth—we can't lose this year or our show is burst for some time to come, so I am buying horses hand over fist—drafting them up as rapidly as possible, and must do the rest with the people and equipment we have here. Naturally I must go with the crowd myself, and it will be no pic-nic. Still there will be some excitement, and it will be a fine *coup* if we succeed, which we will. Then I really think you will see our show go ahead. I am writing all this as it may interest you, and you are so far away that we will be well into it before you get it. Otherwise, under the delicate circumstances, the main difficulty is to satisfy everybody without telling them anything, or at all events any details. I am constantly on the travel at present and not much time, so let the people at home know we are all right, etc.'

By Tuesday, September 5, the Salisbury column, not yet horsed, set out on the march for Fort Charter, a more central starting point, and arrived there upon the following Saturday, but found that most of the horses had not yet arrived. Dr. Jameson had planned to start by the middle of the month, and went down to Tuli to find that Raaff was still away buying horses. Upon September 23 Raaff returned ; but short of the horses required. Duncan at Salisbury and Finch at Victoria thereupon commandeered all the horses that were left in the country, some sixty altogether, and although they were still short, Jameson resolved to start.

From Tuli he drove to Charter in a post-cart, Sir John Willoughby being with him, and they arrived at Charter on September 30. There he inspected the Salisbury column, settled details with Forbes, spoke to the men, and left the same evening for Victoria.

The High Commissioner, although he still hesitated, had by this time arranged that if there was to be war his Bechuanaland Border Police should help, and they had been moved forward to Macloutsi under Colonel Goold-Adams. And he also insisted that Captain Raaff and his column, which had been mainly recruited from Johannesburg, should be under Colonel Goold-Adams's command. From these and other indications Rhodes and Jameson believed that the High Commissioner wanted, if the war took place, to claim the results as part of the Crown Colony of British Bechuanaland.

On October 2, Captain Forbes, as arranged with the Doctor, took his column forward two days' march through heavy sand to the west, closer to the Border, so that no time might be lost when the word was given. On the same day he telegraphed (from

Victoria) to the High Commissioner (at Cape Town) that the Matabele had again crossed the frontier and raided a Mashona village, and that one of his patrols, following up the spoor, had been fired upon by the Matabele; the natives reported large bodies of Matabele all along the Border. On October 4, Captain Forbes rode back to Fort Charter to await instructions.

And upon that day Jameson found time to write a long letter to his brother Sam :—

'October 4, 1893.

'DEAR SAM,—I daresay you think I have treated you badly in the way of letters; but really I have had the most lively two months with no time for anything, and at the same time during the game of chess between the people here and the Imperial authorities the fewer communications even of a private kind the better. Now I am fairly square and will start on the 7th from here—sending off the Salisbury column on the 8th, and the Tuli crowd the same day that I go. The show is bigger than I intended and therefore more expensive, which is annoying. However, it will make it all the more certain. The usual thing, all heroic when only talking to be done, then demands for everything under the sun to ensure safety, so that I have had to chop and change from day to day till the present crowd arrived at of about 1000 men—wagons, transport, commissariat, etc., etc., and all the time brickmaking without straw, and Harris will have a gay old time of it meeting the cheques. In fact, it is a regular Army—my first and I swear it shall be my last—I always did hate the military gentlemen. Willoughby has behaved like a brick; but of course his R.H. Guards ideas are scandalised, and as I could not put him in command—it would have broken up the show—it has been no easy business to get him to satisfy his own conscience to the "Army" and come with me as military adviser. In a force composed of

military and civil the bickerings you can easily understand—the civil as a rule worth a damned sight more than the professional; but the latter's prescriptive right to be top-sawyer. Then the whole crowd going without pay naturally try the blackmail trick on me at every turn.

'However, I have now got them all signed on under military law, and can do what I like with them—the last, last night. Still an interchange of telegrams with the High Commissioner and then off. I expect to finish the business and get back to Salisbury by end of November the latest—leaving Forbes in charge at Buluwayo. With love to Blanche and chicks, and trusting you to write to the home people as I have not time.—Yrs., L. S. JAMESON.

'P.S.—Tell Tom and Liz I got their letters and liked the former's preaching, and quite agree with him on the peace question—I have really been forced into this by the incompetency of my own officials before I could get down here, and there was no way out of it then but shooting, and after all, though expensive and troublesome, in the meantime, it will be a quicker way of making the country go ahead than my peaceful policy of gradual absorption of the Matabele amongst our black labourers. I still think the latter would have been better and could have been carried out. Midge writes me from St. Ives full of good intentions, but I am afraid he is destined to dither through life. Give my love to Kate, and tell her I would have written if I had had time, but will do so on my return.—L. S. J.

'Tell Hillier I would have written him but have no time.'

The High Commissioner might still have hesitated, but upon October 5 a patrol of his own Bechuanaland Border Police were fired at on the Shashi River by about thirty Matabele.

This decided him, and on the same day he sent a long telegram to Jameson of which this was the vital sentence:—

'Whatever your plans are with regard to the

advance of the columns from Fort Charter and Fort Victoria, they had better now be carried out.' Then he added: 'Should the impis withdraw peaceably and of their own accord to a safe distance, they must be allowed to do so without interruption; but if they should resist, then I have informed you, you should take such measures as may be necessary under the circumstances for the protection of life and property.' With this there were some adjurations on the requirements of humanity, and the necessity of discipline and good wishes for the success of the British South Africa Company's troops.

On October 6, Jameson replied that he was 'now acting upon Your Excellency's instructions to carry out my plans.' The Charter and Victoria columns were moving forward and the whole force was 'under strict military discipline.' And on the same day he telegraphed to Colonel Goold-Adams that he had placed Captain Raaff under his orders.

Two days afterwards Jameson and Willoughby rode out after the Victoria column, free at last of all things but the one big thing he meant to do.

In the meantime Lobengula sent a mission to the south to treat for peace. It consisted of Ingubogubo (Lobengula's half-brother) and the two indunas, Mantuse and Ingubo, with 'Jimmy' Dawson as interpreter. It met Colonel Goold-Adams's column at Tati, and thereupon Dawson went to see Selous, who was acting as guide to the column. While Dawson was eating and drinking with Selous, for he was faint after his journey, word was sent to Goold-Adams that the indunas were seeking to escape. Not knowing who they were, but thinking they were only natives who had followed Dawson out of Buluwayo, Goold-Adams ordered them to be put

under arrest, for he was anxious that no rumour of his movements should get to Buluwayo.

The indunas were thereupon put under arrest, being told at the same time that no hurt would be done them. Nevertheless Mantuse snatched a bayonet from one of the troopers, stabbed two of his guards, and tried to escape. Ingubo joined in and both indunas were killed in the struggle. Ingu-bogubo, who offered no resistance, was arrested, so that of the mission only one remained.

The thing had a horrible appearance; and the High Commissioner at once sent his Military Secretary to inquire into the affair. And this officer found that the death of these two indunas was due to a series of extraordinary mischances, for which neither the officers nor the men of the Police were to blame.¹

Upon September 18, a few days after Parliament rose, Cecil Rhodes went aboard the *German* then going coastwise to Beira. Michell, his biographer, says that 'from Beira he went to Salisbury where he joined the little column then starting for the Front.' But this is an error. Rhodes did not join the column.

Dr. Jameson sent Hans Sauer to meet Rhodes on the Pungwe, and Dr. Sauer returned with Rhodes along the road to Salisbury. Dr. Sauer was very much puzzled by Rhodes's behaviour, for whereas there was urgent business on hand Rhodes dawdled upon the way, and the nearer he got to Salisbury the more he dawdled. When at last Dr. Sauer told Rhodes that the wagon, with a little pressing, could get into Salisbury that night, Rhodes replied that it was a very nice piece of veld for a camp.

¹ For full account of this unhappy business see the White Paper C. 7284 (1894).

So they outspanned, but presently Dr. Sauer perceived a messenger coming along post-haste on the road from Salisbury. The messenger delivered his message and Rhodes's face changed. 'Jameson has started,' he said, 'let's get into Salisbury.'

An explanation of this remarkable conduct may perhaps be gathered from a story in Michell's *Life of Rhodes* :—

'While between Beira and Salisbury he was of course out of touch with the High Commissioner, who became very impatient to speak with him over the wire. Hourly enquiries were made by Cape Town of Salisbury as to whether Rhodes had arrived, until at length the operator, with a picturesque touch all his own, wired—"I see Mr. Rhodes approaching over the brow of the hill."'

Mr. Rhodes, in fact, did not come over the brow of the hill until the British Government could no longer change its mind.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MATABELE WAR

'And in regions far
Such heroes bring ye forth
As those from whom we came ;
And plant our name
Under that star
Not known unto our north.'

DRAYTON.

I

DR. JAMESON and his officers made their plans with such care as men take who risk all upon one venture. There were in all four columns—Goold-Adams with his Police and Raaff's and Khama's men on the south, and Major Forbes and Major Allan Wilson with the Salisbury and Victoria Forces at two points on the east. Lobengula was at the centre, and had the advantage of what soldiers call the interior position. Possibly if he had acted with energy and resolution he might have overwhelmed one of the three before the other two were able to come to its assistance. As it was, he sent Gambo with three or four thousand men to stop Goold-Adams on the south, while the rest of the Army did not oppose the invasion from the east until after the Salisbury and Victoria columns had come together.

Fort Charter lies a little to the north of east of Buluwayo, at a distance, by the road the column took, of 220 miles. Victoria is 123 miles to the south-west of Fort Charter, and the two columns,

marching upon converging lines, met at a point called Iron Mine Hill, some 86 miles from Fort Charter and about the same distance from Victoria.

From that point on they marched over a high, wide, and generally open country, together yet not united—the two columns maintaining their separate organisations. The Salisbury column mustered 258 white men with 242 horses, 118 natives, 18 ox-wagons and 276 oxen, 1 Nordenfelt, 1 Gardner gun, 1 7-pounder, and 2 Maxims on galloping carriages. The Victoria column was stronger in men but weaker in horses; of white men it had 414, of horses only 172. It had 3 galloping Maxims, 1 7-pounder screw gun, and 1 1-pounder Hotchkiss, 18 ox-wagons, 40 native drivers and voor-loopers, and a native contingent of 400 friendly Mashonas.

As it was when the Pioneers marched into Mashonaland, so it was now—the wagons were travelling fortresses. And this use of the wagons was reduced to such a perfection that the Salisbury column could form laager in two or three minutes, and in ten or fifteen minutes could so fortify itself with thorn bush that it was impregnable to anything but artillery.

The Salisbury column marched in two parallel lines of wagons some twenty-five yards apart. When the column laagered, two wagons in front and the two behind were pulled round across the two ends, and the six wagons on either side were left diagonally in their two lines, so that the on-corner of the one behind touched the off-corner of the one in front. Every driver carried with him two three-foot steel posts, and when he had driven his wagon into its place he unhooked the whole span of oxen and pinned down both ends of the trek-tow and then tied the oxen up to it, so that they stood or lay alongside

the outer wheels with their long horns like a fence outside a wall, the horses being picketed within. When four guns were mounted at the four corners and the fifth on the front, and the two ends further strengthened with thorns, then the laager was complete.¹

And so it will be seen that with vedettes on either side and scouts and advance guard ahead, these columns were proof against surprise. At a word of warning they curled themselves up like a porcupine and presented to the enemy nothing but the points of their guns.

Thus the two columns went along and for a while met with little opposition. Jameson and Willoughby nearly always rode together, sometimes by themselves and sometimes with scouting patrols well in advance of the columns or out upon the flanks.

'He would not realise,' Major Forbes says of Jameson, 'how important it was that he should keep as much as possible out of danger, but whenever there was any outside work to be done, he insisted upon going.'²

Jameson was in this difficult position: he was civilian head of the expedition—'representative and attorney of Mr. Rhodes'—yet not in military command. 'Willoughby,' says Forbes, 'was accompanying Dr. Jameson as his friend pure and simple, so I understood, but in reality as his military adviser. This I did not know until after the whole business was over, and I can safely say that he never advised me in any way.'

These Rhodesian pioneers were, it should be re-

¹ The Victoria column formed laager similarly, only that the wagons were placed in the figure of a diamond.

² *Downfall of Lobengula*, p. 102.

membered, very often cadets of good families, young men who had been officers in the Army or in the Navy, or held commissions in the Police, or the Pioneers, or the Volunteer corps. There had been such a galaxy of officers in Salisbury as to put the democratic de Waal quite out of temper.

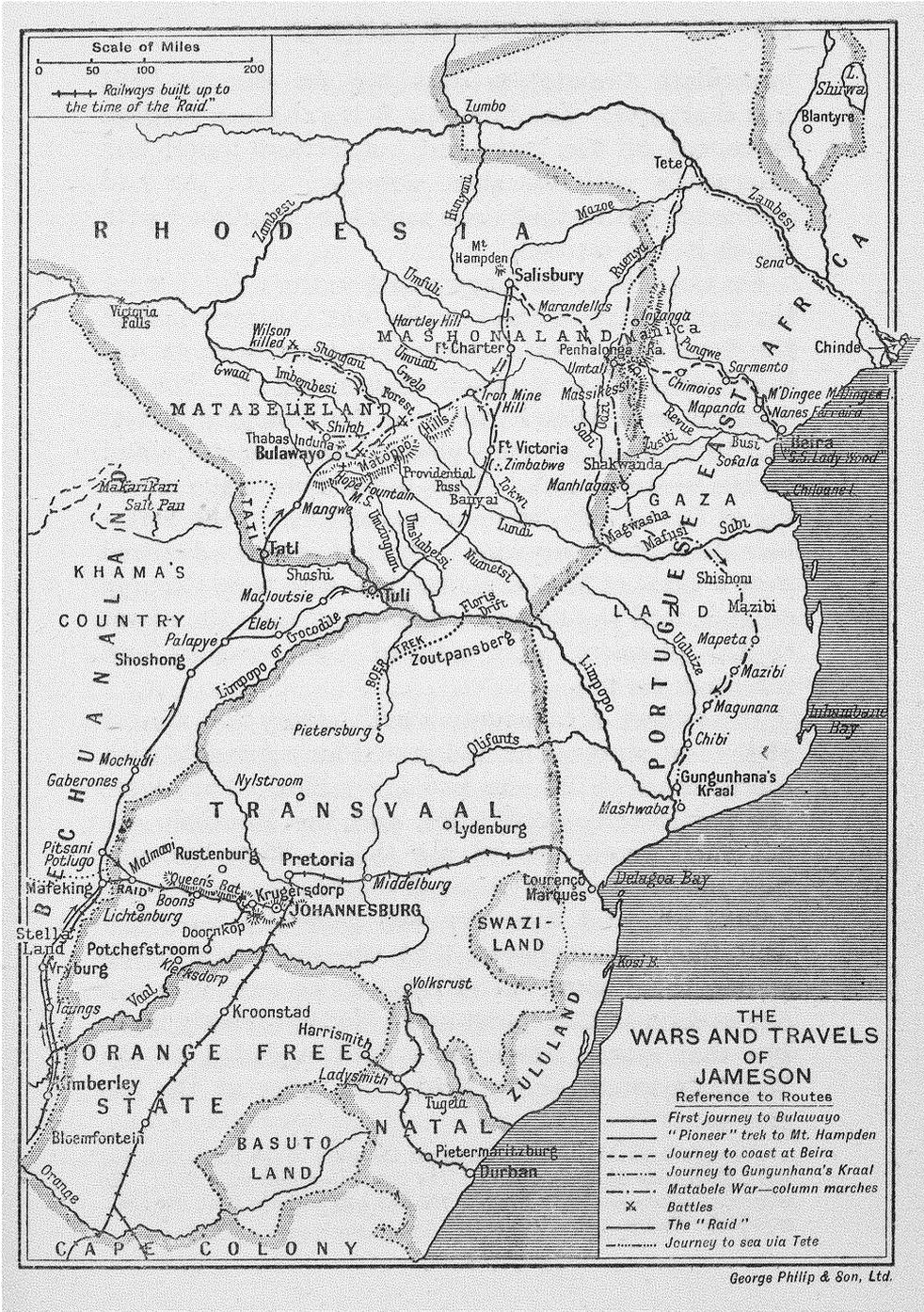
‘Every Johnny to whom I was introduced,’ he says, ‘was a major, a commander, a captain, a colonel, a lieutenant, or a sergeant, but common soldiers I saw none.’¹

When the column was formed, Forbes was puzzled to find places for them all: he had more officers than troopers, and after every post was filled, ‘there were several gentlemen in Salisbury who did not wish to join troops but were willing to go into Matabeleland and to make themselves generally useful, so I formed them into a scouting section for special duty.’

Two of these gentlemen—a dispute arising—insisted upon wakening Jameson in the middle of the night to decide upon the question of their status. Jameson heard the point put, then murmured sleepily, ‘You can all have the rank of captains but must take the pay of troopers,’ and went off to sleep again.

Jameson had trouble enough to reconcile these differences and keep the column in sweet temper, and he saw also to the health of the expedition. As for example, on October 15 Captain Campbell of Major Forbes’s staff was shot by a native from behind a rock. When he was brought in, Dr. Jameson, Dr. Edgelow, and Dr. Stewart examined him together and decided that his only chance was

¹ *With Rhodes in Mashonaland*, p. 230.



immediate amputation of a leg, for the hip-joint was shattered. Dr. Jameson, being the best surgeon there, cut off the limb, and his servant found him afterwards with his shirt wringing wet: he had washed it out so that none might see the blood with which it was stained.¹

On October 22, in foggy weather, the column went through a strip of thick bush—the southern end of the Somabula forest. Near here poor Burnett was killed, shot in the stomach while scouting. But the columns were allowed to cross the Shangani River, and to form laager on a piece of fairly open ground on the western bank. Then about four in the morning of October 25, while it was still dark, the Matabele attempted a surprise. By chance they advanced over a kraal of Mashona friendlies who were sleeping outside, and the firing at that point gave the alarm to the pioneers, who manned their wagons and returned the fire.

It was part of Lobengula's evil destiny that almost at the last moment he had armed his regiments with the rifles which Rhodes had given him. They were not particularly good rifles, and the Matabele did not then know how to use them. They thought that the higher they raised the sights the harder the bullets hit, and their fire was generally too high. And they also believed that the shells which fell among them were full of little white men who ran out as soon as they burst and killed everybody near. For that reason whenever a shell exploded all the Matabele round about fired their rifles at the explosion.

¹ Captain John Alexander Livingstone Campbell of the Royal Artillery and a Magistrate in Mashonaland. The poor fellow died next day. 'He was extraordinarily plucky over it, but had had no hope from the first,' says Major Forbes.

The Matabele might have done better if they had trusted to the old Zulu tactics of a surprise rush with shield and assegai. As it was, they stopped and fired, and their fire did little harm.

When dawn began to break, the white men saw from their wagons a strong force collecting on the top of a small rise some 350 yards to the south-east of the laager.

'They advanced down the slope,' says Major Forbes, 'in a most casual way, without hurrying or attempting to take cover, and I allowed no firing at them. When they got to the bottom of the slope, they suddenly sat down and commenced to fire at us.'

It was part of the Insukameni Regiment experimenting with a new form of warfare and a new weapon in the face of the enemy. And they suffered for it: the greater part of those who came on were shot down by the rifles and Maxims of the column.¹

In several places the enemy got to within 150 yards, and a few to within 80 yards of the laager; but they could get no farther for the fire of the seven machine guns and the rifles, and the greater part of the enemy never got beyond the edge of the surrounding bush. The heavy firing lasted for twenty minutes and then died away. At 4.45 Captain Heany and Captain Spreckley went out with their mounted troops to clear the bush, but were driven back, and at 5.30 the enemy made a second attack; but there was now clear daylight, and under the

¹ Four of the King's regiments—the Insukameni, the Ihlati, the Amaveni, and the Siseba, and four military kraals, the Jingen, the Euxna, the Zinyangene, and the Induba, joined in the attack—in all between 5000 and 6000 men. They had been ordered to rush the columns while they were on the march through the Somabula forest, but lost their opportunity. A full account of this battle was given by Willoughby in his letter to the High Commissioner, C. 7290, p. 44 *et seq.*

certain fire of rifles and Maxims this attack failed miserably.

When the survivors of the Insukameni appeared before their King and confessed to their defeat, the Umbezu and the Ingubu, his two best regiments, laughed at them, 'saying that it was ridiculous that they, the crack regiments, should have to be sent to beat us. And they told the King that they would not have to fight, but would walk into the laagers, leading us out on the other side, killing the elder men and keeping the rest for slaves.'¹

Such were the boasts of the two regiments which were to lead the attack in the decisive battle of the campaign, the battle of Imbembesi. After the Shangani fight of October 25, the column continued its march along the watershed on high, dry, and stony ground, where neither cattle nor horses could find any grass. To the north lay the interminable bush, but on the front and to the south were the wide, open plains of Matabeleland, now dry and brown but after summer rains the grazing ground of innumerable cattle. And the southern horizon, as far as the eye could see from east to west, rested upon the rugged outline of the Matoppos, granite ramparts of the plateau. Only from an occasional shot at picket or patrol did the column know that the enemy still hung round their line of march. On the 26th Captain Williams's scouting party was nearly cut off; but all galloped through save only Captain Williams, whose horse, a strong-mouthed brute, ran away with him and carried him to his death among the enemy.² On the 27th the right flanking party

¹ Major Forbes's account in *The Downfall of Lobengula*.

² Captain Gwyndd Williams, eldest son of General Owen Williams, who had been a captain in the Royal Horse Guards, and had come to Mashonaland two years before with Lord Randolph Churchill.

was engaged all along the line ; but the enemy were beaten off, and then for several days the column pursued its way without seeing or hearing of the Matabele.

By October 30 the horses and cattle were almost bested by the desert and barren wilderness, and the two columns laagered for a day on the headwaters of the Manyami River, one of the tributaries of the Umsingwani. Upon the 31st mounted troops ahead of the laager found some 3000 of the enemy in a line of kopjes which guarded the great military kraal of Insingwen ; but the enemy abandoned the position and the kraal without a fight, and fell back upon the broken bushy country of the Imbembesi Valley. Here the enemy had ground the most favourable for its purpose, a surprise rush upon the columns when caught in difficulties of the march. But the scouts warned Forbes of his danger in good time, and turning to the south, he went round the head of the valley, keeping upon high and fairly open ground all the time.

Thus on November 1 at half-past eleven in the morning he came to a halt within sight of Thabas Induna on a piece of open ground where he thought he might safely rest. It was on a steep rise within 500 yards of the bush, and the columns formed laager upon either side of a small native kraal which promised good night shelter for part of their cattle.

The position, although at first sight attractive, had elements of danger, for upon the north, within 150 yards of the right face of the Salisbury laager, there was a sudden drop in the ground, and on the crest three partly-demolished huts which might give an enemy cover in an approach from the bush beyond. And in time as well as place the Matabele

had a perilous advantage, for the natives of the Salisbury column were still gathering thorns to bush the laager, and the horses and cattle of the column were watering at the stream a mile away.

The attack began about 12.50. First a dense mass of the enemy were seen, apparently retreating towards Thabas Induna. On being shelled they wheeled round and advanced upon the column. At the same time a picket reported that the Matabele were advancing through the bush on the north-western side, and soon the whole bush to the west and north was seen to be full of Matabele skirmishers running up to its fringe on the northern front of the laager.

The men of the column who were on the open ground picked up their saddles, rifles, bandoliers, and ran for their places on the wagons. The horses and cattle watering at the stream were turned for home and driven up at a run. By good fortune the stream lay on the side of the laager away from the attack. But as the natives ran out on the south side to bring them in, the horses of the Salisbury column took fright and stampeded to the west, carrying the horses of the Victoria column with them. The whole crowd thundered across a dry spruit west of the camp and headed straight for the enemy.

For a time it looked as if nothing could save them ; but Captain Borrow, Sir John Willoughby, and Trooper Neale jumped on three of the few remaining horses and galloped after them. Others followed and the horses were turned under a hot fire within a hundred yards of the enemy.

In the meantime, the Matabele were pushing out of the bush along the dead ground, and a few got as

far as the three huts on the crest. From there and from the edge of the bush they kept up a heavy fire upon the camp. But although they were continuously reinforced by line-upon-line skirmishers, coming up in open order at a run, they could get no farther against the terrible fire of the Maxims and the Gardner gun and the rifles of the laager, and although the Matabele fire was heavy, it was high, and most of the bullets, if they hit at all, lodged harmlessly in the head shelter formed of mealie bags and kits on the buck-rails of the wagons.

As the Salisbury laager lay on the north side of the camp, it bore the brunt of the attack, but Major Wilson, seeing that his side of the camp was not threatened, moved out three of his Maxims, the Hotchkiss, and part of his men into the open on either side of the camp and reinforced the fire of the Salisbury front.

By half-past one, under this well-directed fire, the enemy began to waver; they gradually drew back into the bush, and by two o'clock their fire ceased altogether, and the dismounted men of the Victoria column, pursuing, turned the retreat into a rout.

The Umbezu and Ingubu regiments—together 1700 fighting men—who had boasted before their King, led the attack and suffered most in the fight.

'It would appear,' says Sir John Willoughby, 'that the Umbezu and Ingubu were practically annihilated. I cannot speak too highly of the pluck of these two regiments. I believe that no civilised troops could have withstood the terrific fire they did for at most half as long. It was fortunate that only

a few perceived the cover afforded by the nature of the ground to our right front.' ¹

The Matabele in all are said to have lost between 800 and 1000 men in this battle, and their losses fell almost altogether upon these two regiments. The Iseyeba, on the right of the Ingubu, never left the cover of the bush; the Ishlati, although they came into the open, were far to the enemy's right, and the Insukameni, who had suffered most in the Shangani fight, were on his extreme right and fully a mile away.

Of the white men only 1 was killed, but 3 afterwards died of their wounds, and 5 white men and 1 coloured boy were slightly wounded.

In such fashion the fate of the Matabele War was decided. After this brave but ill-planned attack the Matabele never fought another pitched battle, and could muster up resolution for nothing more than surprises and ambushes on pickets and patrols.

II

On November 4 the columns reached Buluwayo. Before they entered they heard the noise of an explosion, and they found the town deserted and on fire. Two white men came to meet them, Fairbairn and Usher. They reported that Lobengula had left before the battle of Imbembesi, but before he left, he had called Sekulu, the great Chief of Buluwayo, and charged him, upon his life, with the safety of

¹ This account of the battle is taken in the main from Sir John Willoughby's report (B.S.A. Company's archives). See also Major Forbes's account. 'Fancy,' said one of these black Guardsmen, as he was brought dying into the laager, and looked round with glazing eyes at the young Englishmen, 'the Umbezu being beaten by a lot of boys!'

the two white men. These three remained beside the deserted town; but when the column had reached the hill of Thabas Induna, only twelve miles away, Sekulu placed gunpowder in the King's house and blew it up. Then he said to the white men, who were at Fairbairn's store:—

‘I have obeyed the orders of the King, but now I must go lest your people slay me, for they are close at hand. And if any ill befall you, it will be from your own people and not from mine.’

Thus Jameson found Buluwayo—the royal military kraal burnt to the ground, a blackened hole where the King's house had been. But beside the rocky drift over the stream, only half a mile to the south of these ruins, Dawson's store was still standing with its dwellings and outhouses, surrounded by its seven-foot stockade of Mopani trunks, and Colenbrander's store, a quarter of a mile to the south-east, was also standing.

Dr. Jameson now sent Burnham and Ingram south with the news, and Burnham rode 210 miles to Palapye, where the telegraph was, in four days, and sent the news to Rhodes.

Colonel Goold-Adams was still 60 miles to the south of Buluwayo when Jameson entered the town. He had defeated Gambo on November 2, but Khama's men had deserted him, and he was impeded by the scarcity of water, so that he did not reach Buluwayo until November 15.

In the meantime, Jameson, thinking there could be no peace save with the King, sent Lobengula a letter desiring him to come. As he had no answer to this letter for some days, he arranged with Forbes to send 200 horsemen after the King; ‘but,’ says Forbes, ‘after arrangements were made he found

there was such a strong feeling against it on account of the danger, that he countermanded it.'

On November 9 a letter came in from Lobengula, written by one John Jacobs, his clerk, who said that the King had received the Doctor's letter and 'so I will come.'

But he did not come, and Jameson grew more and more anxious, for the rains were now at hand. So at last after dark on the night of November 15 he sent out a patrol under Major Forbes. This he was the better able to do as the Bechuanaland Border Police had by this time arrived in Buluwayo, and the patrol was thus composed of the Salisbury column 90; of the Victoria column 60; of the Tuli column 60; and of the Bechuanaland Border Police 90; with 200 native bearers, 4 Maxims, and a 7-pounder gun.

Jameson himself could not go with the column because of the political work to be done in Buluwayo, and the lack of his resolute will is seen at every step of this unfortunate expedition. There were two voices throughout. Major Forbes was a conscientious and capable officer; but deferred too much to the opinion of Captain Raaff, who had great prestige in native warfare, but being sick unto death had no heart for this business.

We gather this weakness of command from Major Forbes's own narrative. Thus for example:—

'I had intended to go on that night, but in the evening Captain Raaff persuaded me that it would be better to send scouts out first to find out whether the King had really left Intaba-gi-Konga or not, and although I did not wish to waste any time, as the King might go travelling on all the time, I gave in to him.'

And over and over again we find Major Forbes

deferring against his own better judgment to the timidity of Captain Raaff, although he knew that Raaff was undermining his men by telling them of the dangerous position they were in. Thus :—

‘ I had intended to have gone on down the river that afternoon, but Captain Raaff again persuaded me to wait until we could send out scouts to report what was in front of us. I was very much against waiting, but had to give in to him, as I feared that if I moved after what he had said, he would unsettle all his men to such an extent, by talking about the difficulties of the matter, that their *morale* might suffer. . . . I heard that there was great dissatisfaction in the force about going any farther. . . . I was not told until some time afterwards this agitation had been started among Raaff’s men, and that he had actually told them that they should go back that day.’

And again :—

‘ Captain Raaff pointed out that it was a very dangerous mission we were on with what he called a handful of men, no reserve ammunition, and no means of carrying the wounded.’

This nervousness and disunion infected the force, and things got so bad that at last it was resolved to consult the men whether they should go forward or back.

‘ While we were talking Burnham and Armstrong returned and reported that they . . . had seen a large number of natives and cattle all travelling east . . . that they had crossed a spoor nearly a mile wide of a very large number of cattle . . . not less than 7000 ; this spoor crossed the river, which was full of dead cattle that had been crushed to death, and the pools through which they had been driven were covered with fish trampled to death ; that although they had been close to the natives they had not been

molested in any way ; they also saw the country was open along the river five or six miles.'

Thus golden chances slip away while men debate whether they will or will not.

When the men were consulted all but seventeen of the Salisbury column wanted to return, but Allan Wilson said that all his men wanted to go on, and of the Tuli column all hung back but four. As for the Police, being an Imperial service, they were not consulted. Major Forbes sent a message to Dr. Jameson with the news of what had happened, and started to return ; but he got no farther than Umhlangeni when he got the Doctor's reply, which was that reinforcements, food, and ammunition were being sent on to Shiloh, that Forbes was to meet them there, and 'get on the King's spoor and follow it right up.'

At Shiloh out of his own force and the reinforcements Forbes made up a force of 300 men, and sent 280 back to Buluwayo. Of the Salisbury column he took Captain Borrow and 22 men, all mounted ; of the Victoria column 70 mounted and 100 dismounted men ; and of the Bechuanaland Border Police 78 mounted men. Of the Tuli column he took 20 men, and he made the mistake of taking Captain Raaff, although Forbes must have known well by this time that Raaff had no heart for the enterprise. Of artillery he took 4 Maxims and a Hotchkiss gun.

'I did not wish to take any wagons with me,' Forbes goes on to say, 'but I knew as they were there I should have to, if it was only for a few days, and I decided on taking some dismounted men to send back with them when it had been proved to

every one's satisfaction that it was impossible to take them on.'

Such was not the spirit for such an adventure. And thus, still halting between two opinions, the new force followed the spoor of the King. If they had been of one mind and had gone forward with resolution they might already have succeeded, for when they turned back, as they now heard, the King was only three miles away, 'very sick and almost deserted.' Lobengula himself wanted to return, as was afterwards discovered; but his indunas would not let him; and he even sent the gold he had received from Rhodes to Jameson as an earnest of his desire for peace, but two thievish troopers, meeting the embassy on the way, took the money and said nothing.

Now heavy rains were falling almost every day and sometimes in the night, so that the men were drenched as often as dry. The oxen by this time were all knocked up so that it was manifest to all that the wagons must be left behind. On November 28 Major Forbes picked about 160 of the best horses, on which he mounted of the Salisbury column 28, of the Victoria column 46, of the Tuli column 24, and 60 of the Bechuanaland Border Police.

These he took with him and the rest he sent back to Umhlangeni. They rode through a bushy country, hearing sometimes tidings of the King, and following his spoor all the way. On November 30, after a night of heavy rain, the column came to a kraal full of people, where 'the men all hid among the women,' and there they heard that the King was on the Shangani River, few people with him, but fragments of his broken regiments guarding his rear. The King's spoor kept a straight course, his wagons

'having driven over everything but the biggest trees.' They passed two wagons which had been abandoned and burnt, and the King's bath chair, which had been drawn by sixteen men. And so, hot upon the King's heels, through the litter and rumour of his retreat, they drew near to the Shangani. In the afternoon, coming to the edge of the bush, they emerged upon a wide, open flat, and saw the King's camp before them. It was deserted, but the fires were still alight and in one of the huts a small slave boy lay asleep.

As it wanted only an hour and a half of dark and the column went but slowly, Major Forbes told Allan Wilson to take twelve of his best horsemen and 'push on along the spoor as fast as he could to see which way it went, returning by dusk.'

Major Wilson picked out his twelve men, and two of his officers, Captain Kirton and Captain Greenfield, also went with him. And a little while after, Burnham the American scout coming in, Major Forbes gave him his horse and told him to follow Wilson, so that he might help in reading the spoor.

After they had gone Major Forbes heard from the slave boy and a Matabele whom they had captured that an impi of about 2800 men had been made ready to attack him, so he told Captain Raaff to double his pickets and prepare for a watchful night.

It was now dark and Major Wilson had not returned. At about nine o'clock two of Wilson's men came in with foundered horses and said that Wilson had crossed the river on the King's spoor and meant to sleep where he was. And at eleven o'clock three messengers arrived who said that Wilson, with a native for guide, was close upon the King, and had

passed through three scherms¹ full of women, children, and cattle, and farther on five more scherms through which they had ridden, looking for the King. And in every scherm, as they went through, they called out that they came to speak with the King and intended hurt to none. And the people in the scherms had not ventured to touch them.

Captain Napier, who was one of the messengers, said that Wilson expected Forbes to press on with the column under cover of night and attack the King at dawn. But this Major Forbes refused to do, 'as we were surrounded and expected to be attacked at any moment . . . and it would be very dangerous to cross the river through deep sand in the dark.'

On the other hand he could not bring himself to recall Major Wilson, who seemed to be in touch with the King, so he took a middle course: he sent Captain Borrow with twenty mounted men.

Early in the morning of December 4 after a rainy night, when the column was preparing to move, they heard heavy firing from across the river. It lasted several minutes and then ceased.

As the column followed the King's spoor along the river bank a hot fire was opened upon it from the bush, 300 yards on its left. In a short time Forbes had 16 horses and 2 mules killed and 5 men wounded, and, his position being bad, he fell back upon some mopani trees under the bank of the river, and there built a scherm and dug rifle-pits. Looking down upon the river they could see that it was now a roaring flood.

In the course of these operations Burnham the scout, his comrade Ingram, and Gooding, who had

¹ A scherm is a fortified camp.

all been with Wilson rode in: and Burnham, as he jumped off his horse, said to Forbes, 'I think I may say we are the sole survivors of that party.'

Burnham told Forbes that Borrow and his men had reached Wilson before daybreak. They had resolved to make a rush for the King, and had ridden up to the King's scherm, which lay near the head of a little valley with bush on either side. They could see two wagons—one of which was empty, for Burnham saw right through it—and they called the King's name.

For answer they were met by a heavy fire and Wilson had fallen back, galloping and then halting to fight, and then galloping away again. When they had got clear of the Matabele who pursued them and were 'shogging along,' Wilson sent Burnham with the two others back to Forbes to report. But the three had not ridden ahead more than a hundred yards when they perceived a strong force of Matabele rushing at them from the bush. They escaped by galloping hard away to the left; but as they went they heard the sound of heavy firing, and knew that Wilson was being attacked. They made for the river and found it flooded, so they followed its upward course for a mile and a half and then contrived to swim across, and so reached the patrol.

Upon these heavy tidings Major Forbes resolved that he would stay where he was that night and turn back in the morning, since it was impossible to go on, and useless to remain.

And so began a melancholy retreat: the column marched with a Maxim in front and a Maxim behind, carrying their wounded, with their prisoners and captured cattle in the middle. They were tired and despondent and drenched with frequent rains. They

were shaken by constant alarms, and once in a gully surrounded by bush they were ambushed, but contrived to shake themselves free with the loss of only two horses stabbed and one man shot. Their horses gave out one by one, and they left a hundred behind them along their line of march. The terror of the threatening bush and the constant forebodings of Captain Raaff almost overwhelmed them. They left the Maxim carriages behind, because they made a noise on the stones, and marched at night carrying the Maxims in blankets and then on the backs of horses. Every day, bar one, it rained, and the men were never dry. They had no overcoats and some of them no blankets. Their boots were worn out, and some of them were fain to make sandals or slippers out of their wallets. The wounded men were carried on the Maxim carriages until these were abandoned, and then rode or were supported on the horses, the others limping beside them. But as the officers testify, 'There was no grumbling, and every man did his duty.' In such wretched plight they retreated for ten days, until at last, upon December 15, they were met by Selous and Acutt with glad tidings of relief.

Forbes had sent messengers on the night of the disaster; they had reached Jameson on the 7th, and the Doctor and Willoughby had started next day with food and ammunition in wagons and all the men they could muster. They had got to Umhlangeni on the 10th and sent out scouts to find the patrol. And Rhodes himself, who had come up to Buluwayo from the south, had followed the relief column and was now at Umhlangeni.

All this Selous told Forbes and the troubles of the patrol were at an end. As for Allan Wilson and his

men the hope was long cherished that some at least had survived. But Burnham was right. They had all perished. And Captain Raaff, whose nervelessness was the result of ill-health, died a few days afterwards.¹ Thus ended the unfortunate Shangani patrol.²

Mjan himself, the Commander-in-Chief of the Matabele army, had been at the King's scherm when Allan Wilson hailed the wagons on the morning of December 4. It was he who had replied with rifle bullets to Wilson's call for the King. And when Wilson retreated he had met part of Mjan's impi which had been sent to ambush the column at the drift of the Shangani and was then returning, as the floods had prevented it from carrying out its orders. Between these two forces Wilson found no way of escape, and so, making a ring of their horses, the party died fighting. All the white men, the natives reported, had four or five wounds; but when one was wounded another bandaged him with a strip of his shirt and they went on fighting.

'One man was especially mentioned, for, when all the others were shot down and more or less wounded, and though himself wounded in several places, he collected some rifles and revolvers, and made a stand on a neighbouring ant-heap, keeping the enemy at bay. For a long time the enemy could not kill him, and he shot down at least eight or ten before he was eventually shot down himself, and on running in at last they found him with six or eight wounds in his body.'³

¹ Raaff died at Buluwayo on the morning of January 2, from what was then called 'inflammation of the bowels,' i.e. peritonitis, 'supervening from Bright's disease of the kidneys and liver complaint, both of many years' standing.' He was buried the same day with full military honours, as he deserved.

² Forbes is our chief authority; but see also Captain Coventry's report (C. 7290, p. 69 *et seq.*).

³ *The Downfall of Lobengula*, p. 207.

And an old Matabele induna, Sivalo Mahlana, who was there, afterwards said of this stand :—

‘ We fought from sunrise until midday. . . . When the white men could see there was no mercy, nor a way of escape, they said, “ Let us thank God who must receive us to-day.” Then they sang. So all the white men died with a great number of the Matabele. . . . In the afternoon the Matabele picked out their dead to bury them and on the morrow they did likewise. Others were covered with the branches of the trees and bushes, both black and white. Not a garment was taken from the dead ; they were all left as they fell, to be devoured by the vultures and the wolves.’¹

As for the King he had ridden away farther up the little valley of the Pupu River on the morning of the 3rd, so that both wagons were empty when Wilson hailed them. And there Lobengula lived for a while a few miles beyond the Shangani ; but he got very thin and full of sores, and presently died. Thereupon Mjan, his Commander-in-Chief, took his body and buried it in a cave in a sitting posture, with an assegai in the belly, so that the King sat upright against the rock, and walled up the mouth of the cave thereafter.

¹ Statement by Sivalo Mahlana translated by Rev. Bowen Rees and published in *Bukuwayo Chronicle* of February 15, 1917. We quote the passage because its tone shows the impression made on the Matabele by the bearing of Allan Wilson’s party. But it is doubtful if the Matabele heard either singing or prayer, and truth compels us to add that the dead were stripped, although they were not mutilated. See Jameson’s telegram to Rhodes of January 10, 1894 (C. 7290, p. 84).

‘ They fought,’ says Jameson, ‘ for about six hours, killing a great number of Matabele ; but finished their ammunition. Then the Matabele fired at them from close quarters, killing, as they thought, those still alive. After a time they approached nearer and found there were some still alive, all seriously wounded, writing on pieces of paper. As soon as the Matabele came up close to them, they drew their revolvers ; but the whole thing was very soon finished, and not one of the whole party was left alive. The bodies were not mutilated, but stripped of clothes with the exception of one man with a long beard (Watson). After stripping the bodies the men and horses were piled in a heap.’

CHAPTER XX

FRUITS OF VICTORY

'He to the Commons' feet presents
A kingdom for his first year's rents,
And (what he may) forbears
His fame to make it theirs.'

MARVELL.

VICTORY thus came to Jameson under the shadow of disaster. He waited in Buluwayo with an anxious mind, longing to follow the King and make an end of the war, and yet not daring because of the political conflict then being waged for the future of the territory. Cecil Rhodes, who had followed the column to Buluwayo, went south to meet the High Commissioner; but Jameson remained. In a letter from Buluwayo to his brother Sam, dated December 24, 1893, he unburdens his perplexed mind:—

'The final settlement has been slower than I expected; but this is really due to the extent of the country and the distance and the pace at which the Matabele can run. In Zululand the King was in a small confined area—here our people chased him 180 miles N.W. from here, and by this time I expect he is over the Zambesi, which is perhaps a better solution than catching him, as it ensures some of the troublesome spirits going with him. At all events this is the most comfortable way to look at it. Our commanders did their best; but I am afraid there was a little error in judgment amongst them—in fact their statements are so extraordinary that I have had to institute a court of inquiry to find out the share of blame if any on Forbes and Raaff.

The latter I have to sift on many points and will get at the truth. This damned Imperial question prevented my going on with Forbes, as I could not leave Goold-Adams to receive the submission of the people who were coming in daily and so give further point to the H.C. However, we must get at the truth in case any of Wilson's party are killed, which is more than probable, though the native information is still the same and agrees from all sides, that Wilson defeated the natives and then went on in the direction taken by the King—so that I have good hopes some of them, at all events, will turn up later here or in Mashonaland. They were the picked men of the crowd.

'This inquiry will mean washing some dirty linen in public, but it can't be helped. I have never been very favourably inclined to the military element and hope this will be the last "Army" I shall have anything to do with. However, the disbandment is done now, the Johannesburg lams, also the Salisbury and Victoria crowds, under way, and the new police force in order and at their patrol work. The prospectors also are rapidly getting away in all directions, the natives coming in well with their arms, and altogether a chance of peace and quietness in front of one. You are quite right. I shall not get away till this country and Mashonaland are running smoothly; but by the end of next dry season I shall try to get off for a few months—as one gets a bit stale and uncivilised after so long an interval on the veld. My idea if it comes off is to go home by the East coast, spending practically no time at home, but staying in Egypt and Greece *en route*. This is all in the clouds at present, but it is as well to have it to look forward to. . . .'

The 'damned Imperial question,' to which Jame-son refers, was a new form of the old controversy which Rhodes had fought out long before with Mackenzie and Warren in Bechuanaland. Rhodes had then been supported by Sir Hercules Robinson, who had learnt by bitter experience to agree with

his friend in his distrust of the Imperial factor. Sir Hercules Robinson was succeeded by Sir Henry Loch, a strong man and a good servant of the Crown ; but without Robinson's experience of the lamentable history of South Africa. Loch worked for a British South Africa ; but he favoured the policy of direct Imperial action, and his first thought of the future of Matabeleland was that it should be under the Administration of the Crown.

As early as May 25, 1891, Sir Henry Loch addressed a despatch to the Colonial Office, pressing for the appointment of an Administrator and executive authorities responsible to him for the government of the Company's territories. The Company was to provide an annual contribution to the cost, which might be sufficiently supplemented by Customs and hut tax, and was thus to be free ' to devote its best energies to the development of the commercial resources of the country.' Otherwise, Sir Henry Loch warned the Colonial Office, the Company might involve the British Government in a war with Lobengula ' without their previous knowledge or consent.'

This proposal, which at first had the support of Rhodes, was declined because the British Government would not face the responsibility ; if it had been accepted the course of this story would have been different. As it was, the timidity of Downing Street again convinced Rhodes that nothing was to be hoped from the ' Imperial factor.'

When the British Government, as Loch had foreseen, were faced by a war with Lobengula, the High Commissioner again pressed for his old policy, and partly to that end and partly to support the Company's forces, he directed the Bechuanaland police to advance upon Buluwayo in concert with Jameson.

But the Bechuanaland police were unaccountably delayed, and although they had a shorter way to go, and a smaller force against them, did not get to Buluwayo until after the Company's forces had taken the capital. Whether Rhodes had a hand in this delay is a point on which there has been speculation but no evidence. Certain it is that he took advantage of it to press his claim for the fruits of victory. The Imperial Government had refused to pay the piper, and Rhodes was determined not to let them call the tune. In a telegram of November 1, 1893, he claimed that his people had beaten the Matabele 'single-handed'; that they had never asked the British Government for assistance; and that they had the men and the means to govern the country.

Sir Henry Loch still pressed for control of the settlement, and for annexation by the Crown. But he now found great powers arrayed against him. The Press of South Africa was all for the Company. The Cape Government exceeded its constitutional limitations by writing a minute to the High Commissioner strongly supporting Rhodes's claim. The Company was no less active in England, and as none could deny that Jameson and his forces had done the lion's share of the fighting or that the Company had borne the lion's share of the expense, Sir Henry Loch was overborne.

Yet in justice to the High Commissioner the historian must pay tribute both to the logic and the prescience of his case. If, he wrote to Lord Ripon on November 15, 1893, there was to be no limited system of administration (although under the Company), any supposed control of Her Majesty's Government would be a mere farce, and he went

on to predict that the next difficulties, which were already looming in the no distant future, would be with a foreign Power and not with a native tribe.

The Imperial Government did not share the shrewd prevision of its High Commissioner, all it saw clearly was that if it took control of the territory it would have to pay for the war, and so His Excellency fought a losing battle.

The issue was embittered by the activities of Henry Labouchere and the Aborigines Protection Society. The latter, which had been skilfully used by Mr. Maund and the other opponents of the Charter, still espoused the cause of the Matabele, heedless of the warnings of their missionary friends in South Africa. The former, a scion of the Hopes, the Barings, and the Laboucheres, yet expounded a Radical creed of the most austere financial asceticism. 'The burden of his argument,' according to his biographer, 'was always the impurity of motive arising from the financial interest involved.'¹ In Venezuela, in Egypt, in the Soudan, and in the Transvaal, he traced this clue to the infamy of every British cause. How Englishmen, not supported by their fathers, were to continue to exist without capital or enterprise, our public moralist never took the trouble to explain.

These and other criticisms had agitated Lord Ripon, then at the head of the Colonial Office, and before and during the campaign, as we gather from the Blue Books, he kept up a running fire of criticism and interference inspired by Labouchere and his allies. Sir Henry Loch, being nearer the spot, understood the situation better. And as we gather

¹ *The Life of Henry Labouchere*, by Henry Thorold, p. 393.

from the correspondence since published, he stood up manfully both for Jameson and Rhodes. But he could not turn the edge of all the attacks, and was forced by his position to take up some of the questions and criticisms showered upon him from Downing Street. Jameson and Rhodes were thus harassed at every turn, as they thought by the High Commissioner, in reality by the Secretary of State and the enemy behind him.

This quarrel went bickering on, until in the end Rhodes carried his point, and Matabeleland came formally under the Administration of the Chartered Company. In the meantime Jameson found 'provisional' a blessed word; he did all things provisionally—rewarding his followers with provisional farms and laying out three miles to the south of the royal kraal the provisional site of the provisional town of Buluwayo.

Thus Sir Henry Loch telegraphs to Lord Ripon on December 28:—

'Jameson informs me that no townships have been marked out, merely position of future townships discussed: men returning to Mashonaland are allowed to select positions for farms subject to my future approval.'

And again on December 29:—

'No government is established in Matabeleland beyond what may be necessary to maintain order. There is no present extension of Government of Mashonaland. There is no appropriation of land. These questions are all dependent on future arrangements to be discussed between myself and Mr. Rhodes, and approved by Her Majesty's Government.'¹

We find evidence of the wearing effect of these quarrels and misunderstandings in the bitter tone

¹ C. 7290 (1894), pp. 36, 37.