

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR JOURNEY ON.

ON the afternoon of the following day we arrived at Cathkin, a farm occupied by one of the true old colonists, Mr. ——. This farm is situated at the base of the Draakensberg, close to the location lately inhabited by the Putini tribe, the well-known peak, called Cathkin, or Champagne Castle, towering magnificently above the general line of the mountain range.

The Colonel rode on in front of the party to ask the permission of Mr. —— to camp upon his farm, which the latter accorded; protesting, however, the while that these desperate "rebels" whom we had brought with us would soon be dispersed over the country. Nevertheless to us he showed himself most hospitable, and, only stipulating that the "rebels"

should not be allowed to approach the house, he invited us all in, and soon set before us an excellent repast. — might be taken as a good type of the hard-working successful colonist. Settling in Natal many years ago he has, by steady industry and perseverance, realised no inconsiderable fortune, in adding to which he was now assisted by his sons, whom, with excellent common sense, he has brought up to follow such trades as are useful in a new and sparsely-inhabited country. Of the two at home while we were at Cathkin, one was a good waggon-builder, the other we found to be an experienced blacksmith. The house in which the family lived was substantially built, the signs of the times evident in the strong shutters attached to every window, to be closed at sundown, the heavy bars to the doors, the care with which the cattle and horses were kept in their kraals at night, and the guard of armed natives, provided by Government, which was posted every evening in the verandah.

I have been told that formerly, that is to say before the expedition of 1873, doors and windows

were not even closed either by day or by night ; and I believe that in most parts of the colony such is still the custom of the white inhabitants, except in the towns or in their immediate neighbourhood. This fact in itself seems to me to prove the peaceful and honest character of the uncivilised natives, amongst whom I believe thefts are absolutely unknown.

At the time, and in the locality of which I write, however, the bars and bolts were no unnecessary adjuncts. Peaceful and inoffensive as are the Zulu-Kaffirs when unmolested, they are not devoid of spirit, still less, as I have mentioned before, of family affection ; and some of them had lately been driven by their wrongs to take vengeance upon their white oppressors.

Terrible stories there are, known to many but suppressed by most, of atrocities committed upon the so-called "rebels" six months before,—women and children killed, caves containing fugitives of both sexes fired into, and the unhappy occupants finally smothered by the smoke of fires lit outside for the purpose. These deeds were done by white and black

on "our" side,—with shame I say the word;—and vengeance had been attempted more than once by some of the unhappy survivors. Therefore it was as well that the houses in this part of the country should be furnished with bolts and bars.

One of the young men accompanied us as a guide when we left Cathkin, as he knew the country well; and I had some opportunity of conversing with him, and of eliciting his "young colonial" views of matters. I thought that from him, living as he did close to the scene of the late disturbances, I should at least be able to learn in what way Langalibalele earned the title of "bloodthirsty rebel," which I had so often heard applied to him, and what his people had done to deserve the severe punishment which had fallen upon them. I confess that I was disappointed by the answers that I received. I hoped to find that at least our cause was good. I wished to think that we English had reason in the main for what we did, and that, although acts had been perpetrated by "us" which all Englishmen must condemn, yet that they were

but the individual instances of cruelty almost inseparably connected with a savage warfare, in which savage auxiliaries and independent volunteers are employed. Could tales have been told of attacks upon farmhouses and the white families living in them, of murder and insult to women and children, of any such injuries as would naturally put the fire of indignation into our hearts and brains, I should have been satisfied that punishment was justified, harshness excusable, and even cruelty not much to be wondered at, although deeply to be regretted.

But of any such justification or excuse I never heard a word. Not a single outrage had been committed of any description, not a head of cattle even stolen from the isolated farms in and close to Langalibalele's location. In answer to my questions our young guide had plenty to say, and all the usual complaints to make. The Kaffirs were lazy and "cheeky," they had been getting more and more so, and thought themselves as good as the white men now. In fact it was the old story; the black man did not care to be the white man's slave,

and the white man could not endure the black man in any other position. This feeling, and this only, I believe to have been the cause of the expedition of 1873; and this same feeling would very soon bring about,—what would prove a very different matter,—a war with the Zulus, were it not, fortunately for all concerned (even for those who most resent the restraint put upon them), that our English Government at home keeps such a vigilant watch over her colonies, to prevent unjust and unnecessary wars. Otherwise, the very existence upon our borders of a large body of natives whom we cannot tax, who are not our servants, nor obliged to treat us with any especial respect, would certainly sooner or later bring about aggressive acts on our part, which in their turn would irritate our neighbours into giving us some handle for undertaking a war of invasion against them. Such a war would certainly be a bloody one on both sides, entailing consequences hardly to be calculated either in sorrow or duration. May just and wise rulers, under Providence, spare us such an evil!

As to Langalibalele himself, I must distinctly assert that although I have taken some trouble in making inquiries from those likely to know, I have never been able to gain a clear notion of what constituted either his long course of disrespect towards Government, of which I have heard so many vague assertions, or the "rebellious" conduct for which his tribe has been destroyed. That he ran away instead of coming when he was called, under a well-founded fear of treachery from the whites, seems to be the extent of his offence. The more I heard of the expedition of 1873, of the reasons for it, and of the way in which it was carried out, the more did I hate to think that in such a cause, and in company with such men, was my Colonel sent to fight, and receive the wounds, one of which permanently disabled him. He simply did his duty, and I need hardly say, perhaps, that he had no share in the cold-blooded butchery,—I can call it nothing else,—which went on for weeks after the one fight at the Bushman's River Pass. All that time, regardless of his own wounded and shattered condition, he was away upon the moun-

tains, in pursuit of the main body of Langalibalele's men, and for the purpose of intercepting another tribe supposed to be about to follow in the steps of the first. It is indeed to be regretted that he was not present to prevent such scenes as that which took place at the cave, since known as "Colenso's Cave," where for two hours one of the tribe held his own in a crevice amongst the rocks, against a force armed with carbines, revolvers, and rockets, surrendering only when covered with wounds, and unable to defend himself longer. Then, appealing and trusting to the white man's mercy, he came out, and, instead of being honoured as a gallant warrior, he was, after a short consultation amongst his captors, then and there shot! The place where this occurred has been called "Colenso's Cave," because it was the Bishop of Natal who raised his voice against this unworthy transaction. He had got his information from the accounts given of it in the papers by some of the men present, who indeed were chiefly white men, and seemed, from their own story, to see nothing unusual or base in their performance.

Our guide was thoroughly Natalian in his ideas on other subjects besides the "Rebellion." His remarks upon "volunteers" amused me. He evidently thought but little of the regulars, and had unbounded faith in his own kind,—for he belonged to a volunteer corps himself. The late failure of the carbineers at the Bushman's River Pass in nowise shook his faith.* Either they were quite right to—*retreat*, let us say, when they did, or else their having done so too soon was the fault of those who placed them,—free independent volunteers, with a right each to his own opinion!—under the command of a regular officer, who actually expected them to obey his orders, and to behave like soldiers! Such, in fact, seemed to be the prevailing opinion. One of our white drivers, I remember, expressed

* This was written in 1875; since then Natal has received a severe lesson as to what war really means, and her volunteers have learnt a soldier's duty; since then, also, the Natal Carbineers have retrieved the honour lost by their corps at the Bushman's River Pass, by the gallant conduct of those other members of the same corps, who fought and fell under and with the same leader at Isandhlwana. See note to this chapter, pages 133 to 140, for full account.

himself much in the same tone, but in worse English, than my young friend from Cathkin.

“Volunteers is not like reg'lars,” said this worthy gentleman. “They oughtn't to be expected to obey like them soldiers. They're all as good as another, and ought to be axed their opinion, and not ordered.” I have often heard like sentiments expressed by Natalians; nor have I ever, in conversation, found that the word “discipline” conveyed the slightest idea to their minds. Theoretically, martial ardour had, I believe, been excessively rife before the expedition in which it was first put to a practical test; nor had the dangers and discomforts of that campaign entirely extinguished it; although it certainly was a pity that it failed so entirely at the first sight of the faces of an armed foe.

We left Cathkin early on the morning of the second day after our arrival, and effected the passage of the Sterk-spruit, about three miles from the house, with some difficulty, owing to the nature of the ford, or “drift,” as it would be called in Natal.

Both the track into the river,—I cannot call it “road,”—and the road itself passed between high and steep banks. The water ran with excessive rapidity; nor was it possible to cross it in a direct line, as, owing to the impracticability of the shore on either side, and the interposition of a heavy sandbank, the landing-place on the opposite side was some fifty yards higher up the stream than the point at which we entered it. Nor was any more direct passage feasible.

It would be difficult to imagine a scene of greater apparent confusion than that at which I assisted on that day in the transport of our heavy waggons and carts over the Sterk-spruit. Each waggon was drawn into the water by its own team of eighteen oxen, when, a sharp turn being made up-stream, a second span was required to drag it up along the sandbank to a position opposite the “pull-out.” And now a third span is added, for it takes the united efforts of fifty-four oxen in all to drag the lumbering vehicle up the steep broken bank on the other side, and to land it safely on level ground

again. As to the carts, their horses were powerless to effect their passage. The animals were all taken out of the shafts and led over alone;—even that not without considerable difficulty. And then the whole of the ninety pioneers seized each cart in turn with a right good will, and, by dint of pulling, pushing, and shouting (a great deal of the latter), foot by foot they gained the opposite bank.

The difficulties of the day's march were so great that we had only accomplished a distance of eight miles when we encamped for the night. Nor was the next day's journey less arduous, at the close of which we pitched our tents at the foot of the Little Berg. This is a short range of mountains running parallel to the great Kathlamba or Draakensberg, and which we had to cross in order to reach the passes of the larger range leading from Natal into the broken and almost uninhabited country beyond, in former years the haunt of the predatory Bushmen, a race now almost extinct.

Our last day's march was of the most difficult description imaginable, the hills being often so steep,

and the track,—if track there were,—so broken and rocky, that it was only by the most strenuous exertions on the part of every member of the expedition that the carts and waggons could be forced over them at all. Occasionally, when we had to take the latter up some more than usually steep incline with half-loads upon them, the united strength of the whole fifty-four oxen only sufficed for one at a time ; whilst the only chance for the carts was to have them taken up by hand as, previously, across the drift.

But farther than the foot of the Little Berg not even thus could any vehicle be moved. It was very evident that pack-horses and oxen were our only means of transport over the range. Accordingly a camp was formed at this point in our journey, to which we should have to return after destroying the two passes for which we had been bound in the first place,—Gray's, No. 1, and the Old Bushman's (not the Bushman's River Pass, which lay about fifty miles distant).

At this camp, then, we left our carts, waggons,

and oxen, in charge of a few Europeans, whilst arrangements were made for the ascent of the Little Berg without them.

For this purpose pack-saddles were fitted to the horses, well padded with sheepskin, as the animals had already fallen off in condition, from work and exposure. Sacks sewn together formed a substitute for saddles for the oxen, which, with breast-straps, crupper, and overhaul girth, made a fairly efficient equipment, each ox carrying a load of about two hundred and fifty pounds of meal or flour.

These oxen were trained to carry loads, and had been obtained from the chief Somathla (a near relative of the celebrated Langalibalele), who had been directed by the Colonel to send him all beasts capable of such service, with men accustomed to their care. The men were rationed with the pioneers, and the chief was well paid for the use of the animals, without the assistance of which, indeed, we could not have carried sufficient food-supplies for our party.

The ox is a capital beast of burden. He is sure-

footed, docile, carries a heavy load, and, being of gregarious habits, requires but little care in driving; as, if the first animal is led in the right direction, all the others will follow. His climbing powers also are remarkable. Give him but his own time and he will take a load over almost any country. An untrained ox is, of course, troublesome. It is necessary to throw him, in the first instance, in order to put his load upon his back, and when this is firmly secured, and the ox allowed to rise, he immediately commences a series of evolutions,—bucking, kicking, and plunging,—highly calculated to burst any but the strongest tackle. Yet, after he has indulged himself for a few minutes in this recreation, finding himself unable to get rid of the load which oppresses him, he subsides into a state of stolid endurance, and quietly takes his place amongst his better-trained companions.

The ascent of the Little Berg was by no means an easy one under even the best of circumstances. The mountain-sides were clothed with long rank grass, which the extreme dryness of the winter

atmosphere had rendered as slippery as ice, and it was very difficult for either men or animals to keep their feet. However, in due time it was accomplished, with no further casualties than the roll of one pack-horse and two oxen for a considerable distance, but without much damage done, and the total disappearance of one of the wildest of the pack-oxen, who, having performed a series of somersaults for about four hundred yards down a grassy slope, thought he had had enough of it, and having got rid of his load during the descent, disappeared at full speed in the direction of his customary feeding-grounds. As for ourselves, we slipped, slid, and rolled, and picked ourselves up again, in a manner calculated to try the endurance of the strongest and most active amongst us, but nevertheless without any worse accident occurring to any of us than a few bumps and bruises.

A British soldier, indeed, was somewhat unceremoniously disposed of by one of the cattle driven with the expedition for slaughter purposes. The man happened to be the last of his party, and was

cautiously picking his way at a very narrow point upon the mountain-crest, when the animal behind him, possibly excited by the dangers of the passage and the sight of the man's scarlet coat, and pressed upon from the rear by the other oxen, rushed at him, and, fortunately passing his wide-spreading horns one on either side of his body, propelled him, with considerable velocity, into a thick growth of underwood, which, luckily for him, broke the violence of his fall, and he escaped unhurt.

We camped for the night of the fourth on a grassy spur, running from the base of the Champagne Castle peak, under a hill with a most extraordinary hole in its crest, through which the sky can be seen on the other side. The cold was considerable here, and we were glad enough to crowd round our blazing fires. Our appetites, too, were somewhat keen, and it was not unpleasant to witness the preparations for dinner which were carried on by our soldier-cook under the stars of heaven, with as much equanimity as if he were officiating in the mess-kitchen of his regiment.

The pioneers, meanwhile, were enjoying themselves immensely after their own fashion. Seated round a number of great fires, they were engaged upon their meal of fresh meat just singed in the flame to their taste. A beast had been shot for them that evening, of which but little remained till morning except the horns and the hide. During the intervals of mastication the tide of conversation flowed freely among them, and one was glad to see from their contented faces and frequent laughter that, although hard-worked, they were not unhappy, and were probably cheered by the hope of freedom held out to them by my Chief.

Indeed nothing could exceed the zeal and good will with which these poor fellows fell to whatever work the Colonel set them to do. Perhaps they might not have done as well under other masters; of that I cannot speak; but I do not believe that there was anything so difficult or seemingly impossible that they would not have attempted at the command of one whose mingled kindness and firmness had won their respect and affection.

With the fifteen Basutos this was still more evident. They, of course, were in more fortunate circumstances than the captive Putini people. They were free followers of the Colonel, who had led them to the fight, at the end of which they undoubtedly saved his life. To so warlike a race as they are, the kind master was doubly dear who was also the dauntless leader, and of its sort I never witnessed anything more touching than the mute devotion paid to my Chief by the Basuto warriors.

Of those fifteen who were with us upon the mountains, the names of two besides that of the young chief, Hlubi, are specially impressed upon my mind,—namely, Jabez and Windvogel. And of those two men I was jealous, although I liked them.

Windvogel aroused that feeling in my breast by a little action which for some time escaped my attention, but which after a while I discovered to be a constant practice of his. During those days of painful climbing and scrambling on foot over well-nigh impassable mountains, along precipices, through rocky defiles, by ways and no ways which

none less enterprising than Colonel Durnford would have attempted, his wounded helpless arm and injured shoulder placed him at a great disadvantage, doubling the toil for him and the danger of accidents as well. I often wondered how he could climb in safety over places where I, with two strong arms to help me, felt life and limbs to be insecure. I thought a good deal about it, but Windvogel did something better than think. I soon discovered that whenever I looked to make sure that the Colonel was not in difficulties, Windvogel was always close to him, between him and the edge of the precipice, or just where he would be of use in case of a slip. As soon as I became convinced that there was a set purpose in this on the part of the Basuto, I felt aggrieved that what had escaped my thoughts should have occurred to him. I should have liked to send him away and to take his place myself; but I felt that on the one hand that would be neither fair nor generous, and on the other hand that such a course would defeat my own end. Windvogel could do unnoticed what would be in-

stantly apparent were I to attempt it; and the result of my interference would probably be that both of us would be dismissed from such close attendance upon the Colonel, who very likely was quite unaware of Windvogel's guardianship, being entirely engrossed in the passage of his little army. Besides, I candidly confessed to myself that Windvogel, with his lithe agile frame and unshod feet, was fitter for the post than I, with my heavy boots and want of mountain practice. So I felt a little sulky for the rest of the day upon which I made the discovery, and made a point of giving Windvogel some of my best tobacco when we camped for the night.

As for Jabez, I remember him rather for his words than for his actions, for he was the only one of these silent undemonstrative men whom I ever got to talk freely or to speak of his devotion to our Chief. Jabez had lately visited both Estcourt and Pietermaritzburg, and those visits must have loosened his tongue; for he was in a state of hot indignation at the way in which he had heard the

Bushman's River Pass affair, and the Colonel, spoken of in those towns, especially at the latter place, and by the friends and relatives of the volunteers. A very little encouragement from me would cause him to pour out a flood of eloquence amazing for a Basuto.

“Why these *Wolumteers* say Mr. Major make them all run away!” he would cry. (Our Colonel was Major then, and will long be known by that title amongst the natives.) “All people say so; I very angry. I tell them I *hear* Captain B—tell Mr. Major wolumteers frightened and *must* go home! I tell this. Then all the people say, ‘Oh! I never hear that before.’ I wish everyone ask me. I come—I tell them all! I speak out! I cry loud! *All lies!* Why do them wolumteers say this, and speak bad words of Mr. Major? I see *all* run away;—leave Mr. Major all alone. Hlubi cry, ‘Come back! you leave Major behind!’ They never come; and then Mr. Major and Basuto they come behind. Wolumteers run in front. When Basuto see wolumteers run away some begin to go too; and then

Hlubi cry out loud, 'Basuto! you too going to run like girls, and leave our Chief to die?' Then all Basuto come back again, not one man leave Hlubi and Mr. Major."

My readers will forgive me for softening Jabez's broken English in repeating what he told me next, for I do not care to spoil its meaning. He said that upon that unhappy day, when my Chief had done all that mortal man could do to stay his flying troops, and to make them face the *now* pursuing foe, and done it all in vain; when his voice was gone with shouting, and he himself exhausted, shattered by a fearful fall the day before, and bleeding from fresh wounds received from the foe, he stopped at last and turned.

"I saw him turn his horse's head," said Jabez, "and ride straight back towards the enemy alone. Then some of us made haste to follow him, and I rode up beside him, saying, 'Where are you going, *Amarail* (Chief)? What do you want?' for I thought he might have dropped something, and wanted to find it. He did not answer me, but

he turned his head and looked at me as we still rode back together towards the pass. And then I looked into his face, and knew what he was about. He was going back to die, because that his soldier's spirit could not endure that he should ever turn his back upon a foe. Then I caught his bridle-rein, and turned his horse's head; for though he was my Chief, and I must fight at his command, I could not let him fling away his life by riding back alone amongst three hundred fighting-men who had tasted blood. We all cried out, 'Come back with us, Chief, you must not die for nothing.' He was too weak from loss of blood and great exertion to resist us, and so we brought him off safe amongst us, and we all went back to camp."

Need I say why I was jealous, though with no unfriendly jealousy, of the Basuto Jabez?

I asked the Colonel later on whether this account was correct; but all the answer I could get from him was a rather short, "I suppose so;" and an immediate order to set about some work or other which must be done at once.

NOTE.

WHILE preparing this volume for the press I have received from a friend in Natal a paper containing an account of the battlefield of Isandhlwana, which is so much to the purpose that I insert it complete in this place.

It proves that upon that unhappy yet glorious day, the Natal Carbineers won back again the honour lost by previous members of their corps at the Bushman's River Pass. It would be an injustice to the memory of my late beloved Chief to omit the true story of the 4th November, 1873, from this narrative. It would be equally unjust to the memory of those who fell beside him at Isandhlwana to omit the true story of the 22nd January, 1879.

One further remark I must make upon the subjoined article. The editor, towards the close of a brilliant and truthful record, says that, if the Carbineers could have made choice of a commander, Colonel Durnford would have been the last man

they would have named. I must venture to observe that the converse statement would have been more correct, namely, that if he judged them by his old experience in 1873, the Carbineers would naturally have been the last men whom the Colonel would have chosen to command. Probably he did not judge them thus, but the moral remains the same. I believe I am right in saying that not a man of those who fled from the Bushman's River Pass was amongst those Carbineers who went to Zululand; and I will venture to assert that Colonel Durnford was precisely the commander under whom men, as ready for the post of honourable danger as the Natal Carbineers of 1879 are generally admitted to have been, would choose to serve. In support of this assertion I may mention that the friend who sends me this paper tells me also that the first man who went up to Colonel Durnford, when the Natal Native Contingent was being formed, and offered to serve through the Zulu campaign under him, was the only one living of the four Carbineers who responded to his demand, "Will none of you stand by me?"

at the Bushman's River Pass. The other three chanced to be the very men who fell.

This brave fellow left the corps after that unfortunate expedition, and was with Colonel Durnford as Lieutenant N.N.H. on that fatal day at Isandhlwana; but not at the last, for from that "last" none escaped alive.

My friend, who knew Colonel Durnford well, also tells me that, deeply as he regretted the death of those three carbineers, and bitterly as I myself know he always felt the simple fact of having been forced to retreat before a foe, he knew himself to be so guiltless in the matter that he never felt himself in the least responsible for their death. He said, speaking of the Bushman's River Pass, not long before he left for Zululand: "Thinking calmly over the matter at this distance of time, I say that I could have done no otherwise. Were it to happen again I must do the same, with the one exception that I should not return." Yet, in spite of all he suffered, mentally and physically, in consequence of their failure, neither the friend who writes to me

nor I myself have ever known him speak harshly of the Natal Carbineers.

Bearing the above in mind, I offer the following article from *The Natal Witness* of May 29, as giving the facts of the case, and the inferences to be drawn from them, as I should desire to give them myself :

“The field of Isandhlwana is beginning to give up its secrets. The mists of fiction are being dispersed by the dry light of fact. It has not been through mere idle curiosity that there has been a desire to know what passed during the final moments of that fatal struggle. There were difficulties to be explained, reputations to be cleared, allegations to be contradicted. There was the desire to know how those who were lost had died,—to be sure that they died with their faces to the foe,—to be satisfied that their death was not attended with any excess of cruelty or suffering. And there can be little doubt that it is the very anxiety to be assured of all this that stands responsible for the numerous fictions,—as we must now hold them to be,—which have been circulated with regard to what passed on that memorable day.

Men who had been present in the early part of the day,—and it is now evident that there has been as yet no reliable account whatever of what passed at the close of the tragedy,—were largely influenced by their beliefs and their wishes, and, very naturally, were confused in their own minds as to what they had actually seen and what they thought must happen. As it is, the result of the recent sad visit to the camp completely reverses not only every story that has been afloat, but also every expectation that might have been formed. The report of what was actually found comes upon us as a surprise, and a surprise which, when it is carefully considered, lessens the pain that had previously been associated with the catastrophe. All the pictures,—pictures both by pen and pencil,—that have been before the public, have represented certain broad features of the final conflict which, had it not been for this visit, might have been for ever accepted as true. They have represented the men of an Imperial regiment as standing back to back, and with their bayonets resisting to the last moment the pressure of the Zulu onslaught. They

have represented the colonial forces, such as there were of them, as scattered hither and thither, acting, if bravely, quite without organisation or guidance. They have represented a commanding officer either as lost in the general *mêlée*, or, worse still, as having, with a coward hand, put an end to his own life. All these impressions will have to be reversed. 'The greater number of the soldiers were found one by one, in the long grass which covers the ground between the camp and the river. Colonel Durnford's body, surrounded by fourteen of the carbineers, and their officer, Lieutenant Scott, with a few mounted police and about thirty soldiers, was discovered at the mouth of the neck in rear of the camp.' There is no mistaking the significance of these words, which occur in the telegraphic report sent us by our correspondent, who was himself on the spot. And equally unmistakable is the significance of the position in which the bodies of Colonel Durnford and his companions in death and in honour were found. Justice both to the dead and to the living demands that the real

meaning of these facts which have come to light, after four months' suspense and doubt, should be fully pointed out. And it is satisfactory to be able to feel that, while these revelations add honour to names that have hitherto been unhonoured, they take nothing away from the reputation of those whose acts have already been recognised.

“Let us go into the history of that fatal day, first so far as we know it from those whose narratives have been before us. That the attack on the camp came originally and mainly from the left front, seems to be a well-established fact. It was in this direction that the rocket-battery and mounted men went out to meet the enemy, with the immediate result, apparently, of forcing them to retire. The parties that had been out in this direction returned into the camp, and, as it would appear, the danger was regarded as so far surmounted that the men were allowed to fall out for dinner. And it is not a little remarkable that this account coincides, in a very striking manner, with the narrative of what passed while Colonel Harness, with his artillery and the

three companies of the 24th were on their march after the general. The firing was heard, and the bursting of the shells was seen, by Colonel Harness, who at once, on his own responsibility, resumed his march towards the camp. His fears were derided; his movement countermanded; and about this time,—somewhere corresponding with dinner-time at the camp,—Lieutenant Milne, who was on Lord Chelmsford's staff, reported that the camp appeared to be all as usual. In all probability he was right. The enemy had retired on observing the retrograde march of the troops under Colonel Harness, and did not resolve to attack again,—for it would appear that there were two distinct attacks,—until Colonel Harness, unwillingly yielding to Lord Chelmsford's special injunction, conveyed through Major Gossett, was well on his way after the rest of Colonel Glyn's column, and too far away for his aid to be of any avail. Then, and not till then,—probably between one and two o'clock,—the second attack on the camp was made, and it remains a very grave question whether that attack would ever have been made if

Lord Chelmsford had relied rather on Colonel Harness's report, received through Major Gossett, than on Lieutenant Milne's field-glass. The second attack was made, and it must be remembered under what circumstances it was made. An urgent message had been sent after the general in the morning that the camp was threatened, and it must have become plain to everyone in the camp, by the time the second attack was made, that this urgent message had been disregarded. Owing to the neglect of the officer commanding the column,—we leave it to others to decide as to whether that officer was Colonel Glyn or Lord Chelmsford,—the camp had never been entrenched, and Colonel Durnford, when the second attack was made, found himself left to his resources in a position which it was impossible to hold, unentrenched, against the force that threatened it. What was, under these circumstances, his duty as officer in command? He had successfully,—owing doubtless to the distant and (to him) unknown co-operation of Colonel Harness,—repulsed the first attack, and now saw no chance of holding the camp

against a second attack, possibly, if not probably, made in greater force. His duty was, clearly, to sacrifice the camp, to save his men, and to cover, as far as possible, the line of communication with the base of the column at Helpmakaar. The situation was most critically dangerous. The Zulus were pressing on in large numbers, and the only thing to be done was to endeavour to hold the 'neck' with what men could be got together,—for it must be remembered that, according to Captain Alan Gardner's evidence, numbers were already 'on the road to Rorke's Drift.' The holding of the 'neck' was the place of danger and was therefore the place for the commanding officer. There was no appearance, at the moment, of any enemy in the rear of the camp between the hill and the river, and there might be, it seemed, if time could but be gained, a safe line of retreat for the whole force. The concentration,—as Captain Gardner's evidence also shows,—was accordingly ordered, and Colonel Durnford, gathering round him the few men who were willing to stand by him, prepared, as it would seem, with

the assistance of the two guns, to make a bold stand in an advantageous position, and thus to cover the retreat of the bulk of the force. But it was too late. The Zulus were already in large numbers at the other side of the hill. The brave little band was surrounded, and was probably being exterminated, man by man, as the two guns made their dash through the 'neck' in the endeavour to reach Rorke's Drift. The rest of the story is soon told. Those who had before passed through the 'neck' found themselves surrounded by crowds of Zulus, through whom it was almost hopeless to attempt to force a way. And only when all was lost,—when there seemed no chance of holding half-a-dozen men together,—did the two gallant officers, who have lately received their well-deserved posthumous honours, make an effort, happily successful though fatal to themselves, to save the colours of their regiment from capture.

“We find no fault with the distinction thus conferred; but who, in the light of these recently discovered facts, were the real heroes of that day?”

Surely the two officers who commanded in that narrow pass at the rear of the camp,—‘poor’ Durnford, whose ‘misfortune’ was so speedily telegraphed about the colony, and Lieutenant Scott, of the Natal Carbineers. Surely, too, no smaller heroism was that of the fourteen carbineers,—the best part of those who were missing,—who, mere boys as they were, gave their lives away in order to afford their comrades-in-arms a chance of retreat. The defence of Rorke’s Drift has been compared to the Pass of Thermopylæ. But was not the holding of this pass by the camp, in which every man shared the fate of the brave Leonidas and his companions, much more like that memorable action? The odds were greater; the choice more deliberate. Any one of these men might have had a chance for his life, had he chosen to follow the example set by so many. They remained, however, and they died; and only after four months of doubt, contradiction, and despatch-writing is it made known to the world who they were who have most deserved the coveted decoration ‘For Valour.’ Coghill and Melville?—yes; Chard

and Bromhead?—yes; but, more than all, Durnford and Scott. ‘Poor Durnford’s misfortune’ turns out to be no misfortune at all. The camp was lost through two causes,—first, the neglect of the officer, be he colonel or general, who neglected to see that it was entrenched; and next, the fatal error which led to the countermanding of Colonel Harness’s retrograde movement, which contained the one chance of saving the camp. ‘Poor Durnford’s misfortune!’—But it was the best fortune which Colonel Durnford could possibly have looked forward to. Five years before his military reputation had been assailed, his judgment called in question, his name rendered unpopular in a colony to which he was peculiarly bound. The grave of the three carbineers, at the head of Bushman’s Pass, was a grave in which seemed to be buried his own pride in his profession as a soldier. If the carbineers, who on that former occasion believed that three of their number had been sacrificed through Colonel Durnford’s blind obedience to a humanely meant order, could have made choice of a commander to

be under in an hour of imminent peril, Colonel Durnford would have been the last man they would have named. By a strange,—almost a startling,—turn of events, however, the carbineers found themselves again under Colonel Durnford's command in a moment when death seemed almost a certainty. Can we believe, however, that the old feeling of distrust remained with them? It is impossible. In moments when death is imminent,—moments which probably no man ever survives to speak of,—there dawns upon the mind a clearer light than is possible amid the worries and petty interests of ordinary life. And we may depend upon it that, during the short time that those gallant men stood together in the pass, while the enemy were pressing nearer and nearer, and while first one and then another fell death-stricken to the ground, there was a mutual recognition of worth which would have made up for a far longer period of misunderstanding. Could any man wish to die more happily than this,—covering a life which had been blighted with the memory of an undying glory, and receiving

the affection of those who, by force of tradition, were most prejudiced against him? We have said this visit to Isandhlwana has brought us down to the dry logic of facts; but there is a solemn pathos and a poetry about this incident which passes expression. We grudge no honours either to the dead or to the living; but we claim for these two, and for all who fell with them, an honour greater than any that has been or that can be conferred. Durnford and Scott,—there is a sermon in the coupling together of those two names which no colonist will ever forget. There lies in it the inculcation of those two noblest, and perhaps rarest, virtues under the sun,—the high honour of the gentleman and the broad charity of the Christian. There is talk of erecting a memorial church. But what church that could be erected would be more sacred than the spot where these fourteen young heroes were found sleeping the last sleep of honour between their two officers?"