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## PREFATORY NOTE

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W. J. B.

*Witness that hero, who to stubborn will  
Joins schoolboy humour and a veteran's skill.*

Dr. W. Haig- Brown.

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## CHAPTER I

## TWO NICKNAMES AND A MAXIM

‘A SMILE and a stick will carry you through any difficulty in the world, more especially if you act upon the old West Coast motto, “Softly, softly, catchee monkey” . . . and what is a sound principle for an empire is a safe one for an individual’.

So wrote Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell in the foreword to his book on the Ashanti Campaign of 1895-96, and the dictum is vastly typical of the man. About the ‘smile’ in his case there can be no sort of doubt; the ‘stick’ is a matter presenting more difficulty. Miss Baden-Powell once told an interviewer in reply to a question, ‘I cannot imagine him with a stick,’ and one finds it hard to reconcile B.-P.’s words with his sister’s opinion of his character. The maxim, however, aptly expresses Baden-Powell’s admirable policy of bluff, of which he has made such effective use in his many campaigns.

In the course of Baden-Powell’s life it is interesting to note the two nicknames out of many that have been bestowed upon him, which serve to show plainly that he lived up to the principle implied in the West Coast maxim; and of which, in some form or other, it was inevitable that he should be the recipient. The first title was conferred during his early career, when he was assisting in the operations against Dinizulu and commanded a column in attack. The Zulus knew him as M’Lala-Pahnsi, which is rendered best as ‘the man who does not hurry things’, or more liberally as ‘the one who sits tight.’ The title is descriptive of the man, and all the world knows that B.-P. did more to deserve the description later in his career. A second pseudonym, which is likewise typical of his habits and character, was Impeesa, the Matabele word for wolf, or expanded into its full picturesque meaning, ‘the beast that does not sleep, but sneaks about all night,’ an evident compliment to his solitary nocturnal scouting expeditions. Taken together, the two nicknames describe Baden-Powell as he has ever been — cool and watchful. These two points, coolness and watchfulness, are the traits in his personality which most forcibly struck the dusky foes against whom he operated. There are other traits, of course, which have done more to establish him as the popular hero he will always be whilst the memory of the South African War lasts.

The Baden-Powell family, or rather the Powell family — the name was not hyphenated until comparatively recent years — came originally from Wales, and their motto was ‘Ar nyd yw pwyll pyd yw!’ Literally the translation is ‘What is not prudence is danger,’ and there would appear to be an element of cautiousness about the motto which is foreign to the character of the present bearers of the name. Mrs. Baden-Powell, the mother of B.-P., has rendered it better by ‘Where prudence is, there is safety.’ This insistence upon safety rather than danger reveals the attitude of the family towards the difficulties of life, which is a capacity for dash and daring tempered with caution. In Mrs. Baden-Powell’s rendering, the family motto bears a striking resemblance to the West Coast maxim, ‘Softly, softly, catchee monkey,’ to which reference has already been made, and which Baden-Powell himself has construed into ‘Don’t flurry! Work up to your point quietly and steadily. In a word, “Patience!”’

It is this capacity for tireless patience, and for watchful coolness, combined with the natural buoyant gaiety for which Baden-Powell has always been known, that gives the key to the whole character of the individual. Baden-Powell must not be estimated by the general conception the public appear to have formed of him as the genial humorist, for such an estimate obscures a just notion of him. The public, quick to generalise from particular cases, notably the ‘one dog

killed' incident of the Mafeking report, are apt to see only a personality which is bubbling over with high spirits, and to lose the idea of the tireless, wary, responsible officer in the process. This is not to minimise the value of humour and exuberant spirits in the handling of bodies of men who may be labouring under the stress of abnormal tension.

An excellent example of this valuable gift may be seen from the following regimental anecdote, told to the writer by a former adjutant of the Gordon Highlanders, and probably new to the reader. The incident occurred at the battle of Talmai, in the Egyptian campaign, when the Arabs succeeded in breaking one of the two squares. During the tedious progress of General Graham's force through the 'Ditch' and down the Red Sea the voyage had been enlivened by some private theatricals conducted by the officers, and one young lieutenant had brought down the house by a screamingly funny performance as an Irish washerwoman. It was at the moment when our four gatlings had been captured; the firing in the immediate vicinity had ceased on the British side. The young lieutenant grasped the meaning of the ugly quietude — the men were wavering. He snatched up a rifle with a blood-streaked bayonet, and plunging at a prostrate Arab, rapidly untwisted his loin-cloth and caught it round the barrel of the rifle. Then with the white-and-red garment fluttering he charged the Dervishes single-handed, crying, 'Hurrah for Misthress Mulvaney's washing!'

The men behind him broke out into one of those strange sounds occasionally heard on a battle-field — a high-pitched hysterical scream of laughter — and, headed by a rugged old red-haired non-com came forward solidly. In the noise and racket of the fight the incident could not have been observed by many, but it was the corner of the square, and it was one of those little things which do happen, and proved the turning-point of the engagement. In just the same manner has Baden-Powell's rapid grasp of a situation, and his unfailing gift of humour, assisted to 'save his side' on more than one occasion.

His merry chuckle, or his quiet yet whole-hearted laughter have succeeded in awakening hope at the moment of despair. And, after all, this faculty is the secret of successful leadership. Baden-Powell is amongst the most versatile of men. He has been at once an efficient soldier, a picturesque writer and war-correspondent, an excellent black-and-white draughtsman, and a musician of no mean talent. Amongst his many talents is the gift of acting — he has always had a weakness for low-comedy parts himself — and his sympathy and kindly interest in his command have always won for him the affection and esteem of his men. This versatile, resourceful soldier, whose self-reliance and hardihood have become a by-word, is the type of what the British officer should be. He has always given the impression of a grown-up public-school boy of the variety that is dependable, and genial in spite of an inbred reserve. His modesty is best illustrated by his reference to his defence of Mafeking, on the occasion when he received the honorary freedom of the Borough of Guildford. 'I was merely the nominal figurehead,' were his words. 'Any other officer would have done what I did with the men and material that I was so fortunate to have with me defending the town.'

And his modest assertion only adds to the merit of his courageous and inspiring leadership.

## CHAPTER II

## A BRILLIANT FAMILY

Whenever a great man is under discussion, or a striking personality comes into prominence for the first time, there is always some interest awakened as to his family and his immediate ancestors: 'Who is he?' 'What are his people?' are the questions that naturally arise. These queries do not imply an undue inquisitiveness, nor is it vulgar curiosity that leads us to put them. There must be some degree of diffidence in answering in the case of one yet living, which would be the greater were we not persuaded that he would not resent inquiry into his family history, provided that the comments were neither unjust nor misleading. Several newspaper and other biographies have already been published about Sir Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, and we do not suppose that anything which has or may be written will much disturb the equanimity of our subject.

For those who feel any further curiosity than we are willing to satisfy in this chapter as to his parentage and descent, we will mention an existing document to which access may easily be obtained, 'The Pedigree of the family of Powell: . . . To which are added pedigrees of the families of Baden and Thistlewayte of Co. Wilts. Compiled and edited by Edgar Powell, 1891.' It will suffice for us that Robert Baden-Powell had certain undeniable advantages of birth and breeding which we will consider in due course.

His father, Baden Powell, a distinguished physicist and theologian, born at Stamford Hill in 1796, was the eldest son of Baden Powell of Langton, Kent, and Stamford Hill, at one time High Sheriff of Kent. Baden Powell was educated at Oriel College, Oxford, and ordained curate at Midhurst in 1820. The following year he obtained the living at Plumstead, but resigned six years later when he was appointed Savilian professor of Geometry at Oxford, which chair he occupied till his death. He was elected F.R.S. in 1824, and made researches in optics and radiation, being a fellow worker with the celebrated scientists Herschel, Babbage, and Airy. He was a man of rare gifts and application, and devoted much time to assiduous literary work. Besides various papers contributed to Philosophical Transactions on heat and light, and others before the British Association, he contributed a History of Natural Philosophy to the Cabinet Encyclopedia, and translated the autobiography of Arago the scientist. Keenly interested in theological discussions, he wrote many papers on doctrinal questions from a liberal point of view much in advance of his day. His best-known essays were on the Connexion of Natural and Divine Truth, The Order of Nature, Christianity without Judaism, and one particularly, upon Evidences of Christianity, which provoked many replies and much heated discussion. Some similarity in his work to that of Hugh Miller is inevitable, seeing that these two powerful minds, both deeply interested in religion and nature, should endeavour to reconcile the apparent conflict between natural and divine laws. In 1846 he married the elder daughter of Vice-Admiral William Henry Smyth. There were ten children of this marriage. Baden Henry Powell, who became the famous Judge of the Chief Court of Lahore and an eminent writer upon Indian law and land tenure, was the son of a former marriage, and therefore Sir Robert Baden-Powell's half-brother. Professor Powell died at Stanhope Street in 1860, and was buried at Kensal Green.

If Baden-Powell was fortunate in his father, he was even more so in his mother. Admiral W. H. Smyth, his mother's father, had three sons and two daughters. Of the first, Warrington became Mineral Inspector to the Crown; the second son, Fiazzi, was appointed Astronomer Royal for Scotland; and the youngest became General Sir Henry Smyth, with whom Baden-

Powell was associated in a military capacity in later years. After an honourable military career. General Smyth was Governor and Commander-in-Chief at Malta. Of Admiral Smyth's daughters, the elder, Henrietta Grace, married Professor Baden Powell; her sister, Georgina Rosetta, married Sir W. H. Flower, the scientist, who wrote a treatise on The Nerves of the Human Body, and also contributed to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Mrs. Baden-Powell, who it will be of interest to note is living yet at Prince's Gate, and who, though advanced in years, shows no signs of failing health, is a versatile and accomplished lady, besides having proved an ideal mother to her numerous family. Amongst other talents, she is very musical, has been no mean artist, is a linguist, and a mathematician; and, besides, shared her husband's love for science and nature. It is worthy of remark that she is a great-niece of the first Lord Nelson. The Smyth family claim a romantic ancestor in Captain John Smith, the Virginian colonist, who was born about 1580, and died in 1631. After an adventurous early life, including some years of residence amongst pirates and slavery to a pasha, he formed one of the 105 emigrants who sailed in three ships from Blackwall in 1606 to found Virginia. On a scouting expedition in the country of the Chickahominies, he was taken prisoner by the over-king of the Indians of the district, Powhatan. When about to meet his death, he was protected by the Princess Pocahontas; and after various episodes was made head of the colony of Virginia, after having been its guiding spirit for years. Pocahontas was the beautiful Indian princess who afterwards married Smith's lieutenant, John Rolfe, the colonist who first introduced the regular cultivation of tobacco into Virginia. Pocahontas, the daughter of Powhatan, was little more than a child when she rescued Captain John Smith from the stake.

John Smith's descendant, Admiral W. H. Smyth, was a writer on antiquities, besides having had an honourable career in the navy. He was at first in the merchant service, until his vessel, bought by the Government, was converted into a 50-gun ship, under Captain Johnston. Afterwards he saw active service in Indian, Chinese, and Australian waters. He was lent to the Spanish navy from 1810 to 1811, when he ably commanded a Spanish gunboat in the defence of Cadiz. After the war he surveyed the coasts of Sicily. It was characteristic of the Admiral, as it was afterwards of his grandson Robert, that much of his most valuable work was carried out unofficially, and from a pure zest for useful occupation. It was not till after he had surveyed the Sicilian coasts unofficially, that the Admiralty placed his services upon an official basis, when he completed the survey of the adjacent coast of Italy and the opposite shores of Africa.

But to return to Mrs. Baden-Powell and her family. It has been said already that she is an accomplished lady. As a mother, she was a most self-sacrificing and courageous one. On the Professor's death in 1860 she was left with a family of eight — seven boys and one girl — the eldest of whom was only fourteen years of age. There can be no higher tribute paid to her maternal care and efficient upbringing, than the success which all those who survived infancy — five sons and one daughter attained. It need not be said that, under the care of such a mother, they were brought up in an atmosphere of art, culture, and unselfishness. Dr. Jowett, Dean Stanley, Thackeray, Ruskin, and Browning were close friends of the mother, as they had been of Professor Baden Powell; and they were frequent visitors to the house in Stanhope Street during the early years of her widowhood.

It has been observed that in the families of our great men there is frequently a deterioration in powers and intellect amongst the subsequent members. But if this be true in many cases, it emphatically was not so in the case of the young Baden-Powells.

Sir George Smyth Baden-Powell, the second eldest brother of Sir Robert, made his mark in the world as both author and politician. He was born at Oxford, and received his earlier

education at St. Paul's School and Marlborough College. After leaving Marlborough, in 1866, he spent three years in travelling to all parts of the world — India, the Australasian Colonies, the Cape, Spain, Portugal, Norway, and Germany. As a result of his observations in Australia and New Zealand, he wrote an illuminating work on those colonies — *New Homes for the Old Country*. He entered Balliol College in 1871, taking his B.A. in 1875, and his M.A. three years later. In 1876 he won the Chancellor's Prize for a brilliant English essay upon 'The Political and Social Results of the Absorption of Small Races by Large'. Until going as Private Secretary to Sir George F. Bowen, then Governor of Victoria, in 1877, he was a student of law at the Inner Temple. His next book was *Protection and Bad Times*, with special reference to the Political Economy of English Colonisation, in which he opposed the notion that whilst free trade was good for a manufacturing country such as England, it was unsuitable for younger communities.

In 1880 he was employed on a Commission to inquire into the effects of the sugar bounties upon West Indian Trade, and with his observations fresh in his mind, wrote *State Aid and State Interference*. He was made C.M.G. for his assistance to Col. Sir William Grossman's inquiry into the revenue, administration, and expenditure of the West Indian Colonies; and was with Sir Charles Warren in the pacification of Bechuanaland in 1885, after which he made a tour of investigation in Basutoland and Zululand. The same year he was elected M.P. for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool, in the Conservative interest, a seat he retained till his death. He was one of the prime movers to establish the Canadian route to Japan, via Vancouver and Yokohama, by which the journey was reduced from forty-two to twenty-two days. This necessitated his residence in Canada; and he returned to act as Special Commissioner with Sir George Bowen in 1887, to arrange details of the new Maltese constitution. For the last services he was made a baronet, K.C.M.G., in 1888, though as a member of Parliament he received no financial reward. Because of his attention having been attracted to the Behring Sea dispute whilst on the Pacific Coast of Canada, Lord Salisbury appointed him to prepare and conduct the British case before the arbitrators in Paris.

In 1896 Sir George Baden-Powell took a party of astronomers to Nova Zembla, in his steam-yacht *Otaria*, to observe a total eclipse of the sun. An interesting incident of the return trip was his meeting, at Hammerfest, with Dr. F. Nansen, just on his way back from his North Polar expedition. Sir George carried the famous explorer with him to Christiania. He was also the author of *The Saving of Ireland: Industrial, Financial, and Political*, a treatise against Home Rule, which he completed some years before his death in 1898.

There are now living of Mrs. Baden-Powell's family, in addition to Sir Robert, Mr. Henry Warrington Smyth Baden-Powell, Mr. Francis Smyth Baden-Powell, Major B. F. S. Baden-Powell, and Miss Agnes Smyth Baden-Powell, and they have all achieved distinction. Mr. Henry Warrington Baden-Powell, the eldest brother of Sir Robert, first served in the Royal Navy, afterwards taking up Admiralty practice, and he is now a distinguished K.C. He also wrote a book on canoes and canoeing. Mr. Francis Baden-Powell is a noted painter, an old Oxford athlete, and a barrister. He has exhibited pictures at the Royal Academy, the Salon, and in various other galleries. Major B. F. S. Baden-Powell, the youngest son of Professor Baden-Powell, formerly of the Scots Guards, is a leading authority on aeronautics. He may often be seen on the 'flying-ground' at Park Royal, and elsewhere. In the South African War he attained distinction by his adaptations of man-lifting kites, and devised a new use for kites in war. This was at the engagement of Modder River, when he first used them as a means of replacing the lofty poles for transmitting and receiving stations required in wireless telegraphy, and succeeded in establishing wireless communication across a hundred miles of South Africa. He is an



experienced balloonist, a writer on aeronautics, and the editor of *Knowledge*, Miss Baden-Powell is well versed in languages, music, painting, and natural science. With Sir Robert she collaborated in writing the pamphlet — recently enlarged to a volume — on Girl Guides, and one of her hobbies has been the keeping of household pets. For many years she had a tame sparrow which would fly after her all over the house, perch on her shoulder, and feed from her fingers. She is especially interested in the training and future of young girls after they leave school. Truly a family of workers!

Three members of the family have married — Sir George Baden-Powell, who left a son and a daughter; Mr. Frank Baden-Powell, who has an only son; and in October, 1912, the subject of our biography, Sir Robert, who espoused Miss Olave Soames of Gray Rigg, Parkstone, Dorset.

It will be seen from the foregoing remarks on the family, that if there be anything in the theory of heredity, its members were bound to distinguish themselves in one way or another. Given the opportunity, Sir Robert Baden-Powell was sure to make his mark. He has all the gifts of the family, and he has made the most of his opportunities. It would be interesting to attempt to trace his various talents to their original sources. From his gifted father he doubtless inherited his capacity for work, and his literary facility, as well as his strong faculty for inductive reasoning; from his versatile mother he would inherit his artistic nature, descriptive power, and love of outdoor life; and this heritage would be developed by the untrammelled open-air existence he led as a boy. His native gifts as a leader, his power of command, and his executive ability, we can trace further back to his grandfather, the admiral with the scientific and antiquarian bent. And, although it may be stretching the point, may not his love for scouting and inductive reasoning based upon outdoor observations, be due largely to the strain of that picturesque old colonist, Captain John Smith? After all, this last assumption is not more fanciful than the theory that all the Baden-Powell family owe much of their musical ability and perception to their remote Welsh ancestry.

## CHAPTER III

### SIR ROBERT'S EARLY BOYHOOD

It is somewhat extraordinary that London has produced comparatively few great men, so it is well to put on record that Sir Robert Baden-Powell was a Londoner by birth. He was born 22nd February, 1857, the year of the Mutiny, at 6 Stanhope Street, W. For godfathers he had two of the most famous men of the time, Dr. Jowett and Robert Stephenson, the celebrated engineer. It is scarcely to be wondered, then, that one of B.-P's earliest ambitions was to become an engineer.

Professor Baden Powell's direct influence on 'Ste', as Sir Robert has always been called in the home-circle, could not be great, inasmuch as he died before the latter was quite four years of age. But, indirectly, the talented Professor was largely responsible for the conditions under which his sons were brought up. It had been the father's habit to have the youngsters with him daily, even when preparing such important papers as those for the Ashmolean Society. They accompanied him in his walks; he showed them how to observe wild life and the beauties of nature, and they were never taught to regard his study as forbidden ground. Professor Baden-

Powell's nature was as open, hearty, and spontaneously jovial as that of Canon Kingsley, and his children always looked to him with the confidence that should exist between a father and his sons.

The training thus commenced was continued in precisely the same manner by Mrs. Baden-Powell. The boys were with her constantly, and from their earliest years learnt from her to be unselfish and forgiving, to love honour and truth, to bear pain with fortitude, and to appreciate Nature's moods. The confidence they learned in her judgment and decisions, then, has never been weakened by time, and in Robert Baden-Powell's life, as in those of his distinguished brothers we can but recognise, —

A noble mother must have bred so brave a son.

Mrs Baden-Powell taught the children simple facts of natural history — not from books, for she believed that practical instruction was of far more importance than book-learning — but from first-hand observation of the real thing. She taught them to identify trees from their peculiarities of growth as well as foliage, to collect wild-flowers and insects, and to note the habits of the various wild creatures which came under their notice. Can it be wondered, then, that little Ste's nature was moulded under the formative influences around him, so that he should imbibe a love of nature, an appreciation of its wonders, and a power of minute and searching observation! His faculties developed marvellously under this sane system of instruction, and when books did become part of his course of education, his mind was reinforced by the unconscious habits of thought he had formed, as well as by unsuspected scraps of acquired knowledge, and his lessons presented a task easy of accomplishment, instead of being the wearisome grind that children taught more formally find them. Herein no doubt lies the explanation of the ease with which the boy mastered his various subjects: his naturally active mind and acute brain had been so prepared that he could grapple with almost any subject, and find in learning a real joy. All through, his career was one of 'continuous progress,' whether at preparatory school, public school, or in the army, and he had nothing or no one to thank for this, but his capacity for work, and the training of his mother.

Of course, he could not learn to observe living creatures and their ways, without applying the same habits to friends of the family. At a very early age he showed powers of mimicry, which were occasionally rather embarrassing. One of his youthful tricks was to stalk an unwary guest of his mother's, until he had crept quite behind his chair, when he would leap forth with a startling 'cock-a-doodle-doo.' There was not an animal of the farm-yard or the wood that he could not mimic passably almost before he wore knickerbockers.

When Robert Baden-Powell was seven, his brother Augustus, who had reached the age of fourteen, died, his loss being felt very deeply by all, as was bound to be the case in such a united family.

'Ste.' Baden-Powell might be regarded by some folks as rather a precocious boy. Possibly he was — but that did not matter in his case, because he was never allowed to know it. His mother was always pleased to note his rapid progress; but neither she, nor his elder brothers, ever acted in such a way as to encourage his 'showing off.' There would be fewer objectionable people in this world at the present time if they had been brought up under similar sensible treatment.

The occupation for which Ste. showed great predilection in his nursery days was cutting out in paper the shapes of animals, and mounting them on cardboard. One can almost hear the rapturous yells with which his achievements in this direction were greeted by the other boys when they duly placed them on the looking-glass in the schoolroom. There is still in existence a

spirited group of camels and camel-drivers that B.-P. cut out in this way, without assistance, when he was about three. At this age he could dress and undress himself, and had some notion of German, besides speaking his native language fluently, if not with great distinctness. It makes one feel how sad is the lot of the 'only' child, when one reflects upon the advantages the association with the other boyish members of the family gave him.

From cutting out camels, young Ste. proceeded to map- drawing and painting. He was under the care of a governess until he was eleven, and Mrs. Baden-Powell and the governess were exercised in their minds as to whether the boy should be allowed to draw with his left hand, as it was soon apparent was his habit. On the matter being mentioned to Ruskin, he settled it by declaring it was the best thing to do. Henceforth the youngster was allowed to draw with his left hand, and consequently he acquired such facility with both hands, that, in his Charterhouse days he could draw with the left hand, and shade the drawing simultaneously with his right. The point reminds one of a favourite saying amongst skilled artisans, 'Did you ever know a left-handed man to be a poor mechanic?' Charles Reade was so impressed with the desirability of being ambidextrous, that he declared ambidexterity should be enforced by Act of Parliament.

On the occasion when Ruskin watched Baden-Powell making his childish sketches with his left hand, he did more than express his opinion that the boy should be allowed to continue in that course; the great man drew and coloured a copy of a vase, whilst the boy looked on with parted lips. The drawing of the great artist and art-critic, and the vase, are still preserved at Mrs. Baden-Powell's house. Another memento which Sir Robert prizes, is a shilling with which Thackeray presented him when, as a small infant, he had strayed into the dining-room. Sir Robert regards that shilling with as much reverence as does the modern Carthusian when he is shown Thackeray's pencil in the Charterhouse Library.

The children were each given a little garden to cultivate; and in the holidays they had glorious times at their grandfather's house near Tunbridge Wells. This was Langton House, the residence of Admiral W. H. Smyth. Here they made nests for themselves in the tallest trees of the wood, where they read books, or talked, or played every sort of game of 'make-believe.' They collected birds and animals, which they stuffed themselves, for the home-museum; and the future scout of the Army learnt to ride almost as soon as he could walk.

At the age of eleven Robert was sent to a private school near his grandfather's, in order that he might spend his exeats and holidays at Langton House. The school chosen was Rosehill, Tunbridge Wells, and the head master was a clergyman, Mr. Allfrey. Young Baden-Powell won golden opinions whilst at Rosehill; his lessons presented no difficulty; his progress was steady and continuous ; and Mr. Allfrey said that his character was such as to improve the whole moral tone of the school. One trait in Sir Robert Baden-Powell's life is particularly striking — his unswerving loyalty to the schools where he was educated — sure proof that he regards them as great factors in his attainment of success and distinction. Quite recently he paid a visit to Rosehill. We all know the glamour that attaches to our first school; and we only hope the illusions of his childhood were not shattered.

During the summer holidays, when the eldest brother was home from sea, the four other boys would be enlisted to join him on his yachting excursions. These occasions furnish some of the happiest memories the brothers ever had, recollections they can dwell upon with rare gusto even now. Before Henry Warrington left the Navy for the Admiralty Bar, he was qualified not only as a lieutenant, but in seamanship and navigation as a master-mariner; and it was no child's play that the brothers were invited to join.

Warington was ten years the senior of Sir Robert, and his authority was unquestioned by the boys. The first boat he possessed was a five-ton yacht of his own design, and the brothers used to ship as crew, and learned to do everything that a sailor should, — to sail and steer, to keep watch, to rig and splice, and above all, to acquire that sense of individual responsibility which is the best asset a youngster can have. Baden-Powell has much to thank his sea-going elder brother for, and not the least were the resourcefulness and power of endurance which come to those who ‘use the sea.’ The brothers shared dangers in common with the enjoyable experiences; they never seem to have quarrelled, or to have met any difficulties that cheerfulness or skill could not surmount; and though they frequently had a ‘wet shirt’ and brine-blistered hands, they were never fearful or dismayed. On some occasions the three youngest — Francis, Robert, and Baden — would go off on an ‘independent command’ in the sailing-dinghey to fish for bass in Portsmouth harbour; and in spite of the difficulties of tides and winds they always turned up smiling to the good-humoured Warington, who awaited them in the yacht. On one occasion, when off the Isle of Wight, they encountered a squall, and their boat — a ten-tonner this time — was dismasted. However, they fitted up a jury-rig for the next day’s race off Yarmouth, and actually succeeded in getting a second-place under these trying circumstances. They sailed all round the south coast in their yacht, and in one of the long holidays got as far as Norway.

Sir Robert relates in one of his articles to *The Carthusian*, the school magazine of the Charterhouse, in the issue of June, 1875, an exciting experience that the brothers had in the Solent. Their boat was known as the *Emerald*, and it was run into and damaged by another yacht, which he refers to as the *Crasher*. Not the least entertaining feature of his description of the collision is his scornful reference to the proprietor of the *Crasher*, who apparently had not the nous to do what was the seamanlike thing under the circumstances, and thus avert an accident. The article is full of boyish humour, and a rich delight in the escapade.

Another incident of these days is related by Mr. Harold Begbie, who describes how the youngsters made their way in Warington’s collapsible boat from London to Llandogo Falls on the Wye. Scorning the railway journey, they performed the distance with the aid of the boat, rowing by day and sleeping at night. They even crossed the Severn by its means, and rowed up the Wye, to the admiration and astonishment of the Welsh people in the neighbourhood. It must have been fatiguing work lugging the boat from river to river, but the boys managed it; and we may depend upon it, their self-reliance and independence of character were strengthened by the experience.

One thing in which young Robert shone at this time was the management and acting of private theatricals. His brothers, recognising that in this matter he was supreme, placed themselves at his disposal, just in the same way as the navy man was recognised as the skipper of the boat. Robert always showed an undeniable talent for acting, and it suited him always to appropriate the funny man’s part, for which all agree he was admirably adapted. During this same period also, he learned to ride almost anything that went on four legs. He and his brothers could stick upon a half-wild forest pony; and they have always been known for their good horsemanship.

So we see that the future General was brought up in entirely healthy surroundings, with the love for active outdoor pursuits that an English boy should have, and with a home life for which he has every reason to be thankful.

## CHAPTER IV

## ‘FLOREAT ÆTERNUM CARTHUSIANA DOMUS’

There are few men to whom public-school life has meant more than to General Sir Robert Baden-Powell. The years of early boyhood we have just discussed were undoubtedly years of great formative importance; but now the training of his mother, the influence of his family, and his two years at Rosehill were to be superseded by life at a great school with great traditions — the school of many noted men, including Havelock, Ellenborough, and Thackeray. Baden-Powell was in his thirteenth year when he entered the Old Charterhouse School, in Smithfield, as a gown-boy, nominated by the Duke of Marlborough. Dr. Haig-Brown was the head master of the school, but the gown-boys were instructed under the care of Mr. F. K. W. Girdlestone. When the gown-boys were dispersed throughout the school, Baden-Powell went into Mr. Girdlestone’s house, and was under his direct care throughout his school life, so this gentleman had actually more to do with the direction of his education than even the head master, who was generally responsible for the whole school of between five hundred and six hundred boys.

It is difficult to glean adequate facts of a boy’s school life, when he has distinguished himself in his after career. Except for the school records, the only information usually obtainable is from memory, as no one can foresee what will come of any one out of a number of boys, and it is a mere accident if a boy makes any distinct mark. Still, there are a good many interesting facts concerning Sir Robert’s school-days, with which the writer has been supplied largely through the courtesy of the masters at Charterhouse.

The entry in the Charterhouse Register relative to R. S. S. Baden-Powell reads: —

‘7th son of Rev. Baden Powell, F.R.S., Savilian Professor of Geometry, Oxford. Entered Charterhouse, Oration Quarter, 1870. A Gown-boy, subsequently transferred to Mr Girdlestone’s House. In the School Football XI as goal-keeper, 1876. [‘A good goal-keeper, always keeping very cool.’ Carthusian, April, 1876.] In Shooting VIII, 1874 and 1875. Left Long Quarter, 1876’.

Owing to the fact that his parents had consistently discouraged all cramming of his youthful mind, Baden-Powell entered Charterhouse by a low form. He possessed, however, something better than a store of undigested facts. This was a vigorous healthy body, and an untrammelled mind. What he knew, he knew well, his observation had been carefully cultivated, his memory was tenacious, and his judgment, moreover, was extremely clear and accurate. In consequence of the ease with which he mastered his work, he was stimulated to further efforts.

Learning was a pleasure, and he had sufficient ambition to desire to excel. Whatever he did, he attempted with all the strength of purpose he possessed, and followed it to its conclusion with his full, power of will. A weaker-willed or a less energetic boy would have done what he was instructed to do, without much enthusiasm, and been content with satisfying his Form Master.

With Baden-Powell it was different. He flung himself into his work with the same keenness that he exhibited in his play. And is not all this the finest testimony to his valuable early training that one could have? Drive a child by force to his first lessons, and he will ever after jib at them. Allow him to nibble his mental food at leisure, till he has discovered for himself the pleasant

taste of acquisition, and then, if he has no latent apathy of character, he will help himself to the food his mental nature requires. Lessons were play to Baden-Powell — serious play, as all enjoyment is to properly-constituted young people. The mastery of his work filled him with as much delight as any performance in the playing-fields; and this attitude of seriousness in work and play helped to make him what he became.

So well did he study, and so well did his healthy body and vivacious spirits assist his mind, that in three years he had attained the sixth form, and was one of the most promising boys at Charterhouse.

About two years after his admission, the school was removed from the old building at Smithfield, which Thomas Sutton had founded and endowed, to Godalming. One may imagine it was a source of keen delight to find himself living in the beautiful countryside in which the new building stands, though perhaps he regretted some of the exciting tussles that the Carthusians had had from earlier times with the lads in the neighbourhood of Smithfield Market.

Dr. Haig-Brown, speaking of Baden-Powell's achievements at school, said: 'From the first he showed an exuberant joyousness, but I cannot recall any incident in which this betrayed him into want of respect for his masters or lack of consideration for his school-fellows. He became at once a popular boy. This popularity grew as he gave evidence of the many accomplishments he possessed — a singular power of mimicry, and a remarkable facility in drawing. Taking one pen in the right hand, and the other in the left, he could draw two pictures simultaneously. His sketches were beautiful — not, perhaps, evidences of art training, but actual reality. When he had been at the school about two years, the removal was made to Godalming. In the somewhat trying circumstances of this removal, he proved most useful. He showed remarkable intelligence and liberality of feeling — most boys are so conservative by nature — helping to smooth over the difficulties involved in the change to the new place, and taking up every school institution which was new. He was by nature a born leader of boys, as he has since become of men. His progress in school work was steady and continuous.' <sup>1</sup>

On another occasion Dr. Haig-Brown, in speaking of his former pupil, and after reference to his nick-name of 'Bathing-Towel,' which was some indication of his popularity amongst the boys, added: 'He was very active, lively, full of fun and amusement, and exceedingly popular with his school-fellows. He was extremely clever in every sort of way, and his accomplishments were numerous. He was remarkably clever with his hands, and he could draw two pictures with his hands at the same time. He was a splendid actor, frequently taking part in the school theatricals; and he had an attractive style of writing. He was fond of athletics of all kinds, and in ail he undertook he showed a fertility of resource, coupled with a keen sense of humour, which has been displayed again and again during the siege of Mafeking.' <sup>2</sup>

Baden-Powell's head master, speaking of his character, expressed himself in words which would be commendation to any one, when he asserted: 'He was a boy whose word you could not doubt.' And what warmer praise could one desire than in the Doctor's article concerning him that appeared in *The Church Monthly*: 'In his attitude to the younger boys he was generous, kind, and encouraging; and in those early days gave no slight indication of the qualities which have since gained for him the confidence, respect, and love of all the soldiers who have been under his command.'

The chief qualities which Dr. Haig-Brown seems to have remembered were his strength of purpose, his uprightness of character, and his eagerness to learn. There is no doubt that, as at the preparatory school, his personality had an elevating influence upon the general tone of his schoolfellows. He was a lad in whom self-respect was inbred, and whose moral nature was intrinsically sweet and clean.

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<sup>1</sup> The Chief Scout, W. Francis Aitken.

<sup>2</sup> The Surrey Advertiser,

His old house master, Mr. Girdlestone, speaks of him in the same tone of high commendation. He says that, though Baden-Powell was very reserved by nature, and never had any one particular chum, he was quite free from shyness, and always at his ease with the masters. The boys of his day, who perhaps knew him most intimately, are now the Ven. Canon William Foxley Norris and the Lord Bishop Burrows of Lewes. It speaks volumes for his character and popularity with the other boys that his habit of free conversation with the masters, in the afternoon walks, etc., did not in any way offend their notions of how a boy should comport himself with reference to his superiors at school. Even with Dr. Haig-Brown, in whose presence most boys found it difficult to appear at ease, he was always self-possessed. Everything that would conduce to the welfare of the school he entered upon enthusiastically, and he greatly assisted to carry out Mr. Girdlestone's idea of a school orchestra. Since his time Charterhouse has always had an excellent boys' string-band; and Sir Robert did his utmost to assist with every other school undertaking that was commenced in his time. The value of this attitude is apparent when one recognises that without the active co-operation of the boys themselves all such innovations are of short duration. The enthusiasm of masters cannot be maintained permanently without a corresponding feeling on the part of the scholars.

Throughout his school career, Baden-Powell's restless energies made him exert himself in the music room, and in the playing-fields, to a degree that would have sent any other boy, who worked as hard at his lessons, home with nervous breakdown. One can imagine some of the youngsters, less favourably endowed with animal spirits and vim, sighing at the contemplation of Master Robert, who was absolutely physically incapable of doing nothing. He was always actively employed, and, what is far more important from the standpoint of effectiveness, it did not matter how many things of high import — from a schoolboy's point of view — he had in hand, he did only one at the immediate moment, and concentrated the whole of his abundant energies on that, to the exclusion of all else. It is unusual to find a boy of school age with the power of concentration so highly developed as it was in Sir Robert.

His chief game was football; his chief indoor recreation, amateur dramatic entertainments; but he fairly bristled with other interests. He was the life of the theatrical representations at Charterhouse, to which we shall refer more fully later; and the humour and schoolboy wit he exhibited within doors was the cause of his always having an audience without. When he kept goal — which was his favourite position on the football field — there was always a group of admirers round the posts at his end. For, whenever opportunities offered, or play was in the other half, Baden-Powell used to enliven the proceedings in his own vicinity by a flow of banter directed at players and spectators which was irresistibly funny.

His wit was not perhaps of a very high order; it flowed chiefly from his tremendously high spirits; but his manner of delivering himself of his superfluous energy was so spontaneous and exhilarating, that his companions saw humour where in any other boy they would have seen only a weak attempt at it. His gaiety was so unforced and natural, that they had to laugh willy-nilly. And, then, he was always up to such extravagant novelties. When he effected a clearance, or carried the ball forward, it was frequently done with an ear-piercing whoop which itself was almost enough to clear the field of opponents to the half-way line. Yet, in spite of his magnetic flow of spirits, he was always as cool as the proverbial cucumber. Every match was a little Mafeking to him. He was there, in the position of responsibility to keep the citadel, and incidentally to encourage his side by word and deed. They knew he was 'dependable,' and it was comforting to have that invigorating and inspiring personality behind the team in a hard game.

Though football was his chief game, and that in which he found most enjoyment, he threw himself into other sports with the earnestness he evinced in everything he did. He played both cricket and racquets, though he never showed anything like team 'form' in either, and the fact that he played at all these games in which he did not shine, points to his youthful idea of doing what he could in every direction. He had all the good schoolboy's scorn of a 'slacker,' and in no sense could he be said to have slacked at the games for which he had no natural or acquired skill.

He was a member of the choir, and a regular contributor to the school magazine, as well as a prime mover in all the dramatic representations that were inaugurated in his time. He was upon the Athletics Committee for two years, and strenuously gave his support and best endeavours to the School Shooting. In connection with the shooting, he was chosen to represent the school in the competitions at Wimbledon on two occasions. His younger brother, Baden, now Major Baden-Powell, was at Charterhouse with him, and was likewise a Girdlestonite.

In some ways Baden-Powell's gift of exuberant gaiety and schoolboy humour has a tendency to obscure a right conception of his youthful character. We are apt to forget his earnestness and enthusiasm in laughing at his drollery on the playing fields and stage; and perhaps to fancy that because he was joyous even to boisterousness he could not possess great steadiness of character. To correct this notion, from which even Dr. Haig-Brown confessed a tendency to suffer, we will say that Charterhouse seldom possessed a pupil with a more steadfast nature than young Baden-Powell. He was, of course, the noisy, fun-loving, old 'Bathing-Towel' that everyone was accustomed to greet with a friendly grin and a shout of laughter — his high spirits were always infectious — but during his residence at Charterhouse there were few boys with a higher sense of duty, or with better principles.

In one's estimate of his earlier days, it becomes apparent that he had a high sense of his duty to himself and his family. Evidently he recognised that if he was to succeed in any career it must be chiefly by his own endeavours, and by his own capacity for sticking to things. Robert Baden-Powell had character before he went to Charterhouse. The life at public school strengthened his natural manliness, but did not create it.

## CHAPTER V

### CHARTERHOUSE DAYS, AND AFTER

There are few things one appreciates so highly about Baden-Powell's habit of mind as the loyalty he has always shown to his old school. It is evidently more than mere gratitude for the splendid start it gave him, — it is an abiding love for the Charterhouse and his old masters. Before leaving for the Cape in 1898, he wrote to Mr. Girdlestone for a list of all the school fixtures, in order that he could be with the boys in spirit at least, and that he might be able to see any event due to happen immediately on his return. All through the years we constantly find references to his old school, and see clearly that he kept in sympathetic touch with it. This chapter must necessarily be somewhat broken and discursive, because our intention is to deal in it with as many Charterhouse notes and jottings as possible, so as to prevent the necessity for returning to discussions of Baden-Powell and his old school at every other page. The need for



this procedure is conclusive evidence that he has always been, and always will be, as much bound up with the school, as generations of Carthusians, past and present, will be with him.

One or two anecdotes recorded by Dr. Haig-Brown naturally call for mention here. ‘On one occasion,’ the Doctor related, ‘we had a master who was somewhat shy, and who had contracted a habit of frequently saying to the boys, when they approached him on any matter, “Don’t you see I’m engaged?” After a time it was whispered that the master’s affections had really become engaged. The news got to Baden-Powell, who, on pretence of asking some question, approached the master. The latter, from force of habit, looked up and said, “Don’t you know I’m engaged?” Baden-Powell, in that inimitable way of his, simply ejaculated, “Oh, sir!” to the delight of all those within hearing.’<sup>1</sup>

On another occasion to which Dr. Haig-Brown refers, a school entertainment was in progress, when one of the performers unexpectedly backed out at the last moment. ‘The boys were beginning to get somewhat impatient at the long pause,’ said the Doctor; ‘so I said to Baden-Powell, who was sitting next to me: “We must do something. Cannot you fill up the gap?” He immediately consented, and, rushing on to the platform, gave them a bit of his school experiences. Fortunately the French master was not present, for he described a lesson in French with perfect mimicry. It was inimitable. It kept the boys in perfect roars of laughter.’<sup>1</sup>

This story is suggestive of a later occasion when, at some social function, one of the entertainers, a conjurer, failed to turn up. The hostess begged Baden-Powell to amuse the audience, and he consented with alacrity. Borrowing a silk hat from one of the men present, he turned back his sleeves, and with the usual jargon of the profession, proceeded to cut the ‘topper’ up with a knife into a large number of squares. He had just completed this when the professional entertainer was announced, and Baden-Powell left the stage with a broad grin, and the announcement, ‘As Mr. has now arrived, I shall be happy to leave the rest of this interesting performance in his hands.’

Whilst on the subject, we may quote a reminiscence told by Mr. Harold Begbie in the Pall Mall Gazette. It depicts ‘Good Old Bathing-Towel,’ as the boys called B.-P. affectionately, in a characteristic setting. ‘Some years after he had left school, Baden-Powell happened to visit Charterhouse on the evening of an entertainment. The funny man failed to turn up, and Baden-Powell was pressed into service. Among his performances he described an “At Home,” to which he had been in London, and where he found himself announced as Mr. Bread-and-Fowl. He told how he picked out the only respectable-looking man present as his host, shook hands with him, and found it was the butler. The recital of that adventure, with innumerable comic details, lives in Charterhouse to this day, and the funny man who did not turn up is forgiven’.

Mr Girdlestone instanced to the writer as an example of Baden-Powell’s versatility and general desire to make things ‘go,’ how on one occasion when Mrs. Baden-Powell gave a dance, each of the guests received a dance-programme, with a design in black-and-white which the versatile soldier had drawn. ‘You will understand what an amount of time and patience it represented,’ said Mr. Girdlestone, ‘when you consider the usual number of guests there would be in a London house.’

Mr Girdlestone related too, with much enjoyment, how Baden-Powell, who played the violin extremely well at the Charterhouse, was found on various occasions in the House Music Room, with shoes and stockings off, mounted upon a high stool, and gravely making music on the piano with his ten toes. When other instruments palled upon him, the Hero of Mafeking was fond of drawing sweet sounds from a mouth-organ or an ocarina.

<sup>1</sup> The Chief Scout. W. F. Aitken.

One of Baden-Powell's former House Master's possessions, which he cherishes with kindly memories of his pupil, is a copy of Mr. Warington Baden-Powell's book on Canoe Travelling, published in 1871, and bearing upon the fly-leaf, 'Presented to F. K. W. Girdlestone, Esq., by his affectionate R. Stephenson S. Baden-Powell'

The House Master also recollects the story that has been told of the customary Lemon Peel Fight on Shrove Tuesday. This annual engagement was formerly arranged as Gown-boys v. School, but now that the former have been distributed throughout the various houses, the sides are usually made up from Town v. Country. The lemons given to the boys to eat with their pancakes were jealously preserved and used as ammunition in the fight on the green. On this occasion the sides were just drawn up for the fray, when Baden-Powell appeared enveloped from head to foot in defensive wrappings. Bounding between the opposing forces with his face only just visible amidst his bandages, he sat down abruptly on the grass. Then in the calm tones of one who is 'armed and well prepared,' he announced, 'Let the battle commence.' This is just one of the novel acts which endeared him to his schoolmates. But to turn to the records as we find them in the school magazine.

The first reference to his gift for acting is in The Carthusian of October, 1873. Box and Cox had been given by some of the boys in the Gown-boy Writing School. Baden-Powell appeared as Cox, and the entry states, 'Baden-Powell gave full satisfaction, startling the audience by a display of his immense knowledge of the sciences, of mathematics, and music, in his songs of Stay, Bouncer, Stay, and The Buttercup, or Diddle-diddle-dum. It was brilliant and spirited acting.'

Later on we note, on an occasion when the band and choir gave an entertainment, 'Baden-Powell and Hansell, as two gendarmes, sang a duet in marvellous costumes.'

In November, 1875, Baden-Powell gave two monologues, as Captain Sabretache from the Heir at Law, and Toby Whistler, or the Wandering Minstrel. His performance in Little Toddlekens, as Mr. Jones Robinson Brownsmith, was thus noted: 'Mr. Brownsmith was excellent, and fully secured the sympathy of the audience in his numerous perplexities; he would, however, with a little more study, have been more successful in his soliloquies.' Reference is also made to his acting the part of Jacob Mutter, the servant, in Taming a Tiger. More than a score of years later, in June, 1899, Colonel Baden Powell acted in the Old Carthusian Theatricals at the Haymarket Theatre, when the part assigned to him was that of the Head Master.

The prologue written by Dr. Haig-Brown for the theatricals at Charterhouse in December of the same year, whilst Baden-Powell was gallantly defending goal at Mafeking, is distinctly worthy of quotation at length: —

Brother Carthusians, we have come to-day  
The annual tribute of our love to pay:  
Thus, stealing from the throng of busy men  
We wake the echoes of our youth again,  
And set ourselves according to our power  
To move your laughter for a leisure hour.

Deem us not thoughtless, if we would beguile  
More serious musings with a harmless smile,  
If, while we list each thunderclap of war  
Peeling across the waters from afar,  
We try, amid the clash of hostile arms,  
To snatch a moment's respite from alarms;

Life is a puzzling medley: hopes and fears  
Alternate reign triumphant joys and tears;  
And even amid the antics of the stage  
Grave cares and anxious thoughts our hearts engage:  
For ever and anon our memories rove,  
Swayed by the magnet of Carthusian love,  
To our brave warriors, who in deadly fight  
Maintain the cause of England and of right —  
Witness that hero, who to stubborn will  
Joins schoolboy humour and a veteran's skill,  
And, spite of Cronje, holds Mafeking still;  
Witness all they who, when the leaden hail  
Shatters around them, waver not nor quail;  
And witness those, whom duty called to die  
In the front ranks of Britain's chivalry;  
Though in the barren veldt their bodies claim  
Only a soldier's grave, their deathless fame ‘

Lives in our hearts and adds, by fresh renown,  
New laurel leaves to our Carthusian crown.’

One of Sir Robert Baden-Powell's last visits to Charterhouse was on the occasion of the tercentenary celebrations at Godalming, on Saturday, July 8, 1911, when he took the part of Colonel Newcome. Needless to say, the role of Thackeray's hero fitted him marvellously well, and the photograph in the souvenir of the proceedings shows how excellent was his make-up. He recited the words of his part with slow and deliberate enunciation, and very solemn must the thoughts put into his mouth have been to the Old Carthusians gathered there. One could have imagined it to be grand old Colonel Newcome himself in the flesh, as he soliloquised, ‘Heigho! How one lives in the old days now! It's pleasant dreaming! Who would have thought they'd be such company! And it's the best of them stand by one to the last. Where are they now, old comrades of the bivouac? In their graves belike! Ay, like enough! But the same moon shines on the quiet sod. We used to say, that as she neared the full, she'd keep our memories bright, and there she shines! over the roof-ridge here, and there over the old fort at Peshawur, or on the Khyber Cliffs! I might be campaigning again, on the wide veldt under the stars, and my head pillowed upon the saddle, they and I still youngsters. There were no such nights! Give me the soldier's life for making young blood course and hearts beat free, and knitting friendships up. That keeps alive the boy in us, which never need grow old’.

From earlier school records it may be seen that Baden-Powell first served on the Sports Committee in 1873. He played football in the first team for two years, playing for Present v. Old Carthusians, in November, 1874. With reference to the match against Westminster, in ‘75, we read: ‘Powell in goal was very useful.’

The entries concerning his association with the school rifle-corps begin in 1874. Early next year he was made Corporal, and before the end of the same year received his Sergeant's chevron. He represented the school in the Shooting Eight in 1875 and 1876. In September, 1875, Corporal Baden-Powell was 2nd for Charterhouse, at Wimbledon, with 48 points; Sergeant C. N. Nicholson was 1st, with 50 points. That year Harrow won the Ashburton Challenge Shield, and Charterhouse was fifth out of nine schools.

As has already been remarked, Baden- Powell left Charterhouse in 1876, at the Long Quarter (i.e. April). In May he paid a visit to Professor Jowett, his godfather, at Balliol, and as a result of an informal examination, was told that he was 'not quite up to Balliol form.' (!) It had, already been decided that he should enter the army, after two years at Oxford, and arrangements, were actually made with Dean Liddell for his entering Christ Church in October. However, it happened that in July an open examination for direct commissions into the army was held in London. Without any previous preparation whatever, Baden- Powell determined to sit, and astonished not only himself but everybody else by passing fifth out of over seven hundred candidates. This was excellent testimony to his work at Charterhouse, especially when it is remembered that great numbers of the candidates had been 'ground' especially for the examination. In September he was gazetted a sub-lieutenant in the 13th Hussars, and, moreover, his commission antedated two years by reason of his high position — he had passed second for the cavalry.

This, of course, was the end of his school days, and the consistent work of the past four years had earned a well-merited reward. He sailed at once to join his regiment in India, just before the proclamation of the Queen as Empress.

Before dealing with his subsequent career, there are some further notes on Baden-Powell's connection with Charterhouse that it will be advisable to include in the following chapter, as they will read, perhaps, more fittingly there than elsewhere.

## CHAPTER VI

### MORE CHARTERHOUSE NOTES

As some further illustration of the affection with which Baden-Powell has regarded the school that nurtured him, space should be found for the following extract from the Carthusian of February, 1900: — 'From Daily Telegraph, February 8th. — The following letter was received by a near relation of the gallant officer to whom England is looking with interest and admiration. It was carried through the Boer lines in a quill stuck in a Kafir's pipe, and has only just been delivered in this country. "Mafeking, Dec. 12th, 1899. — All going well with me. To-day I have been trying to find any Old Carthusians in the place to have a Carthusian dinner together, as it is Founders' Day; but so far, for a wonder, I believe I am the only one among the odd thousand people here. This is the sixtieth day of the siege, and I believe we're beginning to get a little tired of it; but I suppose, like other things, it will come to an end someday. I have got such an interesting collection of mementoes to bring home. I wonder if Baden is in the country? What fun if he should come up to relieve me! I don't know if this letter will get through the Boer lines; if it does, I hope it will find you very well and flourishing."'

Even amidst the responsibilities and cares of that arduous siege, he was mindful of the annual anniversary of Founders' Day, and anxious to find some fellow-Carthusians to spend it with him. Later on, even, when the horrors and the cares of the siege had become more pronounced, when disease was rife, and starvation not only threatening but imminent, we find him writing cheerfully and gratefully to his old House Master, Mr. Girdlestone, at Godalming. 'I can't tell you,' he writes from Mafeking, on April 7th, 1900, 'how much my happy family here appreciate the kind thought of Charterhouse in wishing to provide us with good things. If we

have the good luck to get them by-and-by they will indeed be most acceptable; but in the meantime, it does give us an immense fillip to “buck up” when we find that we are the objects of so much kind thought at home. It is a curious thing that I am the only Carthusian here. I called for names to get up a dinner on Founders’ Day but I had it all to myself. However, I did not the less fail to drink the health of the old school. I hope some day this siege will end, and I can then write you at length. The stamp on envelope may be useful to philatelists!’

In September, 1901, Major-General Baden-Powell and other Carthusians, who had seen service in South Africa, Ashanti, or the China campaigns, were entertained at a dinner in the Hotel Cecil. The Lord Chief Justice of England was in the chair, and in proposing the toast of the guest of the evening, he said: ‘One of his most striking characteristics, both at school and since, had always been his kindly attitude to those in a less exalted or less fortunate position than himself.’ In his reply, Baden-Powell mentioned two anecdotes of his old Head Master, which throw some light upon Dr. Haig-Brown’s personality. He described how on one occasion, at Old Charterhouse, he was leading a desperate fight over the hoardings against some boys of the Town. He and his companions had advanced some distance in pursuit, when they discovered that they were themselves pursued by the Doctor. The latter called him up; and Baden-Powell obeyed the summons in some fear and trembling. There was a silence; the Doctor searched for something in the folds of his gown, and produced — a key! ‘I think,’ said he, ‘if you go through that door there, you will be able to take those cads in the rear.’ The second story to which the General alluded had reference to another street row in the vicinity of the Old Charterhouse. There had been sundry missiles thrown, and one of them, a half-brick, unluckily had fallen upon the hat of an individual in a passing omnibus. In righteous indignation he had got down, and called at the master’s house. When he got into the imposing presence of the Doctor, however, his heart began to fail him, and it was some moments before he could make his complaint. ‘It is a pity,’ he at last began haltingly — ‘It is a pity that passengers cannot ride on the top of an omnibus without the danger of bricks and other things falling upon them.’ ‘Yes,’ responded the Doctor, in his most serious manner, ‘it is a great pity; it is such a dangerous thing to ride on the top of an omnibus when there is a fight going on.’

On 28th September, 1901, Major-General Baden-Powell paid another visit to Charterhouse School at Godalming, for the purpose of laying the foundation-stone of the new cloister. It should be mentioned that when the school was removed from London, and before the ancient building was taken over by the Merchant Taylors’ School, the whole of the old cloisters were transported stone by stone to the new site, and there set up. The name of each former Carthusian is carved upon a stone, and the visitor to Godalming may now walk through the cloisters and read the names inscribed upon the tablets. Thackeray’s will be readily found, as well as those of Dean Liddell, Havelock, Ellenborough, Bowen, etc. At the conclusion of the South African War it was found necessary to build a new cloister, and Major-General Baden-Powell was honoured by the invitation to lay the foundation-stone. Close by the new cloister is a field-gun, used in the defence of Mafeking, which he presented to Charterhouse. It is an antiquated seven-pounder of the muzzle-loading variety, and is in itself a strong suggestion of the straits to which the garrison was driven for artillery of any sort. Dr. Rendall was at this time Head Master of Charterhouse; and when he invited B.-P. to address the assembled school, the General, in a spirited speech, exhorted the boys to ‘buck up and play the game.’ The incident is strongly suggestive of Mr. Henry Newbolt’s school-poem with that title, and may easily have inspired it. June, 1903, saw the General once again in the neighbourhood of Charterhouse, shaking hands with his old House Master. The visit this time was to receive the honorary

freedom of the Borough of Guildford. Earlier in the day, as Inspector-General of Cavalry, he inspected the Oxfordshire Hussars at Blenheim Park. The guard of honour at the town-hall consisted partly of the cadets of Charterhouse. He was presented with the freedom of the borough in a silver-gilt casket. The parchment bore a scroll, reading *Palmarum qui meruit ferial*, and was sealed with the seal bearing the words *Burgus et ville de Guildeforde*. He had received a tremendous ovation at Guildford station, and in response to repeated demands for a speech, he told the crowd of a school-boy escapade in which he and 'another boy' (we suspect the other boy to have been his brother. Major B. F. S. Baden-Powell) figured at that very place. On their way home from school one holiday, the mischievous youngsters had 'pinched' the hand-bell from the station-platform at Guildford, hidden it carefully from official eyes, and taken it with them in the train for several stations up the line. It was gently pitched out upon the grass as the train slowed up, and its loss occasioned much speculation and search until it was found some days later.

For the last thirty years he has been an occasional contributor to the illustrated magazine. The *Greyfriar*, a periodical printed only for circulation amongst past and present Carthusians. It is a magazine contributed to solely by former, and occasionally present, scholars; and a perusal of its pages will abundantly illustrate the wealth of real talent which Charterhouse has produced since the inception of *The Greyfriar*. Drawings and letterpress reach a very high standard, and the contributors are amongst the best-known writers and artists of our day. Baden-Powell's first contribution to Volume I, for the years August, '84, to December, '89, is a vigorously written description of a boar hunt. The drawings which accompany it are wonderfully accurate and realistic; indeed, all his illustrations in *The Greyfriar* are more finished and artistic than most of the sketches in his books for general publication. It would seem that he might have been as successful in an artistic career as he has proved in soldiering.

An extremely interesting series of articles with sketches, sometimes in pen-and-ink and sometimes wash, follows the article upon the boar hunt. The articles were contributed from 1889 to 1900, and appear under the general title of 'My Hats.' There is one about 'The Service Cap' and a second dealing with his experiences of tracking lions follows under the sub-title of 'The African Helmet.' This is succeeded by 'The Afghanistan Helmet' which deals with Baden-Powell's service life in the eighties.

That entitled 'The Billycock, Illustrations and Initials by R. S. S. Baden-Powell' is particularly interesting. Like the other contributions, it represents an actual experience of the narrator. The incident happened when he was offered the part of Sam Gerridge, the gas-fitter, in a dramatic representation of *Caste*. Baden-Powell entered into the business with enthusiasm, and, in order to fit himself successfully for the role and to get the correct local colour, he went to live in south-east London as a gas-fitter. On one particular gala day he went with his gas-fitter mate, who had no suspicion that he was other than he represented himself to be — a tradesman out of work — to one of the London bank-holiday resorts. A fracas took place, and the disguised officer in the billycock and ready-made clothes, protected some girls from rough treatment. It was a repetition of the fisticuffs that B.-P. indulged in once when at Old Charterhouse. As a result of his intervention, the 'plumber' was introduced into the house of the girls' father, an honest and worthy carpenter named Jim Bates, and, in consequence of that visit, the future General and the Lambeth carpenter have been firm friends ever since.

Another sketch, 'The Polo Hat,' is a true account of a tragic event in the playing-field, when a young and promising officer met his death on a polo-ground in India. It is marked by a simple sincerity and a moving pathos which shows the capacity for deep feeling possessed by the

writer. 'The Austrian Hat' presents an illuminating sidelight upon the narrator's idea of a holiday. It describes Sir Robert's experiences when, as an officer on furlough, he went disguised to Vienna for the purpose of watching the autumn manoeuvres of the Austrian army.

In the course of his unofficial travel he has been to Algeria, to examine the military aspect of affairs in that country. A further contribution to *The Greyfriar*, under the title of 'The Algerian Hat,' describes a grim incident which he witnessed at a place called Sidi-el-Benah, on the Algerian frontier. It is the narrative, presented with realistic details, of the military execution of a man for insubordination.

Following an account of 'The Value of Pig-sticking' is a sketch called 'In Barracks,' which, obviously drawn from life, is instinct with kindly sympathy, and in which, reading between the lines, we can see indications of the traits which make Sir Robert so popular with the rank and file. He narrates how the regimental blackguard, who has lost all privileges of leave, comes to his officer to prefer what he believes an impossible request for permission to absent himself from the depot for a few days. The man is evidently crushed by his sorrow — it is the loss of his mother, and he is desirous of going to her old home to arrange about the burial — but he is bowed down by his grief, and the fact that he has no means of meeting the expenses of the funeral. In a few tactful words the officer elicits from the broken man the particulars of the affair, and when the soldier is on the point of breaking down, he wins his lifelong respect and esteem by granting him leave of absence upon his sole responsibility. He makes the man see that he is trusting him to the full, and without allowing him to feel a sense of helplessness, gives him the wherewithal to furnish the necessaries. The narration is unforced, and the telling most delicate, though it cannot conceal the officer's kindly nature. As Baden-Powell relates in the conclusion, when the regimental scamp passes out of his presence with his permit, 'I send him out with a "don't-be-a-fool" pat on the shoulder, but my right hand is richer for a hot and grimy tear-splash.'

The subject of 'My Hats' is resumed in 'The Scouting Hat,' where the writer describes some exciting enterprises in Matabeleland, where he was locating the rebel impis by nocturnal expeditions; and in the same volume of *The Grey friar* is an article entitled 'The Bravest Man I ever saw.' The latter is an account of an incident of the taking of the Tungi Pass, on the North-West Frontier. To Vol. IV. Baden-Powell contributed a most absorbing article, 'Leaves from my Sketch-Book.' The sketches and text are reproduced directly from the sketching-block, so that the writing is a facsimile of that of the gifted draughtsman. It deals with a pig-sticking expedition. 'At the invitation of the Maharajah, four of us went to Patiala (about twenty miles distant from our camp) to pig-stick with him,' says the author, and concludes with a spirited drawing portraying how 'General Preetam Singh in our party had a narrow shave of an accident, coming on a blind well in the middle of a crop of mustard; but his horse cleared it.'

The latest contribution of the General to the magazine is an exposition of 'Tracking,' in which he has included drawings of the hoof-prints made by horses at the canter and the gallop respectively, as well as a most ingenious discussion of what may be deduced from the reproduction given of a bicycle track on a dusty road.

Instances of Baden-Powell's lifelong and affectionate connection with Charterhouse might be multiplied, but would be beyond the scope of these notes. There is one special feature of the library, however, to which reference must be made — this is the fine portrait of the General in his scouting attire — felt hat, flannel shirt, etc., which hangs there for all admiring Carthusians to see. The particular interest attaching to this portrait is that it is the result of but two or three sittings to the artist, G. F. Watts, who came over from Compton for the purpose of

painting it; and that it was one of the very last pictures upon which the famous painter was engaged immediately prior to his death.

## CHAPTER VII

### ONE OF THE 'EVERGREENS'

The regiment to which young Baden-Powell was gazetted lieutenant in September, 1876, was the 13th Hussars, then stationed at Lucknow. This famous regiment was the same which, then known as the 13th Light Dragoons, formed the right of the cavalry line in the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. Besides being termed the 'Evergreens,' the regiment is variously known in the army as the 'Green Dragoons,' the 'Geraniums,' and the 'Ragged Brigade.' The motto is 'Viret in Mternum' (Flourish for Ever), and the badge V.R. in a garter under a crown. When Lieutenant Baden-Powell joined, the regiment was under the command of Sir Baker Russell, an officer who had seen service in the Mutiny and the Ashanti War.

Young Baden-Powell made a characteristic progress to the cantonments at Lucknow, which showed that neither the voyage to India, nor the feeling of loneliness natural to a young fellow in a strange land, had been able to damp the exuberance of his spirits. He turned up, it is said, in advance of a crowd of European children, who were marching behind him to the strains of 'The Girl I left behind me,' which he was performing with great gusto on an ocarina. The commanding-officer must have thought the new-comer was an 'original' at the very least, when he heard the manner of his arrival; but he was quick to learn the value of the youngster, in the mess and on duty.

For Baden-Powell, though a humorist, was no buffoon. He was a hard-working officer, and entered upon his new duties in exactly the earnest spirit he had shown at Charterhouse. It was evident he meant to get on, and he settled down to learn the details of soldiering, and particularly of cavalry operations, in a manner that won the praise of all his superiors. His progress in India, as it had been at school, was 'steady and continuous.' Before 1883 he had completed various maps of the country in which his regiment was quartered, and had travelled over the greater part of Afghanistan by the time he was twenty-three. He was popular with the officers as a subaltern, because he was companionable and cheerful, always good-humoured, and never put on 'side.' They recognised his anxiety to learn his profession, and he was never above asking questions or benefiting by the experience of his seniors. The men worshipped him. He was just one of those dashing, happy-go-lucky spirits that appeal to them, and he won their regard by his thoroughness on duty, and his general consideration of their comfort. Men, soldiers at least, resent being coddled. They have no objection to taking advantage of a young officer disposed to make much of them, but they smile up their sleeves. Baden-Powell did not coddle his men; he kept them up to their work, and inspired them with his own enthusiasm; above all, he did not make the mistake of supposing that the men in the ranks are all fools. He gave them credit for being sensible, intelligent fellows, and the 'Tommies,' appreciating his attitude, did their best to deserve it. Just what the young officer's opinion of his men was, may be seen from the preface he wrote to his Aids to Scouting some years later, when experience had taught him the justice of his early estimate. 'Tommy Atkins,' he writes in his note to instructors, 'is not the childish boy that the British Public are too apt to think him, to be ignored in peace and petted in



war. He is, on the contrary, a man who reads and thinks for himself, and he is keen on any instruction in really practical soldiery, especially if it promises a spice of that dash and adventure which is so dear to a Briton'.

One great friend the young Lieutenant made on his introduction to the regiment was Captain K. MacLaren, now Major MacLaren, D.S.O., and this friendship has lasted all through his life. Major MacLaren is a celebrated horseman and polo-player, and doubtless a community of interests and tastes in the first instance attracted the two officers to each other. Captain MacLaren was worshipped alike by brother-officers and men. In the mess he rejoiced in the sobriquet of the 'Boy' whilst the men nicknamed him 'The Little Prince.' Both he and Lieutenant Baden-Powell idolised the regiment, and, as a natural corollary, the regiment idolised them. It is interesting to note that the friends shared honours in the sport of pig-sticking, as Captain MacLaren won the Ganges Cup, given annually by the Cawnpore Tent Club, in 1883, the year after Baden-Powell won the blue-ribbon of hog-hunting — the Kadir Cup.

As sportsman and horseman, Lieutenant Baden-Powell particularly appealed to the troopers, though his seat is rather that of the gentleman-rider than the cavalryman. There were few better riders in the army, and none more graceful. He sits his horse with a perfect poise as though he and the animal are one, not with the stiff posture so often seen. As a consequence, the horse carries him with less fatigue than he would a rider of equal weight who does not accommodate himself so naturally to the motion of his mount. The worst of horses is 'quiet to ride' with B.-P. 'up.' That deceptive elasticity of his belies the power of his leg- hold; the grip of his knees and thighs is like iron; and, it is said, that he never mounted a horse that could beat him. With an unruly horse he has one watchword — 'patience,' and one maxim — 'sit tight'; and by his cool persistence and powerful grip, he has rendered obedient and docile the most bad-tempered horses. No animal recognises so fully as the horse when he has met his master, and Baden-Powell's horsemanship seldom fails to the extent that he has to use whip or spur — except in the case of a 'spoiled' mount badly in need of a lesson.

If the riding practised in his boyhood's days stood the young lieutenant in good stead when he joined his regiment, how much more so did his youthful predilection for map-making, when he began to direct his efforts towards the requirements of an officer's career ! We have already referred to the maps and surveys he made on his own initiative as a junior officer in India. They were productive as early as 1878, two years after he joined, in his gaining a special certificate for Topography, when he passed the Garrison Class in the First Class. He was assiduous in his attendance at the Adjutant's lectures, though, it is suggested that when the subject-matter failed to interest him, he could not refrain from caricaturing the lecturer or the other members of the class in his note-books.

Shortly after passing the Garrison test he returned to England, and underwent the Musketry course at Hythe, with the result that he took a First Class Extra Certificate, and on his return to India was appointed Musketry Instructor at the camp at Quetta.

During the previous two years the campaign in Afghanistan had been in progress, though the 'Evergreens' took no part in the war until later. The disaster of Maiwand occurred in 1880, when Sir Frederick Roberts performed his remarkable march to retrieve it, and for his distinguished services gained the title of Lord Roberts of Kandahar. Soon after the troops had occupied the place, the 13th were sent there, and Baden-Powell accompanied them. The policy of the Government which replaced Lord Beaconsfield's ministry was to come to terms with the new Ameer, Abdur Rahman, in order that the British forces could retire from Afghanistan. Our wish was merely to retain such small portions of territory as were necessary to give India a good

defensible frontier and command of the passes which an invading army must traverse in its way from Afghanistan. By relinquishing Kandahar, which we might easily have retained, we gave the now friendly Afghans to understand that we had no designs on their country. We succeeded, also, in convincing the Ameer that we wished to be on friendly terms with him and his people, and that we would maintain the independence of Afghanistan in the face of Russia.

While stationed at Kandahar, the irrepressible Lieutenant organised a performance of *The Pirates of Penzance* with the greatest success. He managed everything, devised costumes and dresses, and — there being no European lady in the Afghan citadel — himself acted the part of Ruth. Probably it was when staying in England to undergo the musketry course at Hythe — at any rate, it was when he was spending a few days at a South Coast resort — that the ‘nurse’ episode took place. The anecdote has been told many times, but will bear repetition. He was walking along the promenade with a friend on a very hot day. ‘Suddenly, without explanation of any kind, B.-P.,’ to give the story in Mr Begbie’s rendering, <sup>1</sup> ‘sat himself down on the kerb, placed his billycock hat solemnly on his knees, and buried his face in a flaming red handkerchief. This unprecedented sight stirred the depths of the one and only policeman’s heart, and he strode valiantly across the road, prepared to do his duty at all costs. Touching B.-P. upon the shoulder with his white cotton glove, the constable demanded, in a deep voice, “Arnd, whaat’s the matter wi’ you, eh?” Slowly removing the handkerchief from his eyes, and with a perfectly solemn face, B.-P. explained that he had just at that moment tumbled out of his nurse’s arms, and that the silly woman had gone on without noticing it.’

So successful was the versatile young officer at this time as an actor, and so well was he known for his powers, that he was offered a position in a London theatre at a salary of ten pounds a week. The offer was made him by letter, and was mailed out to him to his regiment in India.

Some time subsequent to the evacuation of Kandahar, Lieutenant Baden-Powell had a nasty experience with a revolver. He was toying with the weapon, which he had no notion was loaded, when it went off and the bullet entered his leg. It might have been a far more serious business, but the wound has never healed very satisfactorily, and he has been reminded of this incident of peace on a good many occasions since. This is somewhat remarkable as Baden-Powell, who has run more risks of wounding or death than most, has in some unaccountable way got off very lightly.

In 1882 the lieutenant was given more responsible work as Adjutant and Musketry Inspector to his regiment. He held the position of adjutant to the 13th Hussars till February, 1886. They were years of strenuous work, for he never spared himself, and they were years of distinct gain in his power of handling men. He recognised that the best means of maintaining order and efficiency in a regiment are to keep the men at work, and to supply them with absorbing and interesting occupations. He lived almost entirely for the regiment, and conducted classes in scouting and signalling which, besides proving valuable to himself, did much to maintain the tone and efficiency of the regiment. Some idea of his industry and desire for efficiency may be gained from the fact that he wrote two of his army manuals in the course of his work as Adjutant. The first is the *Manual on Cavalry Instruction*, written after his appointment on the Board for formulating cavalry regulations, at Simla, in 1884, the year after he obtained his

<sup>1</sup> The Story of Baden- Powell.

troop; and that so young an officer should receive such an appointment is eloquent testimony to his superiors' opinions of his powers. The book was first published in 1885, and a second edition was called for the following year. The other volume, published in 1884, was called *Reconnaissance and Scouting*. In his preface to the book he writes: 'Success in modern warfare depends on accurate knowledge of the enemy, and of the country in which the war is carried on. Scouts are the eyes and ears of an army, and on their intelligence and smartness mainly depends the success of all operations. The brain and strong arm, the general and his troops, are helpless unless the scouts explain where, when, and how to strike or to ward off attack. These lessons are the notes, revised and augmented, of a course of instruction conducted by the author.' Some of the maps in the volume were made whilst Baden-Powell was yet a Lieutenant.

His onerous duties as Adjutant did not prevent him from indulging in what he calls the 'sport of Rajahs'. In the year that he returned from Afghanistan he killed over thirty pigs, and in the year after (1883) he killed forty-two. The later date must have been a proud one for the young Adjutant, for it was signalised by two very gratifying events. He was given his troop, and he won the Kadir Cup for hog-hunting. The latter was in the nature of a bigger triumph than usual, since he won the coveted trophy of the Meerut Tent Club against the largest field that had ever turned out in the first eighteen years of the annual event. There were no fewer than fifty-four starters, and Captain Baden-Powell won the cup on a favourite chestnut, country-bred, named 'Patience.'

Somewhere about this date also he saved a comrade's life under circumstances of which he could feel justly proud. A man-eating tiger was mauling a friend, and Baden-Powell killed it with a shot from his rifle. Bad aim, or any unsteadiness, due to the excitement of the moment, might have been fatal to his comrade.

With reference to the Kadir Cup, it should be noted that the event was, in the first instance, merely a point-to-point race over a pig-sticking country. It took its name from the Kadir or river-bed country in which it is competed for. In 1870 the competitors had to ride with spears in their hands, but it was not till four years after that the character of the competition was radically changed. It became a pig-sticking competition, and was run after pig, with the long spear. A discussion of the sport, based upon Baden-Powell's field classic *Pig-sticking and Hog-hunting*, which he published in 1884, follows in the next chapter.

In addition to obtaining his captaincy in 1883, Baden-Powell was made Brigade-Major to the Cavalry Brigade at Meerut Camp of Exercise, and acted also as Station Staff Officer and Cantonment Magistrate at Muttra. Sir Baker Russell was still in charge of the Cavalry Brigade, and the work threw Baden-Powell and Sir Baker into daily contact.

It was probably on account of this association that Sir Baker Russell selected Captain Baden-Powell in 1884 for special work very much to his taste. They both went home on leave when President Kruger came to England, and the convention of Pretoria was modified in such a way that it became necessary to establish a British protectorate over Bechuanaland. This was not accomplished without some difficulty with the Bechuana chiefs, which culminated in the murder of a British resident, and an expedition to Bechuanaland was arranged to enforce British authority. Sir Charles Warren was placed in charge, but there was some preliminary work first to be done. This was a reconnaissance in the country, for which Sir Baker Russell was detailed, and Captain Baden-Powell accompanied him. Together they carried out the reconnaissance, and whilst in South Africa the subject of our sketch accomplished a survey of six hundred miles of the Natal border, which was the more wonderful as it was an entirely solitary exploit. The visit to South Africa was of more general interest later, as it included Baden-Powell's first acquaintance

with the little town on the border of Bechuanaland, the defence of which afterwards made him famous.

Early in 1887 trouble was brewing in Zululand. As early as February, the Natal Mercury published a report of a meeting of Zulu chiefs to protest against Sir A. Havelock's settlement of the Boundary Commission. They complained that all their good country was being taken from them, and announced that they would insist on their rights or die. It was decided later that Zululand should be divided between the Boers and the British, though it is doubtful whether without our aid the Boers would have obtained any portion. In February, British authority was extended over Eastern Zululand, and the chiefs, meaning to appeal to the Queen direct, refused an audience to Sir A. Havelock. In March Zululand was proclaimed a British possession; we annexed it in order to protect the Zulus from the Boers, though it was not till July that the proclamation was read to six hundred Zulu chiefs, and the British flag hoisted.

In September Dinizulu, the young son of Cetewayo, endeavoured to get the Boers to help him against the British. He was fined in cattle by the governor of Natal, and told that as a British subject he must now obey British authority. Three troops of dragoons and some mounted infantry were sent to Zululand, and Dinizulu submitted. In June, 1888, another outbreak against our rule occurred. The chiefs were attacked by the police and military for stealing cattle, and though the rebels under Ishingana were defeated after a severe conflict, in July a further rebellion under Dinizulu broke out. After various engagements he surrendered to the Transvaal Government in September, and to the British in November. He was sentenced to ten years imprisonment and transported to St Helena.

During the voyage home from Durban in the Pembroke Castle, B.-P. shone as a humorist. Work was finished for the time, and he was in holiday mood. He organised, almost daily, concerts on the deck abaft the bridge, at which he usually presided as chairman. His 'stump speeches' were very funny. There were many ladies aboard the boat, and he would introduce the various passengers something in this vein: 'Mrs. \_\_\_\_ will favour us with "so-and-so."' On the lady smilingly declining, B.-P. would express his regrets, and explain that if she had obliged she would have sung 'like this,' and would proceed with a characteristic version of the lady's hypothetical efforts.

He had forgathered on the voyage with a veteran chief engineer, who had initiated him into all the secrets of the refrigerator. This was his cue for declaring 'Mr \_\_\_\_' (mentioning the chief by name) 'will recite "Forty Years in a Freezer."' No! — well I am sorry, I must do it myself,' and he proceeded with a humorous imitation of the 'dour Scots engineer,' forthwith.

There happened to be on board a naval Lieutenant and a major, who were not on speaking terms, and Baden-Powell electrified his audience one day by gravely announcing, 'Major Blank and Lieutenant Dash will kindly sing the duet, "Strangers Yet."' It was too much, the audience broke out into a roar of delight, and the two men instituted a harmonious acquaintance.

Baden-Powell took no part in the preliminary troubles. He was in England at the time of the Jubilee celebrations in June, 1887, where he acted as Brigade-Major at the Jubilee review. Afterwards he was sent by Lord Wolseley to Aldershot, to test the desirability of equipping the cavalry with machine guns. It was proved that though horses would be of service in transporting the weapons rapidly from place to place, they formed a considerable handicap in the shooting. Indeed, where the guns were employed with the horses attached, only 29 per cent, hits were made, while with the horses unlimbered the percentage was doubled.

Early in 1888 Captain Baden-Powell was sent to act as aide-de-camp to the commanding officer at the Cape. The commanding officer was his uncle, Lieutenant-General H. Smyth, and

Baden-Powell acted as his aide-de-camp, and also in the capacity of assistant military secretary till 1893. He thus saw active service in the Zululand operations of 1888, and as intelligence officer to the force received honourable mention for the way he carried out his 'onerous duties.'

In 1889, when a British representative was sent on a commission to Swaziland, and conferred with Joubert and Smidt, Baden-Powell acted as secretary to the commission; and in the following year, when Lieutenant-General Smyth took over the Governorship of Malta, his nephew accompanied him as A.D.C. and A.M.S.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PIG-STICKING

The subject of this chapter is the sport in which Baden-Powell excels, and for which he acquired such a keen relish whilst in India. His book, *Pig-sticking and Hog-hunting*, has been for many years the standard work on the subject, and is delightful reading. No one can peruse it without being thrilled by the excitement of the chase, or impressed by the wealth of detail and recorded observation the volume contains. The sport may well be called the \* sport of Rajahs.' It might equally well be called the 'sport of riders,' for none but the most skilled and practised horseman could hope to excel in this exciting and dangerous game. It is something like sport too, — where man and beast meet on equal terms; and where man is victor, not by reason of his superior weapons, but by reason of his intelligence, courage, and physical prowess.

The origin of pig-sticking was the bear-sticking formerly practised in Bengal. When bears became scarce, the practice of spearing boars instead was instituted, and the innovation proved that the chase lost nothing of its exciting attributes thereby. In the early days of hog-hunting the sportsmen were furnished with short heavy spears, which were hurled at the boar, and the interest of the pursuit lay in the rivalry to be the first to get a spear through the hide of the quarry.

To quote from the book, the modern form of the sport is as follows: — 'A beat is organised, and the hunters are posted in parties of three or four at points of vantage along the edge of the jungle or cover. On a boar breaking cover, the party nearest to it starts to ride it, each man racing to be first to come up with and spear the hog — thereby winning the honours of the run. The "first spear" won, it remains for the party to unite their efforts to repel the attacks of the boar, and finally to overcome and kill him with their spears, which are retained in the hand throughout the encounter.' The spears which have been in use since hog-hunting was defined and regulated as a sport are seven-foot bamboo poles with a small steel head, though in some localities a short 'jobbing' spear is employed. The idea is to put an instrument into the hunter's hand which does not give him an undue advantage over the ferocious animal, and renders it necessary that he should come to close quarters to use it. When it is considered that a single spear will rarely, if ever, bring down a charging boar; that, more often than not the weapon — unless directed with absolute precision and firmly held — glances off the animal's tough hide; and that a usual specimen of the boar stands higher at the shoulder than a dining-table, besides being as fleet, or fleetier, than any horse, it will be seen that the pastime presents far more possibilities of excitement than the so-called 'sport' of shooting tame pheasants.

Sir Robert Baden- Powell is a firm believer in pig-sticking as a pursuit for the white man in India. He points out that the civil servant who follows the sport will come more directly into contact with villagers and others under his sway; he will be visiting various localities and outlying places at times when otherwise he would be expected to be elsewhere; and by his prowess — for all nations are hunter-worshippers — he will increase his prestige as a man of courage and of action. Again, he will obtain the knowledge of horsemanship which is so necessary in the country. Baden- Powell advocates pig-sticking for the soldier just as convincingly.

‘Apart from the fact that any hardy exercise conduces much to the training and formation of a soldier’, he writes, ‘pig-sticking tends to give a man what is called a “stalker’s eye” but which par excellence, is the soldier’s eye. It teaches him to keep looking about him both near and far, so that by practice he gets to notice objects in the far distance almost before an ordinary man can distinguish them even when pointed out to him. In difficulties of ground he will learn to keep a look-out to the front, and not only see his way over present obstacles, but also the best line to take when these have been successfully disposed of.’ And again, ‘In addition to the necessary preliminary qualifications of being a good rider and skilled in the use of one’s weapons, one must have acquired the art of getting over the ground by the shortest way, and must be ever on the look-out for opportunity, and ready to seize it when it occurs, and make the best use of it, to the extent of one’s gifts and determination; in a word, one must have matured not only the “pluck” which brings a man into a desperate situation, but that “nerve” which enables him to carry the crisis to a successful issue’. The sport calls especially for intelligence, accurate observation, and skilful deduction. It is difficult to select examples from Sir Robert’s book, because of their multitude, but here is one that he quotes from another hunter (Mr Saunderson) to show how the Shikari draws his conclusions. Early one morning Mr Saunderson was riding through the jungle with two professional trackers walking in advance of his elephant. They came upon the ‘pugs’ or tracks of a tiger on the path, but passed them by without giving the slightest signs of having noticed them. Not so the beaters who followed the hunter. They came running after the trackers to jeer at them for their apparent lack of skill, alleging they had passed by the marks of the very tiger for which they were looking. The only reply that the beaters were vouchsafed was ‘Idiots! At what time do rats run about?’ When the crest-fallen beaters examined the pugs more attentively, they saw that over the foot-prints was a delicate tracing caused by the toes of the field-rat. The professional trackers in one swift glance had noted this important fact which the beaters had missed, and concluded that the pugs could not be fresh as the little animal, which had subsequently left its tiny footprints on them, comes out early in the night and retires again long before dawn.

The wild boar is one of the craftiest of animals. Until the beaters have passed, he will lie low in a clump of cane, or a bush that looks far too small to conceal an animal of his bulk. The moment the line has gone beyond him he will break back and, without wasting time, make for that portion of the cover which has already been beaten, or, if driven into the open, he makes directly for some neighbouring place of concealment utilised on former occasions, and of which his cunning little brain retains a tenacious remembrance. His speed and endurance are nothing short of marvellous. When in ordinary condition, that is, except when he has been concealed for weeks in the immediate vicinity of a melon patch or a crop of luscious sugar-cane, he can outpace the fastest horse in the open for almost a mile. His burst when first disturbed is only to be marvelled at, and if the shelter of the friendly jungle is but two or three hundred yards away there is no catching him.

Pigs take to water very readily, and are expert swimmers — at any rate, the wild variety of Indian boar. When pursued through bush they will stop and hide with almost inconceivable decision and rapidity, in order to steal out again the moment the pursuit has swept by, and trot back in the opposite direction. They are clever enough to make free use of obstacles to hinder their pursuers, and never hesitate to face the most dangerous paths. A boar has been known to rush straight over a steep cliff fifty feet high, pick himself up undamaged, and get clear away over the plains below. When hard pressed, he has a facility for doubling — ‘jinking’ is the term applied to the hunted boar — ^that a hare might envy; and he jinks at just the moment when the pig-sticker is about to thrust, in such a way as to throw horse and rider yards from his new course. He is cunning enough also to plunge amongst a herd of buffalo or deer in order to escape the hunter’s eye. And he never, when pursued for any length of time, fails to turn and charge.

The boar is amongst the most ferocious of all animals. He is afraid of nothing, and will face anything, be it bull-buffalo, elephant, tiger, or human being; nor does he always wait to be attacked, before charging. He is the only animal that will go down to water at the same time and place as a tiger; and Baden-Powell recounts a pitched battle between a tiger and a boar that met at a water-hole. The only preliminaries were a roar from the tiger, to which the boar responded by a short rush. The tiger crouched low, crawling stealthily round the boar, who, bristling with rage and ferocity, wheeled in time to the tiger’s movements, and kept his deadly tusks determinedly facing his opponent. At length the tiger flattened his striped body right down to the ground, and wriggled his limbs under him — he had got his distance. Then, with a loud roar, he sprang quick as lightning upon his foe. The struggle was thrilling in its intense excitement. With one swift, dexterous sweep of the strong, ready paw, the tiger fetched the boar a terrific slap right across the jaw, which made the strong beast reel; but with a hoarse grunt of resolute defiance, with two or three sharp digs of the strong head and neck, and swift cutting blows of the cruel, gashing tusks, he seemed to make a hole or two in the tiger’s coat. Both combatants were streaming with gore. The flesh and skin had been torn off the boar’s cheek and forehead, and he was half blinded by the down-hanging flap. He charged the tiger anew. The beast, as lithe and quick as a cat, doubled almost on itself and alighted clean on the boar’s back, inserting his teeth above the shoulders, tearing with his claws, and biting out great mouthfuls from the quivering carcass of his maddened antagonist. Just then, either by accident or design, the boar fell forward, bringing the tiger sprawling on the ground. The boar got his forefeet on the tiger’s carcass, and almost disembowelled his foe with two or three short, ripping gashes from the strong white tusks. Then both animals, giddy and sick with the wounds they had received, lay palpitating on the ground side by side and too exhausted to rise; and the hunter who witnessed the ferocious combat gave each his quietus with a bullet from his gun. An examination of their carcasses showed that neither could have lived after the wounds which the other had inflicted.

Whilst at Muttra, Captain Baden-Powell kept a young wild boar for some time living in his compound. These animals practise quickness and handiness with their tusks from their earliest youth, and he spent many an entertaining half-hour in watching his small captive jinking from, and charging with active and untiring energy, at an old tree stump. An English mare he rode occasionally in the Muttra hunt had a special spite against pigs in general, and always did her best to trample on a boar. She might often be seen plunging about the compound, loose, in pursuit of the jungle foundling, the small boar. The mare followed his every ‘jink’ or jump, striving to get him under her forefeet; but luckily for himself, the youngster was marvellously quick and active, and actually seemed to regard the horse’s efforts as ‘excellent practice.’

‘H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught was on one occasion faced by a very game boar,’ writes Baden-Powell, ‘when hunting with the Delhi Tent Club.

The pig had been started in a very difficult bit of country. Lord Downe was the first to come on terms with him, and as he did so the boar turned and rushed for him, and although smartly speared, succeeded in inflicting a fearful gash in the horse’s hock. Dr. Kavanagh coming up next was charged in his turn, and succeeded in checking the boar with a point in the head, but so deeply was the spear driven in that it was wrenched from his hand, and remained standing in the pig’s skull. In spite of this encumbrance the old tusker again started to make good his retreat to the jungle, when the Duke came up and speared with such effect that he gave up all further idea of flight, and having worked the spear out of his head, took to charging at his enemies. He pursued Dr. Kavanagh for some distance, and another of the party he unhorsed, and only after a good tussle was he killed on foot, the Duke of Connaught giving him his coup de grace.’

No doubt the sport of pig-sticking is rendered more enjoyable by the fact that the sportsman bends to his will that of other animals. To quote Sir Robert on the subject, ‘The fact that at one moment the rider is trusting to the daring or agility of his horse, and at another the horse finds himself saved from an attack of the boar by some action of his rider establishes, after a few runs, a reciprocal feeling of esteem, and a mutual understanding between the two, which, while giving the man a truer pleasure, leads the horse to take a real delight in the sport.’ Once Baden-Powell tackled a boar, on a horse well-seasoned to pig-sticking, in a wide, deep-sided pit into which the chase had led him and his mount. As he truly says, ‘Half the battle is the horse,’ and the man who would excel, besides being a skilful rider, must see that he gets a horse of sufficient courage and intelligence to undergo the training he needs.

The best horse for hog-hunting is probably the Arab. He is compact and speedy, and shows great sagacity. A common failing which counts against the breed, however, is want of carrying and jumping power; and a serious objection to many would be his high price. The New South Wales horse, or ‘Waler,’ whilst being better over fences and capable of bearing greater weight, is generally too big for the work. When not much above 14 hands he is excellent, but the more ‘leggy’ horse is too long in stride to do well over broken ground. The ‘Country-Bred,’ as the native horse of India is called, frequently makes an excellent mount, and is very cheap. He is not as a rule a handsome animal in either colour or form, but if judicious care is shown in his selection he is quite up to pig-sticking. Indeed, Baden-Powell, when he won the Kadir Cup in ‘83, was mounted on one of these country-breds. We may depend that he was put through a most painstaking course of fencing and runs to fit him for his task.

Sir Robert has had several serious falls in the pursuit of his favourite pastime, and on one occasion was only saved from a broken neck by his presence of mind. His horse went down suddenly, and its rider was describing a graceful parabola, which would doubtless have landed him on his head, had he not turned a half somersault in the air and alighted neatly on his feet.

Dogs are used sometimes for scenting pig in the jungle, and for helping to drive them out into the open. When making a solitary excursion, Baden-Powell was often accompanied by a half-bred fox terrier named ‘Beetle.’ The dog was as much a favourite with him as ‘Bob,’ which, years afterwards at Aylesbury made a collection for the War Fund, when his master was earning laurels in South Africa. ‘Beetle’ used to ride on the front of the saddle, where he commanded a good view of the country. Of him his master writes, ‘On arrival at a thick crop, or other likely spot for pig, ‘Beetle’ would skip lightly down and proceed to search him out; soon a sharp yap followed by a smothered growl, a startled grunt, and a crash through the cover would show that he had found the quarry and had started him with a judicially applied nip of his sharp little jaws.’



He used to tail along after the hunt, and always managed to be in at the death. He was a game little scamp, and would hang on the ear of a charging boar. One of the entries in the Muttra Tent Log states: 'Started a big boar in an outlying patch of grass. . . . Before he was killed, he had severely cut "Mahomed Jan," Braithwaite's horse, Smithson's mare, "Beetle" (who was thought killed at one time), and three coolies.'

'Beetle' died in Natal as a consequence of the change of climate. He had received considerable damage in his calling of pig-sticker's assistant, including twelve wounds in his body, a torn ear, and a foot permanently enlarged by a bite from a boar.

As the ground covered in a pig-sticking expedition is frequently very extensive, the pastime involves camping-out. The evenings are spent very satisfactorily in the comradeship of the camp, or in sketching, dozing, and reading. In reference to the more leisured moments of the day, Baden-Powell recommends one \*to take a few books and a dictionary of any foreign language you may wish to be learning.' This principle of filling up all available moments with useful work contributed to make him such an excellent linguist.

Because so much space has been taken up with reference to his favourite sport, it must not be supposed that B.-P. has not enjoyed other forms of hunting. A sight of the stuffed trophies of big game in his mother's home at Prince's Gate would immediately dispel such a notion. But the pursuit of the fierce wild boar, which is as large as a small donkey, and capable of bowling over the most powerful horse, is his favourite diversion.

## CHAPTER IX

### MALTA AND MANOEUVRES

Lieutenant-General Sir H. A. Smyth and his nephew were not given much respite after their arduous labours in Zululand, for they landed in England on 5th February 1890, and received orders two days later to proceed to Malta, where Sir Henry was to take up his new appointment as Governor of the island and Commander-in-Chief of the forces stationed there. Baden-Powell attended the Governor in the dual capacity of aide-de-camp and assistant military secretary, as has been already noted.

The new Governor and his secretary arrived at Valetta on March 1st, the former being welcomed with a salute of seventeen guns. At the Governor's palace they were received by the General commanding the Infantry Staff, the Royal Malta Fencible Artillery forming another guard of honour. On the same day Sir Henry Smyth took the oath of office, at the hall of St Michael and St George, in the presence of the Archbishop, the members of council, and the Maltese nobles. In the evening he held his first levee.

Malta is not regarded in military circles as a very desirable station. It is a busy place with a remarkably large transit trade, and of the greatest strategical importance as a coaling-station and depot for the Mediterranean. There are, however, extremely few opportunities for sport, except polo and an occasional excursion to the neighbouring island of Gozo to shoot sea-gulls; moreover, the island is so hot as to have deserved its nickname of 'the little military hot-house.' The almost tropical heat is aggravated by the glare and reflection from the rocks, and for several months in the year it is intensely trying.

The new Governor had taken over the administration at a moment when its affairs required delicate and tactful consideration. The constitution had only been recently settled (as late as 1887), and the Maltese population of the island were in a state of seething ferment. There were two causes for this state of excitement. In the first place, the Vatican had insisted, at the suggestion of the British Government, that the Maltese clergy should learn the English language at the university of Malta. English was already taught in the Government schools, but the Maltese were furious that their clergy should have to speak it, and they to listen to it in their churches. Up to this time the current official language of the law-courts, the journals, and the schools was Italian. The Maltese language, as spoken outside Valetta and its environs — where a *lingua Franca* prevails — is an Arabic dialect, an unwritten tongue without a literature, but it would be understood readily in the bazaar at Cairo. As a matter of fact, even at the time of Sir Henry Smith's arrival, English was already prevalent to a large extent. The insistence on its use was made an excuse for clerical and political clamour.

The other question vexing Malta was the problem of 'mixed marriages,' concerning which Sir Lintorn Simmons had gone upon a mission to the Vatican. The marriage question had always been a difficulty at Malta. Numbers of soldiers and seamen contract 'mixed marriages' with Maltese girls, and occasionally officers of the army and navy marry Maltese ladies. There had always been a doubt whether such marriages were legal, even when celebrated under the licence of the Bishop of Gibraltar. When any of the Maltese nobility married English ladies, the ceremony was performed in England. Mr. Gladstone's government was engaged in a diplomatic effort to put an end to the uncertainty about the legality of such marriages, and the population being mainly Roman Catholic the effort was carried through with special reference to the Pope. It was the more difficult because previously Maltese marriage laws were not recognised by English canon law, being in the first place simply edicts of the Grand Master, when Malta was held by the Knights Hospitallers, ratified by the Holy See. The settlement of the marriage laws by a British Government, by means of a reference to Rome, provoked much criticism at home, and British interference at all was offensive to the Maltese, however necessary it might be to British subjects.

There is not a great deal to tell of Baden-Powell's stay in the island, as little interest was taken in anything but the marriage question and the language squabble. Moreover, the service people live much apart from the permanent population, and Major Baden-Powell's duties were almost entirely military. Through his uncle's tactful dealing as Governor, the social ferment did not assume troublesome proportions, though the Maltese were only just growing accustomed to the new constitution, which was vested in a council, with Sir Henry Smyth as president. It is an interesting coincidence that the assistant military secretary's brother, Sir George Baden-Powell, should have been appointed three years before as special commissioner with Sir G. F. Bowen to settle the details of the new Maltese constitution. Sir Robert Baden-Powell also distinguished himself in Malta in a way which, if it did not earn him a decoration, at least earned the gratitude and love of every soldier and sailor whose duty sent him to the 'oven of the Mediterranean.'

On arriving at his post, one of his first cares was to interest himself in the condition of the ordinary soldiers and sailors, and he was extremely dissatisfied on learning that Malta, which has few enough native attractions, provided no relief whatever from the dullness of garrison life. There were no means of relaxation and enjoyment within the reach of Tommy Atkins and the Jack Tars stationed there. Consequently, the seductions of the canteen and the native grog-shops were irresistible to the weaker vessels, and the steady, intelligent, and sensible men, who, it must

be remembered parenthetically, constitute the majority, had nothing whatever to brighten the conditions of service life. Baden-Powell set himself to remedy this unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Always practical in what he takes in hand, he hit upon the idea of a 'Soldiers' Club.' It was nothing short of an inspiration. No wonder that in a few weeks B.-P., the enthusiastic officer, was one of Malta's favourites. The gravest difficulty in the way of inaugurating the club was the question of raising funds. Baden-Powell attacked the problem characteristically. He ran a series of weekly concerts, in which he took a leading part both as organiser and performer, and in a short time raised sufficient money to launch the venture. His devotion to the task was enormous, and he spared himself no pains.

Once, when Baden-Powell was to have taken a principal part in some theatricals, it happened that he was confined to his bed with a bad attack of fever. Such, however, was his devotion to the cause of the men, that, ignoring all risk of consequences, he dressed for the performance, went through the part, though scarcely able to drag his aching limbs about the stage, and went promptly back to bed when the theatricals were over. No wonder the soldier and sailor population loved him.

The club was, needless to say, a conspicuous success. It was run on broad lines, as far as possible approximating to a civilian club in its management. The certificate of membership was the Queen's uniform, and all who wore it were encouraged to join. Besides the concerts and theatricals, weekly dances were held, to which the soldier could bring his wife or sweetheart. Billiard tables were provided for the enjoyment of non-commissioned officers and men. Malta became a comparatively happy station. All liquors and food were of the best quality — and why? — because Baden-Powell gave these matters his personal attention. Good beds were obtainable at a price suited to the pocket of the men for whom the club was intended. By these, and every means in his power, Baden-Powell sought to attract the soldier from the low grog-shops with which Malta abounds.

But with his departure this splendid undertaking failed. Most books about him refer to his unselfish labours for the happiness of the men — they omit reference to the cessation of the useful purposes served by the club, which undoubtedly was the inspiration of the present Union Jack Club at Waterloo. The fact must, however, be recorded here. So long as Baden-Powell remained in Malta the success of the Soldiers' Club was maintained. After his departure there was a lack of adequate supervision; no one made it his business to superintend the club servants; the quality of the food and drink deteriorated; and in a few years the popular institution died of inanition. There is another 'B.-P.' wanted who will find pleasure and duty combined in reviving the Soldiers' Club. That was the secret of Baden-Powell's popularity in Malta — real esteem. He was a man who gave personal service, and gave ungrudgingly.

Many stories are told of him whilst stationed at Malta. A turn at a club performance on one occasion was a skirt-dance by a young lady performer. So hugely did the audience enjoy the item that there was a mighty round of applause accompanied by a prodigious clamour for an encore. But the lady would not be moved by the whistling and the cheering to oblige again. Baden-Powell was requested by the Governor to ask her to give a further exhibition. To all his entreaties she was adamant, and replied, 'I really couldn't. You see, I'm almost breathless now.' We can imagine Baden-Powell returning to the Governor and saying, with his whimsical smile and that characteristic lift of his eyebrows, 'It's no good, sir. She says she will be allowed if she does!'

In July, 1892, Baden-Powell was given the rank of Major; and in the April of the following year he returned to England. He took part in the military manoeuvres of September,

1894, which were remarkable as being the first cavalry operations in which the direction of affairs was solely in the hands of a general and staff of a cavalry division. There were many points of interest about the operations, which took place over Lord Wantage's land in the Vale of the White Horse. It has always been a matter of difficulty in England to find opportunity for practising evolutions over a large extent of country. Had it been possible to do this more often, so that officers and men could have had experience of work over large areas, the early events of the South African War would doubtless make different reading. Even in manoeuvring over the Berkshire Downs difficulties arose by reason of officers and men not being accustomed to such extensive operations; and the results of these first cavalry manoeuvres proved of the utmost value. Several officers who afterwards achieved conspicuous success in South Africa were present at this mimic warfare.

The cavalry operated in two brigades, which sometimes opposed each other, and at others worked in concert. The first brigade, commanded by Colonel French, with Major R. S. S. Baden-Powell of the 13th Hussars as Brigade-Major, was composed of the 2nd and 6th Dragoons and the 4th Hussars. Attached to this brigade was a four-gun battery of the R.H.A., which was experimenting with a new field-gun and special light carriage, and used smokeless cordite ammunition for the first time. Captain Curtis, R.E., of the Telegraph Battalion of the Engineers, who was associated with Major Baden-Powell a year later in the Ashanti expedition, was with the first brigade, and his men demonstrated the amazing fact that they could lay a telegraph cable as fast as cavalry going at the trot!

The director of the manoeuvres made trenchant references to the value of reconnaissance and scouting in warfare, as a result of his observations, and Major Baden-Powell received special commendation for success in this particular. Though handicapped by a poisoned hand, due to the bite of a vicious dog, he did not miss a single duty in consequence of his injury, and turned his ambidexterity to good account by writing his reports and making sketches with his left hand. It was a very painful business, one may gather; and Baden-Powell showed a stoical endurance of pain, for it was necessary to bathe the injured member in boiling-hot water every two or three hours, which he managed to do with the aid of a portable spirit lamp.

## CHAPTER X

### THE ASHANTI EXPEDITION

A FEW words are necessary to explain the objects and reasons for the expedition under Sir Francis Scott, with which Major Baden-Powell was selected for special service. It was undertaken entirely in the interests of the Gold Coast Colony, which had suffered much, directly and indirectly, from the government of the kingdom of Ashanti. The insecurity of life at the back of the Gold Coast Colony was such as to prevent the native population from settling down to agricultural pursuits. The King of Ashanti had failed to carry out one of the main stipulations of the treaty of 1874, the abolition of human sacrifices. In that year the King of Ashanti and some of our allies on the Gold Coast were in open quarrel, and to protect the latter, Sir Garnet Wolseley marched from the coast through a dense forest, captured Kumassi and burnt it. The king promised to discontinue the practice of procuring slaves and smuggling them through the French, German, and English 'spheres' to abstain from human sacrifices, to maintain an open

road from Kumassi to Cape Coast Castle, and to pay a war indemnity. This latter was to be applied for the advantage of the Cape Coast Colony, whose finances had suffered through the necessity of maintaining levies to protect them from the blood-thirsty monarch. All these clauses of the treaty King Prempeh had failed to keep.

The courses of the slave-caravans were marked with the bleached bones of slaves who had died upon the marches, which were made by unhealthy and roundabout routes to avoid interference from European forces. Every tribe in the neighbourhood of Ashanti lived in terror of the Ashantis, who had at various times destroyed friendly tribes under our protection. The whole trade and commerce of the district was being ruined in consequence of their depredations. Kumassi itself reeked with human blood — the name of the town signifies ‘the death-place.’ Kumassi had no fewer than three places of execution. There was one at the palace for private executions; public decapitations took place in the central square; in the sacred village of Bantama the fetish sacrifices were celebrated with hideous rites. Slaves were sent as tribute from other tribes, or captured in raids and smuggled through to the capital. Sometimes traders were compelled to pay customs with a gift of slaves, or their own lives.

The road from Kumassi to Cape Coast Castle, which should have been kept open to permit of a large caravan trade with the interior, was allowed to dwindle to a foot-track. Moreover, the rubber-dealers using this track were mulcted heavily in slaves, and always liable to summary execution by the Ashantis. Without an expedition all the outlets of trade would have become choked. The king could not be trusted to carry out the terms of the 1874 treaty; and it was decided to send a Resident to ensure that he did so. Prempeh refused to accept a Resident; then he sent insulting replies; finally he despatched envoys to England. These envoys had no powers — their mission was simply to gain time; but the Government knew that any terms they might make would be repudiated, and the expedition was organised with the idea of bringing the scenes of bloodshed to a close.

A small force would have meant war — all the men of Ashanti, it was afterwards found, had been called out. It was the foresight and sagacity displayed by Mr. Chamberlain in sending a large force that was the means of ensuring peace. Before the envoys had returned, and the fetish-swearing and oath-taking with which the Ashantis always inaugurate a campaign had taken place, the British forces had occupied Kumassi, and thus prevented immense slaughter.

Baden-Powell’s special service in this campaign was to organise a native levy to open and improve the road to Kumassi, and thus prepare the way for the main force under Sir Francis Scott. For details of the expedition and the work of the native levy the reader is referred to his arresting description of the proceedings in *The Downfall of Prempeh*. He also acted as military correspondent to the *Daily Chronicle*.

Lieutenant H.H. Prince Christian Victor, 60th Rifle Corps, Extra A.D.C., and H.R.H. Prince Henry of Battenberg, as military secretary, were attached to the column, and no two gentlemen ever more quickly won golden opinions. They stuck to their duty and performed it without the slightest fuss or grumbling.

When Major Baden-Powell received the notice of his selection for active service, he looked up his field kit, which he always keeps ready, went up for the medical examination, was duly declared ‘sound in wind and limb’ and eyes, and was vaccinated as a precaution against the small-pox which rages on the Gold Coast. Having studied all the particulars of the country for which he was bound, and learnt what was to be learned of the intended operations, and his share in them, he waited impatiently for the date of embarkation.

Not much time was lost. He received his order for special service on November 14th, and was at Cape Coast Castle by the 13th December.

The whole expedition was excellently planned. About two thousand regulars were to be sent out, and by the time of their arrival at the Cape Coast it was anticipated that Major Baden-Powell and Captain Graham, D.S.O., would have raised their native levy, and prepared the greater part of the 120 miles of road to Kumassi. Five depot camps were to be established between the base at Cape Coast Castle and the frontier, which is formed by the River Prah.

Much had to be done in making and protecting communications. Bridges had to be built, bush cut down, telegraphs laid, and fortified posts established beyond the frontier, to say nothing of collecting 12,000 carriers.

It was confidently anticipated that the Ashantis would make a stand, and officers were sent to organise the friendly Koranzas in the Ashanti rear.

When Major Baden-Powell arrived at Cape Coast Castle, he found the place very much as his study had led him to expect. 'A large, rambling, white-washed fort standing on a group of rocks on the surf-washed beach. Behind it lies the dull red native town of earthen flat-roofed houses, interspersed with white-washed bungalows of merchants, and all around the town,' he writes, 'there rises a mass of small, steep, wooded hills.'

He was taken with other members of the expedition to the shore in one of the curious surf boats, which are employed for beaching on the long rolling swell of the Cape Coast. Natives sit on the gunwale, pl3dng their oars, with a wailing chorus, until the boat is being dashed forward on the crest of a 'roller.' Then naked beachmen plunge in and drag the boat through the surf. B.-P. made the landing of Sir Francis Scott and Prince Christian, which took place a week after his arrival in one of these surf -boats, the subject of a spirited drawing. He had found on his arrival that the work of collecting carriers and forming the depots had already begun.

Sir Francis Scott had laid his plans carefully, and every emergency had been foreseen and provided against. He had not only to cope with King Prempeh but with the coast fever. The first officers to arrive were already, as we have noticed, enrolling carriers and building the road stations. The road which, according to the treaty should have been open, was now a mere track just wide enough for two men to move abreast. Beyond the frontier it had practically disappeared amid the jungle-growths. Until the road was opened, it would have been suicidal for white troops to advance. Sickness would have mowed them down like grass ; and, as no baggage-animals can be employed in this country, where the tsetse fly abounds, all transport had to be performed by native carriers.

This was a serious matter. It was necessary to advance all supplies — ammunition, food, hospital necessities, bridge-building equipment — to the boundary formed by the Prah, before even the expedition could be said to have started. Owing to the low physical capacity of the Cape Coast native — he can only be depended upon to carry a 50-lb. load for ten miles for four days out of every five — and the difficulties of the road, it was necessary to employ from ten to twelve thousand carriers. The very number of these carriers necessitated a substantial addition to the already enormous food supplies. Standing camps for rest and protection had to be constructed, and in each of them huts were requisite with bed-places two feet above the ground, that the men should not be poisoned by the exhalations. Great store of fuel, too, was needed for drying the air of the huts, as well as for cooking. Sanitation and water supply needed forethought and practical science, if the force was to escape fever in that pestilential land.

But here we are concerned chiefly with Major Baden-Powell's share in the expedition — the enrolment, organisation, and direction of the advance levy of natives. He had, fortunately, as

his right-hand man, an officer in Captain Graham of the 5th Lancers, who had valuable experience of the country and its people; and, just as fortunately, a reliable native adviser in the person of a friendly chief named Andoh of Elmina.

A nucleus for the native levy had already been collected on the Prah. This was a contingent of one hundred of the Adansi tribe, armed with flint-lock muskets; and a further supply of these arms awaited the main levy at Prahsu, a native village on the frontier river. The natives collected by Baden-Powell were Krobos and Mumfords. The former had the making of decent soldiers, whilst the latter were coast-wise fishermen, splendid fellows physically, but as timorous as mice.

The only way of dealing with the levy was to mingle patience with firmness. The natives have no sense of honour, and no store of energy; and their already degraded intelligence was further weakened by trade gin. Baden-Powell had often to resort to his habit of cheerful whistling to drown care and the exasperation bred by the want of dependableness he encountered. At length he coaxed the Krobos and Mumfords into assembling, and organised them roughly into small companies of from twenty to thirty men each. These were equipped with cutlasses, spades, hatchets, sugar-cane knives and axes, and the various details were told off for special work. Some had to build bridges, others to weave huts, others to prepare the road, and others to do the preliminary work of clearing the land of jungle which the road was to traverse.

Considering the low intelligence of the units of the levy it is remarkable how effective the methods of Major Baden-Powell and Captain Graham proved. Each captain or headman of a company was made responsible for the tools of his section; but it was the personal supervision of the white men which rendered them efficient. Fining was nominally the system of punishment; but the natives could not grasp the meaning of deductions and stoppages of pay, and in practice the only incentive to real work was the threat of a flogging which was usually found sufficient. The levies were not supplied with rations, but were allowed threepence per day per man in order to buy from the tribes through whose territory they passed; and the latter were thus protected from raiding.

Captain Graham's Krobos were armed with Sniders, and he instructed them on the march in the use of these rifles as well as in the rudiments of drill. A few simple whistled signals were employed in place of the usual words of command. It was found that the terror of the African night made the natives utterly useless after dark. Then they went in fear of all kinds of bad fetish. They could not be prevailed upon to do individual sentry, so detached parties of six or more were detailed for the purpose; and these spent the nights in squatting on the various paths near the camp.

It was found advisable not to distribute the ammunition to the levy, or they would have fired it all away at the first suggestion of danger. Each man carried ten rounds; the rest was borne by a special ammunition carrier to each section. Some idea of the queer material Baden-Powell had to organise may be gathered from the following remarks upon the personnel of the levy, made by one of the war-correspondents accompanying the expedition. 'Let a white man bestow a name upon a native employee, and the latter will cling to it for all his days as a gift or fetish. You may dub him "Tar Bucket", "Glue", "Soap", "Boulder", "Brass-Pan" "Pea-Soup", "What Not", he will hold to it, and pass the distinction as a title of nobility on to his offspring. Such are the beginnings of patrimony! An old resident, while travelling up country, once chanced upon a native whom he did not at the moment recognise. The negro walked up to him smiling, saying, "How do, sah? Don't you know me, sah? Why, sah, I be 'Poor Beggar,' sah; that's me, sah,"

giving his employer's name for himself.'<sup>1</sup> The correspondent's bicycle was regarded as a fetish, and carriers threw down their loads and ran when they sighted him.

At last the enrolment of the levy was completed, though, in the midst of the work. Captain Graham was struck down with coast fever. Captain Williams and Captain Green also succumbed temporarily to the malarial disease; but an invaluable officer joined the levy in the person of Major Gordon. Eighteen companies were formed with a total strength of 860. Only eleven of these companies, the Krobos, Mumfords, and Elminas had effective weapons and tools for pioneer work. The remainder, consisting of Adansis, Bekwais, and Abodoms, were armed mainly with flint-lock muskets, and did most of the scouting and outpost work.

The nucleus of the advance column, a small force of Houssas under a Colonial officer were some weeks in advance of the levy, and had already made their way some distance up the track towards Kumassi.

<sup>1</sup> Bennet Burleigh -- Two Campaigns. T. Fisher Unwin, 16s.

## CHAPTER XI

### WITH THE NATIVE LEVY

It took Major Baden-Powell three days to induce the friendly, but untrustworthy, chiefs to produce their tribesmen for enrolment. When at length they were assembled by dint of alternate cajoling and threatening, the organisation and equipment of the levy were carried out in five days! No wonder the officers succumbed to fever under the toil and strain of their arduous work. This is how the indefatigable organiser describes the start of the levy on 21st December, 1895, after the issue of the 'uniform': —

'This consists of nothing more than a red fez for each man, but it gives as much satisfaction to the naked warrior as does his first tunic to the young hussar. At three o'clock the levy is ready for the march. His Excellency the Governor inspects the ranks, and says a few encouraging words to the leading chiefs and captains. Among the men we muster a few with drums and others who are artists on the horn. The horn in this case consists of a hollowed elephant's tusk, garnished with many human jaw-bones — its notes are never more than two, and those of doleful tune; but at the signal for the march these horns give out a raucous din which, deepened by the rumble of the elephant-hide drums, imparts a martial ardour to the men, and soon the jabbering, laughing mob goes shambling through the streets, bound for the bush beyond.'

For the first few miles the road to Kumassi was a hard gravel path, and the white officers began to suffer excessively from the heat. The sun was rendered less fierce by a humid heat-haze, but the moisture from the bush made the 'muggy' atmosphere extremely trying. In a short time the Europeans were driven to the necessity of brief lifts in string hammocks. Baden-Powell would have much preferred to keep his resolve of performing the march on foot. The four bearers of his hammock seemed to make light of his weight; but the swinging motion proved almost as fatiguing to one not accustomed to it as walking, and prevented any possibility of beguiling the tedium of the journey by either reading or writing. Hammocks for officers or the sick were carried by a gang of eight or twelve men, who relieved each other in turn.



On the second day the low-growing bush disappeared, becoming interspersed with towering cotton-trees, giant ferns, palms, and the medley of tropical growth which goes to form the African jungle. The force now entered a scene of luxuriant beauty, which was to be regretted, as in this district the unhealthiness of the climate is in direct ratio to the prettiness of the scenery. Frogs abounded, and noisome stenches. The path was narrowed by the creeping undergrowth to a width of three feet, and the slow-moving line of carriers was compelled to progress in single file. The giant canes made so dense a cover upon the dank ground, that only a few lilies, reeds, and grasses grew beneath them. Marching through the bamboo groves was like walking through the dimly-diffused light of cathedral aisles. Bewildering stretches of palms, evergreen foliage, rubber-vines, ferns, and flowers alternated with the glades of bamboo, and conspicuous amongst them were the white trunks of the cotton trees.

The organisation of the gangs of carriers was in the efficient hands of Colonel Ward and his staff; and the arrangements went like clock-work. Each gang was distinguished by an armband of a different colour, as the carriers wound their toilsome march along, with their loads of lime-juice, salt-beef, biscuits, tarred rope for the bridge to be thrown over the Prah, and ammunition-boxes. Never has the commissariat of an expedition been more skilfully handled, which is the greater tribute when one remembers the inherent stupidity of the native porters; and in no campaign has the white soldier been better cared for medically, or better catered for in the exigencies of such a march. The precision of the arrangements was wonderful. The carriers never went without their allowance for rations, and no loads were lost. Amongst the brown-skinned porters, doggedly carrying their 50-lb. packs, were many native women, only too glad to earn the deferred pay of sixpence per day, and toiling along in many cases with the additional burden of a little brown Cape Coast piccaninny.

Now and again a native village was passed. These places were as like each other as peas in a pod, and one could usually smell them long before they came in sight through the trees. The arrangement of the villages was the same for all. The houses, constructed of poles and wickerwork, were made weather and wind-tight with dried mud. Among the strong and spacious pole-framed houses, were flimsier buildings of bamboo and palm-leaves. A clearing stretched round the huts for perhaps three hundred yards in one direction, and seventy in the other; and the village homes were constructed on either side of the military roadway, which here reached the respectable width of forty or fifty feet. The clearings, which were well cultivated, produced crops of maize, pea-nuts, and yams, and the plantain was grown in thick groves. Each clearing was flanked by a row of cocoa-nut palms. In spite of the fetid smell of refuse always associated with the villages, the interiors of the huts themselves were wonderfully clean, and the best boasted European doors and windows.

The seven rest-camps of the expedition were located as near the native villages as possible, in order that the carriers accompanying the columns might buy their daily rations at the beginning or the end of a march. The camps consisted of large sheds, fifty to sixty feet in length, and open at either end. They were built of bamboos, and thatched with grass or palm-leaf. Besides the sheds, there were numerous smaller huts. On each side of the interior of the sheds, and three feet above the earthen floor, the sleeping-benches were contrived — long bamboo frames, on which the soldiers spread their blankets. The sheds were dry and cool by reason of the open construction. The more permanent sheds and huts, in course of completion, were intended for the use of the white troops. When the column which was to follow halted, it was expected that the native carriers would erect light shelters for themselves — to leeward of the rest-camps. Guards were stationed at the camps to keep the sheds clean, and to maintain a supply of pure

boiled and filtered water for the troops passing through. It was not always possible to obtain water on the spot, and at one of the rest-camps, Akroful, the water supply was over two miles distant.

As Major Baden-Powell passed each village, he warned the headman that a daily market was to be held for the sale of yams and plantains to the carriers. The elders of the tribes were usually to be found sitting round a tree in the centre of the village; whilst on the outskirts was the fetish-ground. This was decorated with rags and broken gourds, the offerings of the superstitious natives to their particular village devil.

The rest-camps were constructed by native workmen, under the supervision of officers of the Army Service Corps, who perspired at their work from dawn till dusk; and already the field-telegraph cable was laid by the Engineers half way to Prahsu. Baden-Powell at length overtook Captain Curtis, R.E., working half-stripped, like his men, and laying out the 'fetish-cord,' as the natives called the telegraph-wire, at the rate of over two miles in the hour.

An incident characteristically recorded by the leader of the native levy occurred just beyond the spot to which the telegraphists had attained. 'Here and there along the road we come to bridges over streams, and causeways over swamps,' wrote Major Baden-Powell, 'all in course of construction at the hands of scores of natives, working with an amount of energy that is most surprising when one sees how few and far between are the ever-travelling, hard-worked white superintendents. Here we meet one gaunt and yellow. Surely we have seen that eye and brow before, although the beard and solar topee do much to disguise the man. His necktie of faded "Old Carthusian" colours makes suspicion a certainty, and once again old school-fellows are flung together for an hour to talk in an African swamp of old times on English playing-fields.'<sup>1</sup> A very welcome meeting one may conceive.

At length the native levy reached Prahsu, after five days in the sweating, fever- reeking jungle, and Baden-Powell received news of the scouts. Rumour was rife of encounters between the British scouts and those of Prempeh, who still refused to treat with the Governor. It seemed probable that the Ashantis meant to fight, and it was but natural that the white officers, after the hours of strenuous exertion the expedition had involved, hoped this would be the case. Baden-Powell, on arrival at Prahsu, found no fewer than three out of the eight white men toiling at the advance preparations there, in the clutches of malaria, yet fervently hoping there was going to be some 'fun.'

From Prahsu onwards the pioneer work was to be performed. Beyond that base, where a great store of supplies was now collected, road there was none. The levy had to make a practicable way for the white column now moving in their rear; and a halt of four days became necessary before the levy could proceed to the farther advanced base at the Adansi Hills, thirty-five miles beyond the natural boundary of the Prah.

It behoved the leaders to be very wary now; and it was decided that, from here onward, the Ashanti method of attack rendered it imperative to form a chain of posts capable of defence all along the line of march. The favourite method of the race is to cut a path through the jungle parallel to the enemy's course. This path is hidden, and when their scouts inform them that the column has passed, the Ashantis emerge from the jungle and attack it suddenly in the rear. The manoeuvre cuts a force off from its base, and places the native army in such a position that it can lie in wait for carriers bringing supplies, or even go back upon the trail and attack the rest-camps. White men fight against such an enemy under great disadvantage: the natives find their rations in every plantain or cocoa-nut grove, whilst the whites are dependent entirely upon keeping open

<sup>1</sup> Downfall of Prempeh.

communication with their base, and are unable to follow the natives into the jungle.

The Houssas who had preceded Baden-Powell's levy to Prahsu now joined forces with him, and he selected about a hundred men of the Adansi tribe for outpost duty. They made excellent scouts, being a bush tribe and consequently experienced in jungle-hunting, which closely resembles bush warfare. Baden-Powell expressed great admiration for the veteran chief of the Elmina tribe, who, together with a party of Krobos and Mumfords, accompanied him. It was to Ando, 'my guide, adviser, and friend,' that he dedicated his book on the campaign.

The levy now began work in earnest, clearing the bush, making roads, and building huts. They were practised also daily in the use of their antiquated muskets, for which their commander had no great veneration, as being more suited to a museum than for campaigning.

Major Baden-Powell had to halt four days at Prahsu awaiting the order to advance towards Kumassi. At length, on Christmas Eve, his levy crossed the Prah. The pontoon bridge, not having been drawn across the stream on account of the nonarrival of the supply of rope, the advanced column, in parties of thirty, was rowed across in a 'dug-out' canoe hewn from a single tree-trunk. The march now became very difficult. At almost every yard the bush had to be cut back and trees felled. The natives showed little or no natural ability for the pioneer work; and the two white men, Major Baden-Powell and Captain Graham, found their duties most exhausting.

Every morning the 'white chiefs' had the same difficulty in getting the men under way. The smiling excuses for not beginning were enough to try the tempers of saints, without mentioning British officers. One chief could not move his men because of an attack of rheumatism in his shoulder, and advanced the excuse presently that his men must have salt with their 'chop' (food). Another tribe cannot proceed until its chiefs have held a council of war. At midday a halt of two hours is found insufficient for the carriers' meal. It is alleged that as they work so hard, they must eat more. These and other excuses are met with a threat of a fine — which is entirely useless. Then a jungle-cane is shown them, and they go laughing and singing to work — immediately. Baden-Powell writes: 'For three days I felled trees myself, till I found that I could get the tree felled equally well by merely showing the cracker of the hunting-crop. The men had loved to see me work. The crop came to be called 'Volapuk', because it was understood by every tribe. But, though often shown, it was never used.' Similar difficulties had to be dealt with when the defensive forts were built. Coast tribesmen professed to be unable to cut bush, and so on. But the work got done. The earth rampart was thrown up against the stockade. Sheds were built within it, and supplies packed and arranged inside.

The native levy had advanced about twenty miles from Prahsu by the 27th December, camping at Fumsu. The white column reached Prahsu on New-Year's Eve; the levy had then got within a day's march of the Adansi Hills, about half-way to their objective; and whilst they were resting Major Baden-Powell was able to join the Headquarters Staff for the Scottish 'fetish' of 'Ne'erday.'

The white contingent was in excellent condition, and English, Scotch, and Welsh comrades sat up and welcomed in the New Year in orthodox fashion. The men had a new song written by one of their officers, with which they henceforth beguiled the tedium of the march. It went to the tune of 'Tommy Atkins.' The first verse and chorus were: —

Oh, they took us from the Guardsmen and the line;  
And they chose us for our health and our physique;  
Our appearance on parade was very fine,  
When we met at Aldershot just for a week.

And the people said we fairly took the bun,  
For men so fit they'd never seen before;  
And Prempeh very fast would have to run,  
If he tried to fight the Special Service Corps.

Chorus. — O Prempeh, Prempeh! you'd better mind  
your eye;  
You'd better far be civil, or else you'll have  
to die,  
And your kingdom of Ashanti, you'll never  
see it more,  
If you fight the Old West Yorks and the  
Special Service Corps.

There were yarn-spinning, songs, and toasts, and after 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'God save the Queen' everybody turned in, and the headquarters camp slumbered peacefully under the jungle starlight.

During this stay at Prahsu Prince Henry of Battenberg, and Prince Christian Victor, Sir Francis Scott, and the other officers, including Baden-Powell, took a quiet walk to the graves of those who fell in crossing the Prah under fire in the 1874 expedition. The present column had lost a few men by heat- apoplexy, but no fighting had occurred.

The levy under Major Baden- Powell reached the foot of the Adansi Hills on the 2nd January, 1896. By the following evening it had crossed them safely and halted at Qwisa.

News received from the outposts stated that Prempeh's envoys had returned from England, and that councils of war had been held at Kumassi. It was learned also that the king of Bekwai, who could put a force of 2000 men into the field, had refrained from attending Prempeh's council. Now, as Bekwai was the country through which the invading force would first pass, it will readily be seen that this was exceedingly important tidings. The king of Bekwai had expressed his desire to Sir Francis Scott of coming under British protection, and his attendance at Kumassi would probably have been the signal for his execution and that of many of his tribesmen. There were over 8000 warriors already collected in Kumassi armed with muskets and rifles; and news was brought that they were taking the fetish-oath, which is the Ashanti ceremony equivalent to the 'war-dance' of other savage nations.

The scouts and outposts of Baden-Powell's levy were heartened greatly by his palaver on their duties, which they enjoyed hugely. He likened his bush-warriors to 'the eyes and the body of the snake which is crawling up the bush-path from the coast, and coiling for its spring! The eyes are hungry, but they will soon have meat; and the main body of white men, armed with the best of weapons, will help them win the day, and get their country back again, to enjoy in peace for ever.' We can imagine the smiling savages listening with glistening eyes to this encouragement; and it gives us some insight into the methods Baden-Powell used so successfully to inspire his native levy.

## CHAPTER XII

## A FLYING COLUMN, AND KUMASSI

It will be remembered that the King of Bekwai, one of Prempeh's tributary chiefs, had sent a request to the Governor to be taken under the protection of the British flag, lest his friendliness should result in his execution at Kumassi. Bekwai lay nineteen or twenty miles from Qwisa, on the left of the road to the capital. Major Baden-Powell was ordered to discontinue pioneer operations and to execute a flying march to Bekwai to accord the king our protection. It was known that a force of Ashantis was posted at the point on the track where the Bekwai road branched off from the main Kumassi trail, at a village called Esian Qwanta.

Baden-Powell's plan was to avoid this picket by a secret flank march through Obum, a village to the left of the Kumassi road. The levy was ordered to take a week's supplies, so that it would be independent of communications in the event of being cut off. This necessitated an addition of nearly five hundred carriers to the flying column, and as the levy could only follow the jungle path in single file, grave danger existed of its being cut in two. On the 3rd of January Baden-Powell set out for the defence of Bekwai.

He decided to travel by night, though his men were kept in ignorance of this fact until it was too late for them to desert. They then preferred to meet the terrors of the fetish-haunted jungle in the company of the others, rather than to risk the evils of the bush without companions.

The flying column consisted of a section of scouts with an advanced guard at its head, then Captain Mitchell with one company and the band of the Gold Coast Houssas. Following the latter came the carriers with the Elminas interspersed amongst them for their protection, and after the carriers a second company of Houssas, and the remainder of the scouts. The whole force of 700 men made a long line in the bush-path more than a mile in length. Ammunition was loosed, and the column started at night-fall. There was no road, only a jungle-track, and every halt in front, owing to an obstruction across the path, led to a succession of bumps all along the lines. Occasional alarms came from the scouts, but the Ashanti outpost fires were passed in safety. An adequate account of that toilsome night march, nine miles in six hours, and nine miles of toil and torture for the superstition-haunted levy, cannot be given here. The reader is referred to B.-P.'s fascinating work, *The Downfall of Prempeh*, It was 'dark as pitch, one's only guide to the path was the white rag or package on the next man in front. With stick in hand one groped one's way through the deep, dense gloom, hoping that as the moon rose things would improve — but they didn't. Buried in this bush, below the overlaced treetops, scarcely a ray could penetrate . . . and all around was the deep silence of the forest, only broken by the rare crack of a trodden stick.'

The force halted at two in the morning at a village, utterly worn out. After four hours' rest the flying column marched the remaining ten miles to Bekwai, finding that the Ashantis had evacuated Esian Qwanta on the right of the route and scuttled back to Kumassi.

Immediately on his arrival, Baden-Powell sought out the king and gave him a letter assuring him of British protection. The chief thanked him earnestly for coming so promptly; but was unwilling to show practical proof of his gratitude by supplying men to act as carriers. The following day was given up to hoisting the British flag. At first the king thought to add to his dignity by disregarding the messages that all was ready for the ceremony. So Baden-Powell chose his spot for the flag-staff, and paraded his troops without him. This action speedily brought His Majesty. Presently the royal procession appeared — a great crowd of natives shouting around the state stools upon which the chief and his head-men were carried. Numerous

drummers beat upon small drums, dancing men whirled before the king's chair, trumpets blared. The great war drums, hung with strips of cloth to show that the gathering was peaceful, boomed. Then Major Baden-Powell offered the king the flag, and the king formally accepted it, whilst the court-criers interjected words of applause.

At last the king, accompanied by his umbrella-bearer, his special fetish-man, his handkerchief bearer, the men who sustained the royal person by clasping his waist, and the boys who carried wisps to prevent any flies settling upon his shiny skin, advanced to the flag-staff where the Union Jack hung in a ball. The chief was dressed with barbaric splendour, and as he pulled the cord which 'broke out' the flag into its draping folds, the Houssa band played 'God save the Queen,' and the troops presented arms. 'The King made a gesture as of going to sleep, with his head on his hand, and said that under that flag he should remain until he died.' The ceremony over, there was hand-shaking all round, and florid compliments were general. The king shook hands several times with Baden-Powell, and then, as a special mark of his august favour, executed a short step dance.

After much wearisome haggling on this day and the following, and a tremendous amount of palaver, the king was at length induced to supply about five hundred carriers. Fever was breaking out now amongst the British officers, and Captain Graham was sent to the hospital established at Qwisa. Prince Christian Victor and Major Piggott joined Baden-Powell at Bekwai, during the negotiations for the additional porters, and returned to head-quarters with a bountiful supply of fowls and eggs purchased in the village.

Bad news was received on the 8th January. Several officers at Prahsu were down with fever, and one death was reported. Prince Henry also was smitten with malaria. On this day Baden-Powell received a party of envoys from Prempeh, who were instructed to ask the British to delay the advance.

The native levy with its additional units retraced its steps to Qwisa, and recommenced the pioneer work of bush-cutting, camp-building, and laying tree-trunks across the road in swampy localities. The levy approached Kumassi by three parallel paths, with the main body a few miles in the rear. Opposition was expected at the passage of the Ordah River, where a bridge was made, but none was offered. Instead, an embassy of Ashanti envoys met the advanced levy at Ordasu and offered the Political Officer the complete and unconditional surrender of Prempeh. This was a desperate blow to the warlike hopes of the white troops marching on Kumassi. They had fought off fever, braved swamps, tropical heat, and toilsome marches, always buoyed up with the prospect of a fight, and the disappointment at such a tame conclusion to the difficult and sickly march was especially hard on the men in the ranks.

To add to the misery and annoyance of the troops, a thunderstorm overtook them in their slight shelters the night before Kumassi was reached, and it was a dispirited and sodden procession which entered the gates on 17th January. Till the last moment the 'Tommies' expected opposition — even at the very gates of the capital — but their hopes were fated to end in nothing. After all they had undergone — not even to be rewarded with the excitement of a 'brush with the nigger!' The manner in which the men marched, and the cheery way they did their duty in that unwholesome climate, were worthy of the highest praise.

Captain Donald Stewart — the Political Officer representing Governor Maxwell — Baden-Powell, Graham, and Major Piggott, the latter carrying the Union Jack on a hog-spear, were the first to enter the town. Two other detachments entered Kumassi from either flank, and thus Prempeh's capital was attained without bloodshed. King Fever had claimed many more victims than the bloodthirsty Ashanti chief.

The town was noisy with the voices of the natives assembled to see the coming of the white soldiers, and discordant with the booming of the skull-bedecked drums and elephant-tusk horns. Great coloured umbrellas whirled over the heads of the Ashantis, as a procession of headmen, amongst whom was Prempeh, made its way to the parade-ground. All signs of the cruel deeds enacted upon that public slaughter-place had been erased, though, upon a closer examination, piles of human skulls and bones were found in the groves beyond.

Prempeh sat looking from his high chair upon the ranks of strangers invading his capital. He wore a black and gold hat, which was pushed into position by an obsequious official every time it slipped and threatened to fall. On his arms and neck he carried circlets of gold nuggets strung on wire, and in his flabby lips was held a big nut-shaped charm, which he never removed in case he should utter the 'wrong word.' He sat there, a stolid, stout, coffee-coloured negro of about thirty years of age, and gave no sign of his feelings.

In the afternoon, when the troops had been billeted by Colonel Ward, and the advanced 'force' had been moved to near the fetish-ground at Bantama, Sir Francis Scott and his staff received King Prempeh and his chiefs on the parade-ground. Prempeh was told that he must make his formal submission to Governor Maxwell, who was expected shortly. No details were gone into, but the interview was short, and the king was warned that markets must be kept open for the sale of provisions to the invading forces, and that order must be preserved amongst the natives. The stolid king was accompanied at this interview by his mother, who sat beside him. She was reputed to be the most cruel woman in Ashanti, who had killed more than forty husbands, as men not to her liking. Though old, and much darker in complexion than her son, she was not uncomely; and her bearing was dignified in spite of her simple garment of calico, and her shaven head.

The night following the entry into Kumassi was extremely exciting. A strange town, full of shadowy horrors, and occupied by more or less hostile though overawed natives, created a feeling of uncertainty. What did King Prempeh intend to do? Was he going to ratify his submission to Governor Maxwell when the latter arrived from Cape Coast Castle, or did he intend to slip off into the bush with his chiefs to begin a game of hide-and-seek in the jungle, whilst fever decimated our ranks? It was necessary for the British to settle matters immediately, and take their leave. A month more of this climate would produce more casualties than a series of skirmishes.

Baden-Powell was not the man to allow Prempeh and his headmen to slip away. A long palaver was held that night in the Ashanti palace; and before it ended additional pickets were placed in all the paths from the king's house. After dark many people were found stealing from the palace, and these were quietly secured.

Then Baden-Powell, who evidently was in his element, formed a small 'hanging patrol' of a few men, and with no lights showing, wandered hither and thither about the squares and public-ways. The patrol went as far afield as the fetish-ground of Bantama, but came back and squatted where they could see the palace. About three in the morning the queen-mother was escorted home to one of the larger huts, amid a crowd of torch-bearers, and the patrol, noting where she would be found if needed, placed a scout or two to watch the place.

In the course of the next few hours the patrol intercepted all those coming from the palace, and kept them under observation till dawn. Some of these wanderers were highly-respectable graybeards of councillors, others were suspicious messengers, for doubtless the long council at the palace had been the occasion for various plottings. Prempeh's policy on the morrow would be determined by what the night brought forth. However, those who left the

palace under the cover of darkness were rendered incapable of harm by the precautions taken. Two men running hard from the king's house were held up by Baden-Powell, almost before they knew it the picket was at hand. The Major seized the first one, and collared his gun, for he was armed. Then, though he fought strenuously, the patrol captured his sword and knife.

When the mists of the tropical night were dispelled by the hot sun, the prisoners were examined and released minus their weapons; and if Prempeh had intended mischief on the morrow, the watchfulness of the sentries that night prevented any of his plans coming to fruition.

## CHAPTER XIII

### KING PREMPEH'S SUBMISSION

The 20th January, 1896, was the day selected for the 'King of the Ashantis — the lord of heaven and of earth' to give in his formal submission to the Governor of Cape Coast Colony. The ceremony was to take place on the Parade Square, where he had so often emptied a bottle of hollands, before throwing it at some poor wretch's head, the act being a death-warrant, for the man singled out was instantly despatched by one of the executioners in attendance. Beyond the Parade Square, where the markets and the public executions had been held in turn, were situated the rows of huts and sheds which made up busy Kumassi. The town was a gold-mining and a manufacturing town in one. In the softer parts of the soil the natives dug and washed out the gold-dust from the loam. Amongst the bamboo buildings were the workshops where the goldsmiths, silversmiths, coppersmiths, and workers in brass and iron plied their trades. Pottery was made everywhere, together with stools and chairs carved in wood; and the women wove silk and cloth. Though English gold and silver were in circulation, trade was carried on in gold-dust weighed out from calico wrappings.

On this historic Sunday morning all signs of commerce were absent. The British forces were drawn up under arms on the parade-ground, with the native levies in line and the regulars in hollow square. Governor Maxwell had intimated to Prempeh that he would be required at 7.30 a.m., and as he did not appear the political agent. Captain Stewart, went to fetch him with a detachment under Major Northcote. The soldiers guarded every exit to the palace compound, which had a perimeter of about 300 yards. When Captain Stewart entered the inner courtyard upon which King Prempeh's garret bedroom in the wattled second story looked, he was told that the king was nearly ready. The alleged reason for the delay was that he was waiting for his chiefs. Captain Stewart gave him five minutes, and Prempeh was told that then he would be fetched, just as he was.

There was no need, however, to resort to coercion. In less than three minutes the drums resounded, umbrella-men rushed to their stations, and 'the lord of heaven and earth' appeared resplendent in a wicker-hammock and supported by cushions; and was carried out under the shade of his blue-velvet state umbrella. His huge retinue was cut down to a small personal attendance of 150 persons; and the king was placed opposite a dais connived of biscuit-boxes upon which Governor Maxwell, Colonel Scott, and Colonel Kempster were seated, with the Union Jack floating behind them. The jabber and tumult of Prempeh's followers, however, swelled so high that the business of the day was interfered with. Consequently the retinue was



further cut down at 'point of boot' by the energetic Houssas, who likewise used their rattans to drive the native populace back.

When the king, his chiefs and headmen, and a few personal attendants alone remained facing the Governor, the queen-mother, and Prempeh's father, brother, uncles, and other relatives were hunted up by armed escorts and brought in to the ceremony. It was half-past eight by the time the preliminaries were over, though plenty of comic interludes had redeemed the scene from dullness.

At length His Excellency the Governor made a speech through Mr Groom, the interpreter, in which he outlined the history of the past few months, how King Prempeh had disregarded the despatches of the Government, and failed to comply with its demands. In accordance with Ashanti etiquette the words were repeated a second time by Prempeh's court linguist. The Governor explained through the same roundabout channel how Prempeh had been warned that his envoys would not be received in England; he detailed the events that ended in the expedition; and concluded by declaring he would make no treaty, and that the king would be deposed unless the king announced his formal submission and paid the costs of the expedition — a sum of 50,000 ounces of gold.

After an interval of obvious unwillingness, the monarch was told, 'Prempeh must come along'; and then the king, with bared head and slipperless feet, slowly approached, and bent down to embrace the booted legs of the Governor and the two Colonels. His mother followed suit; and after this public abasement both returned with some degree of natural dignity to their seats. The Ashantis stared amazed at the spectacle.

After more palaver, during which Prempeh declared his inability to find more than 680 ounces of gold on the spot, it was intimated that he, the queen-mother, his father, the two uncles, and certain war-chiefs must proceed to the coast with the British forces. The arrests were made simultaneously, Prempeh and his mother being the only persons who did not suffer the indignity of being secured by handcuffs; and then the Governor and the military staff retired. The prestige of the over-king of Ashanti had suffered a blow from which it never recovered.

A prison for the 'hostages' was improvised by levelling the huts surrounding a suitable collection of houses near the head-quarters camp, and the royal captives were consigned therein, to guard them against suicide or assassination.

Leave having been given to loot the palace, the treasures were deposited in the market to be sold by auction. In the palace were found about two thousand sovereigns, besides silver and gold dust, and several dozen empty gin bottles stored under Prempeh's bedstead. That same afternoon Major Baden-Powell was despatched to the fetish-village of Bantama, the burial-place of the kings of Ashanti and the scene of the horrible rites of 'watering the graves.' A picket had been placed to guard it; but when the levy arrived the priests had all disappeared — and with them many of the valuables it was anticipated would be found.

In accordance with orders, the fetish-village was burned to the ground, and the great fetish-tree in the centre, under whose branches thousands had been slaughtered, and whose roots were intertwined with the bones and skulls of the victims, was blown up with gun-cotton. The hideous rule of the Ashanti kings was at an end! The fetish had fallen!

The day after Prempeh's submission the British commander received reports of the gathering of armed men in the vicinity of Kumassi, and Baden-Powell was selected to reconnoitre. Under cover of darkness he assembled at Bantama four companies of the scouts under Major Gordon, two companies of Houssas under Captain Mitchell, and a detachment with a Maxim. The reconnoitring party followed a jungle foot-path which led them through some wet

swamps, and for hours progress was difficult and uncomfortable. The dawn found the expedition drawn up opposite the disaffected village, with the scouts and some Houssas on either flank hidden by the bush, and the Maxim and the rest of the party in the centre. From an Ashanti slave whom the scouts captured, Baden-Powell learned that four hundred warriors were assembled in the village; but when the reconnoitring party entered, the armed men had evidently thought better of resistance and decamped.

The deposed king's departure from his capital was not without its pathetic side. He and the other captives had spent a wretched night upon the earthen floors of the hut in which they were confined. King Prempeh's eyes filled with tears as he was got ready for the march; but his bearing impressed the captain of the Houssa guard, on whom Prempeh pressed a present of his robe, some gold-dust, and two small keepsakes. The queen-mother appeared to regard the change in their conditions with more equanimity than the deposed monarch. At length the Ashanti king was borne off in his basket-hammock surrounded by a company of the West Yorks, who had instructions to shoot him if he tried to escape, or if a rescue were attempted. The other prisoners were likewise accommodated with litters, and the queen-mother very coolly smoked a cigarette she had asked of an officer as she was carried through the forest. Her pluck was undeniable. The column marched steadily, and though rumours of fighting Ashantis four thousand strong came to the ears of the leaders, the return journey was unopposed. Prempeh demurred at crossing the Ordah by the bridge, protesting that it was 'fetish' for an Ashanti king to pass that stream. But Kumassi fetish had ended with the blowing-up of the great cotton-wood at Bantama.

One grievous piece of news became known throughout the column on its downward journey. Prince Henry of Battenberg, gentle, unassuming, and considerate, who had insisted on bearing all the hardships of the campaign, and had proved himself a natural soldier, had passed away on the ship that was carrying him, fever-stricken, home to England. He was thought to be recovering, but the symptoms of the dread malaria returned with increased force, and he died at sea the day after Prempeh's submission.

There is no space to describe in full the journey to Cape Coast Castle. As the expedition proceeded through village after village, the land was resonant with the rejoicings of the natives. As the famous war-correspondent, Mr Bennet Burleigh, wrote: 'Ancients, swaying their withered, skinny black arms, and wagging their white woolly heads, sang hymns of praise for the fall of Prempeh and Kumassi. There was a history of years of terror and suffering in their manner and songs: "Oh, the good Lord be praised, Ashanti, Prempeh, and Kumassi will trouble the people no more. I have lived long, and have heard and seen many things, but never have I heard nor seen anything like this. Oh, the white people, the good white people, what is this thing they have brought us? Ashanti, Prempeh, and Kumassi are destroyed. The Ashantis have raided us, they have eaten us and drank our blood; and w^e have raided them at last, and taken King Prempeh a prisoner. Aha! I have seen nothing but good come from the white folk all the days of my life. Truly they have come into our land for good. Now I am happy, and am willing to die."' <sup>1</sup>

Thus the troops, to the accompaniment of joy and song, progressed in marches of a dozen miles per day, and reached Cape Coast Castle on the 4th February. Prempeh and his companions were taken on H.M.S. *Racoon*, seven miles by sea, to Eimina Castle. He had never seen the ocean before, and was convinced when he and the others were sea-sick that they had all been poisoned. At Elmina Castle, Prempeh was immured, with only one wife out of his many; and his relatives shared his prison. Small pity could be felt for any of them, particularly the queen-mother, who suffered most from her captivity, for she had been the chief instigator of the

<sup>1</sup> Two Campaigns.

multitude of cruelties Prempeh had practised.

Thus ended a bloodless expedition to check bloodshed. In spite of the admirable management of the medical department and the commissariat, out of nearly 900 white troops, more than forty per cent, had to be treated for fever and heat exhaustion. But with this sacrifice, the safety and progress of Cape Coast Colony had been bought; another strip of territory producing timber, rubber, cotton, coffee, sugar-cane, and maize, was added to the Empire; and that blot which had besmirched the Gold Coast district for generations — the curse of slavery — was erased.

For the successful conduct of the military operations Sir Francis Scott received a K.C.M.G., and the other officers were advanced a grade in the service. The complete success of the expedition was owing to the excellence of the organisation and the rapidity with which it was carried out. And not the least of the items conducing to the despatch, enabling the Special Service Corps actually to enter Kumassi before the rites of fetish-swearing had been concluded by the Ashanti warriors, was the excellent work done by Baden-Powell's native levy. For his services he received a star and a brevet lieutenant-colonelcy, in addition to honourable mention in Sir Francis Scott's despatches.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MATABELE WAR OF 1896

At the latter end of February Baden-Powell returned home and joined his regiment, the 13th Hussars, in Ireland. He was quartered in Dublin for some weeks, as was his brother, then Captain B. F. S. Baden-Powell of the Scots Guards; and on the 2nd May he was gazetted for special service again, this time in connection with the trouble in Matabeleland.

The reading public are indebted to Lieut. Colonel Baden-Powell's undivided affection for his mother for many personal glimpses of the soldier and his campaigns. During the whole of the operations he contrived to write and illustrate a diary of the events in which he directly took part.<sup>1</sup> The reasons which led to his keeping such a diary command the respect of every Englishman. He felt that the pleasures of new impressions were heightened when he was able, through the medium of pen and pencil, to share them with an 'appreciative friend' — thus he refers to Mrs. Baden-Powell — and the exercise brought mother and son daily together in their thoughts.

The notification that he was selected for special service reached Baden-Powell when he was at Belfast attending the burial of one of his troopers; and he was in London within twenty-four hours, saying good-bye to General Sir Frederick Carrington, the officer in command of the expedition, who preceded him to the Cape. He himself followed in the Tantallon Castle, on the 2nd May, the official date of his appointment, taking command on board of Colonel Alderson's 500 mounted infantry, who impressed him by their quality. In seventeen days the troops disembarked at Table Bay and were despatched to Wynberg Camp. Baden-Powell found orders awaiting him to follow Sir Frederick Carrington to Mafeking, which he reached by train in sixty hours. His first impressions of Mafeking are worth quoting in the light of the events of three years later, when the name had become familiar to the English-speaking world, as well as half

<sup>1</sup> The Matabele Campaign – Sir Robert Baden-Powell.

Europe: 'There's a little tin (corrugated iron) house and a goods shed to form the station; hundreds of wagons and mounds of stores covered with tarpaulins, and on beyond a street and market square of low-roofed tin houses. Mafeking is at present the railway terminus. The wagons and the goods are waiting to go north to Matabeleland, but here they're stranded for want of transport, since all the oxen on the road are dying fast from rinderpest. However, every train is bringing up more mules and donkeys to use in their stead.'<sup>1</sup>

Baden-Powell joined Sir Frederick Carrington at Mafeking, which was crowded with troops, and in the afternoon of his arrival, the new Chief Staff Officer accompanied his General and three other officers of the staff on the road for Buluwayo. During this primitive journey of nearly 600 miles in a heavy coach, various exciting incidents happened. On one occasion the drivers set the team at full speed down a descent too abrupt for the brakes and wheelers to hold the coach back, and the equipage, taking a leap of many feet into the sand below, shook up its human occupants pretty severely. All round the route were unmistakable signs of the cattle plague, in the form of dead mules and oxen, and here and there an abandoned wagon. The Matabele had made the tactical mistake of leaving the Buluwayo road open, otherwise the General and his staff could never have reached the scene of operations. One of the forts they passed had been threatened by the rebels only the night before.

The General and staff were sufficiently glad to reach Buluwayo and the delights of a bed and a bath, though the latter had to be taken at dawn on the veranda over the street ! The town was laid out at this period, but most of the buildings were only completed in their indispensable portions, and everything betokened that an outpost of civilisation had been reached. A laager of wagons drawn up in the market square plainly suggested that the Matabele might attack at any time. Less obvious but very necessary preparations were the barbed wire fences outside the laager, and the mines secretly laid in the streets converging on the square.

Sir Frederick Carrington's first care was to interview the Deputy Commissioner of Rhodesia, the Administrator of the Chartered Company's state, and Cecil Rhodes, though the last held no official position in Buluwayo, with the purpose of getting at all the aspects of the alarming situation.

The rinderpest had broken out in Somaliland the year previous, at the time of Jameson's raid into the Transvaal; the wide Zambesi river had proved powerless to check the plague, and within a few months it was ravaging the cattle-lands of the Mashonaland and the Matabeleland Protectorates. Amongst other steps to check its encroachments the Government had slaughtered cattle in the strips of land on the border of the plague, on the same principle that districts are fired in advance of a prairie blaze. The natives, unable to understand the significance of this proceeding, immediately suspected the white men of a design to starve them. They had not been thoroughly subjugated in the last war, and were ready for any pretext to fight the white colonists who had invaded their territory. The feeling of discontent was further inflamed by recent droughts, and the destruction of crops by locusts; and the natives discovered they were unable to resort to their old remedy in time of want — that of raiding and commandeering the cattle of weaker tribes. The three priests of M'hmo, the invisible god of the Matabele, had circulated the signal for a general rising, for which the withdrawal of the armed men for the Transvaal raid provided ample opportunity.

<sup>1</sup> The Matabele Campaign.

As early as March, 1896, the rising began, and white miners and farmers with their families were cruelly butchered in all parts of the Protectorate. The possibility of a successful descent on Buluwayo was defeated by these massacres occurring prior to a general assault on the town, or scarcely a white would have escaped the ferocity of the Matabele. Laagers were formed, and the farmers and burghers enrolled; but it was known that the natives, armed with Martinis, Lee-Metfords secretly bought, besides antiquated muskets, were threatening the town in numbers approaching thirteen thousand. Colonel Napier, Captain Selous, and other officers organised relief parties to go to the aid of those who were defending their wives and families in laagers, and at tremendous risk succeeded in saving a few isolated stations; and the Buluwayo Field Force temporarily relieved the town by two most gallant sorties.

In May, Colonel Plumer at Mafeking and Colonel Beal at Salisbury, organised relief forces, and marched to the help of Buluwayo; and the country east of the town was cleared. Plumer's Matabele Relief Force did good service also against the impi to the north; and now that General Carrington had arrived, it was decided to send out three columns in radiating directions from Buluwayo to hold the town safe from without, and afterwards occupy the Matopo Hills where the Matabele would be in force.

Two of the three proposed columns. Colonel Plumer's and Captain Macfarlane's, moved off to the north-west and north early in June, and the third under Colonel Spreckley was upon the point of starting, when news was received late at night of a large impi secretly creeping round Colonel Beal's column, encamped about three miles from Buluwayo. This was Baden-Powell's opportunity. By dawn, accompanied by a single police-trooper, he had completed a reconnaissance, located the war-party on the banks of the Umgusa, and ridden on to the threatened camp with the news. The police-trooper had been sent back for Spreckley and his men, and when they arrived, the combined force of 250 mounted men advanced on the impi, which numbered quite twelve hundred.

Baden-Powell had two very narrow escapes in this first encounter, owing to the playful habit of the Matabele of hiding in a bush, and firing on those who passed them. Having dropped his empty carbine under a tree, meaning to pick it up later, he had gone on with his revolver, when he was suddenly aware of a savage kneeling about eighty yards in advance, and coolly taking aim. The colonel charged straight at him, and whether the thundering onset upset the Kafir's aim or not, the savage missed at ten yards, and one of B.-P.'s men in the rear bowled him over. Later, Baden-Powell had stopped for a moment under a tree, to look at a wounded man, when there was a movement in the branches above, and a Matabele secreted there fired down, but missed. The native was immediately afterwards shot, and at a later date, his knob-kerry and photograph were added to Baden-Powell's collection of curios.

The wounds received by our men were frequently very dreadful owing to the rough missiles with which the enemy loaded their muskets and blunderbusses. Colonel Baden-Powell was at a loss to understand the extraordinary rage shown by our troops when at close\* quarters with the Kafirs, until later, when he learned of the fiendish way English children and women had been mutilated and butchered. The fight was a sharp lesson to the Matabele impi, especially as it contained numerous picked men, and several chiefs were amongst the killed and wounded.

A few days after Spreckley's column had left to patrol the district to the north-east of Buluwayo, Baden-Powell rode out with Burnham, the American scout, to investigate rumours of a hostile gathering in the Matopos. Burnham had had experience of Red Indian methods, and he and the English scout made an ideal pair for the purpose. (It may be mentioned that it was Burnham who had ridden into Buluwayo with the news that the Matabele were investing Beal's

camp.) The reconnaissance led them into the mountain fastnesses, where huge granite boulders and thick bushes made admirable cover for an enemy. The scouts succeeded in locating an impi of a thousand Matabele in a natural fortress abounding in caves and gorges, whither they hoped to draw the white troops. Having noted all they could, and made a map of the dispositions of the Matabele, the adventurous companions returned. Out of compliment to Baden-Powell's faculty for inductive reasoning, Burnham dubbed him 'Sherlock Holmes.'

Days of office work alternated with nights of relaxation in the form of scouting, and when Colonel Bridge arrived to direct the organisation of supply and transport, relieving the rest of Carrington's staff of that business, things were beginning to look more hopeful, until the dreadful news came that the natives in Mashonaland had already butchered many whites. The Matabele outbreak was as much as the forces in Rhodesia could hope to subdue. The difficulties of transport owing to the plague, the problem of supplies which was becoming acute, and the immense distances over which the scantily-supplied forces would now have to operate, made the task seem almost insuperable. In Mashonaland the outbreak covered an area of 100,000 square miles, and the natives were in the proportion of ten to one of the white population. Five hundred Imperial troops were sent into each of the Protectorates; but with the rainy season approaching, when transport over the veldt becomes impossible, it seemed that our only chance of maintaining a hold upon the country was to attack at once, and to establish forts supplied with enough food to keep the garrisons during the four months of the rains.

About this time Burnham the scout had his celebrated interview with a local priest of the M'limo. This man, who pretended to be invulnerable, and offered to make the Matabele who applied to him likewise impervious to bullets or swords, was busy instigating the tribes in the south-west of the country to revolt. Such a rising would have cut off Buluwayo from the Mafeking road, and rendered the situation more serious than ever. With only one companion, Burnham volunteered to capture this fire-brand or to shoot him. Pretending that he wished to be made invulnerable, he offered the priest a reward for that purpose, and having satisfied himself entirely as to his identity, and failing in his attempt to arrest him, he shot him in the cave where the meeting took place. With the greatest difficulty, Burnham and his companion, the native commissioner, eluded the Matabele, who had gathered to receive the priest's orders for the rising.

Colonel Baden-Powell made several more scouting expeditions to the Matopos, both by day and by night, in the intervals of his work as staff officer, and these proved of the utmost use to General Carrington, as his maps indicating the position of the various Matabele units could always be depended upon.

Some tough fighting occurred at this time. The three patrolling columns had returned after dispersing the rebels round Buluwayo in every spot but one. To break the rebels gathered at a stronghold called Taba-si-ka-Mamba, Colonel Plumer made a clever night march with regulars, colonists, and Cape boys, and rushed the caves. M'qwati, the priest of the M'limo in that part, unfortunately escaped. Some hope was entertained that the Matabele would now submit, but it was due to such priests of the invisible Matabele god, that the insurrection was not ended with the defeat of the impis. Through his priestly oracles, M'limo promised to turn the British bullets to water, and prophesied that disease would annihilate the inhabitants of Buluwayo.

As a result of these encouraging inventions and insidious suggestions, wholesale murders again occurred all over the country which people at home were beginning fondly to hope had become quiet and peaceful.



## CHAPTER XV

### IN THE MATOPOS

The enemy began now to be most active again in the Matopo Hills, and Baden-Powell was sent as guide to Plumer's column in the operations that General Carrington was directing against them. His first care was to locate exactly the position of the most important impi under Babyan — that being the name of the chief — and with a few natives he successfully carried out this risky piece of scouting. A few days later orders were received to attack Babyan in his mountain fastness.

The expedition started with one of those night-marches in which B.-P. delighted. He went in front of the column, and thus writes <sup>1</sup> of the experience: 'There was something of a weird and delightful feeling in marching along alone, with a dark, silent square of men and horses looming along behind one. Neither talking nor smoking was allowed — for the gleam of a match lighting a pipe shines a long way in the darkness. Except for the occasional cough of a man or snort of a horse, the column, nearly a thousand strong, moved in complete silence. Once a dog yelped with excitement after a buck started from its lair: the orders for the night expressly stated that no dog should go with the column, and accordingly this one was promptly caught and killed with an assegai.'

<sup>1</sup> The Matabele Campaign.

The square halted at midnight to sleep within a mile of Babyan's stronghold, and dawn found it preparing for attack. Baden-Powell was in command of the advance force consisting of Cape Boys — i.e. natives and half-castes from Cape Colony — a small force of friendly Matabele, a few scouts, and three quick-firing guns. The main body was composed of some police, and Colonel Plumer's troops, the Matabeleland Relief Force. With the forces was General Carrington in command.

The engagement was short and sharp. The Matabele were driven to seek refuge in the caves, and many of the British force were shot or speared in routing them out. Among the incidents of the skirmish were the murderous injuries caused by the shooting of Kafir pot-legs from old smooth-bore muskets, and the desertion of the native bearers, who dropped their stretchers into the Tuli River. The ambulance work was done by burly Royal Artillery-men in the intervals of the fighting.

When the columns returned to camp, no news was to hand of Captain Laing's column, which had been engaged during the day with an impi to the westward, and Baden-Powell was detailed after dark with a patrol of a hundred men to seek him out. He tracked the force, and found it had been attacked in laager in a gorge by a superior number of Matabele, who had been beaten off with some loss. The fighting had been very stiff, and the General was intensely relieved to hear of the successful defence of the laager when almost surprised.

Other skirmishes followed, and later the signal-fires on seven hills announced that the enemy were concentrating for a serious attack. Our men were sleeping out where night-fall found them; and in this connection Baden-Powell wrote impressively of night on the veldt, under the star-spangled ceiling where hung the 'dark mantle that shrouds the earth from heaven's light beyond,' — the description of a soldier who is also a poet, and appreciates transcendental things.

The next scouting work that Colonel Baden-Powell performed was a reconnaissance of the Chabez Valley, a tremendous gorge running south through the Matopo Hills. He was accompanied by a young Colonial officer of Plumer's corps named Pryke, a native scout named Tagili, and a Zulu Cape Boy, Jan Grootboom. This last was a scout of exceptional ability, clever enough to disguise himself as a Kafir and go amongst the women in the Matabele camp. The reconnaissance, which Major Kershaw completed, showed that the enemy in the Chabez Valley could be approached only by a route that did not admit of wagon transport.

In accordance with the scouts' reports. Colonel Bridge organised a pack-horse train with mule-guns strapped on the animals' backs. During the engagement, in which the enemy were driven out. Colonel Baden-Powell was struck in the thigh by a spent bullet from a big bore gun. The blow was like that of a hammer — the missile was a stone covered with lead — and the Colonel thought at first he had cannoned into a tree-stump when it knocked him down. He was dismounted, as were all the men amidst the great boulders. The bullet made a tremendous bruise, but otherwise, except for extreme stiffness, did not hurt.

Inyanda's stronghold, a lofty mountain with huge perched blocks and caves, was attacked the following day; and in the stockaded caves the forces came upon the rebels' stores. These were maize, corn, ground-nuts, rice, and dried melons packed in great flat grass baskets whose small mouths were stopped with dried mud. About this time a patrol, under Brand, was outnumbered and attacked, but succeeded in getting back to Buluwayo. Baden-Powell's scouting party came upon the scene a day or two after the skirmish had taken place, and buried the remains of the 'faithful dead.'

The chiefs Sikombo, Inyanda, and Mnyakanilu had now retired farther into the Matopos, and Baden-Powell undertook another expedition to discover if Umlugulu had joined them, and, if



possible, to secure one or two prisoners to act as guides. He followed the spoor of the Matabele until close to Umlugulu's position, and, using a glass whilst carefully climbing about the koppies, discovered the enemy's position. The party later came upon the tracks of women and children who had been in with supplies, and waited among the rocks in the hope of capturing a prisoner or two. Presently they were aware of two women coming along the mountain-path with loads on their heads.

They managed to seize the older woman, who proved to be the niece of a Matabele chief. She was collecting supplies for Umlugulu's impi, and had been with her companion on a four days' journey amongst the surrounding villages. Whilst the others were examining her, the younger woman, a Kafir girl, sought shelter in the cover of the bushveldt. Baden-Powell galloped after her towards the hills, but his horse got into difficulties in the rocky ground. Having been drawn nearer the rebel forces than was entirely safe, he abandoned the chase; and the party returned with their prisoner, though they were almost caught. It was only by returning by a different route that the patrol got clear away. The old lady, Umzava, did not hesitate to inform her captors of the situation from the Matabele point of view. There were five impis collected in the hills, but the rebels, especially after the defeat of Babyan, were desirous of surrendering, and were only kept in the field by the exertions of their chiefs. They were fairly well supplied with food, cattle, and ammunition, but had lost faith in their oracle's promises, and were, moreover, anxious for peace in order to sow their corn.

Upon the reports of the scouts, preparations were made to deliver the disheartened rebels a decisive blow. Plumer's column was paraded in the dark of the morning, and, with Baden-Powell acting as guide, passed through the two ranges of hills intervening between our men and a valley beyond which a ridge was occupied by the enemy. Sunrise found the force within touch of the rebels, and Colonel Plumer ordered his guns to occupy the ridge which was approachable from the valley by five spurs. From this vantage-ground the strongholds could be shelled before the main body moved to the attack.

The rebels, at first surprised at the direction from which the attack came, presently engaged the guns as well as Captain the Hon. Beresford's men who were escorting the Maxims and Hotchkiss. Captain Coope, sending round to see what was happening when the guns were heard in brisk action, found that Beresford had reached a plateau where he was enabled to form a square to receive the charges of the enemy upon three sides. The Matabele advanced under good cover quite up to the guns, and the fight lasted more than an hour, with heavy loss to both sides. Lieutenant Hervey was mortally wounded when dislodging some sharpshooters excellently posted on a koppie that looked down upon the square.

At length, under cover of Beresford's guns, the main body carried the first spur leading to the ridge. Horses were left under cover of the rocks, and Baden-Powell and the Cape Boys cleared and occupied the second spur. In places where the Cape Boys found the rocks too smooth for ascent, they removed their boots to gain a better foothold. The main column of the police and the Matabele Relief Force was engaged for several hours in sweeping the rebel impis with their guns and then clearing the hills with rifle fire, and it was not till three in the afternoon that the recall was sounded. Five of the English force, including Colonel Plumer's friend and right-hand man, Major Kershaw, were killed, and fifteen wounded. The Matabele, numbering between four and five thousand, had lost nearly three hundred killed.

In the final operations in the Matopos, Baden-Powell was detailed by Colonel Plumer with a mounted patrol of a hundred men to destroy kraals and to find a way to the rear of Umlugulu's position. Although having to elude more than one ambush, he managed to return

with a herd of Matabele cattle, which made the enemy very wroth indeed. They threatened and jeered the patrol from a safe distance, and yelled Baden-Powell's new title of 'Impeesa' — 'the wolf that never sleeps' — with every sign of intense hatred. The patrol returned in safety, and the fresh meat was very welcome at the camp.

On the 8th August, Baden-Powell, with Captain Coope and some of his scouts, went to find a road by which the column could gain a commanding position; and the same night he led the main force to the highest ridge of the Matopos — not far from the romantic spot where Cecil Rhodes in later years directed his body to be laid. During the night march B.-P. followed the spur his party had made in the morning, and when unable to see the track — for the night was pitchy — felt for it through his thin shoes!

The operations were entirely successful, and two days later Colonel Baden-Powell rode thirty miles into Buluwayo to report to General Carrington that the enemy were quite broken up and probably willing to surrender.

The next few days were devoted to office work, and he was smitten with fever and dysentery whilst Rhodes was holding the peace 'indabas' with the Matabele chiefs, which were not productive of a complete settlement until October.

In the meantime detached fighting went on, and the question of transport and supply, especially the former, through the ravages of rinderpest, became most pressing. Events in Mashonaland were by no means settled, in spite of the reinforcements of Imperial troops despatched there in June. Colonel Alderson was in local command, directed by the General from Buluwayo by telegraph. Salisbury, which had been threatened by the Mashonas, was relieved, but helpless farmers and small parties of whites were daily murdered.

That this campaign should be so protracted is not to be wondered at, seeing that the country over which Sir Frederick Carrington's forces operated was as large as France, Spain, and Italy combined.

## CHAPTER XVI

### 'THROUGH THE FOREST'

Baden-Powell recovered from his illness in about three weeks, and early in September General Carrington instructed him to take charge of Ridley's column which was operating in the Somalula Forest, about a hundred miles north from Buluwayo. The journey was joyfully anticipated by the Colonel, as promising plenty of 'shirt-sleeve' work and the excitement of a ride of two or three days in a wild country.

He had for companions three troopers of Plumer's horse and his Kafir boy, Diamond. The party started with three days' rations and two horses each — and before they came up with the column, they had satisfied themselves of the necessity for them. On the fourth day he overtook his command, but his little party had endured heat and some privation before he reached it. Colonel Baden-Powell found that though the column had fought no serious engagements, there had been many skirmishes with the natives, and the hospital, was somewhat full. The Kafirs had taken to the holes in the rocks, and it was difficult to dislodge them.

The column had captured the chief Uwini in a series of caves under his kraal. He was wounded, and two troopers crawled after him with a candle, tracking him by his blood. When finally caught, Uwini was helpless from his wounds.

There was no native commissioner in the camp, as that officer had been murdered. The acting commissioner, who had no powers over the rebels till they had surrendered, was anxious that the chief taken in arms should be tried by court-martial, for instigating rebellion and murdering whites. Uwini was, moreover, reputed to be invulnerable, having been rendered so by the native god, M'limo.

Nothing short of his immediate punishment, Baden-Powell and the commissioner believed, would make the neighbouring tribes surrender. It was impossible to send him to the General's headquarters, and no time could be lost in awaiting instructions at this critical moment. As a prisoner of war, Uwini was liable to trial by a military court, and Baden-Powell undertook the responsibility of holding a Field General Court-Martial upon him — a drastic step to which the civil authority later took exception, but which General Carrington considered was entirely justified by the saving of many lives which would have been sacrificed had the tribesmen not surrendered.

Unwini refused to summon his tribe to surrender, and practically confessed to everything alleged against him. The court-martial sentenced him to be shot, and the sentence was carried out at sundown. Within a very few hours Uwini's tribe submitted, either slipping away from their stronghold without resistance, or bringing in their arms. The chief's main stronghold was a koppie of boulders about six hundred feet high and half a mile in length. It was strengthened by ramparts of stone and a stockade, whilst the hill itself was honey-combed with innumerable caves. As a result of this surrender large stores of grain fell into our hands.

Other tribes, however, were still in arms in the Somalula Forest, a sandy waste of low bushes, and with very little water. When Baden-Powell led his patrols — his total force was less than 400 mounted men — to attack the impi, he came upon a wagon encampment near a drift where lay the bodies of three white people murdered by the rebels. His force was co-operating with Colonel Paget's column, and was, for greater effectiveness, divided into three patrols, under Captain Kekewich, Major Ridley, and Captain Poore (7th Hussars) respectively. The last is Major Poore, the famous cricketer.

Captain Poore's patrol, accompanied by Baden-Powell, came upon a camp of Matabele, which stampeded, leaving behind piles of spoil and clothing evidently taken from murdered white people. One of the M'limo's priests was with these rebels, but he was not captured, neither were the warriors.

The three patrols crossed the forest, clearing it of Matabele as they went, and burning their kraals, and at length reached the north-eastern boundary of the forest. It was none too soon, the horses were giving out through the fatiguing nature of the sandy soil, and for want of proper food and good water. To rest the horses the men were compelled to walk for long distances. The country was a strange one; maps were found unreliable; and the 'forest' was practically a desert, with drinking water only in the one river on its border. Remains of murdered people were encountered every few miles, and the column was on half rations when it reached the Gwelo River, smelling of mud under the sweltering sun.

It was intended to re-cross the forest at another point to the Shangani River, but the heat and heavy going in the sand rendered it imperative to turn back again to the Gwelo River. The very koodoo had died from rinderpest, and the column was reduced to eating horseflesh. It took all its difficulties cheerfully, however, even that of a faulty water-supply, when the journey was

re-commenced. Baden-Powell went scouting for water when its want became unendurable, and was fortunate enough to find it at last. He writes <sup>1</sup> very feelingly on the subject: 'I was glad. . . . We camped then and there on a tree-shaded rocky knoll overlooking the river. Poore and I have a splendid log fire between us. I boiled up my last spoonful of cocoa, which I had been husbanding for a great occasion like this, and after a nugget of rock-like bread and a fid of horse, I am going to bed with my boots off! I do not care for Matabele now; I am going to try for a good sleep, and "I will see that I get it."' "

It was the Shangani River that the patrols had reached. A day or two later De Moleyns' relief party brought welcome food to the troops.

Paget's patrol had been engaged with a large impi; and when Baden-Powell began his return to Inyati he received reports of another body of Matabele collected near the road. They escaped, however, before he could attack them, leaving large supplies of grain behind.

At Inyati, Baden-Powell received a letter instructing him to co-operate with Colonel Paget against a chief named Wedza, whose kraal lay about a hundred miles south-east of the camp. De Moleyns was sent to organise the new police force in Mashonaland, and Prince Alexander of Teck joined Baden-Powell's column as staff officer in his place. That night a grand camp-fire concert was organised.

Next day Baden-Powell started with a small force of 160 men for a cross-country march of ninety miles to Wedza's stronghold. On the third evening the little column camped at a farm which had been raided of all its cattle, to await Colonel Paget and his party. This was a splendid opportunity for some preliminary scouting, and Baden-Powell went with the Native Commissioner of the district and a Kafir boy to locate Wedza and his tribe. This excursion was a red-letter day — 'to be marked with a red mark when I can get a red pencil,' B.-P. wrote in his diary — for, on their way back from a survey of Wedza's position, the two whites fell in with a huge lion, which they killed between them. Not content with killing him, they skinned the great beast (one keeping watch whilst the others worked at the hide) and brought the skin into camp.

The force waited a day for the co-operating party, and then moved closer to the mountain fastness, its movements being signalled incessantly by smoke-fires on the hill-sides. The tribes were awaiting the enemy. Next morning early, Baden-Powell and another officer went close under Wedza's mountain, and hid under some boulders till a party of women and some men, one of whom they found afterwards was the chief Wedza himself, came down towards the water. The two white officers were desirous of giving the rebels a chance to surrender before being attacked. So they discovered themselves to the Matabele, displaying a white flag, and parleyed thus with Wedza for some time, only taking care to keep in motion whilst talking, because they realised what a tempting target they would prove if they halted. Wedza, however, was not to be persuaded into surrender, declaring that they would have to fetch him out of his caves.

At this decision Baden-Powell signalled to his men, who were standing to arms below under cover, and at sight of them the natives retired to their main stronghold amidst the rocks.

Meanwhile Baden-Powell burnt those kraals which had been deserted and were accessible. Wedza's fortress consisted of six rocky peaks from 800 to 1000 feet high, on whose summits were perched the kraals, the whole being - strongly fortified with stone ramparts and stockades, and occupying a space of two miles by a mile and a half. The position had been considered too strong for a force of double the number under his command, and he hesitated to attack.

<sup>1</sup> Matabele Campaign.

At length, however, learning that Paget was after all unable to co-operate with him, Baden-Powell determined upon attacking Wedza unaided. For this he considered it advisable to disregard tactics and to resort to sheer bluff. The force first cleared out a stronghold three miles to the westward of Wedza's mountain, from which signal-fires had been shown, and then advanced to the main attack. The mounted infantry gained a commanding position, but were so far outnumbered when fighting commenced that they were in danger of being surrounded. Instead of centralising his remaining force, Baden-Powell made a diversion at another point, which had the effect of making Wedza believe he was being attacked by an army. This patrol very narrowly escaped annihilation; Baden-Powell's hat was shot through, the Native Commissioner was grazed, and their horses were wounded.

Prince Alexander of Teck, however, relieved them by a plucky advance in the nick of time, and our force, though suffering from want of water, held their position until night. Instead of retiring then, as a less stout-hearted leader might well have done, Baden-Powell pushed his men up into commanding positions under cover of darkness and more closely invested the stronghold. His policy was more than justified in the morning, for it was then perceived that Wedza had evacuated the mountain-top.

The kraals on the fortress were destroyed, the granaries were emptied, and the force harassed Wedza until there was no chance of his impi reassembling. Then the pursuers, who had by this time worn out all their boot-leather, returned to camp; and a day or two later Wedza sent in messengers, who announced his desire to surrender. So the long patrol, with much toil and without expected assistance, with its risky tactics and hard fighting, had won the reward it so fully merited.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ON THE MASHONA BORDER

With the submission of Wedza, late in October, 1896, the campaign in Matabeleland practically ended. Only a few chiefs remained in arms, though the Mashonas were still in active rebellion, and needed immediate attention if the smouldering embers of war and murder were not to break out again.

The submission of Wedza was succeeded by the surrender of other chiefs — a direct result of Baden-Powell's successful though arduous patrol — but it was reported that a chief named Monogula continued to hold out in a rugged mountain fortress. A party of ten men, with B.-P. and his orderly, went off to reconnoitre Monogula's stronghold and to parley with him; but after approaching most cautiously, and displaying a white flag whilst they harangued the contumacious chief and his tribe, it was discovered that he had evacuated his post. The main column advanced upon the stronghold, shelling it by way of precaution against ambush, over the very ground where a British lieutenant had been buried and his body afterwards taken up to make 'fetish' medicine for Monogula's followers, but no sign of resistance or occupation was met. Monogula and his tribe, unable to continue the struggle, had decamped. The fortress was blown up with dynamite so completely that the Matabele must have found it difficult to recognise it on a future visit.

Owing to continued disturbances in Mashonaland, Baden-Powell at this time received instructions to accompany General Carrington to Salisbury. Before the commanding officer's arrival he snatched a few days for big-game shooting, as he marched with Paget's column into Mashonaland to the assistance of a Boer laager at Enkeldoorn. The Dutch farmers in their wagon enclosure had been threatened for weeks by the rebels, and of their oxen which had been collected inside the barbed wire entanglements only a few score had escaped cattle-plague. As live cattle had reached a phenomenal value, the Boers had gone out daily, whenever it was safe to do so, to shoot game for their fresh meat; and Baden-Powell found the youngest lads practising to be expert marksmen like their fathers through the medium of cross-bow shooting.

A few of the Boers in laager joined the column, which advanced to the mountain-ridge to attack the Matabele, who felt secure in their cave defences. A surprise attack by night was organised, in which Colonel Baden-Powell was detailed with a squadron of Hussars to cut off the enemy's retreat. Taking up a position before daylight, he awaited the issue of the main attack. When the Matabele ran, as they soon did, at the outbreak of Maxim fire from their front, they were stopped by the cutting-off party and compelled to surrender. In a short time the British soldiers were performing acts of mercy for the rebel wounded, and their rough kindnesses were the more pathetic because some of the women and children in the line of fire had been hit. It was a quick transition from the merciless deeds of war to the tender acts of peace.

In connection with this emergency ambulance duty, Baden-Powell describes <sup>1</sup> a perfect form of field-syringe: 'Take an ordinary native girl, tell her to go and get some lukewarm water, and don't get her anything to get it in. She will go to the stream, kneel, and fill her mouth, and so bring the water; by the time she is back, the water is lukewarm. You then tell her to squirt it as you direct into the wound, while you prise around with a feather. It works very well.'

The night surprise had been so complete a success that the rebels were unable to seek the sanctuary of their caves, and the attack proved the final treading out of the smouldering embers of rebellion.

The following day Baden-Powell joined the General, and with Sir Frederick's party proceeded towards Salisbury. The ride was full of sporting incidents, for the country being practically settled, the officers seized the opportunity to shoot game on either side of the track as they progressed. This peaceful and leisurely march was a welcome change from the toilsome journeys of the past weeks.

In the intervals of office work, which now claimed Baden-Powell again, he visited friends at distant places by means of a cycle — the Chartered Company lent bicycles to the staff — and he speaks in particular of a pleasurable visit to the house of the judge, an old Carthusian, who had acted as commandant at Salisbury. The judge unfortunately was absent on leave, but Baden-Powell renewed his acquaintance with Cecil Rhodes, and enjoyed a run with the hounds.

The white troops and the invalids were now being shipped home. The country had been settled only just in time, for the rains had come. Mashonaland was now quiet, but the armed police were by this time effectively organised. Mounted police also had displaced the Matabeleland Relief Force and the Cape Boys in the neighbourhood of Buluwayo; and the work carried out by Rhodes at the peace 'indabas' had thus been brought to a successful conclusion.

In December, the staff left Salisbury for the coast at Beira, travelling along the frontier of Mashonaland. At Umtah, the General and his party saw one of the Chartered Company's new gold-stamping batteries at work, and also watched the process of washing. The journey through

<sup>1</sup> Matabele Campaign.

Portuguese territory by rail to Beira was through a fever-stricken country; and the party were relieved to embark. Christmas Day was spent at Port Elizabeth, and early in January Baden-Powell returned home on the Dunvegan Castle,

For his services as Chief Staff Officer in the operations in Matabeleland, Major and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Baden-Powell was granted his brevet rank of Colonel and received a medal, besides being specially mentioned in General Carrington's 'Report on the operations during the recent rebellion in Matabeleland and Bechuanaland,' for 'gallantry in action and other good service'.

The Matabele Campaign did not attract at the time much public attention in England, because it was simultaneous with the war in the Soudan; but the War Office was mindful of Baden-Powell's services, and shortly after his return home — in May, 1897 — he was appointed to the command of the 5th Dragoon Guards, stationed at Meerut.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### INDIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

In May, 1897, Colonel Baden-Powell was gazetted to the command of the 5th Dragoon Guards, and within a few weeks he had arrived in the North-West Provinces and taken over his new regiment. For two strenuous years he commanded the 5th Dragoons in India, and his record as Colonel shows that he was as zealous and indefatigable as he had proved when adjutant of Hussars. He was a most popular officer, and interested himself in the men in every possible way. To give details of his command would be only to repeat what has already been said of him as a regimental officer.

He did everything in his power to popularise that frequently-neglected branch of cavalry work — scouting; and his lectures to his non-commissioned officers and men were a welcome change from the ordinary routine work. So enthusiastic did the men become on the subject that it was a source of great disappointment when they were unable for any reason to be present at the bi-weekly lectures. The Colonel's regimental work did not, of course, keep him altogether from the enjoyment of the field-sports which India provides so lavishly.

It is interesting to note that the collected lectures, published first in 1899, under the title of *Aids to Scouting*, were translated for the use of the German army, and later, during the Boer War, the Volksstem re-published extracts for the information of the Federal Commandos. A second English edition, published in 1906, includes notes on certain phases of scouting in the South African War.

All the world knows that Baden-Powell is so abstemious as to be practically a teetotaler. He is besides a non-smoker, whether from taste or just a sense of duty it is hard to state authoritatively. He has every sympathy with the men's enjoyment of the weed, for he is careful to give instructions as to the place for pipe and 'baccy' in the field-kit — but the following extract <sup>1</sup> will suggest one reason, at any rate, why he prefers not to employ the fragrant herb himself : —

<sup>1</sup> *Aids to Scouting*.

‘The sense of smell will often come in useful at night, and though you may be able to see or hear nothing, the smell will often tell you that you are near a farmyard, or a cooking- place, or horses, or natives, etc For being able to smell, a man who does not habitually smoke has an advantage over a smoker. In smelling out an enemy at night keep to leeward or down-wind of any spot where you expect he may be, and keep sniffing the air till you find the ordinary scent of the dew is interrupted. A man who carries tobacco on him can be smelt a long way off — and so can natives, or men who have been campaigning some days without the opportunity of bathing. ’

It is needless to say that Baden-Powell possesses the scenting powers of a fox-hound, and he ascribes the permanence of this faculty to his abstinence from tobacco.

A successful scout must have not only unusual powers of observation, but also a knowledge of human nature which will suggest safeguards of the utmost value. This is shown in the later edition of the Aids. ‘It is often useful, if an enemy happens to see you, to pretend that you have not seen him. Or it may sometimes be useful to pretend that you have other men with you. I did this once in the Boer War, when having crept up a donga to look at a Boer fort, I was seen by the enemy, and they came out to capture me. I at once signalled to imaginary friends in the donga below me, and the Boers ran back into their fort’ — an example of ‘slimness’ which was inspired by an intuitive perception of the enemy’s mental attitude.

The book is brimful of practical observations based upon carefully recorded experience such as the following: ‘A lighted match can be seen nine hundred yards at night, and a cigarette nearly three hundred yards.’ The value of such a piece of information is apparent to the meanest intellect.

The following is a good example of accurate observation plus carefully reasoned and intelligent deduction. The incident occurred in the Matabele Campaign, when Baden-Powell was out with a native scout, and, though apparently trivial, it had far-reaching consequences. The native scout and the white officer came upon a few down-trodden blades of common grass, which led them on to foot-prints in a patch of sandy ground. From the size they were probably the tracks of women or boys, and the assumption gleaned from the fact that they were made by sandals and not by bare feet, was that the persons were going on a long journey. They led in the direction of the Matopos. Farther on the native picked up an additional sign ten yards from the track. It was the leaf of a tree, of the variety which grew ten or fifteen miles away. It was, moreover, damp, and smelt of Kafir beer.

Baden-Powell’s chain of deduction which he constructed from these premises is best given in his own words. ‘From these signs it was evident that women had been carrying beer from the place where the trees grew towards the Matopos (they stuff up the mouths of the beer-pots with leaves), and they had passed this way at four in the morning (a strong breeze had been blowing about that hour, and the leaf had evidently been blown ten yards away). This would bring them to the Matopos about five o’clock. The men would not delay to drink up the fresh beer, and would by this time be very comfortable, not to say half-stupid, and the reverse of on the qui vive; so that we were able to go and reconnoitre more nearly with impunity — all on the strength of information given by bruised grass and a leaf.’<sup>1</sup>

But we must not dwell upon the hints and experiences which Colonel Baden-Powell detailed to his men, absorbing as they are. Other scenes than the Ganges plain now claimed him, and other occupation than the command of a regiment of Dragoons.

<sup>1</sup> Aids to Scouting.



In July, 1899, he received a communication from the Colonial Office, offering him extra regimental employment. Affairs in South Africa had turned out very much as he presaged, and, whilst matters were wavering in the balance, there was a special need for officers with intimate knowledge of the country. At this time the two Englishmen who probably knew South Africa better than any others were Sir Frederick Carrington and Baden-Powell. The Colonel was home on leave when the offer of special service at the Cape was made. The telegram from the War Office found him on the river at Henley, preparing for the gaieties of Regatta-week. In three days he had sailed for the Transvaal. His remark had been, in a flying-visit he paid to Dr. Haig-Brown at the Charterhouse, 'I hope they will give me a warm corner,' — and in Mafeking the erstwhile goalkeeper of the Carthusian eleven certainly found it.

He was forty-two when his opportunity came, though a younger man than most of his years. His irrepressible flow of spirits, that cheerful outlook and joyousness of life which did so much to infuse enthusiasm into the defenders of a beleagured town, was as strong in the mature and experienced officer as it had been in the high-spirited goal-keeper of Charterhouse days. With all his journeyings, his responsibilities, and adventures, Baden-Powell was 'just a boy' in spirit. May the Empire always breed such 'boys'!

In reference to this peculiar gift of youthfulness, he had long before, himself written: <sup>1</sup> 'Old Oliver Wendell Holmes is only too true when he says that most of us are "boys all our lives"; we have our toys, and will play with them with as much zest at eighty as at eight, that in their company we can never grow old. I can't help it if my toys take the form of all that has to do with veldt life, and if they remain my toys till I drop —

“Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and gray,  
The stars of its winter, the dew of its May;  
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,  
Dear Father, take care of Thy children, the boys.”

Before we deal definitely with his remarkable defence of the veldt town which made him famous, it will be well to consider first his personal fitness for the task, and this cannot be better done than through a consideration of the official history of the war.

When Brevet-Colonel R. S. S. Baden-Powell landed at Capetown on 25th July, 1899, his instructions gave him considerable latitude. It could not be told for certain whether the difficulties then existing between Boer and Briton would end in warfare or not. Definite instructions consequently were impossible. He was forced to shape his conduct partly by the peculiar knowledge of South Africa he possessed, and partly by his personal judgment of the turn affairs were likely to take. His discretion and sagacity were confirmed by the way he interpreted his instructions. That he considered war almost inevitable may be argued from his parting remark to Dr. Haig-Brown; but his actions were wisely considered, and, whilst doing his duty in the way of precautionary measures, no Englishmen then in South Africa did less than he in precipitating affairs.

Briefly, his instructions were to raise and equip two regiments of mounted infantry; in the event of war he was to organise the defence of Rhodesia and the Bechuanaland frontier; and also to keep the enemy occupied in the direction of the frontier and away from their own main forces.

<sup>1</sup> Matabele Campaign.

In regard to his personal qualifications for the task, the Official History of the war states: 'Such orders, offering unlimited scope for improvisation, were in happy conjunction with the character of the officer called upon to carry them out. The nature of the events which resulted from them render indispensable a brief examination of that officer's personality. Baden-Powell was a soldier of a type which had become uncommon in European service. With him training with and command of regular cavalry, and experience upon the staff, had been but a foundation, well and truly laid, for those less exact parts of the science of war which had been almost ignored, if not actually disdained, by the military school from which he sprang. That school, with its centuries of honours, he by no means despised: his own regiment, the 5th Dragoon Guards, he had trained in scrupulous accordance with its precepts, and none knew or taught better than he the value of strict regulations.

'His originality lay in a certain unquenchable and almost exotic attraction towards the unusual in warfare; in a preference for setting precedents rather than following them, for making rather than adopting experiments; and he was one at home with any description of comrades whom the emergency which he courted might produce to meet it. A professional soldier by training, he was a soldier of fortune by predilection; and, if like many such, he was naturally adroit and prompt in minor tactics, his genuine education had endowed him with more soundness of strategy and a stronger grasp of organisation than is usual with leaders of his tendency.'<sup>1</sup>

So much for the 'official' account of the 'Man of Mafeking' — now for a consideration of the stirring events in which he played so prominent a part.

## CHAPTER XIX

### 'BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW'

'From the first Baden-Powell had scope for the display of one of his characteristics, that of making bricks without straw against time.'<sup>1</sup> By September, 1899, he had accomplished the first part of his task, which was to recruit two serviceable regiments.

For various reasons this was no light labour. Amongst others, Baden-Powell's instruction confined him to the north and west borders of Bechuanaland, where reliable men were difficult to obtain. But men in regular employment were unwilling to throw up work and enlist merely on the chance of an outbreak of hostilities. Nor were men the only difficulty. Supplies of arms, horses, mules, and oxen were small, as the authorities were very loath to incur what might prove unnecessary expenditure.

A mounted corps, further, could not be organised and equipped without establishing camping-grounds and magazines, which, if the corps was to be of the least use, would be urgently needed the moment war was declared. In addition, there was work to be done in instructing the men to ride, shoot, and manoeuvre, and in devising plans for extended operations with a small force.

Consequently Baden-Powell was very busy, but he was supported by the right sort of officers, able and energetic men who fully understood their duties. The qualities for creating and

<sup>1</sup> Official History of the War in South Africa.

commanding a modern corps are not often to be found in one person, but in these particulars Colonel Baden-Powell more than justified his appointment. The two regiments which he raised, horsed, equipped, and trained, with special attention to their maintenance and tactics, were the Protectorate Regiment under Lieut. -Colonel C. O. Hore, and the Rhodesia Regiment under Lieut. -Colonel H. C. O. Plumer.

The material of the forces was excellent. They consisted of men whose attitude was a 'disciplined unrest,' adventurous spirits with a knowledge of the frontiers, who understood the conflicting interests of the black and white population, and were accustomed even in peace-time to a continual war between suspicion and ignorance.

Mafeking was the centre of a district containing a quarter of a million natives, who formed six to one of the white population. Baden-Powell saw the advantage of holding it for the Empire. It was, moreover, not only the outpost for Kimberley and Cape Colony, but for the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Rhodesia. It threatened the weak flank of the Transvaal; and being supplied with important railway stocks and shops, as well as with large stores of food and forage, the town was distinctly worth holding.

The Boers could on no account ignore the presence of a British garrison at Mafeking, and, in maintaining the position, Baden-Powell recognised that he would best carry out his orders to keep large forces of the enemy employed away from their main body. It was impossible for him to keep the field with a roving column, as he had no base, and, according to his information, he would be hopelessly outnumbered, and speedily forced to surrender.

Immediately before the declaration of war, Colonel Baden-Powell received a message that an armed force of Boers was advancing upon Mafeking, and that war was a matter of a few days. The news came by a native who carried the message on a scrap of paper rolled into a ball the size of a pea and stuck into a small hole bored in the dirty end of a stick and afterwards plugged with soap.

Baden-Powell at once decided upon an audacious move. Retaining the newly-raised Protectorate Regiment under Lieut.-Colonel Hore, he sent Lieut. -Colonel Plumer to Tuli, where he concentrated the Rhodesia Regiment. Plumer's command, though occasionally in touch with Mafeking, was out of touch with Baden-Powell for six months, during that time being usefully employed in keeping the Boers from Rhodesia, until it was able again to co-operate with Mafeking's commander.

Consequently, when war was declared by the Republic on October 11th, Baden-Powell had a very mobile force in the field, capable of taking care of itself and diverting the Boer attention, whilst he had retained in Mafeking a sufficient guard to protect it, and adequate supplies for the inhabitants. The political effect of Mafeking's unexpected stand — from a Boer point of view. — was not fully understood till later, when it became known that the fall of Mafeking was to have been the signal for a Dutch rising at the Cape. In that event war would have spread to Table Bay; and when Cronje had defeated Plumer (Boer forces being no longer required to invest Mafeking), the Matabele and Mashonas would have joined the Boers and laid the country in ruins. This view was corroborated after the fall of Pretoria.

The first act of war was performed by the Dutch on the 13th, when, at Kraipan Siding, about forty miles south of Mafeking, they derailed an armoured train which was bringing up two 7-pounder guns and ammunition from Capetown. The precious contents, which would have been of the utmost value to Mafeking at this juncture, were captured, as well as Captain Nesbitt, V.C., and thirteen men.

The same day the town was invested by General Piet Cronje and five commandos, totalling 6750 men, with six Krupp and four Vickers-Maxim automatic guns.

The Boers expected an easy victory, but 'The Wolf that never sleeps' was fully prepared, and consequently the door to Rhodesia did not 'fly open.'

An explanation of the defences of Mafeking is necessary here. The town was an 'open' town, and entirely unfortified. It lay about three hundred yards to the north of the Molopo River, on a slight rise. The river runs through the middle of the native stadt which lies south-west of the town, and then east by the Fingo village and the brickfields. The river really formed a serious menace to the safety of the town, for its high banks upon either side constituted a covered way through the Baralong state almost into Mafeking; and it was by this access that Commandant Eloff made the final assault in the latter days of the siege. The railway runs to the west of the town, in a northerly direction from where it crosses the Molopo by an iron bridge. From the west the outlying country commands the native stadt, and the rises to the south and south-east slightly overlook the white town, thus rendering it very exposed. The country round Mafeking to the west, north, and east is flat.

At the time of its investment the town was composed of single story brick houses with corrugated iron roofing. In the north-west corner was the railway station, and on the north side the convent. The native stadt to the south-west was composed of Kafir huts, and contained about seven thousand inhabitants and refugees.

Baden-Powell thus describes the town which came to have so romantic a history: 'Mafeking is a very ordinary-looking place. Just a small tin-roofed town of small houses in rectangular streets, plumped down upon the open veldt close to the Molopo stream, and half a mile from the native town — better known as the "stadt" — consisting of red-clay circular huts with thatched roofs, housing about seven thousand natives. All around is open, undulating, yellow grass prairie.'<sup>1</sup>

Such was the town which Baden-Powell was now called upon to defend. There were plenty of provisions, partly collected by Baden-Powell, but largely in the hands of Messrs Weil & Co. Baden-Powell had made the acquaintance of Mr. Weil, who had charge of the transport and supply of the Chartered Company, during his last visit to Mafeking in 1896. He little thought that he was going to renew his acquaintance with 'Weil's Rations' in so intimate a manner.

It was fortunate that Major Lord Edward Cecil, who acted as Chief of Staff to Colonel Baden-Powell, had perceived the necessity of buying supplies far beyond what the Government had considered requisite, using his private means for the purpose.

The waterworks being outside the line of defences, the Colonel had foreseen that the water-supply would be cut off, and had issued orders for cleaning all wells in the town, including the one sunk by Sir Charles Warren. Thus there was nothing to be feared from a scarcity of water.

There were approximately fifteen hundred whites in the place. The defensive force numbered at the outset under 1200 officers and men, and was composed of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Regiment (450 men under Lieut. -Colonel Hore), the British South African Police (Lieut. -Colonel Walford), the Cape Police (under Inspectors C. S. Marsh and J. W. Browne), a company of the Bechuanaland Rifles (Captain B. W. Cowan), the Town Guard, the railway employees, and a contingent of Cape Boys.

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<sup>1</sup> Sketches in Ma/eking and East Africa.

Of these only 576 possessed the magazine rifle, the remainder using the out-dated Martini-Henry. Baden-Powell's requests for more effective ordnance had not been complied with, and he had only four -pounders, one i-pounder Hotchkiss, and one 2-inch Nordenfeldt. These guns were in bad repair, there were no duplicate parts with them, and the fuses of the ammunition supplied were shrunken with age.

The defence was maintained by means of a series of small isolated forts round the town and the native stadt, held by the enlisted men, whilst, about four hundred yards farther in, the town was protected from assault by the Town Guard and the Cape Police under Lieut. -Colonel Vyvyan, who was appointed Town-Commandant..

Sixty works were erected and held in the course of the siege, as the various operations made desirable, and the perimeter of the defence at first seven miles, was afterwards increased to ten. The length of the defences was extremely large for the defending force, but a smaller circle would have not kept the town itself out of close rifle range.

Each of the outer works was manned by from fifteen to twenty men, provided with two days' food, in order to keep independent of supplies for some hours; and they were intended to act on the offensive. As Baden-Powell describes it: 'We acted as much as possible on the principle that "aggression is the soul of defence," and delivered kicks at the enemy whenever we could with our small numbers find opportunity; and these, together with various ruses for shaking the Boers' confidence in themselves, had the effect of toning down any ardour they may have had for attack.' <sup>1</sup>

The armoured train and the railway line protected the most vulnerable side of the town, the north, where a zareba of thorn was erected. The women's laager was established to the north of the stadt, protected by the Protectorate Regiment and the natives under Major Godley, who was responsible for the western outer defences.

Colonel Baden-Powell kept one squadron of the Protectorate Regiment in reserve under his immediate command. A party of Cape Police and a Maxim helped to protect the railway Hue: the Railway Volunteers garrisoned the cemetery and a trench, also partly covering the line: more Cape Police and another Maxim were posted at Fort Ayr, a detached work on the western defence; and Cannon Koppie, the most commanding height in the outer circle on the south-east was provided with a seven-pounder and two Maxims.

Bomb-proof trenches were constructed everywhere in the town, so that it was possible to walk about without being exposed. Look-out towers were built, and telephones installed in them as well as in the bomb-proofs of the outlying forts in connection with Baden-Powell's headquarters. Everything that foresight and ingenuity could devise was done; and it was due to the admirable arrangements as well as to the excellent spirits of the men and officers that the defence was successfully maintained during the 217 days the siege endured.

It was fortunate that Colonel Baden-Powell was able to send away so large a number of women and children safely on the day hostilities broke out. They were taken south by the armoured train in charge of Captain Nesbitt, who endeavoured to take two guns and some ammunition he had procured back to Mafeking. Reference has already been made to the Boer attack on the return journey. Captain Nesbitt and his men kept them back from the derailed train — the track had been blown up — for several hours against the fire of two g-pounders, and surrendered only when the arrival of big guns made his continued resistance merely madness.

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<sup>1</sup> Sketches front Mafeking and East Africa.

The Boers were considerably elated by this small initial success, but Baden-Powell was not long before effecting reprisals, though in a somewhat fortuitous manner. Two trucks of dynamite stood in the station-yard, and considering their presence a danger, he ordered them to be run up to a distant siding north of the town. Two miles from the outer defences the Boers fired upon the trucks, taking them for an armoured train: and the driver, uncoupling the trucks, ran his engine back. The Boers, closing in, continued firing at the supposed armoured train, until a terrific explosion occurred, and several Boers were wounded.



## CHAPTER XX

### GALLANT LITTLE MAFEKING

On the 13th October, Mafeking was completely invested by forces to the north and south numbering nearly seven thousand men. The arrival of the enemy's guns must have been an exciting moment for the British commander. In spite of his quiet manner and habitual calm, the presence of artillery on the scene must have hastened his steady pulse with the prospect of the long-expected action approaching at last. 'I was lucky enough,' he writes, in *Sketches in Mafeking and East Africa*, 'to see the first Boer artillery appear on the scene, as well as the first shot fired in the investment of Mafeking. It happened that I was looking to Signal Hill, a rise about six miles to the north-east, where we usually had a look-out post of Cape Police. To my surprise, no one was on the hill, but while I looked two or three figures came in view from the far side, and, after an interval of a few minutes, three little groups of men and horses at equal

distances appeared on the skyline. They were guns coming into action. A puff of smoke, a distant bang, and a cloud of dust 200 hundred yards away from the town showed that the bombardment had begun; but the Boer gunners soon found that the range was too great, and they moved to a nearer position, and were thus enabled to throw their shells into the town.

‘While watching what effect these were having, I turned round and found a lady cycling up the street. I did not know who she was, but I called to her and suggested it would be well if she took cover, as the shells were flying about. She said, “Sorry; did not know that they were shells,” and “thanked me very much,” and rode away rather apologetically with the air that she had been intruding — not a bit frightened. And that was the spirit of all the ladies, as I soon found out.’

But Baden-Powell was not merely looking for attack. The town around him was desperately busy. The defences, though planned long since, were only in course of construction, the military having been forbidden to make active preparations for a siege until war became inevitable. There were merely a few breastworks thrown up previous to this date, and the town was closed only by wagons across the roads leading to the central square with barriers of barbed wire wound over them. Now Colonel Vyvyan and Major Panzera were perfecting the inner line of defences, and the garrison were hard at work.

No one in Mafeking knew, or guessed at, the interest that would be awakened at home by their gallant stand. Yet when news of reverses and ‘unfortunate occurrences’ began to be received in England; when, in the gloomy initial stages, our countrymen were just beginning to realise that the ‘Revolt’ of the newspapers was in reality a great struggle for supremacy with a well-armed, capably-led, and admirably-equipped nation, all eyes were directed upon Mafeking. The garrison naturally supposed that public attention would be centred upon the operations of the forces in the field, and were surprised afterwards to learn how everybody was anxious for news of them.

The cheerful messages sent out by Baden-Powell electrified the waiting nation, and the safety of Mafeking became a matter of personal interest to every Englishman.

On 14th October, heavy firing was heard in the direction of the cemetery. A squadron of the Protectorate Regiment, under Lord Charles Bentinck, supported by the armoured train in charge of Captain Williams, had gone north to locate the position of the Boers. This train had been constructed by Lieutenant More of the Railway Volunteers, and went by the name of H.M.S. Firefly.

Lord Charles Bentinck was attacked by the Boers four miles out, but the train drove their artillery from two positions, and though shells burst all about the Firefly, no men were hurt.

Captain Fitzclarence now arrived, and followed the Boers, engaging them as they withdrew. By his movement he lost the support of the armoured train, and his squadron, numbering only seventy men, found itself attacked in an open position by eight times its number. Messages were sent to Captain Fitzclarence and Captain Williams with the armoured train to fall back. The Protectorate Regiment was holding its own with a well-directed fire, when the Boers, adopting their usual tactics, moved round to cut the squadron off.

In this they might have been successful but for the timely arrival of Lord Charles Bentinck with more troops and a seven-pounder. A few rounds of shrapnel caused the Boers to relinquish their advantageous position and retire. The English wounded having been placed in the armoured train, the advanced forces and the Firefly withdrew. In this action, against vastly superior forces well-hidden in the scrub, we lost four killed and ten wounded, whilst the Boers lost eighty killed and double that number wounded.

Colonel Baden-Powell and the head-quarter staff anxiously awaited news. If the troops sent to assist had proved insufficient there was not another man who could have been spared, and the whole defence might have failed.

That afternoon when ambulances were sent out with the armoured train and proceeded to the scene of conflict, the bearer-party, under the Red Cross flag, were fired upon, and forced to abandon their intention of bringing in the dead. In consequence of this infringement of the rules of civilised warfare, Baden-Powell addressed a remonstrance to General Cronje.

A reply was received on Sunday, the day following, when Dr Pirow arrived from the Boer army in a carriage with a hospital flag. It appears that the Boers took the coming of the armoured train for a second attacking force. Dr Pirow was entertained to luncheon by Colonel Baden-Powell and his staff, and accorded every hospitality. He assured the British commander that firing on ambulances should not be repeated, and that General Cronje would consider such action by his men as a capital offence. This, however, did not prevent the same thing happening later, though it is but fair to say this was no fault of the Boer commandant. Cronje expressed himself as very anxious to allow the women and children to depart. Indeed, no leader on the Boer side showed greater unwillingness to cause losses to the enemy or to suffer them himself.

On the 16th the Boers commenced bombarding the town from the north-east with two twelve-pounders, and occupied the waterworks. This had been foreseen; the town wells already were in use, so there still remained an abundant water-supply. The town did not reply to the shells which fell constantly about the convent, now fitted up as a hospital and flying the Geneva cross. But a counter-attack was organised by Baden-Powell, to be delivered when the Boers advanced their guns within range of Maxim fire. The armoured train had been painted green and disguised with bushes like those of the zareba to the north. It was practically invisible, and the Boer guns were almost within range of its Maxim, when fate decided that Cronje should send in a demand, under the safeguard of the white flag, for surrender.

The party bearing the message saw the position of the armoured train, and on their return warned their friends of the trap. In answer to the demand for surrender 'to avoid further bloodshed,' Baden-Powell replied, with ironic humour, that he was certainly anxious to avoid bloodshed, 'but when would it begin?'

His spirits were rising in direct proportion to his difficulties, and on the 21st October the Colonel sent off the message which told of irrepressible humour and unconquerable gaiety, and immediately lightened the gloom of the whole nation. Everybody read, 'October 21. — All well. Four hours' bombardment. One dog killed,' and greeted the message with a joyous laugh. If that was a sample of Mafeking spirits, then Mafeking was all right!

On Monday the 23rd the Boers' big Creusot gun (a 94-pounder) arrived, and was placed in position at Jackal Tree, 3500 yards south of Mafeking. As a bombardment was threatened, the British struck first. Captain Williams advanced two guns in the dark of the morning to the waterworks, and shelled the enemy so effectively in their trenches as to put both of their guns out of action.

Next day the Boers shelled the town with 'Creaky,' as our men called the Creusot big gun, and some twelve-pounders. The convent was hit, but no one was hurt. The enemy were probably trying to damage the station. At the end of the bombardment Baden-Powell was awakened to receive another message from Cronje, calling upon him to surrender. 'I will let General Cronje know when we have had enough,' was the exasperating reply.



The town was then shelled continuously for thirty-six hours, in execution of Cronje's threat, to which Baden-Powell had replied by a warning concerning certain mines with which the town defences were protected.

About the same time an attack was made upon the native 'stadt' in which the Baralongs, armed with Sniders, helped to drive the Boers back. This was contrary to the enemy's expectations, as they had purposely fired on the native town, so that the Baralongs should hold the British responsible for the damage caused. In reply to the Boer commandant's appeal urging him to send the women and children out of Mafeking, the Baralong chief had replied, 'For himself, he was a subject of the Queen, but the Queen had not instructed him to fight against General Cronje, Her orders to him were to keep quiet. This he would do, but he could not find any safer place for the women and children than his own kraal.' The Baralongs supported our forces, defending the 'stadt' bravely, and greeted the Boers with a heavy fire from their Sniders.

Bomb-proofs were becoming more fashionable with the inhabitants, now that bombardment was so common. It is interesting to note what Baden-Powell has to say in this connection: 'People take shells in different ways, according to their temperament. Some run like hares, others fling themselves flat, others just hunch their shoulders, and one there is who merely takes a passing but critical interest in them; when a shell bursts within ten feet of him he merely growls, "What a rotten bursting charge!"'

Baden-Powell spent many hours each day now on his look-out on the top of a house in Market Square, from which a speaking-tube, communicating with the underground telephone exchange beneath, connected him with all the forts. On the 27th the Colonel, perched aloft in his eyrie, decided that a taste of cold steel would be salutary to the Boers.

That night the enemy were puzzled at seeing two lanterns hoisted on commanding points in the place. They were to assist one of Baden-Powell's little 'surprise-parties.' If the men kept them in alignment on going forth the direction would bring them to the unsuspecting Boers in their trenches beyond the brickfields.

A force of little over a hundred men of the Protectorate Regiment and Cape Police was paraded by Captain Fitzclarence at 8 p.m., and moved silently to the attack. The order to charge was heard in the outer line of defence, and the first trench was carried with a rush. Bayonet and sword only were used by our men: the Boers, caught actually sleeping, fired wildly in all directions. When the attackers were drawn off by a whistled signal, firing was still proceeding in the trenches. The friendly guide-lights led the force safely back, after inflicting a loss of over forty Boers bayoneted, and sixty shot by their own men, on a laager of over six hundred. Our losses were six killed and eleven wounded, the latter including the two officers in charge, who received slight hurts. The moral effect, as Baden-Powell had surmised, of the silent night attack and the cold steel was enormous. Twice again that night the hoisting of the mysterious lanterns was sufficient to set the enemy firing aimlessly in sheer panic.

The Boers were very surly for days after; and though shell-firing and sniping continued, little harm was done.

On the last day of the month the Boers made an attack in force upon Cannon Koppie, the chief outer post of Mafeking. They advanced five heavy guns, including 'Creaky' from Jackal Tree, and opened a heavy fire at 4.40 a.m. Under cover of this an attempt was made to carry Cannon Koppie by assault, and the Boer riflemen approached to within three hundred yards. Colonel Walford held the fort with two Maxims, a seven-pounder, and fifty-seven of the British South African Police; and the enemy, though at one time almost successful in carrying the entrenched position, were repulsed with great loss. In the defence, Captains Marsham and

Pechell, and two sergeant-majors, were killed. Of this resolute attack and defence the official account remarks: 'Truly did Napoleon rule that in battle a man should never surrender, because he knows not what chance may at the last moment reverse in his favour the most hopeless odds.'

Thus the first month of Mafeking's gallant resistance was brought to a successful issue.

## CHAPTER XXI

### KEEPING THE FLAG FLYING

The first of November was the occasion of the first issue of the Mafeking Mail — Special Siege Slip, which was issued daily, 'shells permitting,' as announced under the title, until the conclusion of the siege. Mr. Whales, Daily Mail correspondent, acted as editor throughout.

All through the weeks following, Colonel Baden-Powell cheered the defenders by his bright and confident bearing. His youthfulness seemed more pronounced than ever, and he whistled gaily wherever he went. He appeared to conceal his manifold anxieties with a tact and silent endurance that was marvellous. 'The Colonel is always smiling, and is a host in himself,' wrote a correspondent about this time. 'He goes whistling down the street, deep in thought, pleasing of countenance, bright and confident.'

He was only living up to his creed of 'bucking up his side' with every fibre tense within him. The Pall Mall correspondent described him in this manner: 'Baden-Powell is here. He is not only here, but everywhere, superintending, inspecting, seeing for himself, doing everything. I think that B.-P. is the nearest approach to Boyle Roche's bird in the world. He never sleeps, I believe, and yet when you meet him in his office, on the square here, or away in a distant camp, he is always the same watchful, wakeful B.-P. with not a feather turned. With the material to hand he has done wonders. The camps are splendidly placed; the earthworks would make Vauban jealous if he were alive and saw them — every man is a volunteer.'

Knowing how fearful the Boers had become of night attacks in the trenches, Baden-Powell invented a particularly ingenious plan for alarming them. Mr Fodisch constructed a number of tin megaphones with vibrating wires inside. Of these Baden-Powell says, 'Some people used them at night, with the bell turned towards the Boer trenches, and carried on a ventriloquial entertainment, pretending they were commanding a force coming out to attack. The effect on the Boers was a sleepless night, and the waste of a great deal of ammunition.'

Heavy shelling and sniping on both sides from the trenches were of daily occurrence. The Boers now tried to imitate our tactics with a dynamite explosion. Loading a truck with dynamite, they pushed it to the top of a gradient to the north of Mafeking Station, meaning to run it down the incline. Something, however, 'went wrong with the works,' on account of a fuse clumsily handled or because of the jolting on the defective line. At all events, it blew up whilst still a mile and a half from the town, and a few Boers were 'hoist with their own petard.'

The lively defenders of Mafeking celebrated Guy Fawkes's day, which occurred on Sunday, with selections from the band, and a firework display. Two days later information was received that the enemy contemplated an attack on the native town, and, acting on the principle of anticipating every attack, Major Godley paraded the forces under his command before daylight, and advanced westward toward the Boer laager from which the attack was expected. This laager contained two hundred and fifty men, with a Maxim, and two twelve-pounders; but

its defenders had a rude awakening when day dawned, and fled towards the big laager three or four miles distant.

Having been reinforced to the number of three or four hundred they came to the attack again, and were met with long-range volleys from Captain Marsh's company, which was covering the south of the 'stadt.'

When Major Godley had succeeded in diverting the attack in a less dangerous direction than the Boers had intended, his men retired slowly upon the outer defences. The Boer fire was very heavy, and there were many narrow escapes as the retiring troops gave ground, alternately halting to fire and cover the other party. Major Godley was slightly injured in the hand, his horse was shot under him, and his hat ventilated by a bullet. The Boers advanced to within six hundred yards of our trenches, and were beaten off with heavy loss. Soon their Red Cross wagons were seen picking up their dead and wounded. The attack had failed. During this day Commandant Cronje's son was killed.

The garrison now began to be tormented by some new guns on Game Tree Fort. These were high velocity twelve-pounders, which threw their shells with such speed that no interval elapsed between the report and arrival of the missile.

Cheering news came to hand at this time of three British successes, and Baden-Powell received a communication by a runner from Plumer's column. On the 18th it almost seemed as though the defenders' hopes of a speedy release would be realised, as Cronje's laager to the south-west was seen to be breaking up and then trekking towards the south and Kimberley. Expectation was deceived, however, for though Cronje did depart with four thousand men and six guns, the siege was not raised. Some relief was felt, the investment not being so close as before, and the bombardment was less heavy. The big Creusot gun retained its position on Game Tree Hill, and the siege was now conducted less vigorously, though at the same time less generously, under Commandant Snyman. The convent and hospital were shelled, and sniping was practically continuous. Feeling in Mafeking was very bitter towards the unchivalrous Snyman. It was impracticable to attempt a sortie on the diminished Boers with their power of rapid concentration and superiority in armament, but the garrison saw that by patience and watchfulness there was every prospect of successfully maintaining the defence.

Sundays in Mafeking afforded a welcome relief from the intense strain of the siege. As hostilities were then suspended, the defender of Mafeking organised weekly concerts — at which he almost invariably performed himself — and polo and foot-ball matches. Church services were held in the evening. On more than one occasion sports were instituted, with tent-pegging, etc., and pony-racing; and, of course, there was always a band performance. One Sunday afternoon the elevation of 'Creaky's' muzzle caused a sensation, as one shell in the centre of the crowded polo-ground would have meant great loss of life, but it was discovered later that the Boers were only exhibiting the ten-ton gun to a party of ladies. The women and children were now beginning to feel the strain of the week-day confinement in the bomb-proofs, and several of the children died.

Powder was found to be diminishing alarmingly early in December, and volleys were almost entirely discontinued, whilst sniping was allowed only when likely to be effective. Major F. W. Panzera of the B.S.A. Police was in command of all the guns. On the 21st there were only 580 shells left for all four of the seven-pounders. The indefatigable garrison turned their attention forthwith to the manufacture of gunpowder, exhibiting ingenuity and versatility scarcely inferior to that of Colonel Baden-Powell himself. An engineer named Conelly succeeded eventually in

turning out effective shells for the guns, and soon the fear of the ammunition failing was removed.

The supply of food also was running low, and all the remaining provisions were placed under the care of Captain C. M. Ryan of the A.S.C. Rations were methodical served out; they were purchased at cost price by those in the town who had money, and were given free to those who had none. Later, it became necessary in view of the possible protraction of the siege to reduce the meat ration half a pound per day, and the bread ration by a quarter of a pound. After that the garrison were driven to all kinds of shifts, which will be referred to in due course.

The method employed by our men to withstand the advance of the Boers was to push out counter-trenches to those the enemy were constructing, and, thus entrenched, to fight the Boers in their trenches. The showing of a head was the signal for half a dozen shots, and dummy men were employed on either side to draw the fire from rival saps. On December 5th a tremendous thunderstorm, accompanied by floods of rain, passed over the town. All our defences were flooded out, and had the Boers attacked they might have rushed the garrison. Captain Fitzclarence was nearly drowned in attempting to cross the Molopo. The trenches and bomb-proofs had to be pumped out with the fire engine, or baled out with buckets, and some ammunition was washed away. Happily for Mafeking, the besiegers, who were even worse off, having no opportunity for drying their clothes, were sufficiently occupied in attending to their personal concerns.

Two days later, Lady Sarah Wilson joined the garrison. Her intention of going home — she was at the Cape with Captain Gordon Wilson, A.D.C., her husband — was frustrated by the sudden outbreak of war, and she only reached Vryburg after sundry adventures. Her presence was regarded by the Boers as extremely suspicious, and to avoid the difficulties to which she was exposed in a hostile district, she made her way to General Snyman, who, instead of exchanging her for a Boer woman in Mafeking, as she requested, made it a condition of her exchange that the substitute should be a horse-thief named Viljoen who had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment in the town jail.

Lady Sarah was vigorously cheered on entering the defences of Mafeking, and from that moment she assisted the other ladies in their ministrations to the sick and wounded. Her experiences were afterwards published in her volume, *South African Memories*,

Dr. Haves was in charge of the hospital arrangements, assisted by Major Anderson of the Medical Corps. The latter was often called upon for ambulance work, and had the uncomfortable experience of being fired on several times in the course of his duties, as the Boers imagined the British made the same use of the ambulance wagons as themselves — to bring up ammunition to the scene of action. The matron at the Victoria Hospital, whither all the cases were conveyed on the convent being no longer used for ambulance work, was Miss Hills, who, with her staff of nurses — professional and volunteer — did devoted service all through the siege. It was especially remarked how lightly the Kafirs treated their own wounds; they endured pain with marvellous fortitude, and grinned when undergoing the treatment of most horrible injuries.

News from outside was scarce about this time, and few messages got out of Mafeking either. Colonel Baden-Powell sent his letter safely away by runner on the 12th December, however, the one to which we have referred earlier in the book in which he told his mother he had been unable to find a fellow Carthusian with whom to celebrate Founders' Day. It was secreted in the bowl of the Kafir's pipe.

The day before, Baden-Powell issued a proclamation to the Boers outside Mafeking, which had the effect of annoying Commandant Snyman very much. Doubtless that gentleman

was of opinion that the epistle was over-confident and spirited to emanate from an invested town, and, moreover, it was addressed to the burghers generally instead of to their leader. A very angry man was Commandant Snyman.

The proclamation to the Boer rank and file called

upon them to return to their farms within three days, in return for which submission, if they surrendered their rifles and one hundred and fifty rounds of ammunition a man, they would suffer no penalty. If they refused, they would have to expect rigorous treatment when the British took the offensive. Baden-Powell pointed out that the burghers were being kept in the dark by their leaders as to the actual position of affairs, and that the notion of foreign intervention was hopeless. He informed them that their papers did not print the truth, that the town had suffered little damage from the lauded State Artillery, and that nothing could stop the British from advancing into the Boer territory in a short time.

The manifesto was sent by eight mounted orderlies with flags of truce. They all returned safe with the report that the burghers had received it sourly enough, but almost all admitted that they were sick of the war and dispirited at their want of success. So discouraged were they apparently by the truth of the jibe that 'Mafeking cannot be taken by sitting down and looking at it,' that the bombardment perceptibly moderated during the day, and the town was shelled only in a perfunctory manner.

The garrison kept Christmas Day on Sunday the 24th, as the Boers' religious festival is New Year's Day, and they knew they would have scant opportunity on the proper date. There were church services for all creeds; and a bean-feast, with brake-rides and tea for two hundred and fifty Dutch and English children in the town, was organised by Lady Sarah Wilson and Mr. Weil. Everybody enjoyed the day thoroughly. There were sports for the adults, and it was a time of cheerful festivity all round.

Two occurrences now made Colonel Baden-Powell resort to offensive tactics against the besiegers. The grazing ground for the cattle had been devastated within the defences by enormous flights of locusts, and if the cattle were to be kept alive, it was necessary to secure fresh grass for them at a greater distance from the inner defences. News also had been received that Plumer's flying column, which had been doing excellent work in the field, was now approaching Gaberones to the north, and an attempt to join hands with him was distinctly worth making. Indeed, if successful, there was a possibility that the siege might be raised.

Accordingly Baden-Powell determined upon a sortie from the town upon Game Tree Fort, the strong Boer position which commanded the road to the north. The day upon which the ill-fated attempt was made was afterwards alluded to by the garrison as 'Black Boxing-Day.'

## CHAPTER XXII

### A DESPERATE ATTEMPT

It was not till afterwards that the various reasons which accounted for the non-success of the daring and costly attack upon Game Tree Fort became apparent. Colonel Baden-Powell had done his utmost to ensure that the sortie made by his garrison should meet with its merited reward. On several occasions the 'Wolf,' walking by night, had crept silently over to the very edge of the rampart that guarded the important citadel of the Boers. He had braved every risk,

and gone personally, not once but several times, to reconnoitre the fort, and had returned in the dark of the morning to mature his schemes.

With such a mixed population as the beleagured town contained, it was inevitable that there should be within the line of defences many sympathisers with the besieging forces. There were many Dutch people in the town, and though the utmost secrecy as to the time and nature of the contemplated attempt on Game Tree Fort was kept, there is no doubt that the burghers and their leaders were fully informed of the imminence of the attack. It was afterwards remembered that the Dutch women in the women's laager had behaved in an unusual manner on Christmas Day, singing psalms and hymns in the noisiest possible manner, and it was concluded that this was one of several methods utilised for conveying the warning that an attack in force was about to be attempted.

So late as Christmas Day Baden-Powell reconnoitred the position, but work which had been in progress for a day or two before had been skilfully concealed even from his experienced eyes. The work appeared to be a low sand-bag breastwork with a single line of loop-holes. But, after the last reconnaissance it was possible to make, the height of the rampart was secretly increased from three feet to twelve feet, the garrison was increased by double its original number, and three tiers of loop-holes were constructed. In addition, two more commandos were brought up into the immediate neighbourhood to be held in reserve, and used as the incidents of the onslaught gave opportunity; whilst, at the last moment, the railway track some distance from the fort was torn up to prevent the storming-party from receiving the invaluable assistance of the armoured train in covering its attack. As a writer has said, so far from Game Tree Fort being an easily assailed position, it proved to be 'a heavily armed block-house' manned with densely-packed defenders.

The attack was under the general command of Major Godley, and the left wing was led by Lieut. -Colonel Hore. The troops stole silently into position before dawn, and even then it is believed treacherous signals were being flashed to the Boers at the fort. It was arranged that the storming-party should consist of two squadrons of the Protectorate Regiment, numbering about eighty men, under the command of Captain Vernon and Captain Fitzclarence, which were to attack from the east. They were to be supported by two hundred men of the garrison, with the armoured train, and all the guns that could be spared; though as the action developed the brunt of the affair was borne almost entirely by the storming-party.

One of the correspondents in Mafeking describes the commencement of the assault thus: 'As the gray dawn broke over the veldt we watched anxiously to our left front the spot where we knew our seven-pounders, under Major Panzera, had been emplaced during the night. Then, in the twilight, through the dark-green loom of the veldt, broke a flash and a cloud of white smoke. A second later a flash showed bright over the enemy's position, followed by another and yet another, as our two guns came into action, aided by the one at Fort Ayr. Shot after shot fell rapidly round the enemy's position. As it grew lighter, the Maxim joined in, rapping automatically, and to the right the armoured train crept slowly like a great black snake over the plain towards her destination.

'The whole scene commenced to unfold itself like a photo which is being developed. The outlines grew sharper. The rattle of musketry broke on our ears, and we knew that our men had opened fire and been sighted by the enemy.

'After that the attack developed with marvellous rapidity to the east of Game Tree, and Vernon and Fitzclarence took up their positions for a final rush. Away to the right flank Captain Cowan, with seventy men of the Bechuanaland Rifles, was disposed to intercept reinforcements

or the enemy's retreat. The armoured train, under Captain Williams, with a machine gun and a Hotchkiss, ran up as fast as the broken state of the line would allow. The whole of the right flank was commanded by Major Godley. To the left of us and west were the enemy. The guns, under Major Panzera, were escorted by a squadron under Lord Charles Bentinck, the whole commanded by Colonel Hore, and were delivering a rapid fire.

'Just before the sun rose the armoured train sounded her whistle. It was the signal from Captain Vernon that he was ready to rush the position, and to the guns to cease firing.'<sup>1</sup>

The guns, however, were engaged in shelling reinforcements of Boers, invisible to Captain Vernon, who were pouring into the fort to its assistance. Major Panzera had hoped to make a practicable breach in the defences, but, though the shrapnel bursting within them may have caused some loss, the projectiles exploded against the face of the fort without dislodging the sand-bags forming the rampart. The Boer plan, too, of not fully manning the position until the guns were about to be silenced so that the storming-party could advance, prevented the casualties that would otherwise have been incurred. All the time the great Creusot gun and the lesser cannon kept pounding away at the British, who were considerably galled by a well-aimed rifle-fire in addition.

Following the cease-fire of our supporting guns, the Protectorate Regiment advanced to the assault through a hail of bullets that swept the zone of veldt before the fort. To quote Mr. Wilson<sup>2</sup> upon the valorous assault: 'The men dashed forward in swift rushes, keeping admirable order, their officers well in front, with such spirit and gallantry that all who saw were filled with admiration. A few fell, but the losses were not heavy at this stage, despite the bullets which seemed to come from every quarter. Half the distance had been covered, when the men, by order, lay down to recover breath, and, as they lay, opened fire with their rifles. Then the order "Fix bayonets" was given; the steel glinted in the rays of the early sun, and the sixty prone figures rose as if by clockwork from the ground and swept with a cheer towards the fort, now only 300 yards away. Captain Sandford was one of the first to fall in this rush; in an instant he was hit twice; one wound through the spine was mortal; but he died calling upon his men to go forward, with his face to the foe.'

The fire from the fort seemed to increase in intensity. Captain Fitzclarence fell and Captain Vernon was wounded, yet the men kept on straight for the position. They got right up to the rampart, cheering as they went, — to death. There was no prospect of rushing the fort, they saw, even as they cheered. The low rampart of a day since was now a high pile of sand-bags, only scalable by a few who had got into the ditch under the belching loop-holes, and, moreover, it was caged in at the top with sheets of iron. The officers, Captain Vernon, though already wounded, and Lieutenant Paton, desperately climbed up, and fired their revolvers right into the loop-holes, falling almost instantly into the ditch with mortal injuries. It was a triumph of British daring, though alas! a futile one. Corporal Cooke even succeeded in gaining a footing upon the sheet-iron roof, and had his clothing shot to rags, though marvellously escaping any hurt himself. Every officer of the regiment was down and most of the men. Sergeant Molloy took command of the shattered remnant of Vernon's men, and even at that moment, when every man before the fort recognised that the attempt was impossible, they disdained to run.

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<sup>1</sup> From *Golden Deeds of the War*, Alfred T. Story.

<sup>2</sup> *With the Flag to Pretoria*, by H. W. Wilson;

At last they fell back, slowly and sullenly, firing as they retired, and rallying even under the murderous hail from the fort. Major Godley sent a mounted aide-de-camp to Colonel Baden-Powell, who had been awaiting news of the assault in the gravest anxiety. The message was convincing — ‘The position was practically impregnable to infantry,’ Major Godley had said — and Baden-Powell, after a moment’s reflection, decided to throw away no more brave lives on a task which had proved impossible.

No wonder the Boers said, ‘They fight like devils, not men,’ but victory was not to our arms that day. Only nine men of the storming-party came back. The rest were lying with arms stretched out near the trench surrounding Game Tree Fort. Yet the Boers were so much impressed by the determination of the attackers that they dared not sally forth to follow up their advantage. The Red Cross flag was carried forward by the Colonel’s orders, and the Boers ceased firing as the bearer-companies began their sorrowful work.

Game Tree Fort had been within an ace of surrendering, and but for the resolution of one man, who threatened to shoot the first burgher who showed the white flag, it would have fallen. So the Boers admitted themselves to the ambulance men.

This was the only grave reverse the gallant defenders of Mafeking experienced. And even in its failure the sortie proved a success, though at the sacrifice of many valuable lives, for the Boers, instead of sending off men to help in the field operations, strengthened their positions, and sat down to invest the town more closely.

The action was full of incidents of invincible courage, and for conspicuous gallantry. Sergeant Martineau and Trooper Ramsden, both of the Protectorate Regiment, were awarded the V.C. That night the dead were buried in Mafeking cemetery, and the whole garrison mourned the futile loss of their gallant comrades.

Captain Fitzclarence, who was brought in wounded in the thigh, recovered by dint of good nursing; but others who received injuries in the attack on ‘Black Boxing-Day,’ succumbed. So weakened was the Protectorate Regiment by its casualties, which amounted to one man out of every four, during the short time it had been in existence, that it was reorganised into three squadrons — originally there had been four. On every occasion when this newly-raised regiment was engaged, it distinguished itself, though never more valorously than before Game Tree Fort.

Colonel Baden-Powell was profoundly affected by the losses of his brave men. All that could be done to ensure victory had been done by him; he had made every personal exertion, but through the treachery of those in the town who had given information to the enemy, his well-matured plans had been defeated. There is no doubt whatever that the attack had been anticipated in almost every detail. This was quite obvious from the reinforcements actually on the spot at the time of the opening of the assault, the increase of the garrison, and the destruction of the railway line, as well as from the actual presence of Commandant Snyman and other Boer leaders.

So stern a lesson had the sortie taught the Boers that some weeks passed without any further operations on their part other than the daily bombardment;



## CHAPTER XXIII

## ‘SETTING PRECEDENTS’

Dark days followed the unsuccessful attempt on Game Tree Fort. News of the serious reverses at Colenso and Stormberg, which had been suffered by our forces a few days earlier, added to the general depression of the devoted garrison. The Boer Krupp-gun was fired again on the women’s laager, killing two little children. And, though up to the present the health of the town had been good, typhoid broke out amongst the women.

This was enough to discourage any commander but Baden-Powell. His indomitable spirits rose under the strain of disaster. Whatever anxieties he felt were concealed with iron determination, and his cheerful confidence inspired the little garrison of gallant and resourceful men to still greater efforts. Instead of repining, they began ‘setting precedents’ in a remarkably enterprising manner.

To begin with, Mr Rowlands dug up an old muzzle-loading naval gun from his garden. The garrison promptly named it ‘Lord Nelson,’ and proceeded to make it an effective addition to their armament. Curiously enough, the maker’s initials cast upon it were ‘B. P.’ When cleaned up, sights were fitted, and it was mounted upon a gun-carriage extemporised from a pair of wagon-wheels. The next difficulty was that of ammunition; but round-shot were made for the old relic of by-gone native wars, and it was conducted amid triumphant jests to the bed of the Molopo River, and there posted. The flannel cartridges had been sewed by the nuns of the convent and filled with three pounds each of Major Panzera’s home-manufactured powder. With this charge the gun was found to throw a cannon-ball over three thousand yards with a fair degree of precision. The Boers opened their eyes wide when the round balls from the mysterious new gun began to hop over the veldt, and henceforward ‘Lord Nelson’ did noble duty in the defence.

Mr. Conolly and the other railroad engineers next tackled the problem of creating a supply of shells for the seven-pounders, the ammunition for which was all but exhausted. The ingenuity and resourcefulness exhibited was marvellous. Shells were improvised out of the caps of air-condensing cylinders from the soda-water factory, and other contrivances. The fuses were designed by Lieutenant Daniels, and the results were as perfect as if the shells had been received direct from home. A lucky find of two hundred five-pound shells, left by Dr. Jameson at the time of the raid, was made. These were resurrected and enlarged by the addition of Mafeking-manufactured bands, so as to fit the seven-pounders. They were also fitted with the newly-designed fuses.

Major Panzera and his workmen proved that their powder was good for the seven-pounders as well as for ‘Lord Nelson,’ and encouraged by their other successes they essayed still more ambitious undertakings. Assisted by Mr. Conolly and Mr. Coghlan, Major Panzera manufactured a five-inch howitzer. The piece of ordnance was known as ‘The Wolf,’ out of compliment to Colonel Baden-Powell, and was constructed from an iron steam-pipe, on to which steel rings were shrunk. A water-tank lined with fire-bricks formed the furnace. The brass castings, the breech-block, trunnion, and rings were made in the railway foundry. This product of ingenuity, resourcefulness, and Mafeking workmanship was an unqualified success. No wonder the Boers were mystified when the howitzer opened fire. It must have seemed some kind of witchcraft that projected eighteen-pound shells four thousand yards from the town into their laagers. How Baden-Powell had spirited a gun of that calibre into Mafeking must have been as

difficult a problem as that of the mysterious company of lancers which first began to parade the town at this time — the Colonel had organised them and equipped the squadron with improvised lances.

About this time the Boers fired into the town several shells containing a phosphorus compound, evidently with the intention of setting the buildings on fire. Early in January they attempted to introduce a number of Kafirs with the idea of diminishing the food-supply. The natives were brought up to the defences under cover of a flag of truce, but Baden-Powell refused to admit them, much to the annoyance of the enemy, who attempted reprisals by firing upon a messenger from the town who carried a white flag.

At the end of January sufficient food remained for seventy-seven more days, though this was eked out for a much longer period by various expedients. For the white population there were stores of meat, bread, fresh vegetables, groceries, preserved fruits, and even fish; but the natives in the 'stadt' were beginning to feel the pinch of want through having been deprived of the harvesting and their usual work. However, the Baralongs from time to time materially assisted the commissariat by raiding Boer cattle beyond the defences. The enemy were extremely disappointed in the allegiance shown to the White Queen by the Kafirs, and made several attempts to tamper with their loyalty. It was inevitable that we should employ them for sundry purposes, but they were only armed for their own defence, and though Snyman was much incensed at their sniping his men, this was only done after the Boers had maliciously shelled the 'stadt.' Indeed, so fierce was the shelling at times on the native town, and the women's laager, that the Dutch women in the latter refuge were moved to send a letter of expostulation to the Boer commandant.

To Mr Benjamin Weil, the Mafeking representative of Julius Weil and Co., the garrison was especially indebted for food, as he had laid in large stores on his own account, in addition to the supplies requisitioned by the Government. Major Goold-Adams, the Resident Commissioner of the Protectorate, instituted a system of purchase by tokens, and towards the end of February opened a soup-kitchen, for which horse-flesh was employed, to supply the natives. By that time the price of food had risen enormously, and Kafirs who possessed hens could sell an egg for sixpence — sufficient to buy a day's ration of meal for two men.

The horses were now getting very poor in flesh, though huge quantities of hay had been stored previous to the siege, so some were slaughtered and the meat made into biltong for the natives. The bones were used in the soup-kitchen. Captain Ryan who had done splendid work in the regulation of food was unfortunately mortally wounded on the 12th February. 'Throughout the whole siege,' Major Baillie writes, 'he was always laughing and joking, and nothing ever subdued his never-failing cheerfulness : to meet him was a regular tonic, if liver or temper were at fault.' <sup>1</sup>

By the middle of February siege-rations were horse-flesh and six ounces of bread per day — poor food to fight on, and to sustain the trials of a continuous bombardment. Corn and flour were the foods of which there was the greatest scarcity, and a ration-biscuit compounded of oats crushed with the husks caused epidemics of dysentery. Whisky was eighteen shillings the bottle, and inferior Cape brandy fifteen shillings.

Marvellous were the shifts to which the garrison resorted to economise the provision of horse-flesh. From Baden-Powell's account <sup>2</sup> the by-products of slaughtered horse made a

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<sup>1</sup> Diary of the Siege, by Major F. D. Baillie.

<sup>2</sup> Sketches in Mafeking and East Africa.

lengthy list. 'The manes and tails went to fill mattresses at the hospital, the hide, after having the hair scalded off, was boiled with the head and hoofs to make brawn; the meat was cut off and minced; the interior arrangements were cut into lengths and used as sausage-skins for the mince (a ration was six inches of sausage); the bones and shreds of meat were boiled into soup, and the bones were then collected and pounded into dust and used for adulterating the flour.'

Such were some of the straits to which the gallant defenders were reduced, and it is wonderful how they maintained their spirits and endurance on such fare.

It was most necessary that the garrison and non-combatants should be diverted as much as possible from dwelling upon the horrors of the siege — the ravages of sickness, the effects of the daily bombardment, and the privations which everybody had to endure — and Mafeking Sundays were a feature of the siege. Sunday was kept as the Sabbath till noon, and church services were regularly attended. The agreement with the Boers as to a weekly armistice rendered this possible, and it was no uncommon thing for the British in the outer defences to have friendly relations with the enemy on the peace-day. In the afternoon, Sunday was kept like a Saturday at home, and everybody was given as much opportunity for relaxation as possible to cheer them up for the six days' shelling to follow.

Driving competitions for the transport mules were arranged; and the excellent condition of the beautiful spans turned out reflected credit not only upon the drivers, but upon Colonel Baden-Powell and Colonel Walford, who had personally selected them previous to the siege.

Bicycle sports were held from time to time, though the going was rather lumpy. The recreation ground was constantly swept by shell-fire, so much so that a trench had to be dug along one side of it to cover the bearer-parties conveying wounded to the hospital. A cricket match between Captain Fitzclarence's squadron and the town was won by the civilian team by nineteen runs; and the same day a concert was held as usual. Baden-Powell always made it his business to enliven these concerts with his comic songs and musical sketches. Various balls were given by different sections of the community, as for example, the Beleaguered Bachelors' Ball, given by the bachelors of Mafeking. On the 25th of February a Siege Exhibition was opened. This contained various ingenious exhibits, including Boer mementos in the shape of shells, explosive bullets, etc. Perhaps one of the most interesting and amusing features of these pleasant Sunday afternoons was a baby show, at which prizes were awarded to English and Dutch babies born in Mafeking since the commencement of the siege. The same ingenuity and resource were shown in the direction of amusement as were exhibited in the plans for the defence.

Meanwhile, on week-days the bombardment was incessant. The population of Mafeking spent almost their whole time under the bomb-proof shelters. One family lived under an engine in the engine-house. Early in February the Boers mounted a new gun, with which they frequently shelled the women's laager. 'Creaky' was put out of action by one of our seven-pounders at this period of the siege; and was moved to a new position about five miles west of the town, where it steadily pounded away at Fort Ayr. It was calculated that this gun alone threw twelve thousand pounds of metal into the town. Curiously enough, the flimsy construction of the houses saved Mafeking from being razed to the ground. The shells went right through the soft mud bricks, of which the dwellings were for the most part constructed, without exploding. Whenever they struck a more solidly-built erection, as when Mr. Whitely the mayor's house was hit, the damage was enormous. The bursting of shells on the rocky ground also caused much injury from the flying fragments of stone.

Various messages got in and out of Mafeking at this time. The usual method of sending them was by native runners, who were prepared to undertake the risk of conveying them to a

village fifty miles from Mafeking — from which they were forwarded to Buluwayo by a secret agent — for the sum of fifteen pounds. One method of concealing the letter was by crumpling it into a little ball wrapped round with lead foil. This the runner carried in his hand, so that, if intercepted, he could drop it secretly upon the ground, where it looked exactly like an ordinary stone. When the Kafir was searched, as nothing was found upon him, he was usually allowed to go free, when he would return to the spot where he had dropped his despatch, of which he had noted accurately the position by landmarks, recover his letter, and proceed on his mission.

On 24th January Lord Roberts sent in a message which came through Colonel Plumer, who was then at Gaberones. The Mafeking Mail of the following day informed the garrison that the Commander-in-Chief had sent his warm congratulations on the plucky defence Mafeking was making. A few days later Mr. Frank Whitely, the mayor, got his message of loyalty to the Queen safely beyond the Boer forces, and a reply was received a month later. News of British victories in the south arrived at the end of January, and on the nth February Colonel Baden-Powell communicated Lord Roberts's message holding out hopes of relief being effected by the middle of May.

The affair at Game Tree Fort was not the only occasion on which Mafeking suffered as a result of information given the enemy by spies. Even before war had been declared there were nine known spies who were warned to leave. The only thing possible was to inflict exemplary sentences when they were caught. By the 25th January three native spies, sent to obtain information as to the disposition of the forces, the strength of the forts, and amount of supplies, had been executed. Still, communication was evidently maintained by the Dutch within the town with their friends outside, for whenever the Dutch women in the women's laager retired en masse to the shelters, shell-firing occurred almost immediately after. Colonel Baden-Powell issued a warning that all persons, including women, convicted of treasonable correspondence with the enemy, would be shot. He also warned the Boers that if they continued to fire upon the women's laager, he would make a jail for his prisoners in the centre of it, so that the fire would kill their own friends.

Another difficulty which Baden-Powell's resourceful garrison surmounted was that of a siege currency. The natives and others who possessed hard cash buried it for safety, and there was no available coin for purchase. Consequently Baden-Powell instituted a paper currency for sums up to three shillings, managed by Mr Urry. The Standard Bank also issued special siege notes for ten shillings and one pound, which would be exchanged for coin on the resumption of civil law. The garrison also manufactured its own stamps.

With reference to the paper-money, B.-P. wrote: 'We tried various dodges — drew a design on copper, bit it out with acid all right, but could not get sufficient pressure to print it even though we tried it through a mangle. Then we cut a croquet-mallet in half and made a wood-cut; but this again, owing to improvised tools, was not a great success, and finally we merely photographed a design on to blue paper, and this became our currency. As everybody kept them after the siege as mementoes instead of redeeming them. Government scored to the extent of several thousands of pounds.'

The boys of Mafeking were found very useful for orderly work. They were formed into a Cadet Corps by Major Lord Edward Cecil, and employed to carry orders and messages and to keep a look-out. They proved an extremely useful and plucky company, and their services released men who were badly needed in the defences.

When the first whispers of approaching relief were received in February, Baden-Powell tried to induce the natives to leave the town and make for Colonel Plumer's supplies at Kanya. A

few did steal away on dark nights, but the remainder were too fearful, and the garrison was not appreciably relieved from the drain upon its resources until much later.

At the end of the month the Boers were seen to be constructing a new trench in the brickfields, a change of tactics which led to an immediate alteration in the comparatively placid method of operations which had obtained since the Game Tree Fort incident.

In the meanwhile Baden-Powell gazed daily from his look-out tower over the veldt, and then down at the little town he was so skilfully defending. In those days, when the promised relief was so far away, and when a moment's cessation of strained attention might prove the undoing of the town, his mind was tortured by the privations and sickness of his little garrison. Diphtheria, caused by contaminated water, had now been added to the other diseases. But Baden-Powell gave no sign of dismay. He kept up his own heart by heartening others; and if his grief was great when the little children died, he distracted his own mind and that of the garrison by his unremitting consideration for the living. Day by day he visited the sick and wounded in hospital, and it was no uncommon thing to see him soothing a fretful child and comforting it in his arms.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### WHAT OF 'B.-P.'?

The siege had now lasted till March, 1900. About this time the Boers began to be aggressive in the neighbourhood of the brickfields to the south-east of the town. During the last week in February they had begun an extensive sap running south from their fort on the outer edge of the brickfields. 'Access was obtained by means of a trench from the Boer camp; and it was against this fort that Sergeant-Major Taylor and his party of Cape Boys operated, a day or two after Panzer a\* s exploit. Taylor and a few men blew up a kiln and held it for two or three days in the teeth of all the fort could do.

We had already some trenches pushed out from Mafeking to reply to the fire of the Boer work on the edge of the brickfields, and the trench the enemy were now constructing, if finished, would run into our sap at right angles, and from that position our trenches could be raked effectively. Thus the enemy's trench was intended to stop our men from advancing farther towards their fort.

Now began an exciting war of spades. So convinced was Baden-Powell of the necessity for exact information of the enemy's operations, that he personally reconnoitred their position on several successive nights. Then a sap was run from our most eastward work toward the new trench, between the head of which and the British fort barely seventy yards intervened. Lieutenant Feltham directed our sappers; and loop-holed steel shields were employed, these being a considerable improvement upon the enemy's sand-bag loop-holes.

So close were the trenches by the 2nd of March that less than thirty yards separated them, and it seemed that an assault could not long be delayed. The same night the Boers tried to dislodge our garrison by flinging dynamite bombs, but the attempt was a dismal failure. Our advanced trench was held by the Colonial contingent, which plied the enemy with grenades and bombs. These, thrown by hand, did not prove very effective until Sergeant Page devised a means of throwing them with a fishing-rod. The grenades and bombs were manufactured from fruit tins! The British used a well-made mechanical dummy to draw the enemy's fire.

On the 2nd the Mafeking-made howitzer was first employed, and made excellent practice over the Boer trenches. At sunset the enemy removed their Creusot gun and placed it on the south-east heights. It was used with fatal effect upon our trenches next morning, and gallant Sergeant-Major Taylor received a mortal wound. The big gun, however, was removed again before night, as our snipers, creeping up to within eight hundred yards of it, picked off the gunners. Previous to its removal, as the position was considered untenable with the big gun commanding the trench, we abandoned the most advanced work at the moment when the enemy paused in their bombardment for breakfast.

The British end of the sap was banked up and defended by Cape Boys behind steel loop-holes. By a mistaken order the defenders retired and the Boers occupied our trench. Only for a short time, however, as on the 5th the Cape Boys, supported by Captain Fitzclarence and the Protectorate Regiment, threw bombs over the loop-holed end of the sap we still occupied, and then cleared the enemy out of the part they had occupied. No casualties occurred on our side.

After this each party kept to its own trenches, sniping being continuous and deadly. The defence of the brickfields was now reorganised by Baden-Powell. The most advanced posts, only seventy yards from the enemy, were held by Lieutenant Feltham of the Protectorate Regiment, Captain Williams with his B.S.A. Police occupied the second line, and the main trench was defended by Inspector Browne of the Cape Police. There were only one hundred men in all, under the general command of Captain Fitzclarence. The loop-holes employed in the trenches were steel-plates with three-inch slits in them.

On the 8th the garrison received news of Cronje's defeat and capture on Majuba Day, and were hugely delighted. Baden-Powell sent copies of the Mafeking Mail containing the news of the surrender into the enemy's lines, wrapped round large stones fired from the cannon.

Meanwhile the shelling and sniping continued. On St Patrick's Day a concertina was played in our advanced trench, and the men danced and sang behind the shelter of the sand-bags. Some Boers, devoured by curiosity, put their heads above their works, and the British sniped them promptly. A curious rivalry in marksmanship began to be displayed at this time, the Cape Boys putting up bottles on the breast-work at the head of the sap, and jeering when the enemy failed to smash them.

Occasionally bullets would come right through the sand-bags, so close was the range; and now and again a well-aimed shell would burst in our trenches with fatal effect. Sometimes the two sides would pelt each other with rocks and stones, but the position was too dangerous for the Boers to relish it for any length of time. On the 16th, Sergeant Page made excellent play with his bamboo fishing-rod, dropping his bombs with wonderful precision into the opposing trench.

Great and cheering news had arrived — the relief of Ladysmith, the defeat of Cronje, and the end to the investment of Kimberley. In spite of disease and privation, the British garrison were jubilant, and the Boers proportionately depressed. On 22nd March runners brought in the welcome information that Plumer was only twenty-four miles away.

Baden-Powell, however, was not misled by Colonel Plumer's proximity. Conscious that under the present circumstances Mafeking could not be relieved by a few hundred men, he sent a message to his colleague to that effect.

On the following night the Boers silently evacuated the trenches in the brickfields — the strain of continual fighting at close-quarters had become too severe. Two men of the Cape Police reconnoitring in the early hours discovered they had gone, and shortly after dawn our men proceeded to occupy the trench. The enemy had left a little surprise in the shape of a mine charged with 250 pounds of nitro-glycerine, fondly hoping to blow the rooineks sky-high on

their arrival. Fortunately Sergeant Page spied the connecting wires, and promptly severed them. So when our men were shouting themselves hoarse and singing ‘ God save the Queen,’ some good-intentioned Boers were probably pressing a button at the other end and wondering why nothing happened. The evacuation of the brick-fields by the enemy was a distinct gain to Mafeking, which was once more practically out of range of rifle fire, and our guns could again reach the enemy’s laagers. The Boer trenches were composed of bomb-proof chambers, roofed in with sleepers and rails.

Shelling now became unusually spasmodic, a streaming bombardment alternating with days of peaceful calm. The besiegers gradually forsook the eastern trenches, and almost the only incident of importance was the bursting of our home-made howitzer, which had served the garrison so signally for almost a month. As the enemy evacuated their trenches we occupied them, always with a wary eye looking out for possible mines.

On Sunday the 1st of April the besiegers sent in a message that Colonel Plumer had been routed the previous day with immense loss; but it proved to be a first of April message. They also sent in a flag of truce, asking us to bury the numerous dead — which proved to be three only — and reporting that Captain Maclaren had been killed. It was afterwards ascertained that only a strong patrol of Plumer’s column had been engaged.

The day before, Baden-Powell had made a demonstration to the north with the idea of diverting attention from Plumer’s force, which had actually reached to within six miles of the town.

Two days later the garrison learned that Captain Maclaren, who is, by the way, one of Baden-Powell’s dearest friends, was not dead, but severely wounded and a prisoner. He was very kindly treated by brother-Masons amongst the enemy, and the garrison received almost daily messages with news of his progress, whilst occasionally he was able to write in person.

Colonel Plumer was attacked on the same date north of the town, and after heavy skirmishing forced to retire, so Colonel Baden-Powell’s opinion of the impossibility of relief at the hands of his small force was entirely justified. The garrison at this time made several minor sorties against the investing forces, and inflicted some damage.

On April 4th, Baden-Powell’s intelligence officer, Lieutenant F. Smitheman of the Rhodesia Regiment, got into Mafeking through the hostile lines, to report on the numbers and armament of Plumer’s force. Whilst in the town he used his considerable influence with the natives to induce the headman of the Baralongs to allow his people to depart and obtain supplies and protection from Colonel Plumer’s column. A steady exodus of the Kafirs began, which was interrupted somewhat by the enemy, and by the end of the siege Baden-Powell had 1300 fewer mouths to feed.

Many of the Kafir refugees had reached a pitiable condition in spite of the horse-soup the Commandant issued to them. Those without farms of their own near Mafeking suffered fearfully, and hundreds died of starvation.

A party of Kafir women who attempted to escape were seized, flogged with sjamboks till they nearly died, and afterwards driven back into the town. Thirty-one Baralongs were caught and massacred, while others were found with their throats cut: apparently they had been killed in cold blood. The exodus, however, continued during dark nights, and it was estimated that several hundred Kafirs got safely away in about three weeks, undeterred by these atrocities.

Lieutenant Smitheman returned the way he had come three days after his appearance, with a message to Plumer not to attempt the relief until strongly reinforced. The bombardment now was not so heavy, and it was computed that the investing force did not consist of more than

three thousand Boers. By this time the rations had been reduced to four ounces of unhusked oat-bread, a small allowance of horse, mule, or donkey flesh, and black coffee without sugar.

In England the gravest anxiety and alarm were felt for the ultimate fate of the gallant garrison and its resourceful defender. His vigilance was unceasing, and his day was spent in doing a hundred and one things — Shearing reports, adjusting differences (though it speaks volumes for his genial though firm rule that none arose between the harassed military authorities and the civil population), learning from the staff all they knew, discussing the situation with Lord Edward Cecil, appraising the food, arranging the rations. And all this with one eye upon the enemy, planning counter-attacks to their attempts almost before they were formulated. He never missed visiting the sick and wounded at the hospital in the evening, nor failed to witness the last rites performed over victims of the siege. He trusted his garrison, but left nothing to chance. The sentries told of numerous occasions when he would come stealing out of the darkness of night like a black shadow, of how he would question them and make suggestions in his cheery tones before departing as silently and as secretly as he arrived. ‘Keep a keen eye in that direction: you never know what may be stirring or where they are,’ might be his parting words.

In April he effected considerable improvements in his arrangements for directing the defence of the great length of works which protected Mafeking. A tall look-out was erected on the roof of his headquarters in the market-square. A speaking-tube installed there enabled him to shout down to the bomb-proof shelter below, which housed the telephones connected with each of the forts. He thus controlled the defences like a captain on his bridge, and was able at a moment’s notice to forestall threatening operations on the part of the enemy, and to send help to his scanty garrison where help was most needed. His ready command of the town defence was of the greatest value on the occasion of the last assault in force by Commandant Eloff on 12th May.

Baden-Powell’s hearty recognition of those who were assisting him in keeping the flag flying may be seen in the message he transmitted to the Commander-in-Chief on the 200th day of the siege: ‘After two hundred days’ siege I desire to bring to your Lordship’s notice the exceptionally good spirit of loyalty that pervades all classes of the garrison. The patience of everybody in Mafeking in making the best of things under the long strain of anxiety, hardships, and privation, is beyond all praise, and is a revelation to me. The men, half of whom are unaccustomed to the use of arms, have adapted themselves to their duties with the greatest zeal, readiness, and pluck, and the devotion of the women is remarkable. With such a spirit our organisation runs like clockwork, and I have every hope that it will pull us successfully through.’

Lieutenant Smitheman brought in Lord Roberts’s reply requesting Baden-Powell to hold out till 18th May, on which date he pledged himself to relieve the town. Everybody knows how strictly the Commander-in-Chief redeemed his pledge. By the same hand, and at the same time, the Colonel received the sympathetic message from Queen Victoria, which congratulated the garrison on its gallant stand, and confidently hoped it would hold out until the relieving forces reached them.

The message that Baden-Powell sent to Lord Roberts on the 7th May reflected the brave spirit of the town: ‘All going well; fever decreasing; garrison cheerful; food will last till about the 10th June.’

The spirits of the defenders, however, were far more hopeful than their situation warranted. Amongst other wants, that of fuel had become acute, and with the cold season becoming imminent there was more than a fear of a serious scarcity for cooking and warming purposes. Nearly all the trees between the hues of the defences had been converted into fuel long before this date.



A new article of diet had been introduced. The inventive brain of Private Sims was responsible for this addition to the siege menu. It was the discovery of 'sowan' porridge, made out of damaged oats and oat-bran, which discovery Captain Ryan of the commissariat turned to excellent account. Large sieves were devised to sift the oat-flour from the husks, out of which the 'so wan' was made, and by this means twenty pounds of fine oat-meal for bread was obtained from every hundred pounds of oats. Nothing was wasted. The garrison ate the fine meal and the porridge, the horses ate the coarse residue of the 'sowan' previous to being themselves slaughtered for rations.

But in spite of everything that resourcefulness could do, matters were not going well with the garrison in these last days. The stores of medical comforts and nourishment for the sick and wounded were all but spent. Repeated rumours of relief, with no appearance of performance, were beginning to produce their inevitable effect, though everyone did his best to hide his despondency from the rest. To show how the garrison was worn to breaking-point one has only to think of the telegram from Lord Roberts that arrived late in April, to the effect that if Baden-Powell had not yet joined hands with Plumer, the town must be prepared to make supplies last even longer than the 18th May, They would have done it, too, in defiance of despair, if need had demanded.

The loyalty of the natives all through was deserving of the highest praise, though their presence in the stadth was naturally a source of wearying anxiety to the commander. They had their cattle raided and their farmsteads on the veldt destroyed, harvest for the year was out of the question, yet they remained trustworthy all through those black days. Their contributions of raided cattle, when opportunity offered for reprisals came at a most welcome period, and on many of these occasions they fought the enemy with courage and success.

The town by now was badly in need of a tonic of cheerfulness. Never did Baden-Powell labour with such intensity to promote amusement, and if his mirth were a little forced and haggard, who can wonder, except at the spiritual endurance of the man. The siege-Sundays were gayer than ever: the military element 'played up' to the Colonel in grand style. They organised a military tournament with sword versus bayonet items. Eloff, who was now with the Boer forces, observed that his men would like to participate in the concerts and cricket-matches, particularly in the latter. And Baden-Powell replied that as the garrison had scored two hundred not out against Snyman, Cronje, and company, a change of bowling would be advisable.

The gallant Colonel's concert items were as good as ever. On one occasion he impersonated Paderewski, and kept the hall in a constant roar of laughter. Then he paraded as a cross between a chimney-sweep and a Mile-end coster, and wound up with 'Home, sweet Home' on a mouth-organ borrowed for the occasion. There were few present who could detect his jaded brain and aching heart under the brave buffoonery. His spirits seemed to triumph over his bodily and mental fatigue, and even at the last siege-concert he sang a song of his own composition describing the experiences of the ladies during a bombardment. One verse ran, —

What is the gun  
That makes them run  
When they hear the warning bell?  
You may bet your boots  
It's the gun that shoots  
The high velocity shell.

Not great, possibly, as a poetical effort — but it served!

April passed away and the first two weeks of May, and the staunch garrison stuck to its guns and held ‘the place among the rocks,’ which is the meaning of the Bechuana name Mafeking. Nor were presages of good omen wanting. The big gun was dismantled and dragged off to Pretoria — a sign that the besiegers despaired of success. And then news was received that the relief was really only a matter of a few days more. Before that arrived the enemy made their desperate attempt to storm the town.

## CHAPTER XXV

### MAFEKING RELIEVED

So confident was Commandant Eloff of success that he had posted up in the Boer laager the day before his attack a notice that the burghers would breakfast in Mafeking next morning. The forecast was correct, though not quite in the sense that Eloff intended, for the burghers who accompanied him and escaped wounds or death did have their breakfast in Mafeking prison.

Eloff’s attempt of the 12th May was by no means deficient in tactics. He had carefully surveyed the environs of Mafeking, and discovered what excellent use an attacking party might make of the deep hollowed-out course of the Molopo River. His plan was that Commandant Snyman should make a pretended assault upon the east, whilst he, with seven hundred burghers crept up the bed of the Molopo from the west and fired the native stadt. So distrustful was Eloff of his senior, that he had a written promise from Snyman to reinforce him when the flames broke out. And Snyman — gallant colleague! — deserted him.

Just before four o’clock on the morning of the 12th, heavy long-range firing began from the Hues on the east. The alarm-bell rang, and the garrison ran quickly to their posts. Baden-Powell, perched on his look-out above the head-quarters, swept the horizon with his glasses. The moon had set, and the veldt was veiled in darkness. The sustained character of the bombardment from the east gave him his cue — it was intended to cover the real attack from the opposite direction. Immediately on forming this opinion the Colonel telephoned to Godley’s forces to be on the alert, and almost simultaneously with the receipt of the message Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, in barracks with a party of B.S.A. Police, saw flames rising in the native village. Within a few minutes daylight began to dawn, and heavy smoke rolled towards the town.

Major Godley had already sent for the town reserve to hasten to Hidden Hollow. The attackers were in the village, and heavy firing there showed the Baralongs were doing what they could to resist them, though they had let three hundred of the enemy through.

Colonel Hore and fifteen men of the Protectorate Regiment with two officers were holding the B.S.A. Police fort, a one-storied stone building to the rear of the stadt. Eloff and his burghers got within sixty yards of it before they were recognised, and occupied the outbuildings in front and flank. The position of the men in the fort was hopeless, a single volley would have blown them all to pieces, so they surrendered, and the enemy occupied the fort. One man, Trooper Muttershek, when told to throw down his rifle, replied, ‘I’ll see you damned first,’ and fell dead with five bullets through him. One of the enemy shouted through the telephone to headquarters, ‘We are Boers. We have taken Mafeking.’

No greater mistake was ever made. The Boers were farther off from success than ever, though some had penetrated the outer defences. Baden-Powell's installation of telephones proved invaluable at this moment. Rapidly taking in the situation, he telephoned instructions. Everybody was armed with any sort of weapon that could be served out. The prisoners in the jail between the B.S.A.P. fort and the town were hastily armed and assisted loyally.

In a few minutes Eloff's men in the fort were isolated by the Cape Police and Feltham's squadron of the Protectorate Regiment. They could not have held it for an instant were it not for the presence of their prisoners, which prevented our seven-pounders and the Hotchkiss from knocking the building to pieces.

Another party of three hundred Boers was in the stad. Baden-Powell instructed Lord Charles Bentinck to let them through, and then Captain Fitzclarence, Captain Marsh, Lord Charles Bentinck, and the Baralongs kraaled them in a cattle enclosure. After shelling them with a seven-pounder, the British made one of their dreaded bayonet charges, and took numerous prisoners. Those who got out had to run the gauntlet from the British fire and the Baralongs, who were anxious to avenge the firing of their stad.

By dusk Eloff's party was hopelessly beaten. In the afternoon he had shot down some of his men who tried to bolt. The water-tanks in the fort had been perforated by bullets, and the want of drinking water decided Eloff. He ceased fire and surrendered with his party of sixty-seven men to his own prisoner, Colonel Hore.

Thus ended the attempt to storm Mafeking. If Snyman had supported him it is possible that Eloff, who had been specially sent to capture the town, might have succeeded. The town-guard behaved most valiantly. Baden-Powell had caused a generous breakfast to be distributed during the fighting of the morning, and more than one man was heai'd to remark, if that was how they were to be fed an assault every day would be a good thing. The Boers lost sixty killed and wounded, and our Joss, including natives, was only twelve killed and twenty wounded, eloquent testimony to the masterly conduct of the defence. The ladies behaved splendidly, carrying provisions and coffee to the garrison, and helping the wounded of both sides under fire.

Colonel Baden-Powell's generosity was shown in his treatment of Commandant Eloff, who was raging at his non-success, and particularly at Snyman's treacherous inaction. When Captain Singleton brought him to the Colonel, he said, 'This is Commandant Eloff, sir.' Baden-Powell gave his fallen foe a silent sympathy which could not fail to soften his defeat. 'Good-evening, Commandant,' said he, 'Won't you come in and have some dinner?'

It had been an anxious day for Baden-Powell — this day on which his garrison added fresh laurels to their seven-months' defence by beating off an attack in force.

Everybody on the following day knew that relief, after all these months of struggling and distress, was actually at hand.

Simultaneously with Lord Roberts's move out of Bloemfontein for Pretoria, Colonel Mahon set out from Kimberley with a small column, on the dangerous errand of relieving Mafeking. All told, he had only 1200, and found himself in opposition to the younger Cronje with 1500 men. Mahon would never have succeeded in his mission had it not been for the rapidity of his movements and his 'slim' strategy. He got away first when the enemy were occupied with the Tenth Division under General Hunter, who had attacked them for the purpose of making a diversion in Mahon's favour.

On 4th May the column crossed the Vaal, and leaving Barkly West, set out on its 223-miie march to Mafeking. General Hunter had cleared the way for some distance with a mounted column, and Mahon progressed swiftly and secretly through difficult country. By the 7th Cronje

had disengaged himself from General Hunter's forces and was endeavouring to cut off the relief column. It was only by forced marches that Colonel Mahon reached Vryburg first, though the Boers had done their best to intercept him.

Pushing on, Mahon learned on 12th May that Cronje was north of Kraaipan and across his line of advance. It was not the intention of the relieving force to risk a fight. By a swift move westward, Mahon went round the enemy's entrenched position, though by this manoeuvre he only eluded Cronje for a day, for by the 13th the Boer force, which travelled light whilst Mahon was hampered with a convoy of supplies, was again blocking the way.

The relieving column, however, obtained information from Colonel Plumer that he would join it with his force north-west of Mafeking; and an ingenious message sent by runner to Baden-Powell gave him particulars of the composition of the column.

On the 13th, Mahon had a sharp skirmish with the enemy. Cronje retired to draw reinforcements from Snyman's commandos round Mafeking, and again prepared to block his progress. In this skirmish Major Baden-Powell, who accompanied the column, had his watch smashed in his pocket by a bullet, but escaped injury.

Cronje's retirement was a mistake, as it enabled Mahon and Plumer to effect a masterly junction on the 15th May. The combined forces had come to the last of their rations, and unless they got through quickly would have to draw upon the supplies intended for the beleaguered town.

On the 16th the tin roofs of Mafeking were in sight, and the relieving forces took up a position on the northern bank of the Molopo. The artillery was posted on an eminence to the north, the convoy was sheltered in a depression of the veldt; on the left flank were the Imperial Light Horse, with Plumer's Rhodesian Regiment on the right, and the Kimberley Mounted Corps guarding the rear. A long artillery duel lasting five hours followed. Cronje intended to make a last stand here, but Mahon's movements had been so rapid that there was not sufficient time to entrench his position.

Accordingly he fell back upon Snyman's commandos, meaning to fight again on the morrow. This move Colonel Mahon rendered ineffective by a sudden night movement which brought him through the Boer Hues into Mafeking by a silent march — wagons, guns, and all — in the hours of darkness of the morning of the 17th.

Previous to this actual relief, however, several stirring incidents occurred. On the 16th the garrison was made aware by the flash of the guns and the roar of firing that Mahon's and Plumer's forces were hotly engaged; and Colonel Baden-Powell sent the Protectorate Regiment, the Bechuanaland Rifles, and two guns, to get into touch with the relief column, but darkness coming on, they were forced to retire.

Major Karris Davis, who had been sent to reconnoitre for the relieving force, and had reported no opposition, entered Mafeking about six o'clock in the evening.

Some hours later Major Baden-Powell followed him, and his story of the meeting with his brother, as told to the writer, is delightfully characteristic. 'I rode forward in advance at right,' he related, 'and when I reached an outpost the officer in charge offered to send a man in with me. I rode with the man till we came to the market-square in the town, and he pointed out my brother's quarters. — You know the Matabele gave him the name of 'The Wolf,' and said he never sleeps. — 'Well, I was in front of the house, and I sang out, "How am I to find the Colonel?"' The next moment I heard him reply, "Here I am" and he came out to meet me.' B.-P. had been sleeping, as was his wont, out-doors on the veranda.

The next day the town went wild with joy and exultation when the garrison and the relief force paraded together, and sallied out on the Boers. 'I did not think it was possible for human joy to reach such a white-hot pitch,' wrote an eye-witness. It was at nine o'clock on the 17th that the force moved out on the besiegers' laager. The Horse Artillery twelve-pounders, the 'Pom-Poms,' and the Canadian quick-firers immediately began to shell the camp. The Boers did not wait, but swarmed out like bees, leaving their breakfasts, and their soup-kettles boiling. Horses and wagons stampeded over the veldt, and a five-pounder gun was captured.

Thus ended the historic siege. During the 217 days it had lasted over 20,000 projectiles had fallen into the town. It was a triumph for a greater thing than arms. It had been a combat of sentiment, and the moral effect of the successful resistance, with the loss of confidence it caused in the Boer commanders, was enormous. It will be remembered that Cronje had, by proclamation, 'annexed' both Kimberley and Mafeking, and it was these towns which so effectively defied the superior numbers, armament, positions, and mobility of the enemy. Never before, in civilised warfare, has an 'open town' been defended for so long or with such comparatively small loss as was Mafeking. Of the garrison, 273 were killed, wounded, or captured during the siege. The losses from disease were also considerable. Mafeking had been assailed by a force varying from 3000 to 8000, had been shelled with 1498 94-pounder shells, and been for seven months cut off from the world, yet it held out with a garrison that did not number a thousand rifles at the close of the siege. Every credit is due to the soldiers who fought so intrepidly, and to their gallant leader.

That day — the 17th May — at noon, the relieving column and the garrison paraded in the market-square, and marched past before Colonel Baden-Powell and his staff, who were on horseback between Dixon's Hotel and the Colonel's head-quarters. The wild outbursts of the people he had worked so well to defend moved even the stoic heart of the gallant 'B.-P.' himself.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE EMPIRE RELIEVED

An observer in Mafeking said of the night following the relief of the town: 'Men of all sorts and conditions, trades, professions, and ranks, relievers and relieved, slept that night in and about Mafeking, with a restless sleep, thinking of what England would think, and we knew and were sorry we couldn't hear what they said.'

The British nation had been 'holding its breath' under the strain of watching the final stages in the defence of the 'town on the rocks.' The knowledge that a few hundreds of men, isolated many miles from our army, were braving the utmost that a cunning and crafty enemy could do even on the borderland of that enemy's country, were holding their own in spite of every discouraging report and in spite of delay and doubt, suffering privations, disease, and want, daily enduring bombardment, and driving back the besiegers in the trenches and on the veldt, had roused all hearts to a pitch of fervid excitement. That Mafeking would 'stick it' every Briton knew, though every day which elapsed before relief could come prolonged the tension. Thus when news of the long-prayed-for relief really came, the Empire itself drew a gasp of relief and broke out into scenes of tumultuous joy.

Not once but many times since has Baden-Powell, with the modesty that seems natural to our brave soldiers, testified to the full-hearted support and loyalty of his co-defenders. In Mafeking, after the relief, he said: 'I look on myself as the figure-head of the good ship Mafeking. It has been her stout canvas and the shape of her brave hull that have really shoved the ship along and brought her safely through her stormy cruise; so, whenever I read nice things people say about me, I take it that they said them inasmuch as I am the head and representative of the garrison.'

However true this utterance was, and nobody will say that the other men in the garrison did not deserve every word of praise the commandant could bestow, Baden-Powell was deservedly the hero of the hour. His personality had shown itself in a hundred different ways during the siege, and it was with a personal regard he was held by the war-racked nation.

On the day when official news of the relief was anticipated — the 18th May — all London was agog with excitement. Thousands of people had been attracted to the metropolis in the ardent hope of learning the joyful tidings first-hand. Throughout the day every one bore a look of waiting anxiety — and no news came. By evening, weary and sick at heart, people told each other that the relief was again deferred, and that they must reconcile themselves yet again to a further period of suspense.

The crowd about the War Office in Pall Mall peered at the placard on the door which announced 'No News,' and wandered disconsolately on. The police could add nothing to the bald statement on the placard, however desirous they may have been to give good news to the queries of noblemen and others who challenged them. 'Dukes' sons and cooks' sons' made the same inquiry, and received the same response — 'No News.'

Then the last paper, the late edition of the Evening News, came out, printed some minutes before the usual time of ten p.m. The stop-press column contained the words 'RELIEF OF MAFEKING — MAFEKING HAS BEEN RELIEVED — FOOD HAS ENTERED THE GARRISON — ENEMY DISPERSED. — Reuter.'

Papers were bought up instantly, seized, and snatched from hand to hand. The crowds in the streets swelled as if by magic. Audiences in the packed theatres and music-halls stood up and frantically sang 'God save the Queen' before pouring forth into the streets.

Simultaneously almost with the issue of the Evening News an excited footman at the Mansion House roared forth the hasty announcement that Mafeking was relieved. Messages went flying to the provinces along every telegraph wire in England that the news so impatiently waited had come at last. London was one wrestling mass of shouting, joyous humanity. The cheering resounded in her streets like continuous thunder. Union Jacks appeared in the hands of all the demonstrators as if by magic, and the relieved millions 'let themselves go.'

Great masses of humanity paraded the streets all night, with a soldier or sailor precariously borne aloft at their heads. Every transparency bearing the letters 'B.-P.' in fairy lamps was hoarsely cheered; people rode on the tops of hansoms instead of inside, burning flares; London was mad with joy and elation. Not even on Ladysmith day had the metropolis witnessed such rejoicings.

The scenes of that Friday night shattered our national reputation for stolidness, not even the French could have surpassed us in the wild manifestations of delight, and the new word 'mafficking' was added to our language. Many people wondered at, and perhaps regretted, the display of wild feeling; but in the pent-up anxiety of the weeks previous to the relief must be found the justification for the unusual spectacle.

One house, surrounded by thousands of cheering men and women, took the news in traditional British style, and that was the house where perhaps excitement would have been most readily excused — Mrs. Baden-Powell's home at Hyde Park Corner. Ten thousand people assembled there to cheer their hero's mother.

The Express sent a special messenger with the news of the relief. He was told that a strict rule had been made to receive no callers, and replied excitedly, 'But do you know that Mafeking is relieved?' 'Thus the Westminster Gazette describes what followed: 'And then in an instant there appeared the fragile fair form of Miss Baden-Powell, not in the least flurried and obviously incredulous. "My mother is ill," she said — "and is it really true?" "Quite true. Quite true." "We have heard nothing from the War Office, and we have heard so many rumours that we can hardly believe it now." 'From that time the house was fronted by a crowd of ten thousand singing and cheering, through which a continuous string of callers came driving up. 'Later in the night B.-P.'s mother sent down word that she was going to bed, and left instructions that if a telegram came for her it was not to be taken to her till the morning, as she did not wish to be disturbed. Truly a Spartan mother!'

The expected telegram came in the morning, a joint message from her two sons, signed 'Stephenson and Baden.' It had been sent off first thing by the Colonel and Major Baden-Powell to say that the latter had entered Mafeking on the 17th, and that all was well.

On the day following Mafeking-night the official news was received. The first telegram conveying the tidings of the relief was received at Pretoria at half-past eleven on the morning of the 18th, and reached Renter's agency in London at a quarter-past nine at night the same day. Even on the 19th the excitement was far from subsiding, and London held high revel all through Saturday and that evening. Hundreds of congratulatory telegrams were despatched to Mrs. Baden-Powell and Colonel Baden-Powell, amongst others two from Queen Victoria. The message the Queen sent to B.-P., and written by Her Majesty at her dinner-table with her own hand on receipt of the news, ran: —

'I and my whole Empire greatly rejoice at the relief of Mafeking, after the splendid defence made by you through all these months. I heartily congratulate you and all under you, military and civil, British and native, for the heroism and devotion you have shown. — V.R. and I.'

On the 22nd May Baden-Powell was gazetted to the rank of Major-General, 'for distinguished service in the field.'

Lord Roberts's official despatch,<sup>1</sup> dated 21st June, 1900, contained this tribute to the defender of the garrison at Mafeking: 'I feel sure that Her Majesty's Government will agree with me in thinking that the utmost credit is due to Major-General Baden-Powell for his promptness in raising two regiments of Mounted Infantry in Rhodesia, and for the resolution, judgment, and resource which he displayed, through the long and trying investment of Mafeking by the Boer forces. The distinction which Major-General Baden-Powell has earned must be shared by his gallant soldiers. No episode in the present war seems more praiseworthy than the prolonged defence of this town by a British garrison, consisting almost entirely of Her Majesty's Colonial forces, inferior in numbers and greatly inferior in artillery to the enemy, cut off from communication with Cape Colony, and with the hope of relief repeatedly deferred until the supplies of food were almost exhausted.

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<sup>1</sup> London Gazette, By kind permission of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office.

‘Inspired by their Commander’s example, the defenders of Mafeking maintained a never-failing confidence and cheerfulness, which conduced most materially to the successful issue; they made light of the hardships to which they were exposed, and they withstood the enemy’s attacks with an audacity which so disheartened their opponents that, except on one occasion, namely, 12th May, no serious attempt was made to capture the place by assault. This attempt was repulsed in a manner which showed that the determination and fighting qualities of the garrison remained unimpaired to the last.’

## CHAPTER XXVII

### IN THE FIELD

The relief of Mafeking on the 17th May was the first incident in the brilliant series of operations the forces under the general command of Lord Roberts were about to execute. Affairs were so threatening to Kruger’s discerning eye that he precipitately fled from Pretoria on the 29th, with a matter of ten million pounds sterling in his possession, which he was safeguarding for the Republic. Two days later Johannesburg surrendered to Roberts, and on the 4th June Pretoria, also, was in his hands.

The rapid sequence of these successes paralysed the Boers in the Transvaal, and it seemed almost as though the war was practically at an end. On the same day that Pretoria capitulated to Lord Roberts, Major-General Baden-Powell made his headquarters at Ottoshoop, in the Western Transvaal.

He had been placed in charge of one of the military districts, it being the Commander-in-Chief’s plan to subjugate the Transvaal in detail. The Marico district, including the towns of Mafeking, Zeerust, Lichtenburg, and later Rustenburg, was assigned to Baden-Powell, whose force consisted of 1100 Rhodesian Volunteers and Police, with a battery of Canadian Artillery and three other guns.

In order to patrol his district efficiently, Baden-Powell divided his command into three parts: two strong patrols of mounted men were placed under Plumer, another patrol of Light Horse under Lieut. -Colonel Edwards, the rest of his men being dismounted to garrison Mafeking and Zeerust.

On the 15th June Baden-Powell was gazetted Lieutenant-General on the staff ‘whilst employed with Her Majesty’s forces in South Africa,’ and received the honour of C.B. On the 18th he made a journey into Pretoria to receive his instructions personally from Lord Roberts.

On his return, he moved upon Sir A. Hunter’s left towards Rustenburg. This was the most important town in the Western Transvaal, and had not at this time submitted. A glamour of Boer sentiment was centred upon Rustenburg, which contained the country home of Kruger, and it was not anticipated that it would be occupied readily by our forces. It is sixty miles from Pretoria by road, and fifty miles from the railway at Krugersdorp. But Baden-Powell’s northerly column under Plumer crossed the Magaliesberg range at Magato Nek and occupied Rustenburg without opposition, whither B.-P. came also on the 21st June. His instructions were now to clear the country to Warmbad, in conjunction with 2000 men of the Imperial Bushmen Corps to be sent from Sir F. Carrington’s command at Buluwayo.





Whilst awaiting this reinforcement Baden-Powell spent the time in patrolling the district, repairing the railway, and raiding places where the enemy were known to be in arms. He received surrenders and collected rifles and ammunition. At this time a deceptive calm brooded over the district west of the central railway: the Boers were still paralysed by the fall of their capital.

Presently it appeared that Lieut. -General Baden-Powell was to be called upon to conduct another defence. It was reported that the Boers were rallying their forces. The expected reinforcements were ordered back to Mafeking, and Limmer's command of 5000 men suddenly sprang into being and threatened Rustenburg.

Baden-Powell concentrated 1500 men and fourteen guns in the town, and co-operated from Rustenburg with Lord Methuen's command, which drove Limmer back from Ohf ant's Nek. Sundry skirmishes followed, and B.-P. was called upon to supply Lord Methuen's force with provisions, which left him with only sixteen days' supplies. Then, disturbances having broken out in the Krugersdorp area, where a train was derailed and captured, Lord Methuen was recalled from Olifant's Nek, leaving Rustenburg exposed to 2500 Boers, with eight guns threatening from the north-east, and a similar number under De la Rey at Wolhuter's Kop on the Rustenburg- Pretoria road.

With all the various British details occupied, the Boers hoped to retake Pretoria with their remaining commandos. Much as Baden-Powell would have liked to defend Rustenburg, Lord Roberts decided to evacuate it to set all available troops free for service in the field. Consequently when Ian Hamilton forced Zilikat's Nek on 5th August, Baden- Po weir s force came under his orders, and Rustenburg was abandoned. The British demolished the works and destroyed 400,000 rounds of Boer ammunition before commencing the march towards Pretoria.

The combined forces of Hamilton and Baden-Powell had reached Commando Nek when the startling news was received that Christian de Wet had broken through the cordon of troops with which Roberts had surrounded him, and that the whole of the Western Transvaal was therefore at the mercy of a bold leader.

Ian Hamilton was instructed to intercept him, whilst Baden-Powell garrisoned Commando Nek to prevent De Wet getting through the pass. De Wet, however, proved as slippery as any eel, and escaped. On the 17th August he was shut in, and attempted to bluff Baden-Powell into letting him through Commando Nek. It was a case of 'Greek meeting Greek,' for when De Wet sent in demanding the surrender of the garrison and stating he had with him 2000 men and eight guns, Baden-Powell recognised the message as a ruse to gain time and information. The wily B.-P. replied to the wily De Wet that he did not understand the message. It was repeated in the morning, but the Boer general had departed in the night.

After this Baden-Powell returned to Warmbad to reinforce General Paget, who was very glad of the support of further troops.

An attack of enteric necessitated a visit to Cape Town to recruit, during the following month. It was known that the hero of Mafeking was coming, and on the 7th September when he arrived, the town was en fete. Crowds met him at the station, and the Mayor gave the popular B.-P. a civic welcome. His enthusiastic admirers gave him such a welcome that he was literally carried off to Government House.

He was back at work before the end of September, when his column was removed to Pretoria. In October Lord Kitchener wanted a colleague whom he required to have a special knowledge of Africa. His intention was to construct a series of chains of block-houses across the country, as being the best way of terminating the guerilla warfare toward which the conduct of the South African campaign was tending, and his mind was projected in advance to the time when a purely military occupation would no longer be required. Kitchener sent for Baden-Powell, and said abruptly, 'You're the man who saw something humorous in the siege of Mafeking?' B.-P. smiled; and Kitchener explained that he needed him to organise a force of police, somewhat on the lines of the Cape Mounted Riflemen, to be called the South African Constabulary. 'And when you see the material you will have to lick into shape,' Kitchener concluded dryly; 'see if you can find a joke in that.' Whether Baden-Powell found a joke in the task or not, we may depend his vein of humour never deserted him; and Lord Kitchener's despatch a year or two later is a tribute to the efficiency of the 'material' which B.-P. 'licked into shape.'

He wrote: 'I have already, in a farewell order, expressed to Major-General Baden-Powell my deep appreciation of the services rendered by the South African Constabulary, but I am glad to have this opportunity to again testify to the good work rendered by this fine body of men.'

Evidently, B.-P. had 'licked 'em into shape' to some purpose!

The Constabulary was established in October, 1900, and Major-General Baden-Powell retained the command till 1903, during which period it played an important part in the pacification of the country.

At Zuurfontein, Southern Transvaal, whither his new task took him in December, 1900, Baden-Powell witnessed a humorously grim incident. 'At dawn, in our camp, some four miles off,' he wrote,<sup>1</sup> 'we got a telephone report that the enemy in force were attacking the station then held by a detachment of Militia just out from England: "Would you kindly help, as the enemy had already captured one of their defence-works?"' The Boers had captured it with their usual

<sup>1</sup> Sketches in Mafeking and East Africa,

astuteness. At early dawn a British patrol had ridden out from the station as was its wont, to see that the neighbouring woods were all clear as usual. The woods were not so clear, and the men of the patrol only realised it when they found themselves exchanging clothes with a party of Boers, who, leaving them well guarded, mounted their horses, and thus disguised as Britishers, rode back in a leisurely fashion to the station, in through the gate in the wire entanglement, past the sentry, and into the nearest work. Here there was a slight scuffle; and a few shots were the first warning to the rest of the garrison that something was wrong. Hence their telephone message to us.

‘But they soon remedied matters themselves, as a young officer, followed by his bold Militia lads, left the work which they were defending, and rushed the invaders; these mounted their horses and fled, leaving one of their number dead inside the fort, and three more on the veldt outside.

‘The main force of the Boers then opened a pretty heavy fire on the place, but without doing much damage, and presently drew off as we appeared, evidently supposing us to be the advance guard of large reinforcements.

‘But for the rest of the day the jolly Militia boys were delightedly telling all-comers of their great fight, and always wound up their story with an invitation to step in and “ see the corpse” as the tangible proof of their prowess.’

At Zuurfontein, too, in the midst of manifold anxieties involved in the arduous task of raising and equipping a force of six thousand mounted police, Baden-Powell found time to reply to a schoolgirl admirer who had written in a spirit of enthusiastic admiration and asking for his autograph. He complied with the request, and more, for the school- girl — she is a grown woman now — has, framed at home, the General’s reply, the object of a peculiar pride: ‘Your last letter, you see, reached me in spite of the Boers. — Yours truly, R. S. S, Baden- Powell.’ He also found time to write notes of sterling counsel to boys who had asked his advice in matters relating to their young lives. The General has always been devoted to young people, and nothing illustrates the fact more forcibly than his readiness to give them personal help through the medium of his ready pen.

In July of 1901 the General was able to ‘run home’ for a brief visit. He was accompanied on the Kinfauns Castle by his mother and Miss Baden-Powell, who, in their affectionate solicitude after the relief of Mafeking, had come out to see him. His quiet reserved manner, coupled with the utter absence of ‘side,’ charmed every one on board the ship.

He was soon back at his duties with the Constabulary, which he did not resign till 1903.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### AFTER THE WAR

In March, 1903, Major-General Baden-Powell returned to England to take up his new duties of Inspector-General of Cavalry. Some idea of the spirit he had endeavoured to infuse into the force he had raised in the three years he had commanded the South African Constabulary may be gathered from the ideal he set before the men. He circulated a quotation amongst them which was culled from President Lincoln’s speech at the close of the American Civil War, and which was intended by Baden-Powell as a guide to his police in their actions towards the

conquered Boers: 'With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, and, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.'<sup>1</sup>

The year in which Baden-Powell returned home was full and varied enough. Although he avoided public occasions as far as possible, the British nation had not forgotten the defender of Mafeking. He was the recipient of civic addresses and honours; almost every corporation sent congratulations or some token of respect.

Cardiff was one of the corporations which conferred its freedom upon him. The town had been the home of his grandfather. Admiral Smyth, and for some years that of his mother; the latter had painted numerous sketches of Cardiff during her residence there, which drawings she afterwards presented to the Free Library. A week or so later, on the 10th June, Baden-Powell was honoured with the freedom of Guildford, to which reference has already been made.

Amongst other municipalities, the Town Council  
of Lewisham presented B.-P. with an address,

and a gold-mounted walking-stick. Another interesting present sent him about this time was his famous charger, 'Black Prince,' given him by the people of Australia.

He was busied the next year or two with the duties of his post as Inspector of Cavalry, and began to express his views upon sport as practised in this country at the present day. The spectacle of thousands gathered at a single football match merely for the purpose of looking on struck him as being worse than futile. A thorough sportsman himself, he was well qualified to express his disgust at the 'gazer.' What he wrote and said was preliminary to the modern social movement to which he has devoted himself. He is not one to attack legitimate sport, but what he has to say in his *Scouting for Boys*, in this connection of gladiatorial sport is undeniable.

'Football in itself is a grand game for developing a lad physically and also morally,' he writes, 'for he learns to play with good temper and unselfishness, to play in his place and "play the game," and these are the best of training for any game of life. But it is a vicious game when it draws crowds of lads away from playing the game themselves to be merely onlookers at a few paid performers. Personally, I love to see those splendid specimens of our race, trained to perfection, and playing faultlessly; but one's heart sickens at the reverse of the medal — thousands of boys and young men, pale, narrow-chested, hunched up, miserable specimens, smoking endless cigarettes, numbers of them betting, all of them learning to be hysterical. . . . Get the lads away from this — teach them to be manly, to play the game, whatever it may be, and not be merely onlookers and loafers.'

That was the aspect of our national life which was revealing itself to him. His experiences of the camp, the public-school, and the veldt were helping him to a point of view, which is dispassionate and sane, and which will have far-reaching consequences to the next generation of our citizens. Other people have come to the same conclusions; but it was left to B.-P. to organise and attempt a remedy for the unsatisfactory trend of present-day sport, and the attitude displayed by the young towards the responsibilities of life.

<sup>1</sup> Mr H. Geoffrey Elwes's Article in the Headquarters' Gazette  
(Boy Scouts).

In the first three months of 1906, Baden-Powell made a tour in the company of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. The immediate object of the journey was South Africa, and the party visited Kimberley and Mafeking, travelled through Rhodesia, calling at Bulawayo, and then proceeded to Mashonaland and Portuguese East Africa. German East Africa was also observed, and British East Africa; and the travellers visited the Victoria Nyanza.

One result was a collection of notes and drawings, made in Mafeking, or subsequently in the course of the journey, which he published in 1907, under the title of *Sketches in Mafeking and East Africa*. The letterpress of the work abounds in wit and humour, keen observation, and convincing descriptions, and the writer's trenchant utterances on matters colonial are worthy of consideration by every citizen of our Empire. It was Baden-Powell's hope that his notes and sketches, though necessarily fragmentary, should be the means of stimulating the curiosity of British boys of all ages to a further study of our African colonies.

The drawings in the book are remarkable. Few of our soldiers have shown themselves as versatile as B.-P. He has proved his capacity in the field, as scout, organiser, and commander; as a sports-man he has accomplished many things of which he has a right to be proud; he is the author of classics upon his favourite sport and our 'little wars'; and with all this he is a finished draughtsman. As *The Times* said of his sketches, when they were exhibited a few years later at the Baillie Gallery, in aid of the Boy Scouts' Organisation Fund: 'He possesses natural talent for depicting action and movement, and his varied career as a soldier has brought him the best opportunities for the exercise of his talent.' This is no mean praise, but Baden-Powell's drawings deserve something more than this.

One humorously pathetic drawing represents a Kafir woman washing clothes in a stream with her baby tied upon her shoulders. It was drawn from life during the siege, and the little brown baby is supposed to be complaining, 'It isn't so much the shells that I object to. It is this everlasting standing on one's head while mother does her washing.'

We have already alluded to B.-P.'s love of Nature in all her moods, and perhaps one of his finest artistic attempts is the coloured drawing of the majestic Victoria Falls from the east side. The same appreciation and command of rich colour effects are shown in a sunset scene at Mozambique, and in the drawing of a couple of red-fezzed natives sitting amid yellow grass in East Africa, with a glimpse of great mountains beyond the plain.

The royal party went over much of the same ground that Mr. Chamberlain traversed in his South African tour, and the Duke and Duchess of Connaught were welcomed at Mafeking, as the statesman had been, by some of the Bechuanaland chiefs arrayed in European dress.

The Duke of Connaught was extremely interested in Mafeking, and was accompanied by Baden-Powell to Cannon Koppie, from which he obtained an idea of the position of the town and its defences during the memorable siege. The Cadet Corps which Lord Edward Cecil organised for orderly work was still in existence, and very proud to be inspected by His Royal Highness. Not only does B.-P. love children, but children love him, and he was extremely touched on this occasion of revisiting Mafeking to learn that one of the cadets who had recently died had left with his mother a pathetic little message for the former Commandant.

Space prevents further reference to the incidents of the tour — the visit to the Zambesi Falls, and the Victoria Nyanza — but the reader should not fail to read what Baden-Powell has written of these wonders, nor to examine his sketches.

In 1907, Baden- Powell was given a further step in the army, being promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General, which he had previously held as a courtesy rank during the operations in South Africa.

The same year his versatile genius secured for him yet another honour, for he exhibited at the Royal Academy a piece of sculpture — a bust of his renowned ‘scouting’ ancestor, Captain John Smith.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### A GREAT MOVEMENT

In August, 1907, Baden- Powell’s ideas on the wastage of youth and the possibilities of training boys in self-reliance and true manliness began to assume a practical form. This date marks the inception of the Scout movement.

He gathered a small number of boys from various sources and different classes of society at an experimental camp held on Brownsea Island, in Dorset. The idea was that the boys should be encouraged in the same sort of open-air life that Lieutenant-General Baden-Powell had himself enjoyed under the care of a far-seeing and thoughtful mother. It will be remembered that her sons had been brought up mutually to assist each other, the eldest looking after the next youngest boy, and so on; and they were taught to observe everything that came under their ken in Nature — the woods, the stars, plant-life, wild-life, and so forth. It was this family influence, and the inculcation of a love for Nature’s charms and the ideal of an honest manly open-air life which Baden- Powell counted upon as the chief factors in his training.

The ideal of scouting is best explained in B.-P.’s own words: ‘From the boys’ point of view, scouting puts them into fraternity-gangs, which is their natural organisation, whether for games, mischief, or loafing; it gives them a smart dress and equipments; it appeals to their imagination and romance; and it engages them in an active, open-air life. From the parents’ point of view, it gives physical health and development; it teaches energy, resourcefulness, and handicrafts; it puts into the lad discipline, pluck, chivalry, and patriotism; in a word, it develops “character,” which is more essential than anything else to a lad for making his way in life. . . . The method of instruction in “Scouting” is that of creating in the boy the desire to learn for himself’.

Lieutenant-General Baden-Powell was appointed in 1908 to the command of the Northumberland Territorial Division.

In August of the same year he organised a second experimental camp for boys at Humshaugh, in Northumberland. Scout patrols, isolated and scarcely organised as yet, began to spring up in all parts of the country, following upon Baden-Powell’s book, *Scouting for Boys*, which was published in 1908, in fortnightly parts, and in May of the following year as a volume. In 1909, a large summer camp was formed at Bucklers’ Hard, and part of the course was taken on the training-ship *Mercury*.

A wave of enthusiasm for scout- training passed over the country, and several thousands of scouts were enrolled in the various patrols in London and the provinces. Seldom, if ever, has a national movement assumed such proportions in so short a time.

The lessons in Scouting for Boys had 'caught on.' Their appeal doubtless lay in the personality of the author, who enjoins nothing but what he has himself practised in the course of a strenuous, abstemious, and purposeful life.

The scout motto is 'Be Prepared', and it was a national preparedness which B.-P. had in mind when he chose it, though the initial letters of the motto are those of his name. The scout law which the boy learns to obey was devised with an eye to insistence on character-formation. The decalogue of the scout teaches personal honour, loyalty to king and country, courtesy, charity, mutual aid, kindness to animals, obedience, cheerfulness, thrift, and clean-mindedness. There is nothing that smacks of 'smugness' to the boy, and the movement is undenominational: two reasons why this social movement has been welcomed by all.

Amongst other virtues which the lad learns to admire is thrift. The leader of the scout movement has never been a rich man, neither have his family been wealthy. By his own thrift and personal exertions he has always found the means to carry out his ambitions. It is a source of worthy pride to Baden-Powell that, since he was first fitted-out for the army, he has always been absolutely independent, and not had to receive a penny-piece from his friends. Those who realise what it is to be the colonel of a military regiment will see the significance of this fact. Even on his world-tour, in connection with his work of extending the scout movement inter-colonially and internationally. Sir Robert earned his travelling expenses by a series of lectures in America.

So enormously did the movement spread that on 4th September, 1909, a great rally of Boy Scouts was held at the Crystal Palace, when King Edward sent this message to the boys: — 'The King is pleased to know that the Boy Scouts are holding their first parade.

'Please assure the boys that the King takes the greatest interest in them, and tell them that if he should call upon them in later life, the sense of patriotic responsibility and habits of discipline which they are now acquiring as boys will enable them to do their duty as men, should any danger threaten the Empire'.

Mr H. Geoffrey Elwes, editor of the Headquarters Gazette, wrote of this rally: 'I was with the Chief and the Chaplain-General in the transept, when the former, in General's uniform, caused the first great cheer from the assembled 10,000 Scouts. "Scouts," he said, "like you, I have a mother, and it is her birthday to-day. She looks on me as her son, and upon you as her grandsons. I am going to send her a telegram of congratulation, and if any scout would like to join me in it let him put up his pole." A great cheer and a waving of 10,000 poles was the reply.'

So impressed was King Edward VII by the tremendous force for good the Scout movement would prove that in October, 1909, Baden-Powell was received by His Majesty at Balmoral, when the King conferred upon him the honour of the knighthood of the Royal Victorian Order, and shortly after Sir Robert Baden-Powell was made a K.C.B.

The various scout-patrols were so far unorganised as a body, and scouting was everywhere practised in isolated groups. If the movement was to accomplish any permanent good it was necessary to formulate some system of national organisation upon a sound basis. It was estimated that there were considerably over eighty thousand boy scouts enrolled by the end of 1909. In December of that year Sir Robert Baden-Powell called together the first Executive Committee to regulate the Boy Scout movement. The Secretary and Chief Scoutmaster was Mr J. Archibald Kyle, who resigned his position at the close of 1911, when the headquarters office was reorganised under the Royal Charter. To Mr Kyle's energy and organising powers much of the enormous development of the movement since its inception is due.

Sir Robert Baden-Powell retired from the army on the 7th May, 1910, in order that he might devote himself entirely to the tremendous organisation of which he is the head.

A great review of the Boy Scouts was planned with him by the late King Edward, and the arrangements occupied the King's mind even upon the day before his death, on 6th May, 1910. Happily, however, King George V graciously expressed himself as being desirous of continuing his illustrious father's interest and support in the movement, and became patron of the Boy Scouts in July, 1910.

During this period of strenuous exertion. Sir Robert Baden-Powell contrived to sandwich in another of his beloved travelling expeditions, for in January, 1911, he visited the Court of Russia and interviewed the Tsar, when doubtless his new organisation was discussed.

On Empire Day of the same year the Scouts had a grand parade in London, at the suggestion of Lord Meath, who is on the council of the Boy Scouts. The sister corps of the Scouts — the Girl Guides — was also represented at this parade. Field-Marshal Lord Roberts took the salute, and the Legion of Frontiersmen formed a guard of honour. Amongst other personages present were Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, the Ministers from the Colonies assembled here for the Imperial Conference, the Lord Mayor of London, and the Mayors of the Metropolitan Burghs. Sir Robert Baden-Powell led this very smart parade. At the Coronation Procession, picked bodies of the Boy Scouts were also present to assist as guides and water-carriers, and to line the route, though the authorities could only assign places to about two hundred and fifty for the last purpose. These included Canadians, Australians, selected life-savers, the King's Scouts, Lord Kitchener's Scouts, and a German patrol.

Baden-Powell remembers with great pride the crowning event of the movement, which took place on 4th July, 1911 — the review of between 30,000 and 40,000 Boy Scouts in Windsor Great Park, when His Majesty King George V personally inspected the patrols. There were Scouts from Canada, and patrols from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Malta, and Gibraltar, as well as from all the counties of England.

His Majesty was accompanied by the Queen, the Prince of Wales, Princess Mary, the Duke of Connaught, Prince and Princess Christian, Prince Alexander of Teck, Lord Roberts, and other celebrities, including Indian princes. Instead of the Scouts marching past, the King and Queen and the Prince of Wales, attended by Sir Robert Baden-Powell, rode round the three semi-circles of lads, and as Baden-Powell said: 'The King noted everything — the badges, the cleanness of faces and knees, the smartness of salute, and even the sergeants' stripes which some of our visitors wore'.

During the inspection the Scouts in the innermost circle piled staves and gave displays of camp fire-lighting and first-aid.

The review concluded with a fine spectacle — the Circular Rally. In obedience to a signal, the boys rushed forward towards the inner ring of King's Scouts, formed round the King, where the Royal Standard floated in the centre. Then, as the inner circle was reached, they came to a simultaneous halt, and the troops hushed the patrol calls they had raised. It was a most impressive ceremony, this rush upon the centre, which was stayed in complete silence. Then the band played the music of 'Boys, be prepared,' and the 'Eengonyama' chorus, in both of which the thousands of lusty young voices joined.

The last scenes were the march past of the King's Scouts and the life-savers, and the presentation of medals to two Canadian Scouts by Sir Robert Baden-Powell. The King personally complimented the Chief Scout upon the appearance and efficiency of his youthful army, and the lads cheered His Majesty till the elms in the royal park rung again with their acclamations.



Within half an hour of the King's return to Windsor Castle Sir Robert Baden-Powell received a congratulatory letter from His Majesty containing this message for the lads: —

‘The King feels sure that the Boys of the Empire will show their gratitude for the encouragement so generously given by the various organisations, both at home and abroad, and will endeavour to become God-fearing and useful citizens’.

A few days after this event Sir Robert went to Charterhouse, to take part in the tercentenary of his old school. A tour to Norway followed in August, when the Chief Scout visited Christiania, where he was much struck by the resemblance of the Norwegian Boy Scouts to their confreres of this country. In December, 1911, he was paid the compliment of being appointed Honorary Colonel of the regiment in which he first served, the 13th Hussars.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE FUTURE OF SCOUTING

We can imagine many a mother discussing with her husband her son's aspiration to become a scout. Paterfamilias is dubious, mother very far from sanguine. They consider the matter for some minutes, perhaps in the presence of the aspirant himself, and at length mother says, with a sigh of resignation, ‘I should let him be a scout, I think; it will keep him out of other kinds of mischief.’

We very much fear this is the attitude of numerous parents towards the Scout movement — as a kind of safety-valve by means of which the boy may harmlessly relieve himself of that spirit for doing things which forms part of his being. To such parents we would say, make yourselves acquainted with the aims and methods of the Baden-Powell Scout organisation, by a perusal of *Scouting for Boys*, activities of various sorts a boy must have — let them not be misdirected. Misdirection of energies in youth frequently means the formation of vicious habits. The moments of danger to any lad are not those of his busy, but those of his leisure, hours. Let us not blame him for a want of ballast or an indecision of character which are inevitable in the very young. Let us rather seek to fill his leisure hours with absorbing, interesting, and sensible employments, business even which may seem foolish to the adult — who has so far lost his youth as to forget the yearnings of his boyhood — but which is pregnant with the highest romance to the boy.

What lad does not dream of feats of derring-do! What British boy worth calling a boy does not imagine himself a sleuth-hound of the law! a tracker of men! or yearn to be sailor, soldier, fireman, or to tinker with solder and fire that he may make something? In whom is the instinct for collecting of some sort — it becomes a passion for acquisition, honourable or otherwise, in later life — not strong in childhood? These things are natural forces in the young, — healthy instincts, that Sir Robert Baden-Powell does not seek to restrain. If the Boy Scout movement merely aimed at keeping lads from loafing at street corners at nights, from unedifying talk, from weak-minded ‘mannishness,’ and from precocious courtships with nonsensical or tragical terminations, it would be a social instrument for good. But it does this and more.

A boy who is as enthusiastic as youth should be, will learn in the troop such resourcefulness and details of practical information as will stand him in good stead at home or abroad. He is encouraged to practise handicraft, self-discipline, manly sports, first-aid, the

principles that ensure health, to observe, to think for himself, and to be thrifty. These, surely, are all desirable things. There is one weak point in the organisation, however, which will automatically strengthen itself in time. This is the supply of suitable scoutmasters. By them the patrol stands or falls. It is by what they are that the movement justifies its existence. In a few years' time most of the scoutmasters will themselves have been scouts, and will be the more efficient and the more keen because of the self-knowledge they acquired in their own training. Meanwhile the movement numbers amongst its voluntary workers hundreds of the best characters that can be found. The futile, vainglorious types either disdain to undertake the duties, or drop out after a half-hearted attempt at them to make room for better fellows.

The Boy Scouts are now incorporated by Royal Charter, and this official recognition of their existence should be of considerable assistance to the movement. Sir Robert Baden-Powell speaks of the great possibilities before the movement; and its success up to the present does not make it appear that he has over-rated them. The educative value of the system is that Scouts learn by doing, which has, for long, been recognised as the best principle of education, though its practice has been by no means so general. The moral benefit is equally important if the scout takes to heart Sir Robert's maxim: 'In assisting his "neighbour" every day to the best of his ability, and keeping truth, honesty, and kindness perpetually before him, the Boy Scout, with as little formality as possible, is pleasing God.'

The Chief Scout hopes soon to see some improvement in the conditions of the Mercantile Marine, so that lads who are keen on the sea may find better openings. With Lord Charles Beresford, the Chief Sea-Scout, he is working towards some developments in this direction. At present the Royal Navy is the best opening for steady lads who wish to become sailors, though the object of scouting is not to send lads to sea, but to inculcate some of the seaman's hardiness, pluck, and discipline, and by their means to counteract the influence of over-civilisation on boyhood.

One of the most interesting experiments of the movement is that of 'The Scouts' Farm' at Buckhurst Place, Wadhurst, Sussex. It is a scouts' republic administered and worked by boys. For some years past in North America boys have laboured in small colonies of their own. Such colonies are called there George Junior Republics, after their originator, Henry George: but the idea in England is quite in the experimental stage. At Wadhurst each of the five patrols of eight boys has its own little farm of four acres and its own stock. The training will be invaluable to any of them who shall seek a career in one of our colonies. The boys elect their own mayor, and have entire control of their internal policy. They have also workshops, where they learn carpentry, blacksmiths' work, leather-work, laundrying, baking, and cooking. So far the venture has proved an unqualified success.

Practical instruction and the supply of suitable emigrants, are only some of the possibilities of the movement. People are just beginning to form a notion of the prodigious organisation which is growing up in our midst. It is not confined to England; it is inter-colonial and international. Every properly trained scout will become one more unit in the great peace-army which is springing up throughout the world. That astute judge of national politics, Edward VII, 'the Peacemaker' was amongst the first to appreciate the possibility of the Scout movement, if regulated and organised efficiently, becoming one of the main factors in the promotion of universal peace — and it is towards this end that Sir Robert Baden-Powell is now labouring.

The Scout Head-quarters is at 116, Victoria Street, Westminster. The Organisation consists of an Advisory Council and Staff, Sir Robert Baden-Powell being the Chairman of the Council. The Chief Scout and Council, with the Executive Committee, exercise complete

control, and govern through County Scout Councils, District Commissions, and Local Associations, the various Troops and Patrols.

The Patron is His Majesty the King, and H.R.H. the Prince of Wales is Chief Scout for Wales. Amongst the members of the Council are Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, Field-Marshal Viscount Kitchener, the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Grey, Lord Avebury, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Alverstone, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, the Earl of Meath, the Earl of Rosebery, Lord Strathcona, the Lord Mayor of London, Lieut. -General Sir Herbert Plumer, Rev. Silvester Home, Sir John Kirk, and various other well-known and influential personages.

Lord Haldane has given the movement his earnest support; and in 1910 the Daily Telegraph was the means of assuring the sum of £4000 a year for three years, to enable the Headquarters to be established on a permanent basis. Nearly every eminent man at the present time is in full sympathy with the organisation.

The Board-room at the Scout Headquarters contains a very fine portrait of Sir Robert Baden-Powell, by Sir Hubert von Herkomer, R.A. It represents the Chief Scout in the khaki uniform of the South African Constabulary, seated upon a square provision box marked J. Weil & Co. Across the breast of his tunic appear, amongst other decorations, the Queen's medal with three clasps, and the King's medal with two clasps. The portrait brings out his faculty of ambidexterity, as he is holding the leaves of his sketch-book with his right hand, in which is held a pencil, whilst he has evidently been drawing with his left hand. The pose is the moment in which he has looked up from his task, and he is smiling as if at some pleasantry which has caused him to glance from the subject in hand. His keen bronzed face under the slouch hat is glowing with health and vivacity, fun sparkles in his humorous eyes, and a mischievous look wrinkles his cheeks and mouth. The artist has caught the expression of his magnetic and vigorous personality, and the cheerful yet serious mien which marked his countenance through the arduous siege of Mafeking. There is also the hint of joyousness and perennial youth in the head carelessly thrown back, and the gleam of the piercing eyes. It is altogether a striking portrait as it looks down upon the table at which the Council sit.

The Chief Scout presides at the Council meetings with his back to his own portrait, his keen eyes travelling from face to face, and his restless hands working busily with pen or pencil on the blotting-paper before him. He remains silent all through the discussions, unless it is imperative that he should speak. His reserve is unbending. He turns his gift of silence to good account. His mind has been working swiftly during the discussion, following swiftly the enunciation of each individual's ideas. Then, if he differs from the opinion of the speakers, he looks up keenly, and in a few rapid words seizes upon the weak points of the various arguments and demolishes them. After this, he retires again behind his screen of reserve. He seldom persuades; he never gets loud in tone; he contents himself with proving his point by means of straightforward logical arguments, and without being a brilliant speaker, though he seldom fails to be dryly humorous, he is an excellent debater.

At the close of the meeting there is always a rush for Sir Robert's blotting-pad, upon which his restless pen has all this time been scribbling, and the lucky person to obtain it is always sure of an entertaining and facilely-executed representation of the faces and poses of those around the table, faithfully rendered and admirably caricatured. There is no malice in these drawings, but a wealth of cynical wit and humour.

The Scout idea is obtaining friends in all parts of the world. There is not a British colony now without its Boy Scouts, English or native. Scout patrols have been organised in Canada, the States, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and even in Fiji and other of the South Sea Islands.

There are Boy Scouts in Norway, Germany, and Holland — it was only in August of 1911 that Sir Robert Baden-Powell inspected the Scout patrols of Amsterdam. The movement, with its complementary organisation, the Girl Guides, is spreading throughout the world, helping to make better citizens and better men and women in every country. The most prominent Japanese and Chinese leaders hope to see the movement flourish in their respective countries.

Seldom has any proposal been received with such universal acclaim, and accorded such widespread support and sympathy.

These words are written within sight of a holiday-camp of Boy Scouts whose tents show white across the Essex meadows. The boys have been going about their business all day, in that dependable, business-like manner of theirs, without noise and bustle, but with every indication of control and personal responsibility in their bearing.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE CHIEF SCOUT'S MISSION

On 4th January, 1912, Sir Robert Baden-Powell left Southampton on a tour of six months, which was to embrace the world. His object was to link up all the Scout organisations in the Colonies and other lands at which it was possible to call, and to distribute Dominion flags to all branches which have been formed in our overseas dominions. The Chief Scout arranged to send weekly contributions on the places he visited to *The Scout*, the official organ of the Boy Scouts, and older persons will find his observations as instructive and illuminative as the young people for whose benefit they were written — for they are the observations of an artist and a writer.

His notes upon the Azores and the Spanish Main have a special appeal to the young blood which is stirred by stories of pirates and buccaneers, and of our old sea-dogs Raleigh, Drake, Frobisher, and Hawkins. The note upon the derivation of 'buccaneer' is particularly interesting. He writes: 'A "buccaneer" originally meant a man who used a "buccan," that is, a kind of frame for drying and smoking meat, and so preserving it for use on long voyages. A large number of people found this a profitable profession in the West Indian Islands, as the Caribbean Sea became a resort for ships; but they also found it still more profitable occasionally to take a turn at ship-looting themselves, so the term "buccaneer" soon came to mean much the same as pirate.'

From Barbados, Sir Robert sailed over the sea scoured in the seventeenth century by the free-booting Captain Bartholomew Sharp (who crossed the Panama Isthmus on foot with three hundred buccaneers). B.-P. visited also Trinidad and the Port of Spain. He went to view the famous lake of pitch which supplies the asphalt for our London roads, and called at Carthagena, where Sir Francis Drake's fleet attacked the Spaniards in 1585, previous to his successful assault upon the town.

At Colon, on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus of Panama, Sir Robert landed to see that immense American undertaking — the Panama Canal; and he describes how the bacteriologists at length proved that the malaria, which carried off the workmen in such numbers as to make the original undertaking futile, was conveyed by the mosquitoes which abounded in the swamps and marshes. Work was possible after the method of covering all stagnant waters with a film of petroleum was employed: the mosquitoes could no longer lay their eggs in the water, and as the clouds of insects abated so did the plague of malaria. Consequently the 35,000 workmen who

had been introduced for canal cutting, and who lived there with their families, were able to carry on the design without fear of the deadly disease.

From Colon, Sir Robert Baden-Powell voyaged to Jamaica, 'the Island of Springs,' which is as beautiful and fertile as the Garden of Eden. At Kingston he was welcomed by two troops of Boy Scouts, to whom he presented the Dominion flag.

New York was the port at which he landed in the States, where he was to begin a series of lectures upon the Scout movement and the possibility of an international fraternity of all Boy Scouts. The idea is a most sane and practicable one for the promotion of the world's peace, and the abolition of that antiquated method of settling national disputes — war. Ten years hence the present Boy Scouts will be men citizens, and it is hoped the lessons and ideas with which they will be imbued will help the fraternity of nations, and thus do much to prevent hasty, useless, and ill-considered strife.

At Boston a thousand American scouts paraded before Sir Robert, and the British flag was saluted in his honour.

President Taft received him in Washington, where more scouts paraded; indeed there are now organisations all over the States. Of Mr Taft, Baden-Powell says: 'He is a great, burly man, cheery and kind-hearted, and he believes in the scouts as manly and chivalrous fellows who will make the best of citizens when they grow up.'

Amongst other places called at in this lecturing tour through the United States were Detroit, Chicago, Baltimore, and Albany. One interesting incident of B.-P.'s stay at Washington was the sight in the central hall of the Capitol of a picture representing his famous ancestor Captain John Smith colonising Virginia, and another of Princess Pocahontas, the rescuer of John Smith from the Indians, being baptised.

After a visit to Niagara Falls, Sir Robert crossed the continent to San Francisco, afterwards taking ship from Seattle to Japan. The Japanese tour was the pleasure part of the trip, though, as has already been pointed out, Japan is awakening to the Boy Scout movement. Even in Siam there are already thousands of scouts enrolled. They are afterwards enlisted into the adult army corps of 'Wild Tigers' under the command of the King of Siam.

After a pleasurable stay in Japan, Sir Robert Baden-Powell went in a North German Lloyd boat through the German colonies in Polynesia, after a flying visit to Hong-Kong. Thence he sailed to Australia, and landed at Brisbane on 12th May. He received a glorious welcome from the 'Cornstalks,' old and young, and after a round of visits to the chief towns of the Commonwealth, sailed to New Zealand, thence to Durban and the Cape, arriving home in August.

The objects of his tour, which, besides being intercolonial, had international aspirations, will be best appreciated from his own references to Oversea Britain and his vision of International Peace. In January, 1912, before setting out to distribute Dominion flags to existing bodies of Boy Scouts, and to promulgate the spread of the peace-army movement throughout the world, Sir Robert Baden-Powell wrote in the Headquarters Gazette: —

'The wonderful spread of the movement, wherever there is British territory across the seas, is of enormous promise from an Imperial point of view. The knowledge that we have brother scouts working in the same uniform, to the same ends, in the same way, in all corners of the Empire, cannot but make scouts proud of their brotherhood, and cannot fail to bring them into closer sympathy. This should, as far as possible, be continued into more tangible form by encouraging the boys to write to each other, and, where possible, to interchange visits.'

‘This idea is being taken up practically by Toronto this next year, in inviting, free of expense, a small troop of scouts from each part of the Empire to visit Canada. It may do incalculable good in bringing the rising generation into a much closer mutual touch and personal sympathy than has been the case before. It may mean a great deal for the future solidification of the Empire.

‘Similarly, the movement having been taken up in so many different foreign countries, we may hope to open up with them, through correspondence and interchange of visits, a mutual regard and friendliness such as may reasonably be expected to tell strongly in favour of peaceful measures when crises arrive between nations.

‘Hence my remark the other evening — which I find has been widely quoted— namely: “If some one would give to the Boy Scout movement the price of one Dreadnought, we could go near to making Dreadnoughts no longer necessary.”

With this hope for universal peace on earth — a hope which ‘Edward the Peacemaker’ laboured so strenuously to bring to pass amongst the nations — we must take our leave of the strong and virile man who is the subject of this volume.

Sir Robert Baden-Powell, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., has exemplified a noble nature throughout his life, and now, dominated by a grand ideal, he is devoting his mature years to the good of his race, and to the furtherance of the world’s peace.

That he is a lovable character every child knows: his power of sympathy and endurance endeared him to the heart of the Empire at a time when that heart was sore distressed: he stands in our minds for the combination of manliness and practical religion, without which every professing scout and every citizen would be a hypocrite: he is a practical patriot who, having served his country gallantly in war-time, now seeks to serve her with heart and mind and brain in peace.

As we consider the various stages of the career of this versatile, observant, and forceful personage, we recognise that personal service has been the key-note of his life, at school and on service, in war and in peace. This trait is the secret of the success of the present movement, which he inspired, and which seems likely to be of permanent benefit to the nations.

Those few who discredit the value of the Scout movement should look at the weekly roll of brave and unselfish deeds recorded of the Boy Scouts. They are not the deeds to be inspired by anything short of sincerity and a lively faith in the leaders of the movement.

In conclusion, let us wish for ‘B.-P. of Mafeking’ many years of health and strength to be spent in continued usefulness to the Nation, the Empire, and the World. And let us remember his own cheery counsel to boyhood: —

Just play the game, and play it on the square:  
Some men may break the rules — to your despair:  
But let them do it; any fool can beat  
Who plays with honest men and stoops to cheat.  
It takes a head to win when playing fair.

Dare all the risks your nerve will let you dare:  
He fails the worst who plays with too much care;  
But whether tasting glory or defeat,  
Just play the game.

Don't shirk the chances; no, but take your share:  
Don't cater to the grand-stand folks who stare:  
Keep on the move; be braced for what you meet;  
Till time is called the game is not complete.  
And here's your motto, always, everywhere:  
    'Just play the game!'

The Scout,

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