# Rhodesia in 1890

## by H. F. (Skipper) Hoste

Henry Francis Hoste was one of the older officers when at the age of 37 he was commissioned as a captain in the Pioneer Corps, but he had a wealth of unusual experience to contribute.

He was born in 1853 at Stanhoe, near Sandringham in Norfolk, the son of the Reverend W. P. Hoste, who was later Dean of St. Paul's, and a descendant of Admiral Sir William Hoste who fought as a midshipman under Nelson and commanded at a notable engagement off the island of Lissa in 1811. Hoste, after Haileybury, failed his entrance examination for the Royal Navy and joined the Merchant Navy instead, serving a three-year apprenticeship in a China tea clipper. From sail he went into steam in the service of the Union Steam Ship Company and he first visited South Africa as fourth officer of the R.M.S. Teuton. In 1877 he was a member of an expedition sponsored by the Foreign Office to enquire into the slave trade in Central Africa; Herbert, a brother of Cecil Rhodes, was another member of the party, which became the first to reach the north tip of Lake Nyasa overland. Subsequently he rejoined the Union Company as its Commodore and from 1883 to 1890 was captain of the R.M.S. Trojan. He describes below the circumstances in which he met Rhodes and joined the Pioneer Corps as Captain of 'B' Troop.

After the disbandment of the Pioneer Corps in Mashonaland he was involved in the operations against the Portuguese in Manicaland. He cast his fortunes with those of the new country, as a prospector and miner and later as a farmer. During the 1896 Rebellion he was commissioned as a major and appointed second in command of the Salisbury Field Force. He died in January 1936.

A few years before his death he compiled an account of Forty Years Ago: Rhodesia in 1890, which was clearly taken very closely from the diary he kept during his early days in the country. This diary has since disappeared but I am indebted to his grandson, Mr. P. H. Hoste-Davies, of Melsetter, for permission to publish these extracts from the later account. They have all the force of contemporary description. Some notes have been added where it has been thought necessary to clarify the text.

E.E.B.

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The first time I heard of the expedition for the purpose of occupying Mashonaland was from Rhodes himself in August 1889. It happened thus: I was sailing from Southampton to the Cape in

command of the R.M.S. Trojan belonging to the Union Steam Ship Company; we had passed through the Needles Passage, dropped the pilot, and having set a course that would take us down channel, I came off the bridge, and was just entering my cabin, when I heard a voice behind me say "Hallo, Hoste! Have you forgotten me?" I turned round to see who it was, and found Rhodes standing there. I shook hands with him, saying, "I did not know you were on board; I don't think your name is on the passenger list." "No, it isn't", he replied. "I didn't want a crowd of people seeing me off, so 1 sent a clerk up from the office to take my ticket, and I believe my name is Thompson, however now we're away I'll resume my original name."

During the voyage he used to come into my cabin and sit there telling me his schemes, and what he was going to do with his new country, and how the occupation of it was the first step towards the realization of his great dream of the Union Jack flying over all the land from the Cape of Good Hope to Cairo. I well remember the day we discovered Beira. Rhodes came into my cabin, saying, "You know the east coast of Africa pretty well, don't you? Do you know of a place called Tungey, Sungey, or Pungey, or some such name? I want a port for my country, and I believe that there's a bay with a name something like that just to the eastward of it." "Yes," said I, "I know of a place called Tongwe Bay. but it's several hundred miles too far north to be any good to you; however we'll have a look at the chart." I accordingly got out the chart of the east coast and spread it out on the table. "Here's the place for you!" I exclaimed. "Mazinzane Bay.[1] It's right abreast of your precious country; it seems to be an estuary formed by the mouths of two rivers."

Rhodes in the meantime was reading the names of the rivers. "Ah!" he squealed out, "What did I tell you, Hoste? What did I tell you? Tungey, Bungey, Pungey. One of these rivers is called the Pungwe. There, I know more about the east coast than you do!"

Whilst he was chortling over his discovery, I took down "The East Coast Pilot" from the bookshelf, and from it we learnt that there was a safe anchorage off the little town of Beira, which from the description given in the book seemed to be rather a one-horse place. Rhodes asked for the loan of the book, and went off with it under his arm, still chuckling over his Tungey, Bungey, or Pungey. Soon after this we arrived at Cape Town, and Rhodes went on ashore taking his plans and schemes with him; however I couldn't get them out of my head, and I made up my mind that if it could be worked I would take a hand in the forthcoming expedition.

I can say that I was not altogether a green hand at that sort of work, as a few years before I had managed to get leave from the Union Company, and had joined a Foreign Office expendition led by Fred Elton that went into Central Africa for the purpose of inquiring into, and suppressing the slave trade. Rhodes's brother Herbert was also a member of the expedition.

To cut a long story short, I got everything fixed up by the beginning of the new year; I interviewed the Union Company's directors, who were very good, and told me that if I liked to

return at any time within two years my job would be open for me. I arrived at Cape Town on February 20th, 1890, where I learnt that a contract for raising and equipping the Pioneer Corps, to which I had been appointed, cutting the road to the vicinity of Mount Hampden, building forts, and occupying Mashonaland, had been entered into between Cecil John Rhodes (on behalf of the British South Africa Company) and Messrs. Johnson, Heany, and Borrow. I also learnt that the High Commissioner—Sir Henry Loch—had insisted on the Pioneers being accompanied on their march north by several troops of the newly organised British South Africa Company's Police, the whole Force to be under the command of Lieut.-Col. E. G. Pennefather (6th Inniskilling Dragoons) who was O.C. Police.

On June 25th, 1890, we broke camp at Macloutsie, and marched on again. The next day we had a call from a Transvaal Boer, Frikky Krief. We had been warned that he was coming to spy on our strength, in the interest of some Transvaal filibusters, so we were quite prepared to see him, and as we had nothing to be ashamed of we made him a welcome guest, and showed him everything. In the evening, after dinner, we had a bucksail with a bulls-eye marked on it hung to a couple of the trees, about two hundred yards away from the electric searchlight. We then turned the beam on the target. First, eight of our best shots fired at it, and though we could not mark the shots properly it was fairly easy to see where the heavy Martini bullets struck by the vivid light generated by the searchlight. That impressed Frikky considerably. Then Biscoe[2], who was somewhat of an artist with a maxim, made patterns all over the target, and finished up by signing his name right across it. The 7-pounder was then fired at it and the whole contraption swept away. That finished Frikky, who exclaimed, "Allemagtig! That's not fighting, it's murder". He left us next morning, satisfied with what he had seen. We crossed into the "Disputed Territory" on June 27th. It was claimed by both Khama and Lobengula, hence its name. We had now to take all sorts of precautions; we laagered whenever we halted, whether by day or night, and we marched by day only, as there was always a chance that Lobengula might send some of his impis to turn us out.

June 28th was quite an eventful day. During our midday halt we were joined by 'A' Troop of the British South Africa Company's Police. They were a hundred strong and a smart and useful crowd at that. They were under Capt. Melville Heyman and Lieuts. H. V. Brackenbury and the Hon. Eustace Fiennes. That night we laagered at Selous' camp. He had been making a road for us. We found him very fit. He reported that all was quiet across the border and so far as he could find out all that Lobengula wanted was peace and quiet. Selous now joined us as Chief Intelligence Officer.

Mr. Archibald Colquhoun, and his secretary Mr. C. F. Harrison, also joined us that evening. He had driven through from Palapye. Mr. Colquhoun was to take over the administration of Mashonaland on our arrival at our destination. In the meantime he was acting as the special correspondent of The Times. We had a terribly dusty march on June 29th. 'B' Troop was doing

rear guard that day, so we got all the dust that was kicked up by the long train of wagons, to say nothing of the guns and horses. It was like a fog, only considerably more gritty.

That night a lion visited one of our outposts; he growled for a few minutes, then went away and left them in peace.

June 30th. We laagered that night at Baobabspruit after another dusty march, but my troop was forming the advance guard, and had quite a pleasant time. During the march Adair Campbell, who was scouting on the flank, nearly rode over a leopard: it grinned at him and slunk off into the bush. We arrived at the Shashi river, the boundary of Matabeleland proper, on July 1st. As soon as we had laagered we started to build a fort. It came to be called Fort Tuli, owing to an idea that was prevalent in camp that the Shashi was the Tuli.

We had hardly tinished drawing up our laager when 18 Matabele warriors appeared on the scene. They crossed the river and came swaggering into our camp as if they owned it. They were a tough looking lot; big hefty men, variously armed with assegais and guns of many patterns. They all carried oxhide shields, the hallmark of the soldier. Borrow took the opportunity of airing his Sindebele on them and chaffed them; which amused them mightily and they roared with laughter at his jokes. The next day our Matabele friends were still loafing about the camp and were becoming rather a nuisance, so we gave them an ox to eat, and told them to go home. They took the ox, crossed the river driving it in front of them, and were seen no more.

Soon after they had departed the O.C. sent for me and told me that I was to collect 40 volunteers, as he wanted me to go across the river to cut a road for the column, and reconnoitre the country generally; I should possibly have to go in three days' time. I at once fell in 'B' Troop and said, "I've been told to get 40 volunteers to come across the river with me to cut a road and reconnoitre. I'm giving you chaps the first chance. Now all who'll come with me two paces to the front. Quick march." The whole troop stepped forwrd like one man. I then dismissed them and reported to the O.C. that all my troop had volunteered. So that business was settled.

That day horsesickness broke out among our horses in earnest and we had several cases. July 3rd. All hands were busy building the fort and clearing the bush away from the vicinity of it. Another party were fixing up a drift across the river. So far as the river was concerned, though the bed of it was over a quarter of a mile wide, all the water there was was a little stream about ten yards wide and six inches deep near the east bank.

There were five or six more cases of horsesickness this day: my troop were suffering badly as all our horses were unsalted.

General Methuen turned up in the afternoon.[3] He had come, he said, to wish us goodbye and God

speed, and incidentally to get a little shooting.

On July 4th a crowd of thirty Matabele turned up with a letter from Lobengula that had to go to Headquarters. I don't know for certain what was in it, but I heard that it was to say that he didn't think that he would be able to hold his young men, so we'd better go home again. It was sent on to Headquarters, and the Matabele Induna stated his intention of remaining in our camp until the answer was handed to him. Under these circumstances Major Johnson thought it would be better to delay my departure until these unwelcome visitors left, as they would undoubtedly send word to Bulawayo if we went, and though the Matabele might think twice before they attacked the column, they would hardly be able to resist the temptation of having a smack at a small party. We were still losing horses from horse sickness at the rate of four or five a day.

Another recruit joined us this day; a man named Armstrong. He was sick when we left Kimberley, so couldn't join there. He was determined to come, so he followed us up as soon as he had recovered. July 5th. At daylight Radikladi—Khama's brother—marched in with 250 men. 50 of them well armed and mounted, who were to act as scouts; the remaining 200 were labourers, to work on the roads, herd cattle, and do odd jobs. When the Matabele saw this crowd march in they cleared out at their best speed, and crossed the river. We sent scouts to shadow them, to see what their game was. The scouts returned soon after dark, and reported that they were making a bee line for Bulawayo, where I imagine that they reported to the King that Khama was taking a hand in the matter. As soon as the Matabele were out of sight, I got orders to parade my troop in full marching order the next day at 10 a.m. I was to take Dr. Litchfield with me in case of accidents,[4] and Selous was to come as guide. Dr. Jameson, who had joined us a few days earlier in his capacity of Rhodes's alter ego, was coming along too. We were to have a wagon, to carry kit and food, a water cart, and five spare horses.

On that afternoon we had a football match in the bed of the river. "B" Troop had challenged the world, that is to say the whole of the rest of the Pioneer Corps and 'A' Troop of the Police. It was terrible work running about in ankle-deep sand, but we managed to get through with it, and the first rugby football match played in the country resulted in a draw, slightly in favour of 'B' Troop.

General Methuen after wishing us all goodbye left for the south about noon.

On July 5th at 10 a.m. 'B' Troop paraded in full marching order on the parade ground in front of the embryo fort. Just as I was going to mount my horse, Trumpeter, I discovered to my disgust that he was showing unmistakable signs of horsesickness, so I shifted the saddle to my second horse, who rejoiced in the name of Satan. The men had given him the name when we were in Mafeking, partly because he had upset the parson and partly on account of his colour, which was black. However in spite of his name he was a good horse. I handed Trumpeter over to 'Daddy'

Farrell and asked him to dohis best for him.[5] which he promised to do. When we had fallen in and had been inspected by the O.C. we marched off amid cheers from the rest of the column, who had all come along to see us off. We crossed the river and landed on the other side, thus being the first members of the expedition to enter Matabeleland officially, though the first to actually cross were Heany,[6] Heyman and myself; we had ridden across to the opposite bank whilst the laager was being drawn up the day that we arrived at Tuli. but our visit was quite unofficial.

As soon as we reached the other side we started chopping out a road. Our modus operandi was that one man of each half section dismounted and chopped, the other man rode, led his mate's horse and carried his rifle. As soon as the man with the axe got tired they swopped jobs. In this way we got along fairly well and, though the trees were Mopane, which is about the hardest wood in Africa, we had done five miles of it by sunset.

At sunset we formed a thorn zariba and camped. We placed our wagon at one end of the zariba and the water-cart at the other end, with a picket rope for the horses stretched between them. Every man slept behind his own horse, that's to say those who were off duty. We had a picket of three men outside the zariba and three more inside, with a Non-com, in charge of the lot. Jameson, Selous, Litchfield, Bobbie Beal—my subaltern—and I slept at the wagon end, also close to our horses.

On July 7th we had another day's hard chopping. We were still among the Mopane trees, but we did a good day's work, about 13 miles, and eventually made our zariba near a Makalanga kraal. The people there were very civil and obliging, selling us goats, sheep, and milk. They also supplied us with two guides to take us to the Tshabezi river, the guide who had come with us from Tuli having come to the end of his tether. They told us that the Matabele had not been their way for some time—a fact that their prosperous condition told us better than anything that they could say.

We got away at dawn on July 8th. That day we struck a much better bit of country; the trees were not nearly so crowded, and we accomplished 13 miles by sunset.

On July 9th we crossed the Mzingwane, and camped on the north-east bank. Here we stayed for a day to rest the men, and sharpen the axes, which were getting a bit dull. We found a species of sandstone on the banks of the river that put quite a good edge on them.

Just after we had built our zariba one of our scouts came in to say that three Matabele warriors had been seen close by, to the westward, but they were apparently unaware of our proximity; his two mates were following them up and watching them.

As soon as the camp was fixed up and the men were sharpening their axes I fixed up a fishing rod and went down to the river, which was only sand with an occasional waterhole. I tried one of the waterholes and in half an hour I caught four barbel averaging about 4 Ibs. each. A bright thought struck me. Why not give the men a feed of fish, and save bully beef? So I told Bobbie Beal to take a couple of men and go fishing. I supplied them with some hooks and lines that I had amongst my kit and off they went. The fish were simply ravenous, and by midday they had caught enough to give all hands a fish dinner. They carried on again in the afternoon and we had fish again for supper. Our scouts turned up about sunset and reported that they had followed the three Matabele a long way, and had eventually lost them in some thick bush; they were heading north-west when last seen.

July 11th we were off at dawn, and found ourselves in a thick Mopane forest again; so hard slogging was the order of the day, especially as we had twenty miles to go before we reached the Tshabezi river and, according to our native guides, there was no water until we got there. However if we pushed on fairly fast our water-cart would see us through, so far as men and horses were concerned, though the unhappy oxen would have to go thirsty. In spite of the Mopane we did a good trek, and found ourselves within about five miles of the Tshabezi by sunset. The next morning we started off as soon as there was a sign of light in the sky, and pushed on. Soon the trees began to thin out and we made better speed. Eventually we reached the Tshabezi at eight o'clock in the morning.

The river didn't look too hopeful at the first glance. There was not a sign of water, nothing but sand, but on investigation we found that we could get as much water as we wanted by digging for it, the water being only about a foot below the surface.

Soon after we had camped some men who had been scouting on the flank rode in, and reported that they had ridden into a herd of about twenty elephants three miles away.

That afternoon I got an accession to my force in the shape of ten of Khama's mounted men under a chief named Matipi, a decent old boy, but he would never have taken a prize at a beauty show; my chaps nicknamed him "The Wildebeeste."

July 13th being Sunday we had a day off. In the afternoon I received word From the column to say that they were on the road, and had crossed the Shashi. I was therefore instructed to stay where I was until they caught me up, which would probably be in five or six days. On the strength of this I handed over to Selous (who was Chief Intelligence Officer) a sergeant and ten men, and old Matipi and his ten Mangwatos, to enable him to patrol the country round about.

On July 14th we started in to make a good drift across the river. Selous' patrols returned in the evening and reported that they had not come across any Matabele. They had visited several kraals

and had found the Banyai—as the natives in that part of the country were called—in a very miserable condition, mostly living in holes in the rocks, like baboons. They, the Banyai, said that they had been raided some months back by the Matabele, who had killed all the old men and women that they could lay their hands on, and taken away the young men, girls, and cattle. This the Matabele called "collecting taxes."

July 15th, one of our patrols reported that they had visited a Banyai kraal about twelve miles off, and that the people there had told them that twenty Matabele under an induna, Tombela, had passed by four days before. They were on their way to the Limpopo to "collect taxes" in that district. On July 16th, the drift finished, we began to clear away a spacious site for the laager on the north-east side of the river. We got word in the afternoon that the column was crossing the Mzingwane.

That night a brute of a hyena paid us a visit. He came within a yard or two of our zariba at about eight o'clock in the evening, as we were smoking our postprandial pipes, and let out a yell that would have roused the dead. Now there was a yarn floating round that the war-cry of the Imbezu, Lobengula's crack regiment, was the howl of a hyena, so I fancy that some of the crowd thought for a moment that we were for it. I am sure Jameson did, for he said in the silence that succeeded the yell, "That's a good imitation". However Selous reassured him by saying. "Don't you worry yourself, Doctor, there's no human throat in the world that's capable of making that infernal row". After the first yell the brute wandered round the zariba for another half hour, and then loafed off still howling.

On July 17th we finished the laager site, and had everything ready for the advent of the column. In the morning Jameson left us and rode back along the road to meet it.

That night a sentry on the north-east bank of the river got a bad fright. A herd of elephants walked down the river bed; it was very dark, and all that he could see was a procession of huge black objects, looking like a street of houses out for a walk. I believe that he always maintained that he wasn't scared, but that he climbed the nearest tree as fast as he could so that he would be able to see better.

We had a change of weather on July 18th, a cloudy sky and a cold drizzling rain. The column arrived at 10 a.m. I had my crowd standing by at the drift to give any help that might be required in getting the wagons through, but they all got across without accident; there were 123 of them now and they stretched out, even when close up together, for nearly four miles.

There had been a considerable accession of strength to the column since I left it at Tuli. as 'B' Troop of the Police under Captain P. W. Forbes (6th Innis-killing Dragoons) had joined it. Lieut.-Col. E. G. Pennefather (6th Inniskilling Dragoons) who was O.C. Police, had arrived on the scene

too, and had taken over the command of the whole column, both Pioneers and Police.

The Pioneer Corps had also a slight addition to its numbers in "The Twelve Apostles", though as a matter of fact there were thirteen of them. They were thirteen young fellows selected by Rhodes himself at Kimberley. They were supposed to act as the Administrator's bodyguard, but as the Administrator had not yet taken over his job a bodyguard would be no use to him. Heany and I therefore divided them up between us. Their names were F. W. Adcock, P. W. Campbell, T. J. Christison, A. Eliot, W. L. Cornwall, R. T. Coryndon, W. D. Durell, F. Ehlert, H. W. Featherstonehaugh, J. Grimmer, J. M. McRobert, B. E. A. O'Meara, and W. K. Stier. On our arrival at our destination the first Civil Servants were selected from them.

Bob Coryndon, one of them, was the first Administrator of Northern Rhodesia and died a few years ago as Governor of Kenya. Jack Grimmer, another of them, acted as private secretary to Rhodes for many years, and died a few days after Rhodes himself did.

The total strength of the Pioneer Corps was now 21 officers and 167 noncommissioned officers and men. Two members of the Corps, Lieutenant A. Dennison and Q.M.S. Charles Vialls, were at Palapye acting as forwarding agents for us.

Of the Police I can only give a rough estimate, they amounted to somewhere about 200 all told. There were also attached to the column about 500 Coloured men and natives, made up of drivers, leaders, servants, and Khama's contingent.

When the column marched in I rejoiced to see my horse, Trumpeter, trotting along at the head of the spare horses, with his tail cocked, looking as fit as a fiddle. 'Daddy' Farrell told me that he had had horsesickness right enough, but mildly, and had salted, the proof of which was that I had him until he died of old age ten years later.

We left the Tshabezi the next morning, and proceeded on our way to the north and, to the great disgust of my troop, 'A' Troop was sent on ahead and we had to stay with the column. The language that my chaps used over the matter I will omit; it might corrupt the chap who sets up the type. On July 20th we had several promotions among the N.C.O.s of the Pioneer Corps—among others I remember that my brother Derick was promoted to Lance-Corporal.[7] That evening they had a little "tea-party" to celebrate the promotions. I gave Derick a bottle of whisky to wet his stripe with, and they raised another bottle or two besides, with the result that they had a very merry evening. Unfortunately it ended in disaster. It appeared that H. P. Brown, who was my Troop Sergeant-Major, had chafed himself slightly riding, and late in the evening confided his trouble to the Hospital Orderly, who told him that he would give him some carbolic oil to rub the place with. Accordingly they went off to the hospital wagon together, where Hosking, the H.O., told Brown to clear for action, and hold out his hand. He then poured a liberal allowance of what

he thought was carbolic oil into Brown's hand, and told him to rub it in hard. He didn't rub for long. In less than a minute he was careering round the laager, holding up his breeches with one hand, shouting and blaspheming loud enough to wake the dead; at any rate he woke the whole laager up. I turned out 'B' Troop to catch him, which after a while we succeeded in doing; we then handed him over to Dr. Litchfield, who we looked upon as a member of the troop. It was then discovered that they had got hold of the wrong bottle, and had used carbolic acid instead of carbolic oil. The poor chap was very badly burnt, and had to stay in the Hospital wagon for some weeks.

Nothing of interest happened on July 21st.

The next day we had to laager on the south bank of the Bubye river while a drift was being made. As I was busy with my crowd in the bed of the river fixing up the drift Biscoe came down to have a yarn, and while he was there he spotted a black face peering at us out of the reeds on the north bank, so we went to investigate and found nine Matabele warriors hidden away there watching us. I told them that they had better come up to the laager and see the N'kos M'kulu. They were nothing loth, so we marched them up to Colonel Pennefather who questioned them. One of them, who was apparently the head man of the party, told him that Lobengula had sent them to see that the Banyai didn't hurt us. The Colonel replied that it was very kind of Lobengula, and told them to go back to the king and thank him for his care of us. He then ordered that a goat should be given them, and as soon as they had got it they went on their way rejoicing.

On July 23rd we had a capsize. I was doing rear guard with my troop, when Major Johnson rode up and told me to scrape up all the old sailors that I could find, as the wagon that carried the engine and boiler belonging to the electric searchlight had capsized crossing a donga. I accordingly left Beal in charge of the troops and, taking my brother Derick and a man called Valentine Baker, both old sailors, I went on to 'C' Troop where I borrowed the machine guns' crews, who were all sailors. We then went on to the wagon which we found with its wheels uppermost. We then turned to and cut down three large straight trees—fortunately there were plenty close by—and rigged up some sheer-legs. In a short time we had the wagon the right side up again, and found that the only damage done was a slight crack in the smokestack, which had been unshipped and lashed alongside the boiler.

That was about the only serious capsize we had during the whole trip, though Sandy Tulloch and his Gardner gun used to capsize in about five sluits out of every ten. His idea was to rush them. In theory the idea was probably good, but in practice it generally ended in a capsize.

On July 24th one of my boys caused a sensation whilst we were on the march. That day 'B' Troop was furnishing the flanking patrols, and a young fellow named Harvey, who was on the left flank in the thick bush, suddenly found himself on top of a herd of zebra. They, of course, cleared out,

and he, without thinking of the disturbance he would cause, fired at one of them as it was disappearing. As soon as the shot was heard the column was halted. The bush was too thick and too close up to the road to give us room or doubtless we would have started in to laager. I at once rode out to the flank to see what was the matter; I found out what it was, and put the offender under arrest. On my way back I met the troop of police that had been despatched to strengthen the flanking patrol. I told them what had happened and returned to the column, which on receipt of my news once more proceeded on its way. I remember I had a big job to soothe down the bosses; their idea was to make an example of the unhappy chap which, as he was a very good man, did not meet my views. However after a lot of argument I got my way, and when he came up to the Orderly Room next day he was only severely reprimanded.

We arrived at Matibi's on July 25th and laagered for the day in a natural amphitheatre surrounded at some distance by high hills. The hills were inhabited by the Banyai, whose kraals were stuck up in all sorts of inaccessible places. They came down in crowds to trade mealies, pumpkins, beans, etc. They told us that so far as they knew there were not large bodies of Matabele about, but that some months before they had been raided, many of their men being killed, and a lot of women and cattle carried off.

We broke up our laager at 2 p.m. and proceeded to cross the Mtchwani river. It took us close on five hours to get the column across, as the bottom of the river was muddy, and wagon after wagon stuck. However all hands turned to, most of them stripped to the bare buff, and with much shoving and shouting, the wagons were eventually got through, and we laagered on the north bank.

That afternoon a party of sixteen Matabele came across 'A' Troop, who were ahead road-making, and told them to quit working and go back. However, as no one paid any attention to their orders, they watched operations for a bit and then went off again, and disappeared in the thick bush. The next day a party of about twenty Matabele turned up while we were on the march. They were inclined to be cheeky, and wanted to know "What the white man had lost, and why were they looking for it in their country?" However they eventually went off without declaring war.

On July 27th our march was through a long valley with high granite hills on each side of us. On the top of the hills we could see groups of the wretched Banyai watching us, doubtless wondering who we were, and wondering whether our advent would do anything towards stopping the reign of terror under which they had lived for so long.

That afternoon we spent a couple of hours fighting a large grass fire that came roaring down on us. We beat the fire, but were all as black as sweeps by the time that we had done with it, and worse luck no water to spare to wash with until we could reach the Nuanetsi river the next day.

On July 26th we reached and crossed the Nuanetsi river. We were pretty well all day crossing, as the drift was not too good, and many wagons stuck badly, but all hands went at it with a will, and we got across without accident. The men, both Pioneer and Police, looked upon a troublesome crossing in the light of a gorgeous spree, and enjoyed themselves hugely, shouting at the oxen, pushing and hauling at the wagons, and when they got the chance ducking one another in the river.

The day after we crossed the Nuanetsi a herd of zebra flashed through the main body and the rearguard. They bumped into some donkeys that were being herded along in the rear of the wagons, carried one of them off with them, and kicked and bit it to death.

In the evening of July 30th, just after we had laagered, one of our scouts rode in and reported that he had seen a large force of Matabele camped amongst some hills about five miles away. We turned to at once and got everything in readiness for any trouble that might turn up. We cleared a good space round the laager and put down several mines. However, nothing happened and we passed a peaceful night. As soon as we could see in the morning, patrols were sent out to search the country, but no signs of any large party of Matabele could be found. The matter is a mystery to this day. The scout who made the report was a most reliable man, and he was positive that he had seen them, but he could neither produce them nor any signs of them. As soon as the patrol returned, we dug up our mines and broke laager. We discovered when we dug up our mines that it was a fortunate thing that we had not needed them, as the spring hares, whose holes were all over the place, had nibbled through the cables that connected the mines with the blasting machines in the laager, so we couldn't have fired them off if we had wanted to.

On July 31st nothing more happened worth recording—just pushing steadily along northwards.

On August 1st we camped in a fairly open place near a remarkable rock called Savana Bula. It was a huge mass of granite, looking like an immense thumb stuck upright in the veld. It had a decided Rider Haggardish appearance. About a third of the way up there was what appeared to be a hole or cave in it. The natives told us that it went right through to the other side, and that it was not a natural hole, but had been made by human agency in the far distant past.

For some reasons, but I forget what, we did not laager that day, but contented ourselves with drawing up the wagons in lines.

Selous, who had been away for some days looking for a practicable pass by which we would be able to get up on to the high veld, returned that morning having found an excellent one, which we named Providential Pass. About noon he and I were sitting in the Orderly Room tent, and he was telling me all about his discovery, when we were startled by an infernal din; yells, shouts, and screams accompanied by the yelping of dogs. We jumped to our feet, Selous exclaiming, "My

God! They've caught us on the hop!" We rushed out of the tent, revolver in hand, fully expecting to find a Matabele impi on the rampage, but it was only an unhappy hare being chased through the camp by a mob of wagon drivers and a mixed pack of dogs.

At 2 p.m. we inspanned and trekked to the Lundi river, where we laagered on the south bank.

We spent the whole of the next day making a drift across the river; no easy job as the river was very wide, about three feet deep, and running strongly. As three feet was rather too deep for the oxen to pull with comfort, we raised the bottom by laying down sandbags, and by sunset had a good drift made. When we marched on again we left the sandbags in the river for the benefit of the next wagons that should come along but, alas, our backs were hardly turned when the innocent and unsophisticated barbarians who lived in the vicinity lifted them, shook out the sand, and converted them into garments.

That day Major Johnson shot a fine bull hippo about a couple of miles above the drift. I remember Khama's men had the meat, but there was a good deal of it, and they didn't eat it quite fast enough—the weather was hot—I leave the rest to your imagination.

We crossed the Lundi river on August 3rd. The first wagon entered the water at 8 a.m., and by noon the laager on the north bank of the river was completed.

We had all hands, with the exception of outposts, etc., on the job, and the shouting, splashing, cracking of whips, intermingled with yells of laughter, were simply deafening during the four hours that we spent in crossing the river. That afternoon Biscoe and I, having heard from 'Rocky Mountain' Thompson[8] — who had been prospecting round about the Lundi some years before— that there were some ancient ruins about a couple of miles or so away, rode off to look for them. We found them without much difficulty; they were small, but wonderfully perfect. In the centre there was an erection that appeared to have been either an altar or a smelting furnace, as round about it in the sand there was a considerable amount of cinders, ashes and charcoal.

We had a day of rest on August 4th, which was a boon for which men, horses and oxen were very thankful.

On August 5th we proceeded on our way again, and 'B' Troop once more took the lead and was full of joy in consequence. To help us, Major Johnson gave us a large gang of Khama's men to assist in cutting the road. They were not much use however; in fact they delayed us if anything, and that night they nearly poisoned us with the stink of the putrifying hippo meat that they had loaded on to their wagon.

The next morning we were up and away after an early breakfast. I sent our sable allies, and their

stinking meat, back to the column with a letter of thanks for their valuable services. We in the meantime pushed on gaily, flattering ourselves that we wouldn't see much of the column until we reached the high veld. But, alas, our hopes were soon dashed, for while we were off-saddled at noon, a despatch rider turned up with a note from Major Johnson telling me to stay where I was until the column caught me up. At about 6 p.m. the column arrived and laagered on the space that we had cleared for them. I went at once to the Major to find out what the trouble was, and learned that that morning Johan Colenbrander had arrived from Bulawayo with a message from the King to say that,[9] although he would do his best, he feared that it would be impossible to hold his young men any longer if we persisted in going on. Colenbrander told the Colonel that the impis were clamouring night and day to be led against the white men and that things looked very serious indeed; in fact he went on to say that if we went on we would be attacked and wiped out to a man.

After some little discussion a message was sent back to Lobengula to say that we appreciated his efforts on our behalf, but if his young men did attack us it would be very bad for them. The column then marched on northward, and Colenbrander left for Bulawayo, shaking his head in a most doleful way, and saying that we were all doomed to destruction. It was thought that in these circumstances it would be better for my troop to sleep at the laager every night, and start from there on our road-making job every morning.

August 7th. We came across a small party of Matabele in the morning. They were evidently watching our movements, and in the afternoon we sighted quite a large body of them on the hills near Chibi's. We thought at first that they were only Banyai, but when we got our glasses to bear on them we made out their shields and assegais. They were probably the impi that was quartered at Chibi's. There must have been several hundred of them. However they contented themselves with looking at us only, and they were quite welcome to do that if it gave them any pleasure.

On August 8th we crossed the Tekwane river without much trouble. It was small and there was only a drain of water in it.

The next day we, 'B' Troop, pushed our way on ahead of the column, and after a hard morning's chopping arrived at the Tokwe river at noon. As soon as we had had some food we inspected the river, and found that though there was a good deal of water in it, we could make a good drift if we blew up the rocks that were in the way. As we had drills, hammers, dynamite, etc., in our scotch cart we got to work on them at once. Five of us spent four hours stark naked, except for our hats, in the river, putting drill holes in the rocks. As soon as the holes were finished we loaded them, lit the fuses, and up went the rocks in fragments, to the great astonishment of a gang of natives who had been watching our proceedings with much interest. As soon as we were ready to fire I told the natives to clear out, so they got behind some rocks on the bank of the river and peered over the top of them, but as soon as the shots began to go off they left their cover, and

took to the bush at their best speed; they'd seen enough for one day.

I remember that while we were drilling the holes Colonel Pennefather rode up and asked for the officer in charge, so I, who was in the river dressed in my hat only, and up to the neck in water, answered him and told him how we were getting on. He made no remark about my very sketchy costume, but he looked rather shocked, I thought.

The column reached us in the evening, and laagered on the west bank of the river, but by that time we were all clothed decently.

August 10th. The men had breakfast early and, as soon as that was over the wagons began crossing the river. On the left hand side of the drift there was a submerged rock; it was out of the line, but there was just a chance that a wagon might bump up against it, as it wasn't visible; so I told Sergeant Finucane, who was acting Troop Sergeant-Major, to place a man on it to act as a beacon. After a while I noticed that the man he had sent there was Trooper Jameson, the oldest man in the troop, and rheumaticky at that; he was Jameson's older brother, generally known as either Bob Jameson, or 'Alabaster' Bob. I sent another man to relieve him, but Jameson objected to being relieved, so I called out to him, "Come off that rock, you silly old fool; you'll be laid up with rheumatism if you stay there any longer." "Oh no, sir!" he replied, "I shan't get rheumatism, but I'm suffering terribly from corns and this is softening them splendidly." However, in spite of his corns, I shifted him.

The column made the passage of the river, and laagered on the east bank.

August 11th. We laagered close to a large wet vlei. There were a lot of spur-winged geese and duck on it, a few of which we managed to shoot.

On August 10th we laagered at the foot of Providential Pass near Fern Spruit. That evening Father Hartmann went out for a stroll and lost himself.[10] Several parties went out to look for him but without success. He turned up bright and smiling the next morning, having spent the night lying hidden under some bushes half a mile from the laager, under the impression that our fires, which he could see, were the fires of a Matabele impi.

August 13th. We, 'B' Troop, after a cup of coffee each, left the laager just before dawn, crossed Fern Spruit, and began the ascent of the pass just as the sky was beginning to light up in the east. The bush was very thick and was interspersed with big trees, so hard slogging was the order of the day. We had hardly cut a quarter of a mile when we heard, by the cracking of whips behind us, that the column was on the move, and that we would soon have it treading on our heels. However we managed to keep ahead of it. About eleven o'clock the Colonel rode up. He congratulated us on the progress we were making, and asked me when we had had breakfast. I

told him that we hadn't had it up till then and that unless he halted the column for a spell I didn't see how we were going to get any. He rode back and halted the column and we got our long delayed breakfast. As soon as we had swallowed it we pushed on again.

At about three o'clock I got a note from the Colonel telling me to halt at the first flat place that I came to, and clear space for the laager. As luck would have it we were just then at the very place that would answer, so we cleared it. I then marked out a pool in Fern Spruit, which was running alongside our road, for drinking water, and told my crowd that if they wanted to bathe they could bathe in the pool below it, which they did. However some busybody told the Colonel that they were bathing in the drinking-water pool; then the band began to play.

The next morning we were off again at dawn, and at 8 a.m. we emerged from the pass on to the high veld. The first things that caught our eyes were two large white patches that looked like snow, but which turned out to be nitre, if I remember right. Our relief on leaving the hot steamy low veld, where for months we had seldom been able to see for more than two hundred yards round us, and arriving on the open veld with a cool, invigorating breeze blowing, may be imagined.

We laagered about a mile from the pass, and a spot was selected on which to build a fort to guard the pass. The fort was to be named after Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

On August 15th, after getting the necessary leave, a party consisting of Captain P. Forbes (Police), Canon Balfour (Chaplain to the Police), Captain E. Burnett (Pioneers), Lieutenant Ellerton Fry (Pioneers), Trooper F. Langerman (Pioneers), and Messrs. J. Beaumann, F. E. Harman and H. Denny belonging to some of the prospecting parties that accompanied the column; and I. started off at dawn to visit the ruins of Zimbabwe, which had been discovered forty years before by Carl Mauch. We took a couple of native guides with us, a pack horse, and two pack donkeys to carry grub, blankets, etc.

After we had crossed a couple of ranges of hills the guides pointed to a kopje some seven miles off and said, "Zimbabwe". Then, after crossing three rather bad swamps, in one of which the horses went in up to their girths, we reached the kopje, on top of which we could see large masses of masonry; there were also a lot of native huts mixed up with them. As soon as we reached the foot of the kopje a crowd of natives turned up, armed in various ways; some with bows and arrows, and some with assegais. They told us to stop where we were, and began fitting arrows to their bows in a most embarrassing manner, so we palavered with them for a bit, and eventually after we had given the chief a blanket as a present, they became more amiable and condescended to listen to us.

Their first proposal was that if we wanted to see the ruins we should be led up to them

blindfolded. This was promptly rejected on our side. Then after more talk they said that they would show us the ruins, but we mustn't bring up our native guides with us. To this we agreed, and oflf we went up the kopje where we found ruinous remains of what looked to us like a citadel, in the enclosures of which the natives were living. They had evidently utilized the old building to the utmost, pulling down the walls wherever it suited them, and using the stones for building new, and very round, walls, in all sorts of places never contemplated by the original architect.

We wandered about the place for a bit, and then a slab-sided young savage, who was showing us around and who I believe was the son of the chief, led us off by an awful path down the back of the hill to the plain. There we found ourselves among the ruinous remains of what had apparently been a town many centuries before. After passing through them we came to a large circular building that we had seen from the path as we came down the kopje.

Our guides for some reason would not let us go in at the entrance, but made no objection to our climbing through a gap in the wall. The inside of the place was a perfect jungle of trees, bushes and creepers. As most people have read far better descriptions of the place than I could possibly write, I won't attempt to describe it further than by saying that of all the ruins in Rhodesia, and there are many of them, it is far and away the most marvellous.

Fry, who was our official photographer, got his camera going, to the great alarm of the natives, who watched him in fear and trembling, expecting an explosion every moment. We in the meantime wandered about the place. We camped there that night, and the next morning after an early breakfast saddled up and returned to the laager, where we arrived in the forenoon. In the afternoon the first cricket match in the country was played. The sides were 'A' Troop (Pioneers) v. 'B' and 'C' Troops (Pioneers). I forget who won; it was probably 'A' Troop as they had several outstanding cricketers, notably Monty Bowden, the celebrated Surrey wicket-keeper. He had come out to the Cape in an English team, Read's I think, and hearing of the Pioneer expedition, had joined as a trooper. L. Vintcent and B. Wimble, both noted South African cricketers, were also in 'A' Troop. Our side was captained by Trooper E. J. Pocock, an ex-military officer, and a most useful cricketer.

Major Sir John Willoughby (Royal Horse Guards), with 'C' Troop of the Police, caught us up that day.

On August 17th Biscoe and Mandy collected a party together and went off to inspect Zimbabwe.[11] They got back that evening. That day we sent all Khama's men back to their country with the exception of a few of the dismounted men, who were acting as voorloopers, etc. We were not sorry to see the last of them. Radikali and his mounted men were useful as scouts, but were far from indispensable, whilst the dismounted crowd were more trouble than they were

worth.

In the afternoon Selous, who had been away on a three day's patrol to investigate the country ahead, returned having discovered the watershed between the rivers running to the east and those running to the west, along which a good road could be made.

Major Sir John Willoughby now took over his duties as Staff Officer. Captain Max Graham of the Police had been acting for him up to then. 'C' Troop of the Police, under Captain Keith Falconer and Lieutenant Brackenbury, was left behind to finish building Fort Victoria, and to garrison it.

We had now finished the most arduous part of our journey and, what was more, we had little to fear from the Matabele in the open country that we were now in.

On August 18th, 'B' Troop, who were still roadmaking, got away after an early breakfast. The column was to give us a decent start and then follow on. Roadmaking on great open plains of the high veld was a pleasure. We now made two parallel roads, about fifty yards apart, as it had been decided to have a double line of wagons, instead of the long cumbersome single line that we had had up to then. All we had to do as a rule was to tow two young trees, one astern of the scotch cart and one astern of the water-cart; the wagons just Followed the spoor that they made. Now and again, of course, we struck patches of bush, but after the dense bush of the low veld they were child's play.

On August 19th, when we were falling in at our stations in the laager, which we always did at "Reveille"—sounded an hour before dawn—a rather amusing incident took place. I may mention that it was a hard and fast rule that no one should take off their boots when they turned in for the night; the most helpless creature on earth is a white man without boots. That morning a man named Logan, belonging to 'C' Troop (Pioneers), was spotted by the Colonel in the act of putting on his boots. The crime was manifest. It was perfectly plain that he had had them off all night. The Colonel promptly went off the deep end and there was no end of a rumpus. When matters calmed down and quiet reigned once more, one of the Police, a troop of which was falling in close to the Gardner gun that was at the corner of the laager, leant over and inquired of Treneman, one of the blue-jackets in the Gardner gun's crew, "What all the blooming row was about?" "Oh!" replied Treneman, in a loud, hoarse whisper that could be heard half way across the laager, "It ain't nothink. Only one of our chaps 'as taken 'is bute off, and b . . . . y near pizoned the Colonel."

On August 20th, as we were now pretty safe from being held up by the Matabele, we began to make night marches again. We in 'B' Troop now had a fairly easy time. We used to leave the laager as soon as we had had breakfast and

push ahead, marking out the road, until we had done ten miles or so. Then we camped for the night at the first suitable place for making a laager that we came to. The column generally caught up and laagered alongside of us at dawn.

There's little or nothing to chronicle at this period of our march. One day was very much like another. Everything was working like clockwork, and day by day we were pushing further north.

About this time, I forget the exact day, Mr. Colquhoun went off to make a treaty with an independent chief who lived to the eastwards of our line of march. I think it was Guti but I am not sure. He was accompanied by his secretary, Harrison, and Selous went with them as guide and Adair Campbell was in charge of the escort. They took pack donkeys with them to carry their provisions, blankets, etc. On starting, the donkeys caused a considerable amount of trouble. It perhaps is not generally known that packing a donkey is quite an art and the men who packed Colquhoun's donkeys apparently did not properly understand that art, for as soon as the party started the loads began to slip, and in a few minutes the donkeys were trotting about the veld with their loads under their bellies. After a bit we captured them all, and some of the prospectors who were accompanying the column and who understood donkeys, packed them properly. The party then moved off.

I noticed some little time ago that someone, no names no pack drill, wrote to the papers to say that when Selous left us we promptly lost our way. Without wishing to be rude and contradictory. I may say that that statement was absolute rubbish. Without Selous we would certainly have lost our way coming through the low veld, but when he had guided us through that and up on to the high veld his job was practically over. Johnson, Burnett, Borrow and Spreckley, all members of the Pioneer Corps, had shot all over the country that we were passing through when Selous left us and knew it from A to Z.

Two days after Colquhoun left us, as I was riding away from the laager to go ahead with my troop to mark out the road, Major Johnson called to me saying, "Hostel A little meat would be quite useful if you come across any; it'll save slaughter cattle." As luck would have it we hadn't been on our way a couple of hours when I saw a herd of about twenty wildebeeste coming towards us. Burnett and Nicholson,[12] who were on ahead guiding us, were galloping behind and driving them along in front of me. I saw that with any luck the herd would pass about two hundred yards on our right, so I dismounted right files and told them to fire a volley into the herd at two hundred yards when I gave the word. Along came the wildebeeste as hard as they could gallop, tails up, heads down, kicking up clouds of dust. When they were abreast of us I gave the word. Crash went the volley, the herd dashed on leaving four of their number dead on the ground.

On September 2nd we were laagered on the headwaters of the Umniati river. The following day

was the coldest of the whole trip; it was blowing a hard easterly gale, accompanied by showers of icy cold rain. We who were ahead were trying to reach a place that had been christened Mooi Fontein by van Rooyen, a very celebrated hunter.[13] Ted Burnett, who was with us, was careful to explain that though the Fontein was there all right, he had never been able to discover where Mooi came in.

We reached the place just before sunset, and Burnett was proved to be quite right. It was a beast of a place to come in on a cold night. There was not a scrap of shelter so far as could be seen. I sent out two or three parties to prospect round for a place of some sort where we could camp for the night with some chance of a modicum of comfort. Presently a man came back and said that he had discovered a few skimpy bushes that might give a little shelter, so we shifted over to them. They did not amount to much so we turned to and dug some trenches to sleep in. It was easy work digging, as the soil was mostly sand. We made them about two feet deep and as we threw up all the soil we dug out on to the weather side, we were fairly well sheltered from the wind and passed a comfortable night after all. The column turned up at dawn and laagered near us.

We stayed there that day, partly to give the cattle a rest and partly to select and mark out a place to build a fort, which was to be called Fort Charter. 'A' Troop (Police) was left behind to build the fort and garrison it.

September 5th. 'A' Troop (Pioneers) took the lead and 'B' Troop took their place in the column.

The next day we laagered on the headwaters of the Sabi river, where we found Mr. Colquhoun and his party, with the exception of Selous and a few troopers, waiting for us having fixed up his treaty satisfactorily. Selous had gone on to Manica to make a treaty with Mtassa, otherwise known as "Sifamba Basuku" ('He who walks by night'), who was an independent and powerful chief on our side of the Portuguese boundary.

September 7th found us laagered on the south bank of the Umfuli river. V/e found 'A' Troop there, and shortly after our arrival Capt. Burnett, Lieut. Nicholson and Tpr. Langerman, who had been ahead spying out the land. walked in dead beat with their saddles on their heads. It appeared that on September 5th they were a long way ahead, pretty close to the Hunyani river in fact, and were camped for the night, when a lion turned up, killed two of their horses, and scared away the other one. Burnett got a shot at the lion and was pretty sure that he had hit it, but it was very dark and the beast got into some thick bush that was close by, so he had to let it go. They could not recover their lost horse. He, the horse, made up his mind that the locality wasn't healthy for horses and had gone off at a gallop, so as they were due at the Umfuli drift at daylight on the 7th there was nothing for it but to load up their saddles and tramp back..

That day, as there was a pool of deep water below the drift, we put together the sections of our

little Berthon boat and launched it on the pool,[14] which was about half a mile long. Biscoe and Ivan Fry came with me, and we sailed the boat up and down the pool, to the great astonishment of some natives who had turned up and who had never seen either a boat or a canoe in their lives.

On September 9th we were laagered between the Umfuli and Hunyani rivers, near the place where Ted Burnett had wounded the lion on the 5th, so Pennefather, Johnson and Borrow rode off to see if they could get any news of it. They found the carcass about three hundred yards from where Burnett had shot it. It was a large male, but the skin was useless as it had been torn by hyenas and vultures.

The country we were passing through at this time had once been thickly populated. There were any amount of the remains of destroyed kraals about, but the Matabele had swept the country clean and, with the exception of an isolated village here and there perched on the top of an almost inaccessible kopje, there were no signs of any inhabitants.

Late in the afternoon of September 10th we reached the Hunyani river and laagered on the south bank. We found 'A' Troop there, busily employed in putting the finishing touches to the drift. The river was low, but both the approach to the drift and the pull-out on the other side were very sandy; however that difficulty was more or less overcome by placing bundles of reeds over the sand, which helped to keep the wagon wheels from cutting in too deep and sticking.

The next morning at dawn we commenced crossing the river and by ten o'clock we were laagered on the north side, and the last big river had been crossed. A little after midday we broke up the laager and proceeded on our way again. It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when we reached what is now known as the 'Six Mile Spruit'[15], where we halted and laagered. Just after we had laagered a veld fire came roaring down upon us, with a fresh breeze behind it. All hands turned out and put in an hour fighting it. It nearly reached the laager; we managed to stop it in time, but only just.

For some time past a good deal of discussion had been going on amongst the authorities as to where we should eventually halt and build the fort. It had to be built on a healthy spot as undoubtedly it would become the nucleus of a town later on. Nominally we were marching for Mount Hampden, but that was only because Mount Hampden was a prominent landmark the latitude and longitude of which were approximately known. The country round it was also well known to Selous, who had discovered and christened the mountain, to Major Johnson and to several other members of the expedition. For some days scouts had been searching the country ahead for a suitable place, and the general consensus of opinion pointed to the open country near the Makabusi about twelve miles south of Mount Hampden. Colonel Pennefather, Major Sir John Willoughby, and Major Johnson had ridden ahead and inspected the place. So far as they could

see it answered all the requirements. It was an open and apparently healthy piece of country, and the Makabusi in those days carried quite a decent amount of water.

It was finally decided to halt between the kopje, called by the Mashonas "Harari", and the Makabusi river, and to build the fort there. The fort was to be named Fort Salisbury, after the Marquis of Salisbury, then Prime Minister of England.

At the first streak of dawn on September 12th we broke up our laager at the Six Mile Spruit, and started on the last lap. The column wound slowly over the veld and presently, as we surmounted the ridge that bounds the valley of the Hunyani, what is now called the Salisbury Kopje came into view. As we got nearer we saw that the shallow valley between the Kopje and what is called the Causeway was a yellow mass of flowers. They were something like candytufts in shape and, as we discovered later, they gave off a very pleasant smell at night.

'B' Troop was doing guard that morning so, by the time we arrived and dismounted, the last laager had been drawn up and the long five months' march from the railhead at Kimberley had terminated.

It is hard at this date to realize the feeling that prevailed in the camp that day. The majority of us were young, many of us very young—mere boys in fact— and consequently full of hope. We were all jubilant; our fortunes were made; we were millionaires in embryo. I remember the popular idea was that we would make our piles in a couple of years and go to the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1892. I believe one member of the expedition did get to Philadelphia; he married a wealthy woman and was able to go.

That afternoon we got our tents off the wagons for the first time since we had left Macloutsie and pitched them. Our laager and camp were just about where Gordon Avenue crosses First Street.

Soon after we arrived Major Johnson, accompanied by Borrow and Ted Burnett, went off to the Umfuli river near Hartley Hills to see the much talked of ancient gold workings there, and Captain Heany was left in charge of the Pioneer Corps.

Sir John Willoughby, who had been mugging up fort-building in the "Soldier's Pocket-book", was busy with half a dozen men marking out ground to build the fort on. It was, he told us, to be a "Demi Lunette."

General Orders that evening informed us that there was to be a dismounted parade of all troops at 10 a.m. the following day for the purpose of hoisting the Flag.

Heany and I discussed the matter that evening, and arranged that as Heany was an American

citizen, and could not very well go hoisting British flags, he should be Captain of the Day instead of me, whose turn it was, and take charge of the camp, while I was to command the Pioneer Corps on the parade.

The next morning, September 13th, I awoke at dawn and suddenly re membered that there was no flagstaff to hoist the Flag on, so I got up and roused up Biscoe, an ex-sailor like myself. We got hold of an axe and went to the nearest clump of trees where we picked out a nice straight pole. While I was chopping it down "Reveille" sounded, so Biscoe went back to camp and fetched along two or three more sailormen from the machine-gun squad in 'C' Troop.

We then carried our mast along, rigged signal halyards on it, and erected it in the middle of the fort that was to be, where Cecil Square now is. At 10 a.m. we paraded in front of the flagstaff; 'A' and 'B' Troops of the Pioneer Corps in the centre, 'C' Troop, Pioneers, with their two seven-pounders on the right, and 'B' Troop of the Police on the left. Colonel Pennefather (O.C. Column), Sir John Willoughby, Lieutenant Sidney Shepstone (A.D.C. to the Colonel), Lieutenant E. C. Tyndale-Biscoe, R.N. (Pioneers), and Canon Balfour, in his cassock, stood at the flagstaff, Biscoe with the Union Jack under his arm. We then stood at ease whilst the Canon gave a short address and an extempore prayer. When he had finished, the bugles sounded the Royal Salute and we presented arms, while Biscoe slowly and solemnly hoisted the Flag. As the Flag reached the top of the mast 'C' Troop commenced firing a salute of twenty-one guns. When the salute was finished the bugles once more sounded the Royal Salute and we presented arms again. The Colonel then called for "Three cheers for her most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria!" We gave them with a will. That function being over Mashonaland was now a part of the British Empire, another jewel in the British Crown.

In the afternoon we turned to and commenced building a fort. After that afternoon we arranged to work in four shifts. I remember that the first day 'A' Troop worked from 6 a.m. till 9 a.m., 'B' Troop from 9 a.m. till noon, 'C' Troop worked from noon to 3 p.m., then Ted Burnett's wagon drivers came on and worked till 6 p.m. Work was then knocked off for the day. The next day 'B' Troop came on at 6 a.m., so the shifts were changed in that way daily. We had quite a market in camp every day; the Mashonas simply streamed in bringing pumpkins, sweet potatoes, grain, etc., to barter. Old clothes were the principal medium of exchange; money they looked upon with suspicion and would have none of.

Whilst we were building the fort the Police were busy erecting huts, some for their own quarters and some for the Administrator—residence and offices. They also built a church.

On September 15th we got news from Bulawayo telling us that the Matabele had simmered down, and for the present at any rate they were not likely to give trouble.

That evening I remember we, the officers of the Pioneer Corps, dined with the Police officers and, as they were rather short of mess-traps, each guest brought his own knife, fork, spoon and plate with him.

About this time we were suffering from a plague of dogs and puppies. I don't know how many there were about the camp, but there must have been well over a hundred. At night when we turned in a dog or two would loaf into your tent and proceed to crawl under your blankets which, as we all slept on the ground in those days, was an easy job. After a hopeless attempt to eject them, in which they were always the victors, you gave in. They would then lie fairly quiet until you got to sleep. Then something would start them off and up they got, kicked off your blankets, galloped over your face, dashed into the middle of the laager, and barked as if their lives depended on it. After about five minutes of this, in which every dog in camp joined, they would saunter back growling and throw themselves down on top of you as if life wasn't worth living. I'm fond of dogs, but at that time I used to think that life without dogs would be very quiet and peaceful. On the night of September 19th one of the prospectors had two donkeys and a dog killed by lions.

On the afternoon of September 22nd just as 'B' Troop were finishing their shift on the fort, a wild looking savage appeared trotting across the veld holding a cleft stick in his hand with a letter stuck in it. He was duly passed along to me and, on examining the address on it, I found that it was addressed to Major Johnson in 'Daddy1 Farrell's handwriting. Farrell was camped on what is now known as Avondale with all our troop horses under his charge.

As soon as I had dismissed the men, and handed over the job to Jack Roach of 'C' Troop, I went over to the mess tent, taking the savage with me. There I learnt that Major Johnson was out. However Captain Heany was in charge and on the spot, so I passed the sable Mercury on to him. When he had read the note he handed it to me. It was to the effect that a lion had killed three horses the night before and that he, Farrell, thought that it would probably come back to the kill about dark. "Now," said Heany, "comes our chance. We also will go to the kill, but we'll go a bit before dark and be on hand to welcome the lion when he arrives, so go and polish yourself up a bit. You're terribly dusty. Don't forget that you've been asked to visit the King of Beasts."

We rode off for the horse kraal at about four o'clock, each armed with a 600 bore Express. At the horse kraal we found Farrell, who told us that the dead horses were on the veld about a mile away, all lying close together, and that he was of the opinion that it was the work of two lions. He gave us a boy to guide us to the place, and we started off again with the boy trotting along in front of us. We reached the place some little time before sunset, and stationed ourselves in a convenient spot about fifty yards downwind from the carcasses, which were all lying close together. Our horses were left under the charge of the boy, and hidden in a clump of bushes fifty yards in our rear. For ourselves, we snuggled down on our stomachs amongst the grass and

shrubs, and as our position was slightly higher than the spot the carcasses were lying on, we got a fairly uninterrupted view. Then came a tedious wait. For a time nothing happened. Then some vultures and crows that had cleared out on our arrival began to return, and hopped among the carcasses. The sun set, the birds retired to some adjacent trees, and a jackal appeared on the scene, on which Heany whispered in my ear, "When I was a kid I was always told that the jackal was the lion's provider, but I expect that when the lion turns up he'll provide that jackal with a clip on the jaw for messing his dinner about." After that nothing more happened and it began to get dark. We hung on, however, until we could neither see the sights on our rifles nor the carcasses of the horses. We then decided to return to camp for the night and come back again the next morning at dawn.

The next morning we saddled up at five o'clock, with our party reinforced by Colonel Pennefather and Major Johnson. We got away without delay and after a smart canter of about three miles we came in sight of the place as the sun was coining over the horizon.

The first things we saw were some jackals, vultures and crows. The vultures and crows were dodging about in the trees, and the jackals were in the act of skulking off. I was just beginning to think that we were going to draw a blank once more when Johnson called out, "There's the lion!" We forthwith rammed in our spurs and went for him as hard as we could gallop.

When we first viewed him he was stealing away in a catlike manner, but as soon as he saw that we were after him he stopped and threw his head up, looking every inch the King of Beasts. As he stopped Johnson, who was leading, pulled up, dismounted and fired (he was about thirty yards from the lion) and hit him behind the shoulder, upon which the lion jumped into a patch of high grass and remained there out of sight, snarling and growling. Fortunately we had our dog with us, which ran round and round the patch of grass barking and yelping, until the lion got savage and sprang straight on end into the air and fell back into the grass again. After waiting for a bit and hearing nothing more of him, we went very gingerly up to the grass, peered in, and found him lying on his side, dead. He was in splendid condition, fat as butter and, so far as I can remember, he measured 10 ft 6 in. from the tip of his nose to the end of his tail. After we had skinned him we went home to breakfast very hungry and very pleased with ourselves. We had hardly finished breakfast when a deputation of

wagon drivers arrived. They wanted to know if they might have the lion's carcass to eat. They said that it would make them strong and fierce. Pennefather. Heany and I visited the carcasses again the next day, but there was no sign of any other lion having been there. By this time the fort was nearing completion, and on September 27th it was practically finished, so to celebrate the event our worthy Regimental Sergeant-Major, Fleming King, gave us a play. King was not only a most efficient soldier, but an excellent actor as well, and had got together a theatrical troupe. I forget what the play was about, but I remember that King described it as a "Knock-about farce".

There was only one female part in it and that was taken by Trooper F. Langerman, a boy of seventeen. They had some difficulty in making his dress, but after a few efforts they managed to construct it out of blue and white limbo. The play was a great success and was applauded vociferously by an enthusiastic and appreciative audience.

The Pioneer Corps was disbanded on September 30th and within twenty four hours the members of it were scattering all over the country prospecting, each one of them perfectly certain that he would make a fortune in twelve months. The majority formed themselves into small syndicates so Biscoe, my brother Derick and I. following the fashion, formed ourselves into one too. Derick went off to the Hartley Hills, and Biscoe to the Mazoe. I stayed behind to finish off some business, and also to fence the stand that we had pegged off at the foot of the Kopje, in the little settlement that was springing up round Fort Salisbury.

## NOTES

1. Mazinz.ane Bay was the estuary of the Buzi and Pungwe Rivers.

2. Lieut. E. C. Tyndale-Biscoe was an ex Royal Navy officer, serving with 'C' Troop of the Pioneers which consisted of artillery and machine guns; it had also a searchlight with donkey engine and generator all mounted on wagons.

3. Major-General the Hon. P. S. Methuen (later Lord Mcthuen) was Deputy Adjutant General at the Cape, and responsible for ensuring the military efficiency of the Pioneer Corps and the British South Africa Company's Police.

4. Surgeon-Lieut. J. W. Litchfield was attached to the Police.

5. Lieut. F. O'C. Farrell was Veterinary Officer to the Pioneer Corps.

6. Major M. Heany, a Virginian by birth, a West Point graduate and once a lieutenant in the United States Army, commanded 'A' Troop of the Pioneers, and Captain H. M. Heyman 'A' Troop of the Police. The latter played a distinguished part in the country's history and was knighted for his services, in 1920.

7. William Derick Hoste was considerably younger than his brother. He died of fever on the Umfuli river, near Hartley, in 1893.

8. 'Rocky Mountain' Thompson was a civilian prospector accompanying the Column. He was immortalized by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick in Jock of the Bushvelcl, where he figured as 'Rocky Mountain Bill'.