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THEY WERE  
SOUTH AFRICANS

*By John Bond*

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*To the friends and companions of my youth at Grey High School, Port Elizabeth, and Rhodes University, Grahamstown, who taught me what I know and cherish about the English-speaking South Africans, this book is affectionately dedicated.*



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'I have neither Voortrekker nor Huguenot blood in my veins, and the "South African spirit", as understood by those who extol it, implies a view of the Native question which I cannot share. But I am proud to be a South African and I claim to stand on the same national footing as if my forebears had landed with van Riebeeck or followed Piet Retief over the Drakensberg.'

— Sir James Rose Innes in his *Autobiography*



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE UNKNOWN PEOPLE

**A**n unknown people inhabit South Africa. They are not the Afrikaners, about whom a great deal has been written, in several languages. They are not the Bushmen, the Hottentots, the Malays, the Cape Coloured, the amaXhosa, the Zulu, the Basuto—their histories are known, their customs described. They are not even the South African Indians, about whom the United Nations have heard so much, and from whose unpopular ranks emerged the greatest figure that has ever stepped from South Africa on to the stage of the world—Mahatma Gandhi.

These unknown people are the English-speaking South Africans. They number more than a million today and trace their beginnings back to 1795. Yet no history of them has ever been written. They are one of the smallest English-speaking peoples—smaller even than the New Zealanders, whose national history started half a century later, and far smaller than the Australians, whose beginnings came likewise at the close of the eighteenth century.

Yet the English-speaking South Africans have exerted an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. They have never yet formed so much as ten per cent of the total population of their country. But with their arrival in the shank of Africa a creative stimulus stirred in one of the remotest and wildest countries in the world. The stranded nucleus of older settlers from western Europe felt a powerful and disturbing reinforcement.

For at least a century these newcomers with their descendants and the succeeding waves of immigrants—British, German, Dutch, Jewish, Greek, and Scandinavian—who joined them, played the most creative role in South African history. That is one reason why their own story has never been written, only the story of the immense activity among all races that they touched off. Even today, they stand so much closer to the civilized West

than any other national group in South Africa, that visitors from Europe or America take them for granted.

That is not how Gert Middelberg, President Kruger's trusted adviser as manager of the Netherlands railway system in the Transvaal, regarded them. Outwardly he was fiercely anti-Uitlander. Inwardly, as his recently published letters show, he was fascinated by the energy, the creativeness, and the power to raise order out of chaos which the British South Africans displayed not only on the Rand but in Natal, the Cape Colony, and even the Free State.

Middelberg did not distinguish them sharply from the British of Britain, though he marvelled at the ease and efficiency with which they adapted the parliamentary system of Westminster to South African life. But the distinction was already there. The new country, with its unique environment, was slowly transforming them all the time. Their immense contribution towards turning South Africa from a chaos and a wilderness into a thriving modern State has been largely due to their tenacious links with the Christian, civilized West—in short, to their well-known 'dual allegiance' to Europe as well as South Africa.

That is the thesis of this book. Ever since Theal, South African history has tended to read like a current election campaign. Its central theme is depicted as the Afrikaners' endless fight for justice against an unjust British government—and against 'unnational elements' in South Africa allied to Britain.

The South African War, waged between the British Government and the Boer republics, and the tragedy it brought in the concentration camps to 20,000 women and children, lent this version its force. Yet this picture makes the rise of a civilized order in South Africa incomprehensible. It conceals the ultimate dependence of the Afrikaner throughout the nineteenth century on the very government and the very 'unnational elements' which are depicted as his inveterate foes. Ironically enough, the cry of Bantu nationalists, who are even more one-sided, is that the British subdued their fathers by fair promises as well as by war, then handed them over to the Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.

'The fact that the Afrikaner has remained a civilized being, at so great a distance from the countries his forebears came from, must be attributed first and last', according to Dr G. D. Scholtz,

the well-known Afrikaner Nationalist thinker, 'to the fact that he could rely on the products of civilization in Europe.' Those products, from education to ammunition, from communications to political stimulus, did not reach the Karroo or the Highveld by magic. They were put there by his English-speaking fellow-countryman.

The central story of South Africa is not the monopoly of any race. It depicts the struggle by faulty and conflicting human beings to root firmly into a soil which had known neither civilization nor Gospel before the first civilized Christian society—in fact, the first civilized Christian power—in Africa south of the Sahara.

The task is far from complete. It was always more difficult than it looked from the nation-states of Europe or America. Yet, in spite of grievous shortcomings and tremendous present tensions, civilization and Christianity are more deeply rooted in the Union, among all races, than anywhere else in what was once called the Dark Continent. This is not due to any one group in isolation. British governors and generals came and went in official invulnerability on the stage of South African history, profoundly affecting for good and sometimes for evil the destinies of the country in which they never settled. In stark exposure to all the dangers of the veld—drought, flood, fever, wild beasts, and wilder men—the Afrikaner cattle-farmers blunted the keen edge of savagery and left the graves of their children along the way.

The old Cape Dutch houses and their furniture are not merely a fragment of Holland's golden age that has undergone a sea change on the African shore: they attest the parts that Malay slaves and craftsmen working for their Dutch masters played in the rise of a civilized South Africa. The Hottentot levies in their rainbow-coloured uniforms stoutly defended the civilized order of the Cape Colony against the Bantu barbarism at the eastern gate. The Bastards, renamed the Griquas, fought one of the decisive battles of South African history, under the leadership of Moffat and Melville, at Lattakoo in 1824, when they diverted the vast Mantatee horde from the Cape Colony.

The number of Boers and more particularly of Britons who lost their lives in the Native campaigns waged in defence of the civilized settlement was considerable. But it can scarcely compare with the number of Hottentot, Fingo, Mantatee, Swazi, and other

Bantu allies, retainers, and herdsmen who perished in the same cause from the Eastern Cape frontier to Sekukuni's Transvaal fastnesses. Native Christians risked their lives to protect the missionaries, sided for their faith with often ungrateful white governments, and paid for their devotion with their property and their lives. Who can reckon the parts they have played since as teachers, missionaries, and doctors of their own people? or claim that they have received adequate reward?

Ensuing chapters will trace parts of the tremendous contribution of the English-speaking South Africans. To isolate that contribution is to break the closely woven fabric of South African life and history. It is isolated in this book, not in order to deny the work of others but to redress a balance and restore a lost sense of proportion.

Nothing is more impressive than the simple memorials, in countless little churches of English-speaking South Africa, to those who laid down their lives 'for Queen and country'. Through 150 years the tale goes on, in small wars and in great, in ambushes of the African bush, in desperate South African sieges, and in the battlefields of the world.

Yet we do not know our own story. Our children are taught at school, rightly enough, to honour the Voortrekker leaders and the presidents of the republics. Rarely do they hear the stirring and enriching story of their own people—not the governors and generals who served Britain here but the men and women who stayed in South Africa and made it their home. It is a story enriching as well as stirring because it includes champions, defenders, and friends of the large non-white population of South Africa, besides those who fought them and those who exploited them. It is a far better preparation for life in a multi-racial country than the story that white South African children usually hear at school.

Whence came the restless energy, the freshness of ideas, and the inventiveness of the English-speaking South Africans, as they broke into the history of the country and, with accessions of strength from repeated immigration, transformed it into a civilized power? The answer is easy. These are the marks of a nation during a golden age of expansion.

The Dutch in their own golden age overran the decaying empire of Portugal with rare vigour. Rembrandt was painting

his masterpieces and Vondel writing the great dramas of Holland when van Riebeeck's tiny fleet cast anchor in Table Bay. The early Dutch settlers took with them like an infectious fever the energy and competence of their country at its prime of power and achievement. That superb burst of confidence carried them far into the forbidding and desert hinterland of the Cape of Storms. But the Dutch Empire was collapsing after a long decline when the first major challenge to the little Cape outpost of civilization was heralded by the outbreak of the First Kaffir War in 1779. At last the handful of settlers had met the vanguard of the vast and hardy Bantu race.

The nation that replaced the Dutch rulers in Cape Town Castle was the leader of Europe in its struggle for freedom against the ambitions of Napoleon. The British were entering on a new golden age of their own. Even the loss of the American colonies could not check their impetus. The rise of English-speaking Canada, of Australia, and of the new empires in Africa and the Pacific, date from the very period of that tremendous setback.

The soldiers, seamen, merchants, and missionaries who after 1795 began to filter into the Cape Colony from Britain restored to South Africa what it had all but lost in the darkening night of the Dutch East India Company's rule. They restored direct contact with the foremost country of Europe—no longer Holland but Britain. These early British immigrants were no more a hand-picked *élite* approved by the Minister of the Interior than were the seventeenth-century ancestors of the Afrikaners. They were average people from a country in one of its great ages.

At the start their numbers were infinitesimal. When the Batavian Republic took over the Cape Colony in 1803 it found that barely seventy or eighty Britons had settled. They bore such names as Tennant, Caldwell, Duckitt, Murray, Callander, Rex, Reade, and Anderson. Even the arrival of the 1820 Settlers did not swell their total beyond perhaps 5,000, barely a tenth of the white population. Till near the end of the century they hardly exceeded a fifth.

Yet it fell to this scattered minority to turn the tide of Bantu invasion, establish the first effective rule of law combined with free speech in Africa, revive and expand the Dutch Reformed Church among the Afrikaner population, found the first educational system of South Africa and its first university, bring

Christianity to multitudes of the yellow and brown inhabitants hitherto dismissed as heathens, and solve, for their own age, the baffling problem of administering warring tribes and leading them into the paths of peace. They built the roads, opened the harbours, and created the postal, telegraph, and railway services. They revitalized agriculture, carried trade far into the interior, developed the first banks, opened up mines in the wilderness, founded great cities, and launched an industrial revolution.

By adding to these educational and economic achievements an effective public service and a parliamentary tradition, they made the sovereign independence of South Africa a solid fact which the politicians had only to proclaim and define.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FIRST OF THEM ALL

Private Robert Hart, just 18, and visibly Scottish from his rugged face to his green-and-black kilt, stared from the rolling deck at a phantom outline of peaks rising like clouds from the sea. To port and starboard, fore and aft, a fleet of many sail dipped and rose in the great green rollers. But it was the majestic coast, pallid with distance, standing up out of the sea to the eastward, that held all eyes and arrested every mind on board the East Indiaman.

The end of four months' confinement, scurvy, and general misery in the troopship was in sight. What a breath-taking end that wild skyline of fantastic mountains looked, green and cold in the Cape spring of 1795!

Hart did not guess that this wild country would become his home and he himself the first of all English-speaking South Africans. Yet this penniless lad, who at 17 had run away from his home near Glasgow to enlist when all Britain was arming for the French wars, was destined to become a pillar of civilization on the threatened eastern border of the land that now grew clearer before his eyes every minute. The town and the church that he founded there thrive to this day. The famous farm he started is still owned by his descendants.

At that momentous landfall in early September the raw young Argyllshire Highlanders, cooped up in four tossing transports of General Clarke's armada, could hardly fail to have the sense that some tremendous event was about to crown the months of hard training since the clan Campbell, by special request of King George III, had recruited them from the glens and back streets of Scotland.

No peaceful welcome was in store for them. Of so much they felt certain. Urgent appeals from General Craig's little force, clinging to its toehold on Simon's Bay, had reached General

Clarke on the voyage south. By now it might have been wiped out by lack of supplies and by superior numbers. The French themselves might be lying in wait behind that sharpening line of peaks. Cape Town, the key to the Indian seas, might have fallen into the hands of the enemy who had overrun Holland and were fast conquering Europe. The men of the 98th and the posse of Campbells who were their officers stared at the approaching land—and cleaned their firelocks.

It was much more than a battle that Robert Hart and his 800 comrades were sailing into across the heaving floor of False Bay. It was a thunderclap that would end the immemorial sleep of the Dark Continent. The Dutch East India Company was weighed in the balance that day and found wanting. The outpost of Christian civilization which it had founded in Africa, and which it had failed, was passing for good or evil to stronger hands. Robert Moffat and the Great Trek; Livingstone breaking through from the Voortrekkers' farthest north to the Great Lakes and the Congo; Rhodes drawing the steel threads of his railway into the Kingdom of Monomotapa, and his telegraph line to the fountains of the Nile: all this and more was decided on that day that Robert Hart would never forget, the fourth of September 1795.

That very morning the Dutch troops, advancing in full strength on Muizenberg camp for the knock-out blow against Craig's half-starved force within, discovered the sails of fourteen large ships crowding the skyline of False Bay. Then they descried their colours—not Dutch, not French, but British—and wavered. Then they began streaming back. The issue was settled. The gate of the Indies clanged shut against France. The same Providence which, 143 years before, had permitted van Riebeeck to plant a Dutch settlement in the remotest tip of Africa now permitted a second European race to make its home in South Africa.

Six days of wild rumours elapsed, with the fleet rocking at anchor in Simon's Bay, before Robert Hart's regiment carried their kit ashore. Five days followed of desperately heavy work man-handling guns, ammunition, and stores along the beaches to Muizenberg. Men's labour, General Clarke noted grimly, was 'the only means in our power' of transporting the whole impedimenta of the army along the rock-bound coast which has since become the Riviera of Africa.

At dawn on 14 September the Argyllshire Highlanders, still

pale from four months at sea, stepped out from Muizenberg, over meadows ablaze with the flowers of the Cape spring and through marshes starred with arum lilies, to occupy Cape Town in the name of King George and on behalf of His Serene Highness the Prince of Orange.

For lack of horses, seamen hauled the guns. The troops themselves staggered under their loads across the marshy flats in full view and range of Commissioner-General Sluysken's Hottentot sharpshooters, mounted farmers, and mutinous German mercenaries. Bullets whistled over the heads of the 98th. But there was no fight in the defenders, for the colony of the Cape of Good Hope was even more rent with dissensions than was French-occupied Holland. After a final skirmish at Wynberg the mercenaries turned and ran, and Sluysken sent in his flag of truce.

What were Hart's first impressions of Cape Town in 1795? The crowds of slaves, brown, black, and yellow, and the ragged, yellow-faced Hottentots cheering and laughing along the road? The white burghers' families, silently watching in their eighteenth-century finery? Or the great gallows close to the Castle, with crows settled on the corpses swinging there, and the blood-stained wheels below on which slaves were broken for raising a hand to their masters?

One thing is certain. Even the handful of wretched Wiltshire youths who had been pressed into the regiment just before embarkation were for once not ashamed to be seen in the kilt as the marching feet of 800 red-tunicked, green-kilted men raised the dust at the Castle entrance. Then the Castle swallowed them up. For seven years it was the regiment's home—Hart's first home in South Africa.

What a gracious contrast 'the Cape Town', as everyone called it, offered to foggy Glasgow, the city of his childhood, or to grim, war-like Stirling, where he had enlisted a year and a half ago. The neat lines of shapely whitewashed houses with green shutters made a pleasant picture under Table Mountain. Vines were covering trellises with new leaf. The scent of orange blossom, strange to Scottish nostrils, drifted alluringly down straight roads lined with oaks in young green.

'Here is a divine climate, no fog, no damp . . . but a clean, pure yet not sharp air, full of health and exhilaration to the spirits', wrote Lady Anne Barnard, whom Hart often saw from

a respectful distance after her arrival as first lady of the Colony. "The town is clean . . . the features upon Nature's face magnificently strong."

But if they liked the climate and the grandeur of Cape Town, there is no indication that the 98th took readily to most of its people. Five out of every six men they met were slaves. In the wealthier white families, every child owned one. The slaves were well treated, as befitted valuable investments which their owners freely mortgaged. Yet a slave who loitered about the entrance of the Dutch Reformed Church, or walked in the street with a lighted pipe, or, when driving a wagon through Cape Town, cracked his whip in the presence of white people, could be flogged by the authorities.

As for the cosmopolitan white Capetonians, they had long been accustomed to entertaining and overcharging the seamen and soldiers of many nations, as well as their own up-country cousins. Not for nothing had they lived under the demoralizing rule of the Dutch East India Company in its latter days. To sour relations between the military and the burghers, the 98th knew that while they rusted in Cape Town Castle, with no prize money or plunder, Napoleon was smashing Britain's allies one by one. Every French victory, every reduction of the Cape garrison, strengthened the veiled hostility which the troops were to meet again and again in the Cape and the turbulent interior.

It did not take Hart long to see men and women from that interior. Day after day their sturdy wagons creaked into the market-place. Their rustic clothing marked them off from the elegantly turned-out Capetonians. Their customs were as different as their clothes. Turbulent, even 'Jacobin', some might be, addicted to French revolutionary principles, but their simple forthrightness blew into Cape Town like an air from a new country.

Soon Hart's company had the chance to see these Afrikaners-in-the-making at home in the wild interior. The first chance came within a year, with the news that a great Dutch fleet was approaching to wrest the Cape to the side of France and the puppet régime in Holland.

Elphinstone's fleet slipped from its moorings to northward. Soon Hart's company, with nearly 2,000 infantrymen besides, were marching through the toll-gate that had shut Cape Town off

from Africa and levied Company's taxes on the trickle of incoming trade. Soon the Highlanders were sweating and swearing in the deep sands of the Cape Flats. After 140 years of Company rule there was still no road from Cape Town across the flats to the mainland.

For nine gruelling days Hart and his comrades trudged north through a carpet of spring flowers the like of which none had ever beheld in Scotland. Shelterless by day and night against the incessant rain and cold, with little to eat but Cape mutton swimming in fat, they arrived exhausted at Saldanha Bay, just in time to exact the surrender of Admiral Lucas and his trapped fleet.

Other expeditions soon followed. The more Hart's company saw of the hinterland, the more unexpected they found it. The yellow-faced Hottentots, with peppercorn hair and enormous buttocks, who used rancid butter as a cosmetic, were strange enough. The wild horses of the mountains wore vivid stripes, and the men still had high hopes of killing a unicorn for scientific Mr Barrow.

But the very things that should have been familiar were strange. No nation in Europe was more addicted to towns and cities than the Dutch. Yet even when Hart had served from end to end of the Colony's 130,000 square miles he could name only five tiny villages outside Cape Town. There was Stellenbosch, which his company saw in 1797 when smelling out Jacobinism. There was Swellendam, which they visited on the same expedition, after crossing two appalling mountain passes which few wheeled vehicles on earth other than the Cape ox-wagon could traverse. There was Paarl, not very far from Stellenbosch, and there was Tulbagh, smaller still, not very far from Paarl.

Lastly, there was that nest of 'Jacobins' and 'French principles', Graaff-Reinet, which Hart's company first visited in 1799 under Brigadier-General Vandeleur to stamp out trouble. The most miserable village in Scotland would have looked palatial beside that 'street' of dusty veld and ragged goats, sparsely lined with the mud-huts of a dozen artisans, with a bigger mud-hut for the landdrost at the top and a tumbledown government office, also of mud, alongside.

Even those artisans were foreigners, deserters from German regiments and the like. The Cape Dutch outside Cape Town had become the most rural white race on earth. They called themselves

*boere*—farmers—and their farming was the most primitive that country lads from Scotland could imagine. It was as though thousands of years had fallen away and they were watching Lot and Abraham on trek with their flocks and herds on the fringe of the desert. The Dutch East India Company had monopolized trade so strictly that the only fit life for a free man who did not own a wine- or wheat-farm close to Cape Town was to shake off the whole bustling, varied life of Dutch civilization and trek to the ever-receding frontier. There he could lay claim to a spring and the 6,000 acres around it, pay a trifling rent to the Company for a year or two (though it was legally due every year) to make good his title, and live off the game till his humped Afrikaner cattle, and his goats and fat-tailed sheep, had multiplied. Lack of capital to buy slaves hardly mattered. He could always draw into his service on pain of eviction the Hottentots who had formerly used the spring.

Sympathetic travellers like Lichtenstein wondered what cause except 'love of indolence' could tempt white men to settle so far from the towns or villages of their own kind. Unsympathetic Mr Barrow said bluntly that to prefer the life of peril and mental vacuum in the semi-desert interior, a man 'must be accustomed to it from his infancy and unacquainted with one that is better'.

Hart, who loved the pioneer life of the frontier, came to know that it had great compensations. The frontier Boer, however oppressed by danger and hardship, could say with truth, 'I am monarch of all I survey.' He was one of the freest men in the world. He loved hunting, and all the wild life of untamed South Africa surrounded him. The menial tasks of earning an existence he left to his 'lesser breeds without the law'. Accustomed to using a saddle-bag for a pillow and a hunk of biltong for provisions, he was amazingly mobile.

'Such is the nature of an African boer', Barrow ungraciously put it, 'that having nothing in particular to engage his attention he is glad of an excuse to ride to the distance of 8 or 10 days, whether it be to a church or to a vendue, to hunt elephants or to plunder the Kaffirs.' Exposed to constant danger from his own slaves and Hottentots, from wild Bushmen or Bantu raiders, from lions and elephants, flood and storm, he and his wife and children were sustained by an immovable faith in the God whose words they

struggled to spell out in massive State Bibles by the light of mutton-fat candles.

When in 1799 Hart's company embarked for Algoa Bay in the *Star* to suppress a new Graaff-Reinet rising, another surprising difference between the Cape Dutch and their forebears came to light. Every Scotsman from every seaport town knew the Dutch as great sailors. But as the ship pitched and rolled along the iron-bound coast the lack of ports was surprising. Wherever it was not buried in primeval forest the whole 600-mile line of coast was settled, though sparsely, by Dutch families; yet the Company had mapped it so badly that the uninhabited strand of Algoa Bay, when it came into view, lay scores of miles east of its position on the chart. The *Star* passed no coastal vessels, no little harbours, no fishing-smacks whatever. The descendants of the 'Sea Beggars' had become the most landbound of all white races.

Again the reason was plain. The Dutch East India Company had closed the sea to its Cape settlers.

The Dutch had been the merchants of northern Europe, the founders of modern capitalism, and the heirs to the mercantile glories of the Hanseatic League. But a dismal fact for Argyllshire Highlanders was the absence of shops or taverns beyond the first western range of mountains. Trade scarcely existed. A little wine from graceful Cape Dutch homesteads reached Cape Town in half-loaded wagons dragged by double spans of oxen through the sand-dunes of the Cape Flats. A little wheat came from the districts immediately beyond the transport range for casks of wine. But even the Swartland, which Hart had slogged through in 1796 during the march against Admiral Lucas, grew scarcely any. The transport was too burdensome to cover the returns except in years of famine at Cape Town. Then hundreds of trek oxen perished on the tracks of heavy sand.

It astounded Hart and his friends to find that even the farmers of Graaff-Reinet and the Boschberg took their rare loads of produce to Cape Town themselves. At long intervals the more enterprising frontier farmers would load one wagon with Boer soap and salted butter, the other—if he had another—with hides and skins, and set off upon the 600-mile trek to Cape Town. There Hart had often seen them, at the end of a six-week journey over deserts, through rivers, and down precipitous passes, selling their few hundredweights of cargo for half their value to slick

Cape Town agents, who even then were called 'smouses'. Ill at ease in the town, where he was readily fleeced, the frontier Boer departed as soon as he could with a load of his few East Indian luxuries—sugar, tea, coffee, and rice—and his two necessities, iron, for mending wagons, and gunpowder, the raw material for security on the frontier.

They had few products to offer. The very mention of their Cape beef made the troops groan. Cape Town butchers bought the cattle and sheep reared on the distant frontier, and made Hottentot servants drive them 600 miles to market. Afrikaner cattle are justly famous for the distances they can cover, but at the end of 600 miles on the hoof those that survived for the butcher were walking skeletons. Cape beef was the toughest in the world.

The learning of Holland, with its famous universities, had evaporated on the arid soil of South Africa as readily as its commercial supremacy and bustling enterprise. In Scotland the dominie was highly respected. Men of the 98th gladly paid a shilling a month in Cape Town Castle to attend the regimental school. But there was no occupation in the great open spaces of South Africa which enjoyed such scant respect as that of schoolmaster. The *meester* was often a drunken deserter enjoying the status of a tolerated menial while teaching some farmer's family an alphabet which he could barely make out himself. There was not a high school in all the Colony, far less a university. Written Dutch had broken down in chaotic confusion; its successor, written Afrikaans, still lay in the womb of time.

The idea of Liberty was suspect among the lairds and younger sons of the name of Campbell who made up half the officers of the 98th. It reminded them too much of the atrocities of the French Revolution. But Liberty played little intentional part in South Africa as the Company planned it. Freedom of speech, of assembly and of the press were all firmly denied by the Dutch East India Company. Liberty of conscience only just extended to letting the Lutherans build a church in Cape Town and (in the death-throes of the Company) readmitting a solitary Moravian mission.

The Dutch Reformed Church, strictly controlled from Amsterdam, enjoyed a solid official monopoly of religion. As for self-government, the Company scarcely acknowledged so preposterous a notion. Partly to make certain that the craving for it

could never arise, they had discouraged immigration from Europe as far back as 1706. The only sign of it after 140 years was an incipient form of local government.

Yet Liberty blew in the very air of the Colony in spite of official precautions. Slaves started risings or fled to the wilds. Bushmen withdrew fighting into the desert Karroo. Hart himself would see the tragicomedy of a Hottentot rising. As for the colonists: to stamp out what British officers regarded as dangerous French notions among them was one of the repeated and most ticklish tasks of the Argyllshire Highlanders.

The unrest at Graaff-Reinet, which had its own republican movement in 1795, first brought Hart and his detachment to the mud-huts, flies, and bats of that improbable rival of republican Paris.

Early in 1799 Adriaan van Jaarsveld, a leading exponent of republican aims, had been arrested in Graaff-Reinet for forgery, and set free by a turbulent band of sympathizers. This provided Hart, who was now a promising N.C.O., with his first opportunity to visit the frontier of civilization.

From their landing-place at the mouth of the Baakens River in Algoa Bay his company marched into a wilder, more desolate country than any he had ever seen. Great herds of springbok retreated at their approach. Lions were heard by night. Immense troops of elephants roamed in the coastal forests which they bypassed. Wild, grand, forbidding, lonely—this utmost border of civilization and the Christian religion was all these. But it was also the country in which Hart would make his home, where his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren would live and die. And its people, as rugged and yet as strangely appealing as the country itself, would be his people.

Destiny led the company from Graaff-Reinet itself, where rebellion dispersed at the sight of the redcoats, eastwards past Bruintjieshoogte in pursuit of Prinsloo and van Jaarsveld, to a beautiful mountain. Clothed in forest and flecked with waterfalls, the Boschberg towered above the valley it watered, looking, after the scorching Karroo, like a vision of Eden. There Prinsloo and van Jaarsveld were satisfactorily arrested. And there, eighteen years later, Hart and his wife Hannah with their bevy of children would make their home—the home that grew into Somerset East.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE FIRST OF THE ASSEGAI

From the Boschberg, Hart's company marched at leisure southwards and westwards towards Algoa Bay with the rest of General Vandeleur's force. They passed tall forests and hills covered with grass and flowers. This green Zuurveld, still the home of the elephant, would become in another twenty years the cradle-land of the English-speaking South African. Its green grass, its little mountain streams and primeval forests, were an invitation then as now to the English South African spirit. Wherever you find that combination in South Africa you will also hear the English tongue.

The men of the 98th—but by now it had been renumbered the 91st—were seeing at last the good lands of Africa that lie beyond the moat of deserts which protected the infant settlement of the Cape. Here, where the green grass begins, they clashed almost at once with the outposts of the advancing Bantu race, whose dominions stretched southward from the Mountains of the Moon.

At one moment Hart's company with the rest of Vandeleur's column were marching at ease through hot, flowering bush along the Sundays River. At the next a shower of assegais was plunging among them from the tangled trees, men were shouting and shots going off all along the line at the unseen attackers.

Hart's company was unhurt. The attackers made off into the bush. Only the heavy-bladed assegais lying on the ground showed that the attack had been real. But the next would be far more determined.

In a vain effort to offer protection to Lieutenant Chumney and his detachment of the 81st, who were on reconnaissance nearer the coast, the column was ordered east to the Bushman's River. They had barely pitched camp when Cungwa's tribesmen burst shouting from the bush in many hundreds, their cattle-hide shields held high to protect their bodies, their assegai handles broken off

short to stab the British. Not till volleys of musket-balls and grape-shot had strewn the intervening ground with brown bodies did the tribesmen waver and flee. The Third Kaffir War had begun.

In the arduous months that followed, Hart was articulated to that life of perpetual danger to which the frontier farmers of South Africa had been born. No wonder Thomas Pringle, on meeting him twenty years after, described him as 'a man of iron look and rigid nerve'.

'At every farmer's house', one of Hart's comrades recorded in his description of that disastrous war, 'we found sad vestiges of murder and desolation. Whole families had been wantonly massacred. . . . A poor dog might be found howling over the dead body of his master or some wounded horse or ox groaning with the stab of a spear. The savage Cafir exults in such appalling sights.

'They are such famous marksmen with their darts that they make sure of their aim at 60 or 80 paces' distance. When you fire upon them they will throw themselves flat upon their faces. As they reside in woods, in the most inaccessible parts of which they take refuge on being hard pressed by their enemies, an offensive warfare against them is inconceivably arduous.'

Dressed in green, with his gun-barrel browned for camouflage in the bush, Hart spent many months in the mobile force which General Dundas mustered, along with Boer commandos and the Hottentot Corps, in fruitless attacks on the Xhosa forces unloosed on the Colony by Ndlambi in his conflict with Gaika.

The normal perils of a frontier where the Dutch East India Company had supplied no protection for white man or yellow, and permitted no missionaries to avert or soften a head-on clash of races, were quite overshadowed now. The Xhosa tribes spread murder, fire, and destruction from the Zwartkops River to Graaff-Reinet in the north, and along the fruitful Langkloof with its trim little homesteads and orchards to Knysna in the west. Except for brief interruptions to build Fort Frederick—the seed from which Port Elizabeth would grow—and to refit, Hart's unit was constantly on the frontier for three savage years.

Disturbances broke out anew among the frontier farmers, many of whom had lost all they possessed or had seen their own nearest relations murdered. There was a Hottentot rising against the

Boer masters. There were joint Hottentot-Xhosa raids on what little was left to pillage, while the ruined Boers lived in laagers and struck back where and as they could. In after years, when he was entertaining Thomas Pringle or John Centlivres Chase the 1820 Settlers' historian or Robert Godlonton the pioneer journalist, Hart must often have recounted those dark days, when civilization seemed on the verge of extinction in South Africa.

While they sat together on the stoep of his farm 'Glen Avon' and, as the 1820 Settlers loved to do, compared their lot with that of the Pilgrim Fathers of 1620 in North America, this one fact of the Bantu upset all comparisons. The North American colonies were barely a dozen years older at the outbreak of the War of Independence than the Cape settlement was when Hart landed. But instead of the 15,000 whites and as many slaves and Hottentots who inhabited the Cape Colony in 1795, the white North Americans numbered nearly 2,500,000.

Instead of the trickle of trade on which the bankrupt Cape depended, the North American colonies had prosperous shipping, and thriving fisheries, agriculture, and commerce. In some areas they had compulsory universal education. They possessed nine university colleges. So far from being autocratically governed by visiting officials from Europe, they had governed themselves from the start and were about to produce the greatest written constitution yet devised by man. Thus superbly equipped for independence, the nascent United States might have faced with equanimity its first contacts and clashes with a vast indigenous people, prolific and brave, and organized in powerful tribes.

For the few and scattered representatives of civilization in South Africa, neglected for a century past by a stepmotherly Company which neither governed the interior nor allowed them to govern it, the challenge of the teeming Bantu peoples was a different matter. The Bantu were far more numerous, more advanced in civilization, and more cohesive than the Bushman families and Hottentot clans which had hitherto barred the advance of the Dutch colonists. Nor were the Bantu the only menaces brooding over the lawless eastern frontier when Hart was transferred in 1802 for service in India.

'The assembling together of so many uncultivated men in so remote a country, where everyone without any attention to the laws acted only according to his own pleasure', Lichtenstein

soberly noted, 'could not fail of producing bad effects on the general character. The contentious spirit, always too prevalent among the colonists . . . broke out here into lamentable family divisions attended with the most degrading consequences.

'Without the restoration of some severe civil regulations, and the introduction of some intermediate authority, which could constantly watch over the people, it seemed inevitable that each generation would go backwards in civilization and that they would at last sink nearly as low as . . . the former savage inhabitants.'

A hundred and fifty years after the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers the North American colonies were safely on the road to a magnificent future. But one hundred and fifty years after the landing of van Riebeeck there were threatening signs that most of the Cape settlement might founder, as the Christian kingdoms of Nubia had foundered in Africa long before or as the nascent Christian kingdom of Congo had been swallowed up anew in the seventeenth century, leaving only the sign of the Cross to a savage people who did not know whence it came.

Hart lived long enough to smile at Lichtenstein's gloomy prophecy. He lived to see the tide of civilization, which had been ebbing so fast when he first fought in the Zuurveld, swelling to a flood over South Africa.

His stay in India was short. During 1804 he revisited Cape Town on his way back to Britain. In the same year he married Miss Hannah Tamplin of Guernsey and shared cantonment life with her for a tranquil year and a half in England while a new war with Napoleon raged on the Continent. All through the summer of 1806 the 91st were in strict training at Shorncliffe camp, under the great Sir John Moore himself. It was in July at Shorncliffe that a summons arrived from Cape Town which Robert and Hannah had doubtless long been expecting. Sergeant-Major Hart, it announced, had been given his commission in Colonel John Graham's newly founded Cape Regiment.

Early in 1807 Ensign Hart stood once again on a rolling deck watching a phantom outline of peaks standing out of the sea. But they no longer looked fantastic or wild. They meant home to Hart now. They would soon be home to his wife and their child.

At 'Glen Avon' many years later, Hart could recall to visitors

—his home was a famous centre of hospitality—the steps by which the menace of barbarism hanging over the Eastern Province had been dispelled. He had himself fought as a lieutenant all through the 1811-12 campaign, which rolled back the amaXhosa from the Zuurveld and deposited them outside the Colony's legal boundary, the Great Fish River. He and Hannah had been among the very first to build a house for themselves in the new military centre, Grahamstown, founded to consolidate the victory.

His own friends among the new landdrosts and his own regiment helped to give the Eastern Cape, henceforward, the framework of settled, orderly government which it had so dangerously lacked. Then, when Waterloo was over, and the Cape Colony had been finally ceded by war-shattered Holland, the trickle of English-speaking immigrants grew to a stream. One and all helped to restore South Africa's broken links with the mother civilization of Europe. There were young Andrew Geddes Bain and Lieutenant Benjamin Moodie from Scotland, the latter with a whole party of free Scottish labourers and artisans to challenge the slave-labour complex of the Cape. There were Henry Nourse with his brothers, George Thompson Borradaile, and other merchants anxious to develop trade, which became a powerful civilizing force connecting the wildest parts of the frontier with Europe. And there were the first missionaries to the Xhosa, among them young Joseph Williams, whose widow Hart rescued from the Kat valley in 1818, John Brownlee, William Thomson, and many more.

The arrival of British settlers in 1820 crowned the whole precarious transformation. In 1811 Burchell, like Lichtenstein before him, marvelled how quickly isolated immigrants who penetrated to the frontier lost the advanced civilization of Europe from which they had come. He forecast that the remedy must be an influx of Britons numerous enough 'to form an English community and preserve their own customs'.

It worked just like that. In his new post at the Boschberg as head of the great Somerset Farm, pioneering an improved agriculture in the Eastern Cape and buying up provisions from the Boers for the frontier troops, Hart saw and himself took part in the astounding transformation of the Zuurveld. From having been the most dangerous and savage part of the Cape Colony it

became the most closely settled and progressive—a civilizing centre on the very border of the Bantu country.

Algoa Bay, where ships had hitherto called only two or three times a year to supply Captain Evatt and his men at Fort Frederick, became at a bound the second port of South Africa. Through it the civilizing contacts and influences of Europe reached out to the Cape frontier and far beyond. Hart must have met all the future Voortrekker leaders while buying corn, cattle, and sheep for the Somerset Farm military depot from 1817 onwards. He was a close friend of Piet Retief. He lived to see Port Elizabeth become, with Grahamstown, the trading base of the Free State and Transvaal Voortrekkers.

The only Scottish party among the 1820 Settlers passed close to the Somerset Farm on the way to their dangerously isolated destination on the Baviaans River. Hart heard of their coming and went out to guide them to their future home in person. Thomas Pringle wrote that for all his stern and austere exterior Major Hart almost broke down when he heard the voices of the Scottish women. Long-submerged memories of his mother and the home he had run away from in Scotland swept uncontrollably over him.

Hart gave these Scottish settlers their first fruit-trees at the Baviaans River. He took Thomas Pringle on a memorable journey through the lichen-hung forests of the frontier, where elephants swarmed. He appointed Pringle's brother John as his assistant when hard times came—as they did very early—upon the 1820 Settlers. During their first hungry years in the Zuurveld, when rust wiped out their wheat, Hart supplied the settlers as well as the military with rations. This must have taxed the 600 acres he cultivated on Somerset Farm, as well as the supply system he had arranged with the scattered Voortrekkers-to-be.

Hart's Scottish thrift and organizing ability made Somerset Farm one of the most profitable government undertakings in South Africa. Lord Charles Somerset ploughed back the profits into other development work in the Colony without obtaining the sanction of Whitehall, till the arrival of a commission of inquiry into South African affairs alarmed him. Hart's reward was therefore a terse note on 7 January 1825, warning him to wind up the farm and dismiss all the staff, including himself, by the end of January. Within a few weeks the farm was formally

broken up from Hart's stoep and proclaimed the township of Somerset East. Major Hart was without a job after nearly thirty years' work of the strictest integrity for South Africa. Fortunately he had been granted land a few miles away in 1822. With the help of a small pension he was now able to start farming for himself. Soon he was one of the most successful pioneers of Merino sheep-farming in the Eastern Cape, helping to establish South Africa's first major export.

Godliness and good farming have generally gone together in Scotland. They went together in Robert Hart. He had always befriended the missionaries—secretly at times, because Lord Charles Somerset was so hostile to them. He enabled the missionaries to address his Hottentot staff; he asked them to hold services in his own home. Now he helped to found the Dutch Reformed Church congregation at Somerset East. He became a foundation elder and continued to serve as elder in the closest harmony with his Afrikaner colleagues till he was nearly 70.

In March 1826 Somerset East astounded the frontier by holding an agricultural show, or fair, the first of a series that has continued ever since. Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking farmers took part as they do to this day. It was William Mackay the landdrost who presided, but there can be little doubt that the driving force behind it all was his deeply trusted and respected heemraad, Robert Hart.

Hart's new home 'Glen Avon' became a great meeting-place in peace as in war. Missionaries from Kaffirland or the far-off 'Bootchuana country' which is now the Transvaal were as welcome as visitors from Europe or farmers from far and wide. He made it one of the finest homesteads on the frontier, planted a vineyard, and established a notable orchard of orange and lemon trees. His two sons helped with the farming. His six daughters set many hearts beating faster among lonely young officers and settlers on the frontier. John Pringle, who had been his assistant on the Somerset Farm, became his son-in-law; so did his fellow-officer in the Cape Regiment, Charles Lennox Stretch.

Stretch could tell stirring stories of the Battle of Grahamstown, which Hart had missed on Somerset Farm. But the anxieties of war were seldom entirely forgotten. In each succeeding Kaffir War—the war of 1834-5, the War of the Axe, and Umlanjani's War of 1850-3—'Glen Avon' opened its doors to the homeless and

the imperilled, fed them and protected them, just as the Somerset Farm no doubt did in 1819.

During Umlanjeni's War, the worst and last of the six that had surged around Hart and his family on the frontier, the farmers of Somerset East, English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking alike, met to warn the government that they could endure these never-ending dangers and losses no longer. They elected Hart to the chair as the unquestioned head of the district and sent the government a warning that they would have to trek west to safer regions. Many did trek. Robert Hart, deep in his seventies now, was not among them.

When the austere, God-fearing laird of 'Glen Avon' passed away in 1867 his tale was not yet done. The Eastern Province is peopled with his descendants. Sir Gordon Sprigg, who was four times Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, married one of the grand-daughters of Robert and Hannah and paid a memorable tribute to the patriarch. Sir James Rose Innes, twice a Minister in the old Cape Parliament and eventually Chief Justice of the Union, was a great-grandson of Hart. And in 1937 a great-great-great-grandson, Count Helmuth James von Moltke, came from Germany to visit his mother's native land and his grandparents, Sir James and Lady Rose Innes.

Why mention a passing visit from one who was not even a South African? Because this Count von Moltke paid with his life for those generous and liberal ideals for which, in their best moments, Hart, the first of English-speaking South Africans, and his descendants have stood. Von Moltke could not endure the nation-worshipping National-Socialist system that had gripped his country. In the midst of the Second World War, he struggled with a small group of like-minded men to prepare to save Germany from the political and moral chaos which he foresaw must follow the collapse of the Third Reich. Arrested, then tried for his life by Freisler in January 1945, he was condemned to death. In his last letter to his wife before execution, he wrote in words that Hart would surely have envied: 'Finally I stood before Freisler not as a Protestant, not as a great landowner, not as a noble, not as a Prussian, not as a German even. . . . No, I stood there as a Christian and nothing else.'

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THEY SAVED A COUNTRY

**T**he Redcoats have been almost forgotten as founders of the civilized order of South Africa. Yet the part they played and the price that they paid in lives were large indeed. For the Queen's shilling they fought foes with whom they had no quarrel, in defence of a young country whose very name few had heard before they embarked from the green shires and the brown heather. Few of their graves, the crumbling or vanished reminders of hundreds of desperate encounters, are known even to the thousands of South Africans whose ancestors landed here as British regulars.

Soldiers were the founders of Grahamstown, mother city of English-speaking South Africa, and of Bloemfontein, the capital with which they endowed the nascent Orange Free State. They created two of the four major ports of South Africa. Fort Frederick, built by British troops in 1799 when the Eastern Cape was a welter of chaos and conflict, became the nucleus of Port Elizabeth. Fort Glamorgan protected the tiny community of Buffalo Mouth, the military landing-place which became East London.

The same British garrison troops gave South Africa its first highways and first notable bridges. The Fransch Hoek Pass and Sir Benjamin D'Urban's system of military roads in the Eastern Province were their work, as well as the stone bridges across the Great Fish River and the Kat. On these army works Andrew Geddes Bain served his apprenticeship as a road-builder.

Religion and education alike owe much to the redcoats and their military chaplains. The Methodist Church, whose missionary record among the Bantu is unrivalled, traces its beginnings in South Africa to devout soldiers of the Cape garrison. The Anglican cathedral which dominates Grahamstown with its lofty

spire was begun by garrison troops. Irish soldiers built the Roman Catholic cathedral near by.

When the first Voortrekkers were murdered north of the Vaal by a Matabele impi in 1836, a schoolmaster called McDonald lay in his blood alongside the bodies of his friends the Liebenbergs. McDonald may well have stormed ashore at Blaauwberg with Baird's Highland troops in 1806. Certainly the wandering schoolmasters who ran primitive schools for the big Boer families in the interior during the nineteenth century were often men who had reached South Africa in British regiments. Some were discharged at their own request in the land of their adoption; others deserted. The schools they ran became bywords, in later times, for the frequent ignorance of the instructors themselves and the queer, not to say drunken, characters to be found among the *meesters*. Yet without these humble stragglers from the great world across the seas, total illiteracy might have cut off much of the Afrikaner race even from their State Bibles.

As recently as the late '70s John Nixon noted a homestead between Rustenburg and Potchefstroom with an outhouse used as a schoolhouse by a broken-down Englishman who received a small stipend for educating the farmer's children. The lack of organized schools which made such a system tolerable was clear enough. 'The eldest daughter, a girl of 17,' Nixon tells us, 'was only just learning to write.'

Peace, law, and order—the only soil in which civilization can strike root and grow—were the redcoats' major gift to South Africa. Inadequate nearly always in numbers, often ill-trained for bush warfare and new to the country, they yet played an indispensable role as the first-line troops of civilization itself.

Hottentot levies did much of the fighting against the British invaders in 1795 and 1806 and played a notable part again and again in defence of the Colony afterwards. But there was always the risk, which lack of fair treatment made a tragic reality in the great Kaffir War of 1850-3, that they might mutiny or go over *en masse* to the enemy. It was the British regiments that provided the Hottentots' officers and instructors and supplied their essential stiffening for dangerous work.

Commandos, at first composed of Boers only and later often of British settlers as well, were always a formidable force in the field when well led. Throughout South African history, how-

ever, they suffered from certain disabilities. They could never man forts or patrol a frontier for any length of time without paralysing the economic life of the whole countryside from which they had been withdrawn. With some renowned exceptions, they were not highly disciplined forces and melted away disconcertingly as campaigns drew out in length. Finally they, and to some extent also the volunteer corps which played a useful part in the Eastern Cape and Natal, were apt to look for their reward to captured cattle and captured land. This system of reward was destructive of any Native policy based on setting aside tribal land for permanent Native ownership. It certainly made for conquest, but not for a civilized order; for economy for the impoverished governments, British or Boer, that employed the commandos, but not for the peaceful policing which gives security to all. The mere fact that British regulars received the Queen's shilling and were a strictly disciplined force gave them a value and importance in the defence of civilization often out of all proportion to their experience or skill in local conditions.

'It is a pity', an army officer noted during the Kaffir War of 1835, 'that the red jacket is so easily seen at a distance; still, it has its *effect*, after a short experience of the gallant breast it covers.' That effect was undoubted. The scarlet tunic of the regiments of the line was an ever-present reminder that tribes at war with the civilized settlement were at war also with the civilized world beyond the seas, with its immense powers of reinforcement. All South Africa, black and white, knew this perfectly well in times of crisis. For the sake of redcoat protection against the Basuto the Free State republicans were inclined at moments of danger to consider the advantages of British rule. Once Moshesh had come under British protection and thus under a control remotely upheld by the regiments of the line, the Free State was safe and its motive for a merger fell away.

Because of the same protection by British troops against Cetywayo on the one hand and Sekukuni's small but militant tribe on the other, the South African Republic of President Burgers found compensations in the imposed British connexion—compensations which rapidly disappeared once the redcoats had forced both chiefs to surrender.

It is often forgotten that the great Voortrekker victories over the Matabele and the Zulu were achieved by commandos fresh

from the Kaffir War of 1834-5 and that the Bantu nations they now met were new to horses, wagons, and fire-arms. As supplies of horses and fire-arms filtered through to the tribes by legal or illegal means from Boers, English traders, and the Portuguese at Lourenço Marques, the Voortrekkers' sons found victory over the impis far more elusive and far more costly. Could they ever have maintained themselves if the three most formidable Bantu nations (the Xhosa, the Basuto, and the Zulu) had not become the responsibility of the imperial power that the redcoats represented?

In South Africa this is an unpopular view of our military history. It has been obscured above all by the bitterness engendered from 1880 to 1902, when the civilized military forces of South Africa, after subduing the last great threat of the tribes, turned upon each other. Even without that tragedy it would have been obscured by the healthy growth of a South African national feeling. But it would be gross ingratitude now to obscure the magnitude of the redcoats' achievement. Many became South Africans in the fullest sense of the word. Scarcely a regiment sailed away after service of any length in South Africa without leaving a considerable number of men, and officers too, who had elected to make our country their home.

'Fancy me a black chief!' a young Scottish officer wrote in elation from Cape Town in January 1806 to his soldier cousin, the future Lord Lynedoch, in Scotland. John Graham had reason for gaiety. For one thing, the long, oppressive voyage to an unknown destination was over. John had known military voyages before. At the tender age of 16 he had become a lieutenant in his cousin's regiment, 'Graham's Grey Brecks' (the 90th). A year later, in 1795, he set sail against the French with the Earl of Chatham's expedition to Isle de Dun. Four years after that he sailed for Toulon in Earl Hood's expedition.

In all Graham's years of campaigning he had never known a voyage like this latest expedition. He had embarked at Cork with the Highlanders of the 93rd in the late summer of 1805 'for the Mediterranean'. The heavily laden transports, with their little convoy of troopships, had narrowly missed discovery and destruction by Villeneuve's powerful fleet near Trafalgar, but instead of entering the Mediterranean they cast anchor at Madeira. By the time the whole fleet of sixty-one sail, with 6,600 soldiers on board,

put in at São Salvador on the coast of Brazil, Major Graham and his young fellow officers felt quite sure they were sailing to attack Buenos Aires.

There was plenty of time for wild conjectures during those months on the water, steering for death or glory to an unknown destination. Glory was Graham's requirement. His father, the twelfth Laird of Fintry, was a close friend of Robert Burns the poet. He was growing old but had nine unmarried daughters to provide for. John and his younger brother, a captain in the Navy, were the only sons who could help him since the assassination of his eldest boy in India.

Every penny of their pay that the two brothers could save, all the prize-money that might come their way, were needed for the laird, his lady, and those sisters, to the eldest of whom Burns wrote his sonnet 'Here where the Scottish muse immortal lives'. Such was the plight of Major Graham, future founder of a great South African family. He belonged to the flower of those British forces which were about to save Britain by their exertions and Europe by their example.

When the South American coast had faded far behind them, officers and men were at last told their destination. They were sailing to recapture the Cape of Good Hope from the allies of Napoleon. In a jubilant letter in January 1806 Graham told Lord Lynedoch the story of his part in that operation. He was one of the officers who led the light infantry ashore through the surf on Blaauwberg Strand under fire. Then to his delighted surprise, he was put in charge of the light companies that were to lead the vanguard in the advance on Cape Town.

'My joy at the good fortune', he told his cousin, 'was a little damped by my learning at the same time that one of our boats from the Charlotte had been unable to pull windward of the [sunken] rock. . . . She touched it, instantly turned bottom up, and down went 36 of our brave fellows, cheering as they sunk.' Often in after years South Africa would hear that cheer from the men of British regiments in face of mortal peril.

And now, in delightful Cape Town after the cramped months at sea and the victory which he had done much to ensure, Graham was jubilant at receiving the promotion he needed so badly. His task was to reorganize the Hottentot Corps left by the Batavians and make it a loyal, disciplined force for the defence of the Cape

as the Cape Regiment. Other British officers were to serve under him, not least among them Robert Hart himself.

Five active years slipped by. Lieutenant-Colonel Graham was still unmarried (how could he afford to marry?). So were his sisters. And then on 6 October 1811 he was handed sealed instructions of His Excellency Lieutenant-General Sir John Cradock which announced a turning-point in South African history.

'I assumed the command of a force', Colonel Graham afterwards wrote, 'destined to accomplish what all former attempts, both coercive and friendly, had failed in, viz. the expulsion of the Caffre hordes from the most fertile part of the Settlement of which, for upwards of 20 years, they had retained exclusive possession.'

Since 1789 the Xhosa had turned the white civilized settlement of the Cape Colony back on itself. The Great Fish River was still the boundary on official maps, as fixed by Governor van Plettenberg with petty Xhosa chiefs in 1779, but the green, well-watered Zuurveld, from the future Somerset East to the sea, had been emptied of its Boer settlers by the Xhosa. Tribesmen had settled as far west as the Sundays River. They had raided the Gamtoos, only 300 miles from Cape Town. The commandos of the Voortrekkers' fathers, with such scanty help as the Dutch East India Company and the first British Administration could give, had been unable to drive them back. Behind them lay the pressure of all Bantu Africa, portending the utter eclipse of the Cape Colony and civilization in South Africa.

Colonel Graham drained the garrisons of Graaff-Reinet, Algoa Bay, and Cape Town for the 640 British regulars who formed the core of his force. Apart from 160 officers and men of the 21st Light Dragoons and 48 gunners, they were all drawn from the 83rd Foot. With them came detachments of Colonel Graham's Cape Regiment, nearly 600 Hottentots strong.

To supplement his small force of cavalry, the Boer commandos were called out. Colonel Graham wrote glowingly afterwards of their services. 'I never in my life saw more orderly, willing and obedient men . . . whenever they have been engaged they have behaved with much spirit.'

Such were the forces with which he rode across the Sundays River late in 1811 to carry out Cradock's orders. He was to persuade the Xhosa, if possible, to return to their own country

across the Great Fish River, but, if not, to 'clear His Majesty's territory from every invader'.

Persuasion worked badly. Landdrost Stockenström was struck down and killed while parleying with armed Xhosas. Major Jacob Cuyler narrowly escaped the same fate when he and the force with him reached Cungwa's kraal in the dense coastal bush and found Ndlambi, head of the Xhosa tribes in the Zuurveld, present in person.

'Old Ndlambi's figure was immediately recognized', Cuyler notified Graham, 'standing up and advancing a few paces from the rest when, in great apparent agitation, he called out: "Here is no honey. I will eat honey and to procure it shall cross the rivers Sunday, Coega and Zwartkops. This country" (stamping his foot violently) "is mine. I won it in war and shall maintain it."'

Then Ndlambi blew a horn. Several hundred tribesmen armed with assegais rushed at the major and his interpreter where they stood parleying, fifty yards ahead of their force. The troops fired but it was too dark to see the result as Ndlambi's warriors melted back into the forest.

Within two months Graham and his men had advanced across the whole length of the Zuurberg, had scoured its deep forests, tangled kranses and caves and the dense Addo bush to the west, and driven 20,000 Xhosas across the Great Fish River. By this superbly executed campaign Graham, his redcoats, and their Boer and Cape Regiment auxiliaries had turned the tide. They had ensured European possession of Graaff-Reinet, Uitenhage, and Algoa Bay—the very bases of the coming Great Trek.

They had also restored to the tiny civilized community in South Africa 5,000 square miles of the best-watered country in the Cape Colony. Just enough fertile land had been won, with just sufficient defence in depth, for the great advances in law and order, in missionary work and commerce, in education and agriculture, that were soon to be launched from the 1820 Settlers' cities of Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth.

To secure this toehold of civilization on the grassveld which held the future wealth of South Africa, Graham strove to persuade the Boers to return to their long-abandoned homesteads. To protect them he laid out a system of fortified outposts facing the Fish River, from the sea to an inland post which he named Cradock.

With the help of Ensign Andries Stockenström, son of the murdered landdrost, he chose Lucas Meyer's deserted farm in the Zuurberg as the centre and ammunition depot of this system and the future headquarters of the Cape Regiment. The ruined homestead became the officers' mess, and the colonel hung his sword on a nail driven into the mimosa tree outside. A few months later Sir John Cradock directed that this headquarters should henceforth be known as Graham's Town.

So pleased was the Governor with Graham's achievement that he offered him the post of permanent civil and military commissioner on the eastern frontier for the then magnificent salary of £1,000 a year, besides his military allowances. At last John Graham could afford to marry. His bride was Johanna Catherina, daughter of Rudolph Cloete of 'Great Westerford' near Cape Town and descendant of the Cloete who landed with van Riebeeck in 1652.

In September 1812 the Grahams set sail for Scotland in H.M.S. *Galatea*. They were lucky to arrive safely after a narrow escape from two American frigates. Even on honeymoon Graham kept thinking how to augment the scanty white population of the Zuurveld and maintain the Fish River frontier. He wrote to the Cape authorities suggesting that 500 Highland crofters should be persuaded to take up the vacant Zuurveld land. Why not start the ball rolling, he asked, by sending 'a few good trusty men of the 93rd Regiment' (the Sutherland Highlanders) to see the Zuurveld and tell their friends in Scotland about it?

Graham never came back to the Zuurveld as commissioner. Even on holiday he could not resist joining his cousin Sir Thomas Graham in the final fighting against Napoleon's troops in Holland. When Graham sailed for the Cape in 1815, after the old laird's death at Fintry, Sir John Cradock had been succeeded by Lord Charles Somerset, who insisted that no commissioner was needed on the frontier. Colonel Graham settled down as commandant at Simonstown with his wife and his sister Christine. Soon Henry Cloete carried off Christine in a second alliance between the Graham and Cloete 'clans'.

Lieutenant at 16 and major at 22, the thirteenth laird of Fintry was dead at 43. Two years before Graham died, Lord Charles Somerset discovered that the frontier of civilization along the Fish River needed Graham's skill after all. But the hardships of

a lifetime of campaigning and his repeated rides between Cape Town and the frontier had taken their toll. Graham was too unwell to accept the post. He only heard by letter of the Battle of Grahamstown, which in some ways ranks as the Blood River of English-speaking South Africa.

Pretorius had more than 450 armed burghers in laager with him at Blood River, including eight Englishmen. Colonel Willshire and Captain Trappes had only 330 armed men and boys when Makanna's 10,000 Xhosa warriors, urged on by their prophet to sweep the white men out of the Zuurveld, poured down the hills on to Grahamstown on 22 April 1819.

Pretorius's commando was rigorously prepared for a decisive battle. Grahamstown was not expecting attack at all. The Win Commando had no women or children to embarrass it. The tiny garrison village of Grahamstown, which numbered barely thirty scattered houses, had both.

In fact, Grahamstown tradition maintains that a Frenchwoman, Mrs Elizabeth Salt, played a heroic part in rallying resistance and then carrying a keg of gunpowder at the critical moment from the village to the desperately besieged East Barracks, a mile away. She relied on the chivalrous Xhosa custom of sparing women in warfare to pass through the midst of the fanatical warriors of Makanna and save the day for the defenders. Her descendants still live in the eastern Cape.

Of the 330 armed men at Willshire's disposal, 80 were Hottentots of the Cape Regiment. Another 30 were civilian men and boys, hurriedly armed to defend the village and its stores, which were the arsenal of the entire frontier defence system. The colonel had 45 light infantrymen of the 38th Regiment, 39 mounted men of the Colonial Troop, and 135 members of the Royal Africa Corps.

No one had ever seen 10,000 Xhosa warriors mustered for a single fight before. No one had ever expected that they would dare to storm the military headquarters of the frontier in broad daylight. Nineteen years later at Blood River the Zulu army, with an equal trust in its overwhelming numbers, would make the same fatal mistake.

The enormous forces of Ndlambi and Makanna were discovered in the nick of time advancing from the bush on Grahamstown. On came the 10,000 Ndlambi Xhosa warriors, adorned with plumes

and ox-tails and brandishing ox-hide shields and bundles of assegais. They took up their positions in three divisions overlooking the village from the north-eastern slopes. So confident were they of feasting that night in Grahamstown that thousands of women and children brought up the rear with pots and sleeping-mats.

At one o'clock a burst of fire from stolen muskets gave the divisions their signal. Down they rushed, as Lord Charles Somerset afterwards told Whitehall, 'with great impetuosity, making the air resound with their appalling shrieks'.

The defenders held their fire, tense and motionless, till the yelling front line of warriors came within thirty-five paces; then 270 muskets roared and two small cannons hurled grape-shot at the enemy.

Reloading as fast as they could, the British and Hottentot defenders fired again and again into the mass of brave but wavering warriors, who knelt down and ducked to avoid the rounds of fire which had already killed or wounded so many of their most daring men.

Now, as Somerset was informed, 'our little band cheered in its turn and advanced upon the enemy. The depleted enemy ranks retreated, dragging away numbers of their wounded.' By two o'clock the village was saved. But the East Barracks, where Fort England now stands, was still in the thick of the battle. Here Makanna led the attack in person.

Lieutenant Cartwright had only sixty men of the Royal Africa Corps to defend the new barracks against thousands of warriors. Scores of attackers fell. But the survivors charged into the barrack square itself, and a fearful struggle ensued inside it before they were finally ejected. When Makanna's men gave up hope at last and withdrew to the hills, Cartwright counted 102 warriors lying in the barrack square.

The total Xhosa losses were never known. Estimates ranged from 700 dead upwards. The immense advantage given by fire-arms to trained and disciplined men is shown by the defenders' casualties. They had only three dead and five wounded.

Had the village fallen, the whole of the Eastern Cape would have been overrun, perhaps to the Gamtoos or farther west, and the frontier's vital supplies of muskets and ammunition would have been used against the Colony. Instead, the Eastern Cape was

saved, just as Natal was saved for the Voortrekkers by the victory of Blood River.

If the Battle of Grahamstown had been a Voortrekker affair, the site would be a place of pilgrimage now and the names of Elizabeth Salt and the British officers would be taught to every schoolchild. But English-speaking South Africans neither know nor cherish their national story.

The Colony's narrow escape from catastrophe convinced Lord Charles Somerset that Colonel Graham was right in his insistence on 'augmenting the population' of the Zuurveld. By the end of that very year thousands of 1820 Settlers were preparing to set sail to populate (though they mercifully knew it not) a region so perilous that even the frontier Boers would not reoccupy it. Their task, which was studiously concealed from them, was to act as a human shield for Afrikaans-speaking South Africa against the pressure of the Bantu. Before his death in 1821 Graham had the satisfaction of seeing his plea for '500 Highlanders' thus tardily but magnificently answered.

The spirit of John Graham, thirteenth laird of Fintry, seemed reluctant to leave that eastern border land. His son Robert became in later years Governor Deputy of British Kaffraria when King William's Town had replaced Grahamstown as the capital of the military frontier. His grandson Francis Graham preserved the family tradition as civil commissioner of Albany. More than a hundred years after Colonel John Graham's death, another of his descendants, Sir Thomas Graham, reigned in Grahamstown as Judge-President of the eastern division of the Supreme Court. Sir Thomas had been three times a Minister in the old Cape Parliament. His brother Sir John Graham was a famous public servant of South Africa.



Grahamstown a few years after the battle of 1819.  
George Thompson.



The birth of Algoa Bay. Wooden blockhouse built by British troops in 1799.  
From an engraving by Samuel Daniell.



The 74th Highlanders storming the Amatola Heights on 16 June 1851. From a sketch by W. R. King.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE REDCOATS BEAR THE BRUNT

The repeated Kaffir Wars on the eastern frontier did not end until 1878. During those sombre years the problem of raising some framework of law and administration under which white and black alike could live in security along the densely peopled frontier was complicated by many difficulties and errors. The redcoats' duty, however, was simple. From the Battle of Grahamstown till the last Kaffir War they can be glimpsed bearing the brunt of endless guerilla warfare.

Watch them, for instance, storming Zyolo's high rock in the beautiful Amatola forests in 1835. Up the crags clammers Captain Murray with Ensign Stewart and a company of the 72nd Highlanders. Zyolo, son of Dushani, holds the summit with 600 picked warriors, who fire muskets and hurl assegais and stones at the climbers below. Murray draws his men up after him, and hurriedly borrows a musket from below whenever he sights a warrior above. Five of his men are wounded in quick succession but Murray presses on, unaware that he has been wounded himself till someone beside him exclaims, 'There 's ane o' them things stickin' in ye, sir', and tugs an assegai out from under the captain's ribs. Wounded but heedless, Murray finds a better way up and finally clears the high rock. Zyolo's men in their flight into the forest leave hundreds of assegais on the summit, which the Highlanders immediately break across their knees.

Watch these same cheerful Highlanders later when they have captured a peculiar 'Scotsman' indeed—the gigantic Cape Corps deserter Louis Arnoldus, sporting a plaid of the Black Watch. He was tied neck and heels to await questioning but, a witness records, 'the compassionate Highlanders fed him like a sparrow and stuck a pipe in his mouth'.

Finally glance at the sheer drudgery of that guerilla warfare. Three hundred men of the 72nd spent ten hours cutting a roadway

through the forest with axes, and then, overtaken by darkness, stood to arms, un-fed through the night, till dawn showed them a way out.

'D— this wark', said Jock Maclaughlin to his comrade. 'I didna care about the want o' the bit o' sup, but the Kaffirs are like eels and we hadna a guid feight, ava!'

'Ye needna fash yersel', says his comrade dourly. 'Ye'll hae a wamefu' o' that too, afore aa 's dune.'

It is the same story in the War of the Axe in 1846; the same again in the great Kaffir War of 1850-3, but with two terrible variations.

The better to subdue the Gaika, Sir Harry Smith founded four villages for soldier-settlers in what is now Victoria East, under the forest-covered Amatole Mountains. On Christmas Day, 1850, the friendly Gaika chief Xaimpi and his followers salute the people of Woburn. Munro, the superintendent, goes out of his house with his young son and a soldier-settler to give the chief coffee and bread.

Xaimpi drinks the coffee squatting on his haunches. Suddenly he leaps up and gives a piercing whistle. In a few seconds Munro, his child, and his friend lie pierced with assegais. The remaining nineteen men in the village, with thirty women and children, flee into a stone storehouse just in time to escape the Gaikas, and open fire on Xaimpi's swarming warriors.

The Xhosa, themselves fearless fighters, were noted for their mercy to white women. They allowed the thirty women and children to leave the store-room and walk unmolested to Lovedale, seven miles away. Then they returned to the attack. All night through, the soldier-settlers fought them, and on into morning, but the odds were too great. When Boxing Day was well advanced, the last round of ammunition was gone, and then the last defenders were stormed and killed. Woburn has never risen again from its blood-stained ruin.

The other scene has never been quite forgotten as a supreme example of that iron discipline which made the redcoats civilization's first line of defence in South Africa. This time the troops were new and young. Among the newest and youngest there was

a future chief magistrate of Durban, Ensign G. A. Lucas of the Black Watch.

It felt like old times aboard when Lucas fell asleep on the evening of 25 February to the thrashing music of the great steam paddles of the finest troop transport in the Navy. For seven weeks he and the 550 recruits aboard had heard that music as the iron vessel hurried them south from Cork to reinforce the hard-pressed Cape Colony in the fiercest of all the Kaffir Wars

As the weeks of that express voyage went by, Lucas came to know intimately all the tiny group of army officers on board. Their official senior was a youthful lieutenant-colonel, Seton of the 74th. He was on his way to replace Lieutenant-Colonel Fordyce, who had been killed in action in Kaffirland. But easily the oldest and most experienced officer was Captain Edward Wright of Robert Hart's old regiment, the Argyllshire Highlanders. He had much to tell at the officers' mess about Xhosa warfare, for he had campaigned against the Gaikas before.

The voyage was interrupted for three days by coaling and the loading of supplies at Simonstown. The silence of the paddles under the two huge life-boats fell strangely on Lucas's ears at waking. But now the ship was at sea once more. Commander Salmond was setting a course as close as possible to the dark African coast in order to reach the Kaffirland battle zone sooner.

That calm summer night, under the unfamiliar Southern Cross, the paddles threshed out their sea-rhythm again and the men slept soundly.

At two o'clock in the morning a violent shock woke Lucas. Immediately after it the two great paddles reversed, but new shocks shook the vessel. Suddenly there was a hissing roar of steam and their music stopped for ever.

Swarms of soldiers came pounding up the companionways in their shirts. A hundred already lay drowned in their hammocks on the lower troop-deck. Ensign Lucas flung on his uniform and dashed up on to the doomed deck of the *Birkenhead*.

'Nothing could exceed the order that prevailed', he testified later. 'Every word of command could be heard as plainly as on parade.' The summer night was still calm. But surf crashed on the hidden reef and the swell rolled and ground the sinking ship upon it.

Colonel Seton and Captain Wright were already enforcing

order and silence on deck. They assembled hundreds of men on the poop deck aft to lighten the sinking bows. Lucas was detailed to man the pumps with sixty soldiers, while sixty more attempted to launch the two big life-boats over the silent paddle-boxes. These boats were the hope of the ship, for each could hold 150 men.

The *Birkenhead* was every minute in greater danger of sinking. When would the boats be launched? The ropes of the one major life-boat snapped as the men strained at the tackle. She could never be launched now. The men at the other could not budge her, however desperately they tried, because the davit-pin had rusted.

The smaller boats were the only hope left. But the pinnace amidships was trapped under wreckage and the starboard gig crashed into the sea as her rotten ropes parted. She drowned most of the men aboard her.

At last a cutter was successfully lowered. Lucas was ordered to put the women and children aboard her.

'It is not easy to imagine a more painful task', he confessed afterwards. 'This was in several cases done by main force. Tearing them from their husbands, they were carried to the bulwarks and dropped over the ship's side into the arms of the boat's crew.'

With drawn sword Seton stood beside Lucas to make sure that no panic-stricken men should swarm into the cutter. But he could have spared his pains. Not a man broke the ranks. As the cutter drew safely away, the bows suddenly broke off the heaving ship, the bowsprit leaped into the air, and the funnel crashed down, smashing one paddle-box life-boat and killing the men who were still hauling on her tackle.

The falling funnel narrowly missed Lucas as he darted back to the pumps. 'It is hard to describe', he said afterwards, 'the sensation of oppression removed from one's mind on knowing the utterly helpless part of the ship's living cargo had been deposited in comparative safety.'

Barely twenty minutes had passed, but the ship was sinking fast by the head, and the poop deck, at the stern, with its crowded, silent ranks, was now high out of water. 'All those that can swim', shouted Commander Salmond, 'jump overboard and make for the boats.'

Seton, Wright, and Lieutenant Girardot instantly turned to the

men and begged them to stand firm or the cutter carrying the women and children would be swamped. In memorable words Wright afterwards described that heroic scene to the court of inquiry.

Not more than three men, he said, moved from their places to make the attempt. 'The order and regularity that prevailed on board, from the time the ship struck till she totally disappeared, far exceeded anything that I thought could be effected by the best discipline. It is the more to be wondered at, seeing that most of the soldiers had been but a short time in the service. Everyone did as he was directed and there was not a murmur or a cry among them until the vessel made her final plunge.'

That plunge was very near now. As the trembling stern rose higher and higher into the air, every man knew it. But the cutter was safely clear of the ship at last. The officers shook hands. As Lucas took Colonel Seton's hand he said he hoped they would meet ashore. 'I do not think we shall, Lucas', said Seton quietly. 'I cannot swim a stroke.'

All that discipline could achieve in face of death had now been accomplished. Three small boats—the women's cutter, the other cutter, and a gig—had been launched, and waited a safe distance away to save the very few men they could still carry. Just twenty-five minutes after striking the reef, the *Birkenhead* broke in two and sank, with her hundreds of quietly waiting troops and ratings, under the Cape seas.

Seton and Salmond were among the 445 officers and men who did not reach the shore alive. Only 193 men, women, and children survived that night and the day of despair that followed. More than half of these, including all the women and children, owed their lives to the discipline shown by their companions. For the three boats could carry only 66 human beings between them. Had the redcoats disobeyed their orders, every boat must have been swamped.

The 40 men who were eventually found clinging to the upper part of the foremast and yard-arm projecting above the sunken wreck also owed their lives to the boats, which succeeded in bringing help from a schooner, but not before many men had fallen from sheer exhaustion into the sea.

Only 77 men of all those thrown into the waves by the wreck found their way safely at last through the heaving sea-bamboo

that guards the coast and through the surf roaring on the rocky shore. Lucas was among their number. He was so badly injured by his pounding on the rocks that many days elapsed before he could join the decimated ranks of his Black Watch contingent in Kaffirland.

Like many another survivor of the *Birkenhead* who settled in South Africa after the fighting, Lucas played a notable part in peace and war for his adopted country. Many survivors' descendants are with us still.

A silver wreath of immortelles adorns the pole of the Queen's Colour of the South Wales Borderers. By Queen Victoria's command it commemorates the most heroic victory that the redcoats ever won for civilization in South Africa.

'I have not got over the wonder of there being one of us left', a young lieutenant wrote to his sister in Britain after that action. 'God was very good to us in giving us a little time to get up a defence. . . .'

Gonville Bromhead's 'little time to get up a defence' amounted to seventy-five minutes' notice that 20,000 Zulus had just inflicted the most disastrous defeat that the British Army ever sustained in South Africa and were now swarming to overwhelm his small, unfortified post. The company of redcoats who held that post did more than save its army stores and its hospital patients. They averted a Zulu invasion in which the 300,000 Natives of Natal would have been forced at the assegai's point to join Dubulamanzi in ravaging all the Colony.

That defence against overwhelming odds shed a lustre of heroism on the British Army's last and costliest feat for civilization in South Africa, its destruction of the Zulu military power.

The Zulu War is still a subject of fierce debate. In the final victory at Ulundi, the 17th Lancers, heroes of the charge of the Light Brigade, broke out from the square of redcoats to wreak terrible havoc on the wavering impis. Yet the most heroic feature of Ulundi was surely neither the dash of the cavalry nor the steadiness of that square of British infantry under heavy fire in the open veld, but the courage of the Zulu warriors who hurled themselves against Gatling guns and artillery to defend their king in a war he had not initiated.

Cetywayo was the key figure in the last great military struggle

to establish the civilized order. Between 1877 and 1880 the Gaika and Gcaleka of Kaffirland, the Koranna on the lower Orange River, the Griqua and Basuto of Griqualand East, and the Bapedi tribesmen of Sekukuni, all engaged in what nearly became a general war against the white man, with his own fire-arms. Cetywayo was suspected to have been the connecting link in all these outbreaks. His prestige among Bantu tribes was immense. He had revived the prowess and discipline of Chaka's armies in his independent Zulu kingdom. Now he insisted that his warriors must have some chance to 'wash their spears' in human blood in honour of his reign.

It was essential, the British High Commissioner in South Africa decided, to 'end a system which locks up all the manhood of the [Zulu] country in a compulsory celibacy, considered by the despot necessary to the efficiency of his army, that army having no possible use but to threaten us or other friendly peoples who surround him, a system which . . . relies solely on a regular course of murder and plunder by armed bands of the king's soldiers for the replenishment of the royal exchequer'.

Sir Bartle Frere did not foresee that an Isandlwana would follow within a few days of the unprovoked invasion of this dangerous kingdom. 'At about 10.30 a.m. on January 22nd, 1879, the Zulus were seen coming over the hills in thousands. They were in most perfect order.' By 2.30 p.m. the British casualties were: Killed in action, 1,329; wounded, nil. More than 800 of the dead were white troops; 600 belonged to the 24th Regiment, known today as the South Wales Borderers.

Such was the disaster announced to Gonville Bromhead, a lieutenant of that well-nigh obliterated regiment, by mounted infantrymen fleeing from the massacre. It was just after three o'clock. Already, thousands of Zulus, they shouted, were nearing his post at Rorke's Drift, ten miles to the south. At almost the same moment two horsemen frantically beckoned for the ferry at the Buffalo River drift below. From these fugitives Lieutenant John Chard of the Royal Engineers learned of the disaster and hurried up to the post.

The odds seemed utterly impossible. The main British force defending Natal against invasion by the Zulu impis had perished at Isandlwana camp. Lord Chelmsford's advance column, in whose rear 20,000 Zulus had stormed the camp, was actually

intact. But for all that Chard and Bromhead knew, it too had perished.

Chard, as slightly the senior, was in temporary command. With Bromhead's 80 youngsters from the 24th Regiment, he could muster barely 100 white men, but 350 members of the Natal Native Contingent were attached to the post under a white officer.

White troopers and mounted officers kept passing the post in frantic flight from the oncoming Zulu army. Everyone was escaping to Helpmekeer. Why should not Chard and Bromhead?

Neither young lieutenant thought of flight. With the stubborn discipline of the regular army they prepared to do their duty. A mistaken order had reached them from Isandlwana during the morning to defend the post at all costs. They refused to flee.

The post itself was a mission station commandeered by the military. A long stone building, roofed with thatch, which had been the Rev. Otto Witt's home, was now a military hospital with thirty-five patients. It faced north and its front verandah looked north over Rorke's Drift across the Buffalo, the boundary between Zululand and Natal. Thirty yards east of the hospital stood a second low stone building, likewise with a north verandah. This had become an important army store. Just north-east of this store lay a goat's kraal in solid stone.

When Chard hurried up from the drift he found Bromhead's men already barricading doors and windows with tables and mattresses and loop-holing the walls. Now he set them frantically blocking the gaps between the two buildings and the stone kraal with a laager of full bags of maize, such as his force of 450 men could conveniently man. For once, the notoriously cumbersome baggage-train of the British Army might prove its salvation.

Then the first Zulus appeared—from the south, at the rear. The nerves of the Native garrison troops gave way at the sight. All 350 fled, accompanied by their officer.

Counting the doctor, the ferryman, the chaplain, commissariat, civilians, and a few Natal volunteers, there were now exactly 104 fit men left to defend the impromptu laager instead of 450. All of them were white. Chard had to reduce the size of the laager under the eyes of the advancing enemy. Estimating that they could scarcely hold the hospital and the open space between it and the store, he bisected his laager with a new breastwork of

full biscuit-boxes four feet high. He had not finished this task when the first wave of Zulus, 600 strong, rushed the post from the rear—that is, from the south—at half past four.

From that moment till half past four next morning, B Company of the second battalion of the 24th, with a few patients and white South Africans, fought for their lives against more than 3,000 Zulus.

The first charges were checked and the enemy driven to cover all round the post before the main Zulu forces attacked. Within ninety minutes the heavy, erratic rifle-fire from a kraans 350 yards to the south had taken such toll that the garrison had to retreat into the eastern half of the laager behind the biscuit-box retrenchment. The hospital with its patients and garrison of half a dozen privates was thus isolated. The Zulus leapt the mealie-bag wall again and again to capture that western half of the laager. They were cut down by a vicious fire from behind the biscuit-boxes till they took cover behind the western end of the hospital, tried to force a way in there, and set the thatch alight.

Six privates of the South Wales Borderers won V.C.s that terrible night, attempting to hold the flaming hospital till the patients could be got out to the biscuit-box retrenchment. Had there but been a passage lengthwise through the stone building, with an east door into the laager, their task would have been almost simple. But there was no passage and only a small, high window opened eastward. Patients had to be dropped from it into the no-man's-land of vacated laager and crawl as best they could to the biscuit-box retrenchment thirty yards to the east, under cover of a steady fire from its defenders.

Bromhead himself drove off a Zulu attack on the far west room of the hospital, with a bayonet charge. Fourteen Zulus were found dead next morning under the window where Private Joseph Williams had held them at bay while his comrades tried to hack a way through the partition walls to the east and drag the patients through. When his ammunition was gone he held the door with his bayonet till he was dragged out by his hands and stabbed to death outside.

Meanwhile Private John Williams and two patients had managed to hole the partition wall to the east with his axe. Through this hole the three men escaped into the next room, defended by Private Henry Hook.

Hook and John Williams now took turns at keeping the enemy out at the west wall and hacking a hole in the next wall to the east. Close by in the doomed building, Private William Jones and Private Robert Jones defended another ward till six of the seven patients had been removed and had crawled to safety across the fire-swept yard. The seventh lay in delirium. The Zulus killed him before Robert Jones could get him out.

In another room Private Waters concealed himself in a cupboard and killed Zulu after Zulu as they tried to enter the room. Finally, on being wounded in the arm, he wrapped a black cloak round himself, dashed outside, and lay concealed among the bushes till dawn.

All this time there were desperate Zulu assaults on other parts of the post. Where bushes gave them cover on part of the north front, they actually reached and held the outer side of the mealie-bag wall and grabbed the bayonets of the defenders' rifles before they were shot or bayoneted themselves. Several times at different points the attackers set foot inside the defences, stabbing or slashing with their assegais. They even made their way into the goat kraal during that fearful night. Everywhere else they were killed or forced back at the bayonet point. Their firing of the hospital's thatched roof actually proved a godsend to the defenders. It lit up the attackers' movements for hours in the night.

At 4.30 a.m. the last erratic firing upon the outpost ceased, the Zulus withdrew, and the defenders, their hands scorched by their weapons, could let the almost red-hot barrels cool.

Fifteen of the garrison were dead. Twelve more were wounded, two mortally. But there was no rest for the others. They must improve the defences for the next Zulu attack. They hacked the thatch from the storehouse roof to prevent that, too, from being burnt over their heads. In the hollow top of a great dump of bagged mealies and oats—Chard's lofty redoubt, improvised under fire—the wounded lay in temporary safety.

At 7 a.m. the impi with which Dubulamanzi intended (as he later revealed) to smash a way into Natal and force its Natives into rebellion advanced again from the south for the knock-out blow.

And then, on the Zululand bank of the Buffalo, a big new force came into view. The haggard defenders, who were expecting more Zulu regiments, suddenly recognized the far-off scarlet

tunics. Lord Chelmsford's column had fallen back on discovering the total loss of Isandlwana and was moving down on the drift. The Zulus, too, saw the scarlet tunics, and retreated.

On the north bank the men of the column, with the nightmare of Isandlwana close behind them, stared at a second nightmare. In front they saw Zulu impis leaving the smoking ruins of Rorke's Drift. Had Helpmekaar fallen too? How much more of Natal had been razed?

Then the unbelievable met their eyes. Hats were waving vigorously from a hastily erected entrenchment alongside the smoking ruin. 'This little force', Lord Chelmsford told England, 'had for some twelve hours made the most gallant resistance I ever heard of, against the determined attacks of some 3,000 Zulus, 370 of whose dead bodies surrounded the post.'

There were V.C.s later for Chard and Bromhead and Surgeon-Major Reynolds, who had tended the wounded under fire and carried ammunition to the defenders. There were V.C.s for the six privates who held the flaming hospital and saved nearly all its patients. There was an army chaplain's commission for the Rev. George Smith, vicar of Estcourt, who had ceaselessly carried ammunition in his hat to the garrison. His affectionate title ever after in the Army was 'Ammunition' Smith.

But the greatest boon, and the least expected, was life itself. Some of that little band of redcoats who saved Natal and turned the tide in the Zulu War elected later to spend the rest of it in South Africa. Their descendants are with us to this day. The last Rorke's Drift veteran of the 24th in South Africa, Mr G. W. Mabin, died in 1937 at the age of 90.

In modest and memorable words Private John Williams, V.C., summed up the story of the silver wreath of immortelles on the pole of the Queen's Colour of the South Wales Borderers. 'In his ordinary life', he said, 'a man often contemplates some possibility and feels that he would be unable to face it. But when it comes he does face it. He finds himself up against it and he goes through with it. That is just about what happened to all of us.'

## CHAPTER SIX

### BREAKING INTO THE NORTH

England has never forgotten the Italian monk who left his country and civilization behind him nearly 1400 years ago to risk his life among the savage Anglo-Saxon tribes. The mission he and his followers built at the 'kraal' of a Kentish chief is Canterbury Cathedral today. St Augustine of Canterbury is remembered wherever the English language, which he struggled to master, is spoken around the globe.

Africa in turn will scarcely forget the remarkable trek which carried William Anderson early in 1800 from his comfortable home in London to sow the seed of Christian hope far beyond the boundaries of white South Africa, in the wastes north of the Orange River; which then led his friend and successor Robert Moffat into the Transvaal, years before the Voortrekkers; and which finally took Livingstone as far as the Boer ox-wagon could go into tropical Africa and thence on foot to the heart of the Dark Continent.

William Anderson stood to lose everything when he set out in his brand-new wagon from Cape Town on 10 February 1801, to found a mission among the Bastards 300 miles beyond the northernmost white men.

When the first Voortrekkers set out likewise, a generation later, for the new lands north of the Orange, they faced greater dangers than they knew. But they hoped in return to gain free title to vast tracts of virgin land and found a new State in which they would be unquestioned masters.

Anderson, son of a London merchant from Aberdeen, knew perfectly well, when he offered himself to the young London Missionary Society, that he was choosing the high road to poverty and humiliation. Few Scotsmen at 30 are carried away by fits of heroics. Anderson got exactly what he expected.

The first five weeks of his trek from Cape Town were pleasant

enough. His L.M.S. colleague, Kicherer, who conducted the party, could tell him the little that was known about Barend Barends, the Bastard chief north of the Orange, who had asked for a missionary. The northern boundary of the Cape Colony and white settlement lay then and for years afterwards on the Sak River, 200 miles south of the Orange. Anderson spent six instructive weeks at Kicherer's mission, on the boundary, watching his colleagues attempting to enlighten the bewildered Bushmen.

Then, with a few Sak River Hottentots as companions, he struck north on his own across the desert to reach the Great River.

'When Anderson first proposed to settle among us,' a dying Griqua of the Kok family told Dr John Philip many years later, 'being asked my opinion on the subject I said, "Let him come". But my motives for consenting to his proposal were that he had a wagon and many things I coveted and that we should one day kill him and I should in that case have a share in his property. This project was often in my mind, and I never could conceive, till I became a Christian, what kept me from it.'

This Kok was only one of many Bastards who sooner or later confessed as much to the reserved Scot who so unreservedly threw in his lot with theirs. With many a longing glance at his fine new wagon, Barend Barends, Adam Kok, and their people accepted Anderson as their missionary. They gave him a site at the Aat Kaap, or reed fountain, two days north of the Orange. Murder could wait till convenient. And then their difficulties began.

First, Kicherer arrived from the south with a staunch Afrikaner companion for the London Scot. Thenceforth, Anderson and Cornelius Kramer, the first full-time missionary of his race, sustained each other uncomplainingly through all the terrors and hardships to come. Next, a British official party which called at Aat Kaap served as an unpleasant reminder that, however quietly Anderson was murdered, the dreaded Cape Government would want to know about it. This party brought with them a young English missionary called Edwards, who was on his way to attempt to found a mission at Kuruman, 100 miles to the north.

These safeguards for Anderson and Kramer melted away. The expedition went home. The Sak River mission was closed. The Kuruman mission failed.

Nothing remained to mitigate the chaos and violence of the country of the Great River. Yet the nomads were beginning to

shelve their plan of murder. They were falling under a twofold spell they had never known before—the spell that members of an advanced civilization cast over barbarous or semi-barbarous peoples, and the spell of that selfless love and gentle spirit of pity to which Christianity owes its greatest triumphs. The half-savage Kentish tribes had felt that twofold spell when Augustine and his monks came unarmed among them 1,400 years before. The Bantu tribes of tropical Africa, and even the Moslem slave-traders, would feel it in the glance of Livingstone sixty years later, when the very Arabs who thwarted him called him in awe ‘the great, the very great doctor’.

These Bastard chiefs, or ‘captains’, and their immediate followers, with their horses, guns, and even wagons, were the pioneers of Afrikaans in the north-west. It was they who gave the Vaal River its name a generation before the Great Trek. Nominally Christian by religion (though they had drifted into polygamy), they had been driven from their small farms on the edge of the Colony by the advance of their white relations, Lichtenstein says, or by falling foul of the harsh laws of the Colony. With them were ‘rabble of every kind, free blacks and slaves who had escaped’.

Mingling with these exiles and outlaws from the south were the completely barbarous clans of the north, naked Bushmen grey with ashes, primitive Namaquas, and others. The Koranna Hottentot clans who had attached themselves to the Bastards smeared their bodies with grease, then covered themselves with powdered ores. They wore mantles of cattle-hide, sheepskin, or buckskin. Ten years later Burchell complained that in Anderson’s church in hot weather ‘the smell of their greasy bodies and of so many sheepskin karosses, etc., is too strong for a nose unaccustomed to it’.

The male Koranna’s habit of suspending a knife from a string in front of his neck hardly endeared him to the beholder. Korannas lived on the milk of their cattle and fat-tailed sheep, and also on dried berries, locusts, gums, game, and bulbs. For four years Anderson and Kramer shared that primitive fare. They shed thousands of years of civilization to become nomads of the desert with their murderous flock.

Thenceforth they lived in the small portable huts of the Hottentots—reed-mats hung over long bent sticks like fishing-rods.

These precarious homes were unbearably hot by day, leaked miserably in the rare rains, and offered no protection against the driving dust or the dogs that filched the occupants' meat. As for bread and vegetables, Anderson and Kramer often went without either for six months at a stretch.

In vain they begged the Bastards to settle down, learn the arts of civilization, and attend the tiny thatched church which the missionaries had built at Aat Kaap. Then, in 1803, came the great drought. The grazing within reach was trampled to dust. The game departed northwards in search of grass; the lions trekked with the game. The famished outlaws had no choice but to straggle north into the Bechuana country with their humped cattle and white Namaqua sheep.

That trek through a starving land of drying water-holes told even on the Korannas and Bushmen. When at last the drought broke and the scattered bands started back on the long journey south to their fountains, Anderson made up his mind to hesitate no longer. He sent his ox-wagon south over the Orange to the distant Roggeveld to fetch a load of seed-wheat. He was a handy blacksmith and made what farm implements he needed. Then he and Kramer, with their own hands, cleared fifteen acres for cultivation, irrigated it with a furrow from the fountain, and sowed their crop.

With fervent prayers they watched the growth of the first wheat ever sown beyond the Orange. From miles away its rich green in that arid land beckoned to Bastard and Hottentot alike with the promise of a new world. Poignantly it reminded the missionaries of home, and of the Sower who went forth to sow in the field of the world. When it grew white to harvest it yielded a rich crop.

This miracle of the loaves convinced the nomads. Next winter the Bastards had laid out tiny wheat-fields under all six of their fountains. The endless trekking was over. Anderson's and Kramer's chance had come. But early in 1805 smallpox invaded the settlements. When that horror had burned itself out after many deaths, Anderson himself succumbed to a fever. Soon he seemed to be dying. The end of the hard road was in sight. And then, out of the blue, Dr Henry Lichtenstein, peered through the door of the cheerless Koranna hut where the missionary lay wasted and helpless.

Lichtenstein, with a well-equipped expedition, had been sent north by the Batavian régime at Cape Town to investigate rumours that English missionaries were inflaming the outlaws of the Orange River and publicly praying with them for 'our sovereign lord, King George'. He reported on his return that Anderson was a saint.

The missionary's serene and devoted spirit, his fine features, and the evident traces of a long-standing sickness, Lichtenstein said, 'could not fail at the first glance to win the heart of everyone who approached him'. After speaking only Afrikaans for four years, Anderson was 'not a little rejoiced at being able to talk to us in his mother tongue'. Who can tell what this refreshment of spirit, the news of the outer world, the company of civilized beings, the small luxuries Lichtenstein and his party left behind, meant for the half-dying exile?

The tide had turned. New missionaries from Holland were evacuating Kuruman after a half-hearted attempt to reopen it. One of them, Lambert Jansz, nursed Anderson back to convalescence. A second took him south in his wagon to Cape Town, 600 miles away, for proper medical care. Jansz kept Kramer company at Klaar Water, where Anderson had lain sick and helpless so long.

In that time of healing in white-washed, green-shuttered Cape Town, Anderson found spring in his heart as well as in the cold, wet winds and flower-awakening rains of August 1806. He had fallen in love. Johanna Maria Schonken, daughter of a Dutch official in Cape Town, was 29—an advanced age for marriage at the Cape in those days. William himself was 37. It was the start of a rich new life for them both. For forty-two years the brave, warm-hearted Johanna shared the privations and dangers of William's life among the despised and the poorest of the poor. Other men might have looked for an easier assignment now than missionary to the Bastards. But Anderson, who had held his ground with Kramer when all other missionaries fled from the hardships and dangers of the north, was not the man to quit.

'We have for the last six years denied ourselves many comforts and necessities of life', he wrote to the London Missionary Society in August 1806, 'and applied the money taken up for things more immediately touching the mission.

'The reason of our not writing oftener was not being willing



Anderson and his party trekking across the Karroo towards the Orange River in 1811. William Burchell.



Klaar Water in 1811, showing Anderson's church of reeds. William Burchell.



Bechuana tribesmen (*circa* 1800). From an engraving by Samuel Daniell.



'In the twinkling of an eye . . . the Korannas had loaded their movable huts on oxen and the whole village had fled west.' This engraving by Samuel Daniell

upon uncertain ground to elevate the spirits of our dear brethren and sisters in Europe, but though they have long waited, blessed be God they have not waited in vain. Oh, no! I would not exchange my mission for any in Africa. We have been enabled to endure a severe storm; our blessed Redeemer was with us; oh that He may keep us humble, faithful and diligent!

As soon as his convalescence was over he set out by wagon again for the wilderness where he had so nearly perished. Johanna Maria shared his wagon, leaving the comforts of Cape Town and all her friends to live with the outlaws of the desert. In her first years at Klaar Water she was separated by hundreds of miles from the nearest white woman. There she bore her husband the first white children ever reared north of the Orange. With those children—nine of them in the end—William and Johanna founded more than the first white family of the north. They founded a missionary dynasty which is still at work in South Africa to this day.

It was her never-failing kindness that travellers to Klaar Water noticed. But her courage was memorable too. Her letters to Cape Town must have painted a happy picture of that farthest outpost in Africa, for three years later her younger sister Maria Elisabeth did not hesitate to marry a younger recruit for the Orange River mission field, William's devoted German colleague, Johannes Seidenfaden.

These were happy but strenuous years for Anderson. He sent Cornelius Kramer south for a well-deserved furlough while he and Jansz, with Johanna's help, fostered their little Christian community of Bastards, Koranna Hottentots, and Bushmen by catechism, by schooling, and by personal friendship. They did all they could to foster in the Bastard 'republic' a desire for settled homes, tilled fields, and the unfashionable blessings of law and order.

Never in a hurry for results, Anderson was slow to admit members of his strangely assorted flock to full membership of the Church. Not till 1809 would he agree to perform marriage services, and then only after he had helped polygamists with great tenderness and patience to face that drastic parting of the ways demanded of them if they would join the company of Christians.

One memorable experience of those years was the arrival of Dr Cowan of the 83rd Regiment and his brother officer,

Lieutenant Donovan, early in November 1808. They had the Earl of Caledon's permission as Governor of the Cape to explore Africa all the way to Mozambique. Three English privates, a farmer called Karel Kruger, who had long roved on the Orange, and nearly a score of Hottentots from Colonel Graham's Cape Regiment completed the expedition. They asked for Bastard volunteers from Klaar Water to go with them. Anderson persuaded two to volunteer, and himself agreed to accompany them on the next stage of their journey into the unknown.

By Christmas Eve, when Anderson felt he must strike south again to Klaar Water, the expedition had reached the latitude of Nylstroom in the Transvaal. It was probably just west of the present Bechuanaland Protectorate border. Cowan and Donovan bade him a cheerful farewell. The country had steadily improved as they had trekked north-east. The scattered Bechuana tribes were friendly. The expedition had covered more than 1,000 miles from Cape Town in less than three months and was now within a few hundred miles of its goal—the Mozambique coast. They gave Anderson excellent news for the Earl of Caledon, and left him a sturdy army-tent as a parting present. Not one of them saw civilization again.

Bitterly Anderson reproached himself in after years for having persuaded the two Bastards to join that doomed expedition. Its fate is a mystery to this day. But he had no reason to fear that disaster had befallen Cowan and Donovan, when he hastened south early in 1809 with his family and the new tent to tell the Governor that he had left them safe and well at the northernmost point any white man had yet reached in South Africa.

When Anderson set out once more in May 1811 for Klaar Water with Kramer—now married himself—a more famous explorer travelled with them. It is to William Burchell that we owe the most vivid accounts we have of Anderson, Kramer, and the faithful Jansz at work at Klaar Water. He described their homes and gardens—true oases of the desert—and their church of poles, mats, and thatch with its dung-smeared floor where 300 worshippers could sit.

Every Sunday morning and afternoon he would hear their lonely church-bell calling the people to prayer from their mat huts up to a mile away. Often he would attend the service, which they conducted in Dutch with translations into Koranna for those

who could not understand. On week-days there were catechism classes and evening classes in reading and writing for the children.

To Burchell the beneficial results were not unduly obvious. Had he watched Augustine at Canterbury in A.D. 590 he might likewise have thought the civilizing work unduly slow and unduly religious. He might have found the primitive English as slothful and unwilling to help the missionaries as Anderson, Kramer, and Jansz found their more diverse and more demoralized flock.

Burchell developed a quarrel with Anderson and Kramer. They would not persuade Bastards to join him in his grandiose scheme to press north to Angola. Anderson refused to have the blood of more volunteers on his head. Probably he believed that Burchell stood no chance where Cowan and Donovan with their military escort had failed. He and Kramer did their best to discourage him even from striking south-east across the desert to reach Graaff-Reinet and recruit extra Hottentots there. They feared that the opening of a new and shorter road to the Colony would increase the Bastards' traffic with the Boers, to whom they would be 'always selling their cattle' for fire-arms and possibly for brandy. For the mission's own welfare, Anderson warned Burchell, the mission's connexion with the Colony should be kept as slender as possible.

Burchell ignored the warning and pioneered the new route, with disastrous consequences for the little Christian republic for which Anderson and Kramer were laying down their lives among the outlaws and nomads of the north, and for which Kramer's young wife already lay buried in a new grave at Klar Water. Pneumonia had carried her off a few weeks after her arrival.

The first sign of the disasters to come was an impressively sealed letter which arrived from Cape Town early in 1814 from Lieutenant-Colonel Reynolds, Colonial Secretary, on behalf of His Excellency Lieutenant-General Sir John Cradock. The letter explained that the Cape Regiment was short of recruits and it was inconvenient to call up able-bodied Hottentots from the service of farmers. 'You are therefore required to afford from your society 20 Hottentots from 17 to 20 years of age who, from constitution, strength, shape and height may be deemed eligible for the military service of His Majesty.'

Kramer had returned broken-hearted to Tulbagh with his little

son. With great perturbation Anderson and Jansz debated this extraordinary demand from that Colony with which they had tried to keep as tenuous a connexion as possible. Their flock hated and feared the Colony. The Hottentot clans had fled north into the desert as white settlers, from the seventeenth century onwards, waged the Hottentot wars, annexed the Hottentots' country for farms, and took the original owners of the land into their service.

The escaped slaves had no cause to love their former owners. They knew that the direst punishments might be visited on them if they were ever recaptured. The Bastards themselves—now, with all their followers, styled Griquas, through the insistence of the Rev. John Campbell on his visit the previous year—had fled north when 'wanted' by the law (mostly for assaults on harsh masters) or when the advance of the white colonists threatened them with loss of their farms. The Bushmen for many years had been hunted down like animals by Boer commandos, just as they had been harried by Hottentots and Bantu.

The land of the Griquas, of which Klaar Water (by now called Griqua Town) was capital, lay ten days north of the boundary of the Cape Colony and owed it no allegiance whatever. But the Griquas were as dependent on the Cape Colony for their communications with the civilized world as Basutoland is on the Union today.

With a sinking heart, Anderson called the Griquas together and made known the Governor's illegal order. There was immediate uproar. It looked as though he might be stoned. On 26 March 1814 he wrote in reply to Colonel Reynolds that he had done his best but could not persuade any Griquas to go. Two months later the Colonial Secretary brusquely replied that, unless the order was complied with, all communications between the mission station and the Cape Colony would be considered at an end.

This threat brought Anderson to Cape Town in person. He found a stiff new governor installed there. Lord Charles Somerset was no friend of dissenters. After hearing the missionary's anxious explanations the Governor grudgingly admitted that Anderson could not use force to carry out orders from Cape Town, but insisted that the Griquas' refusal to enlist was 'a want of the principle of love and gratitude'. He threatened to bring all the Griquas into the Colony and disperse them among the farmers.

The Andersons were still in Cape Town when a new menace rode into Griqua Town—the famous outlaw Coenraad du Buys. For years Buys had lived peacefully in the George district with his Xhosa wife, till the ostracism of his Boer neighbours persuaded him to cross the frontier again. He approached the Griquas by the eastern route with a nondescript band of hangers-on, including a runaway negro slave called Arend and a party of amaXhosa.

Buys was quick to realize how valuable the Griquas could be to him on freebooting expeditions, with their horses and fire-arms. He sowed the opinion among them that the absent Anderson would betray them to the Cape Government and they would be sent to the Colony as soldiers. At this they grew so uneasy that a section broke away, joined Buys, and were soon pillaging the Bechuana for cattle. Anderson returned from Cape Town to the unhappiest years of his life. Behind him was a Governor determined to harry him in every way he could, and to do all he could to close missions outside the Colony and impede the opening of new ones within it. Only three hours' ride from his mission, the giant freebooter had settled and was busy blackening his name and undermining his authority among the Griquas.

To make Anderson's position completely impossible, a new influx of runaway Hottentots and slaves had begun from the Colony, especially by Burchell's road from Graaff-Reinet. This influx intensified the unpopularity of Griqua Town with Lord Charles Somerset and the Graaff-Reinet farmers. It continually reinforced the uprooted and unstable element at Griqua Town which he had tried so long to rehabilitate. What hurt most of all was Buys's success in setting against him Griquas whose trust and friendship he had won by years of self-sacrificing service. They reverted to a roving life of violence and plunder, and jeopardized the Griquas' future by wrecking their precarious unity and social coherence.

Jansz died, and a devoted Dane, Henry Helm, with an English wife, took his place at the Andersons' side. In 1818 Buys fled north with a price on his head, on that last trek which eventually took his half-breed family to the Soutpansberg. In the south, Somerset founded the drostdy and village of Beaufort West to bring colonial control closer to Griqua Town.

Through all the miseries of those years Anderson never forgot his goal. "The disordered state in which you found things here,"

he wrote to Landdrost Stockenström at Graaff-Reinet in 1819, 'the great want of civil order and the evident necessity of some serious measures [have] given me since your departure many anxious moments, fearing lest the strict measures required . . . might have a tendency to check our missionary exertions towards evangelising the heathen here and in the more remote parts of the interior.' It was still the same goal for which he had left his comfortable home in London twenty years before.

Lord Charles Somerset remained implacably hostile. 'I have signified to Dr Philip', he wrote to Whitehall three months later, 'that it is my opinion that Mr Anderson's establishment, which he has named Griqua Town, should be broken up and that he should be settled either within the Colony or so close to it as to be considered under the control of the Colonial Government and the people attached to him subjected to the local law of the place. . . . Until the Colony itself is entirely Christian it seems premature to attempt to convert the tribes beyond it.'

It scarcely matters today whether Somerset persuaded Dr John Philip, the new London Missionary Society superintendent at Cape Town, that Anderson was the stumbling-block at Griqua Town or whether, as Robert Moffat believed, the London Missionary Society was inveigled into that notion by the restless James Read, who was now at Kuruman. Anderson was induced to withdraw from the Christian settlement he had founded and from the outcasts for whom he had laid down his life. He was persuaded that his reception of Cradock's demand for recruits in 1814 had made him a stumbling-block and a source of division to his people.

The whole troubled after-history of the Grikwas and Korannas gives the lie to this assertion. Certainly it must have cost William and Johanna great pain to accept it. With aching hearts they bade farewell to Griqua Town at the beginning of March 1820, and set off with their children and Dr Cowan's tent for the south, never to return. A big escort of sorrowing Grikwas conducted them across the Bushman-haunted desert. Had their life's work been one long, unhappy mistake after all—a 'premature attempt to convert the tribes beyond the Colony'?

At first, as they settled down to a more sheltered existence at Pacaltsdorp (the London Missionary Society mission for Hottentots which still stands between George and the sea), Anderson

might have thought so himself. But as he and Johanna laboured there, with characteristic self-effacement, the rich harvest of their faithfulness north of the Orange began to ripen spectacularly. By doggedly holding their ground when all other missionaries shrank from the ordeal, Anderson and Kramer had built in the wilds an advanced base for Christian civilization, which now started to move with ever-growing rapidity over Africa.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### FIRST INTO THE TRANSVAAL

It is New Year's Day, 1823—the first year of the Christian era in the Transvaal. White settlers are moving north-east into that unknown and dreaded country, a dozen years before the Great Trek. Their speech is English, their ways absurdly so. With them they bring their afternoon tea, and their English nurse-maids—heroically out of place in a land strewn with skeletons and burning kraals.

In the front wagon travels Thomas Laidman Hodgson of Cape Town, with his wife Anne, their little daughter Mary Anne, and their English maid. In the second are Samuel Broadbent, pale with disease and hardship suffered in the wildest parts of South Africa, his wife, his little son Sam, and another maid. These white servants' names have perished from memory but the thrilling story of the Hodgsons, the Broadbents, and their friends the Archbells, should never be forgotten in the Transvaal which they were the first white families to pioneer.

Their base was William Anderson's Griqua Town. Without that oasis of friendly white missionaries and Griquas, Hodgson, Broadbent, and Archbell could never have brought the first foretaste of civilization to the Transvaal and the Orange Free State 130 years ago.

Broadbent was later invalided out of South Africa after a series of perilous escapes from the Mantatee hordes, but Thomas Hodgson and the Archbells lived and died in South Africa.

Hodgson arrived from England with his wife in 1821 to serve as a missionary of the Methodist Church to the slaves and Hottentots in Cape Town. It was a not uncomfortable assignment. But the fires of the great evangelical revival which had impelled Anderson to cross the Orange in 1801 were still burning in him. Thomas and Anne did not refuse when they were unexpectedly asked in September 1822 to go to the post of greatest danger—

the 'Bechuana country'. There Broadbent was about to make his second attempt to found a mission.

On 1 November 1822—eleven months after Anderson took charge of Pacaltsdorp—the two families and their maids left Graaff-Reinet, each in their own wagon, with a third wagon for their Coloured drivers and their wives.

Passing Philippolis, the first town in what has since become the Orange Free State, and following the Modder River westwards, they at last crossed the flooded lower Vaal by rafts near where Douglas now stands. On 6 December they reached Campbell, an offshoot of the Griqua Town mission. Hodgson and Broadbent hastened to Griqua Town itself, thirty miles to the west. Bastards and Bechuana at both missions gave them lurid warnings to venture no farther because of tribal wars raging in the interior. The Mantatees, in fact, had begun that famous massacre of the Bantu inhabitants of the Transvaal and Free State which was destined to open the interior to the Voortrekker invasion.

But neither missionary was a man to retreat. 'Our only instructions', Broadbent recalled long afterwards, 'were to go to the Bechuana country.' After thoughtful discussions with Anderson's friends the Helms, who warmly encouraged them, they decided to move north-east 'into a region where no missionary had preceded us, nor any European or colonist'—in a word, to enter the Transvaal.

They crossed the Harts River close to the present Vaal-Harts irrigation scheme and were again warned by wandering Griquas and Hottentots that 'hordes of savages' were massacring everyone in the country to the east and would bring 'inevitable destruction to [their] company'. Still they refused to turn back. 'We were messengers of the Church', Broadbent recorded simply. 'We were going in the name of Christ, who had promised His presence with us and, by His grace, we resolved to set up our banner in that land of darkness and war.'

Their Coloured servants thought differently. They bolted. But in the end all except one driver and a Bushman came back.

The farther east the wagons moved, through country teeming with lions, the better the land looked, 'especially in wood, water and luxuriant grass'. At last they found the kraals of naked Koranna Hottentots.

It was in the middle of one of these kraals that Mrs Hodgson and Mrs Broadbent brewed the first afternoon tea ever recorded in the Transvaal. Meanwhile a Koranna chief, Chudeep, clothed in jackal skins and wielding a jackal's brush as a switch to wipe off sweat and flies, implored their husbands to stay with his people as earlier missionaries had done at Griqua Town. The fame of Anderson's work had reached even this wild spot.

To make doubly sure, Chudeep removed their spare oxen so that they could trek no farther. His clan's talk of the Mantatee terrors ahead made two more servants decamp, including the Bechuana interpreter from Griqua Town.

It took days for Hodgson and Broadbent to recover their cattle. They had hardly succeeded when Korannas galloped into the kraal on ox-back, shouting a warning. In the twinkling of an eye, as it seemed to the white men, the Korannas had loaded their movable huts on oxen and the whole village had fled west. Meanwhile a great cloud of dust bore down on the wagons from the east. Soon the lowing of cattle and bleating of sheep reached them from the cloud. Then a mixed multitude of men, women, and children, accompanied by a host of armed warriors, loomed up out of the dust.

If this was the Mantatee horde, the little party of Christians had only a few minutes left to live. Parleying would be useless. Yet Broadbent and Hodgson stepped forward to try it—and found an immediate response. They had been overtaken not by the Mantatees but by the very Bechuana they had come so far to find. The host passing by in the cloud of dust were the Barolong tribe of Bechuana, falling back before an enemy tribe.

Hour after hour, herds, flocks, and Barolong passed them till at twilight an armed force of 'remarkably fine-looking men' stepped forward and Chief Sifonello's brother Sabadere stood before them, 'a tall muscular man armed with shield, battle-axe and a quiver of spears'. The white men gazed on him with the same astonishment with which he stared at them. Neither knew a word of the other's language, but signs and gifts initiated a friendship which was to give the Barolong a unique place in South African history. A Barolong guide was given them to bring them to Sifonello, and they even retrieved their vanished interpreter.

For a week the missionaries remained hidden with their wagons

in thick bush to the west, in order to avoid being involved in the battle between the Barolong and the Mantatee. Then, knowing perfectly well that they were cutting off their own retreat, they trekked eastward again.

It was a daring decision. Soon they became aware that an impi of Mantatee warriors, wearing black ostrich-plumes and carrying large oval shields, was shadowing them. Nearer and nearer the warriors drew. At last the Mantatees came so close that the foremost raised their assegais to hurl them into the moving wagons. The missionaries refused to fire. Instead Broadbent beckoned with his hand and uttered the only Tswana phrase he yet knew, meaning 'Come here!'

Houses walking on wheels had already tested the courage of the Mantatee warriors to the quick. Now, when a white face stared at them for the first time in their lives, and a white arm beckoned them from the moving house, terror of the supernatural seized them. They broke in panic, and fled for their lives. The wagons creaked peacefully on, alone.

After two days and nights of the most intense anxiety for the travellers—anxiety heightened by passing the corpses of newly speared Bechuana—Sunday dawned. It was 26 January 1823. The Hodgsons, the Broadbents, their English nurse-maids, and their few Coloured servants knelt in the open air for the first Christian service of worship in the Transvaal. 'It is a fact, however mysterious to us,' Broadbent wrote, 'that this was the first time that the voice of praise and prayer or the name of the eternal Lord had been heard in these regions.'

After that heart-felt thanksgiving for deliverance, the families strolled through a newly deserted Bechuana village. With horror they noticed a small Bechuana girl of about seven years stirring among the skeletons. She was frightfully emaciated, barely alive after eighteen days' exposure, and wounded by crows. Tenderly Mrs Hodgson and Mrs Broadbent carried her to the wagons, and offered her warm milk and water. Only a few days earlier the Broadbents had saved a starving boy, Liratsagae, from a deserted battlefield, so it was the Hodgsons' turn to adopt the little girl into their family. They called her Orphena.

Orphena survived her starvation and wounds. She grew up a devoted family servant, one of that humble, cheerful multitude to whom generations of white South African children have owed so

much affection and care. She even went to England and learnt dressmaking.

John Liratsagae lived to become one of the first Bantu printers in Africa. His later home was the Thaba Nchu mission in the Orange Free State, where he was head of the Sunday school and a lay preacher to the Barolong people. He had become a legendary figure among the tribe when he died at a great age in 1904.

The Transvaal charmed the two English families more and more as they trekked east towards the Schoonspruit, which joins the Vaal below Klerksdorp. 'The further east we advanced,' they recorded, 'the more we were delighted with the beauty and the fertility of the landscape, its undulating surface, abundant grass and clumps of trees.'

How many future Voortrekkers may first have heard of a land in the north, flowing with milk and honey, from Broadbent two years afterwards, when he rested and recuperated for a month in the elder Andrew Murray's manse at Graaff-Reinet? Or from Hodgson, his companion, and Archbell, his successor, on their later visits from the still nameless Transvaal and Free State to Grahamstown?

The idyll near the Schoonspruit ended abruptly. The Coloured drivers and their companions refused to go an inch nearer the certain death which they divined ahead. That same night, all the cattle, down to the last milk-cow, were stolen.

They could now neither advance nor retreat. Their walking supply of milk and meat—they had neither vegetables nor bread—had been spirited away by an unseen enemy. One driver in despair suggested that they should bury their possessions and set off on foot for the distant Colony. This was out of the question for the English families. Broadbent's old injury from a wagon accident had begun to cripple him again. Mrs Broadbent was expecting a baby.

It was Hodgson, the younger and fitter man, who found a way. He volunteered to walk in search of Sifonello, head of the Barolong tribe, who could not now be more than a few days' walk away, and beg him for food and a guard till the party could send to Campbell mission, a fortnight's stiff trekking to the west. Taking two Barolong guides to show the way, the Bechuana interpreter, and the mutinous drivers, Hodgson set out at daybreak with all speed.

Broadbent, feeble and ill, took charge of the women, children, and stranded wagons. They had only one day's food left. Many years afterwards in England, he still looked back with intense feeling on his despairing effort to shoot at least one large buck for the camp before he became too weak to walk at all.

Having wounded but failed to kill a wildebeest, he struggled on till he sighted a hartebeest, far out of range. 'Knowing how much depended on this fresh and, probably, last attempt,' he said, 'I sought unto God for success.' Painfully he stalked it till at last it took fright. He fired, he thought it kicked, but it got away. He struggled back to the wagons to share in the last food left, then asked the Bushman servant and two Bechuana to look for the wounded wildebeest in case it had fallen after all. Instead, quite close to the wagons, they found the hartebeest, dead. There was food in plenty now for children, mothers, and all. A gracious Providence, Broadbent ever after believed, had 'spread our table in the wilderness'.

Meanwhile Thomas Hodgson had reached Sifonello after three days' forced marches. The Barolong chief welcomed the party heartily and promised food and help. Hodgson set off with what supplies he and his party could carry. He returned with feet blistered and swollen after a narrow escape from eight lions in a reed-bed.

Within a few days Sifonello arrived with his eldest son Moroka, 'noble figures, tall and well-proportioned', bringing bags of sour milk and a fat cow. Next day came the crowning mercy. All the lost cattle, which had been missing for seventeen days, came lowing back into the camp. The thieves had abandoned them in the bush. There friendly Barolong had found them and driven them mile after mile to the stranded wagons. 'Why, this is miraculous', Hodgson exclaimed.

It was a merry party that set off at last for Sifonello's capital. Neither Sifonello nor Moroka had ever seen a wagon before, but Sifonello now rode royally on Broadbent's and Moroka on Hodgson's, while a Barolong escort ran alongside to show the way.

When they set eyes at last on that capital with its 500 simple Bechuana dwellings the missionaries broke down and wept. They forgot 'all the way we had come, the afflictions we had endured and the trials and perils through which we had passed, counting

them all as nothing now that our object in coming was being attained'.

They gave their mutinous drivers a wagon with which to return to Graaff-Reinet, with messages for Campbell and Griqua Town on the way. They did not guess that still greater perils and long wanderings lay in store for them ahead. For the moment all was cheerfulness and novelty.

Sifonello allowed them to build with their own hands the first European dwellings in the Transvaal in 'a well-selected and beautiful place called Maquassi', to which he intended to move his capital. Here at Old Maquassi, on 1 July 1823, not far from the spot where Wolmaransstad would rise many years later, Mrs Broadbent was safely delivered of the first white child ever born in the Transvaal. It was a fine healthy boy, who in after years became a missionary to India.

The child was only a week old when Thomas and Anne Hodgson, with Mary Anne and her playmate Orphena, took both wagons away to fetch urgent supplies from Griqua Town. In their absence an appalling danger loomed up. Fifty thousand Mantatees swept, pillaging and killing, on the baThlapin tribe of Bechuana near Kuruman, and prepared to attack Lattakoo (Dithakong) itself, a town where thousands of baThlapin lived under chief Mothibi. Lattakoo was saved by the presence of mind of its young missionary, Robert Moffat.

Seeing the weakness and panic of the baThlapin, he sent an urgent plea to Griqua Town for assistance. A commando of 150 mounted Griquas with fire-arms—William Anderson's wild but fearless flock—sallied forth to lead the resistance to the vast Mantatee host. They fired upon the invaders to such deadly effect that after hours of battle the Mantatees turned and ran.

South African history records no more spectacular victory by a few fearless men equipped with horses and guns against overwhelming numbers. Fifteen years before the battle of Blood River, the Griquas foreshadowed at Lattakoo the tremendous victories that would attend Voortrekker arms when wielded for the first time in open country against brave and warlike tribes who lacked experience of horses, wagons, and fire-arms.

As the shattered Mantatee retreated, they swept eastward along the north bank of the Vaal, straight in the direction of Maquassi. Sifonello's people discovered a vast force approaching their bush-

covered hills, and fled. Sifonello begged Broadbent to flee with him. But the wagons were at Griqua Town, Broadbent was ill, and his wife still weak.

'You will be destroyed if you do not flee', Sifonello insisted. 'I hope not', was all Broadbent could answer.

Sifonello and his councillors looked deeply perturbed. 'I cannot remain to defend you', he said. 'It would be madness to risk a battle. They are too strong for us.'

'Leave us. We will remain here', Broadbent replied till even Sifonello left at last. The servants fled. The Broadbents and their two children were left completely alone as the night came down, quiet and lonely.

Sifonello had left a few scouts in the bush. For three days, these scouts told Broadbent, the starving Mantatee host went by on the far side of a ridge, without discovering Maquassi.

Great had been the rejoicing at Griqua Town, just before the Battle of Lattakoo, when two wagons appeared from the east, and great the anxiety for the Broadbents when the Helms and the Moffats found that the Hodgson family had come alone. When the battle was over and the Mantatees retreated in the direction of Maquassi, Thomas tore himself from his family and set out to attempt to save his friends. He reached an encampment of the Mantatee only a few hours after the famishing horde had moved on. He found a Mantatee woman roasting part of a dead man's leg on coals while another woman and a man with savage greed gulped down the portion she had already cooked. Hodgson was promptly sick.

At last the Broadbents espied two white wagon-tilts coming over the rise above the simple cottages at Maquassi. Hodgson was overjoyed to find his friends safe. Soon after, Sifonello returned, to marvel with his people at the Broadbents' escape. Hodgson fetched his family from Griqua Town. Soon the two Englishmen were growing civilized crops for the first time in the virgin soil of the Transvaal.

They planted wheat, maize, beans, pumpkins, onions, carrots, beet, and melons. They started a little orchard of peach-trees, fig-trees, and vines. They laid out test plots to find the best time to sow their crops. They were the first to prove that maize, which is now the staple crop of the whole western Transvaal, would grow there without irrigation.

But no crop that they brought to the Transvaal was so unfamiliar as the mercy and the kindness they carried with them. They defied Sifonello's anger and threats to plead for the life of a young thief who had robbed them. They opened an orphanage to save the lives of children whose relations had been killed in those chronic wars which marked the life of the tribes. These orphans helped them to dig the first well in the Transvaal. When water at last appeared in the bottom of the well, the tribe was astonished. It took much encouragement to persuade Sifonello to taste the magic liquid.

The two English families steadily gained the trust and affection of the Barolong and in turn grew more and more attached to the helpful chief and his friendly, though pilfering, people. Day after day they wrote down and memorized new words of Tswana, against the day when they would know the language well enough to explain to the Barolong why they had come so far, through such great dangers, to live among them.

They observed Sunday strictly, holding a service in Dutch in one home or the other for themselves and their Coloured servants.

'In less than 12 months from the time of our settling at Maquassi, there was a quietness and stillness on that day which served to remind us of the Lord's Day in our native land.' It was the Transvaal's first experience of the Christian Sunday.

Into this scene of growing hope came an unknown wagon one day and in it the first white man to visit the Transvaal mission, Edward Edwards, a Methodist missionary from Namaqualand. He brought bad news. The Missionary Committee in London had ordered Hodgson to return forthwith to Cape Town. Edwards himself would help the Broadbents till James Archbell and his wife took the Hodgsons' place.

Hodgson had no wish to revert to his post at Cape Town. He had won the confidence and friendship of the Barolong. He and his family were on the most affectionate terms with the Broadbents. But he had to obey.

When all preparations were complete for that immense journey, 'Mr. and Mrs. Hodgson entered my dwelling, where my dear wife and myself with our two sons sat in tears', Broadbent wrote. 'They took an affectionate leave of us and withdrew. We could not accompany them to their wagon . . . but sat weeping

with grief . . . and mourned as though all our earthly sources of happiness had been removed from us.'

Edwards did not take Hodgson's place at Broadbent's side for long. His Namaqua converts, sent to preach to the Vaal River Hottentots, were terrified of the Mantatee. At first temporarily, but soon permanently, Edwards settled with them well to the west among Chudeep's Koranna Hottentots at Moos, probably near the present site of Bloemhof.

At Maquassi Broadbent's health grew worse and worse. One night during a brief spell of improvement, he was oppressed again and again with an intense presentiment that he and his family ought to leave Maquassi. It made so vivid an impression upon him that he resolved to pay a fortnight's visit to Griqua Town.

The Broadbents had hardly left on that visit when a fierce neighbouring tribe fell upon the Barolong, inflicting heavy losses of men and cattle. The attackers razed the two rough missionary cottages and carried off or destroyed all the Broadbents' possessions. Meanwhile, the Broadbents themselves, quite unaware of their escape, reached Griqua Town without incident. Samuel Broadbent was now so ill that there seemed little chance that he could ever recover. Wasted and ill, he reached Grahamstown in November 1824. A year later he was invalided out of South Africa, apparently dying.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### A MASTER TREKKER

The Hodgsons in comfortable Cape Town followed with deep concern every scrap of news that came through about their friends at Maquassi. At last news reached the Cape of Sifonello's disaster and Broadbent's illness. Someone had to succeed the Broadbents at the side of the Archbells.

Thomas and Anne did not hesitate. They agreed to plunge again into the Transvaal with all its wars, and implement Broadbent's promise not to abandon Sifonello and his people. Before the Broadbents reached Grahamstown, the Hodgsons were on their way back into danger, with their new allies.

The Rev. James Archbell was a short, sturdy Yorkshireman of 26, toughened by five adventurous years in the wilds. In October 1818 he had married Elizabeth Haigh in the parish church of Leeds and sailed with her for Cape Town before the year was out to join the Methodist mission in Namaqualand.

First the young couple opened a new station at Rietfontein, four days north of the Methodist headquarters at Lily Fountain (Leliefontein) in the Khamiesberg. Elizabeth's first child was born in a rough little hut in the veld with no one to help her but her husband.

She carried a cheerful courage whatever befell. She needed it all when she and James set out with their Christian Hottentots to reopen the Warmbad mission in South West Africa. This mission lay a month's trek north of Lily Fountain and had lain derelict in the desert since 1811. The Archbells narrowly escaped dying of thirst on the way. Then they faced death by drowning as they struggled to cross the flooded Orange River.

War broke out in the South West African desert between the Namaqua tribesmen and the Bushmen. It was no part of the missionaries' duty to take sides. They withdrew to the Cape during the fighting. On the way south their elder child saw bread

for the first time and refused to eat it. She thought this unfamiliar luxury was some kind of soap.

James now tried to break into South West Africa from the sea. Friends in Cape Town chartered a cockle-shell of a ship, the sloop *Julia*, to take him and his Namaqua evangelists to Walvis Bay to examine the possibilities. James declared on his return that he was ready to open up the Great Namaqualand desert with his family if he were given a colleague. None was forthcoming and he was sent instead to the still more dangerous 'Bechuana country', now known as the Transvaal.

On 25 May 1825 the Hodgsons and the Archbells met Sifonello, an impoverished wanderer now, at Moos on the Vaal. 'His joy at seeing us was great', Hodgson wrote, 'and it was no small pleasure to us to meet an old friend.'

Early in August they gazed on the blackened ruins of Maquassi. It was Archbell who roused them from despair. They cleared out the well. They found their fruit-trees were still alive. Hodgson and Archbell laboriously built themselves new stone cottages with their own hands. They had spent exactly one day in them when Sifonello was defeated in battle by a neighbouring tribe and decided to leave Maquassi forthwith.

It was a sore trial, after a whole year in wagons, 'again to pack our wagons', as Anne, no lover of trekking, wrote submissively, 'and commence anew our gipsy life'.

For a while they camped on the Vaal and there, on the tiny printing-press Archbell had brought, they published the first book ever produced in the Transvaal. It was a school primer in Tswana to help the Barolong to read. Many of the words and phrases had been collected by Broadbent when he was too ill for any other task. The little book was printed in 1826, nine years before the first Voortrekker reached the Vaal.

Sifonello still refused to return to Maquassi. A few weeks after the book was printed, the missionaries trekked with a few followers to a safer and more fertile home that Hodgson had discovered at Platberg, a few miles south of Warrenton on the future boundary between the Orange Free State and the northern Cape. At last Anne Hodgson with her only daughter, and Mrs Archbell, with her growing family, could move into permanent houses after years in and out of their wagons. Sifonello and the tribe joined them at Platberg, and soon Barolong children's voices

could be heard reciting phrases from the Tswana reader in the church and school that Thomas and James had built.

The Archbells now felt it safe to leave their companions and trek southwards to distant Graaff-Reinet to buy corn so that they could once again taste bread. Hardly had they gone when Mary Anne fell ill of what was, perhaps, diphtheria. In a few days she was dead. The Hodgsons were childless. 'The world has now lost its charms and appears an empty void', Anne Hodgson wrote in anguish of heart. 'God is not good to kill your child', Sifonello and his people told her gravely.

But Anne, surely one of the few real saints in our disputed history, found in this loss of her second child (the first had died in England) a call to an inner peace and faith of rare spiritual quality. She would need it all on the road of suffering that lay ahead.

Sifonello died soon after at Platberg, where his people, among the first in all Bantu Africa, were at last beginning to climb the long ladder to the Christian civilization of the West.

At Platberg the missionaries were on the borders of Griqua country. Several Bastard captains lived to the westward, not all of them reliable or peaceful neighbours in that disordered region. Yet they were a valuable protection, with their fire-arms and horses, against the murdering raiders of the Transvaal. In 1828, with Platberg flourishing, the missionaries agreed the Hodgsons should start a new station, with the sanction of the London Missionary Society, at Boetsap, forty miles west, near the present Vaal-Harts irrigation settlement. Here lived the ageing Barend Barends, William Anderson's first friend. Barends had passed through troubled times in his later wanderings while the Bastards and fierce Koranna Hottentots fought each other and pillaged the Bantu tribes.

'A small reed house of one room, without window or chimney' was parlour, sleeping-room, kitchen, and store, to say nothing of schoolroom and chapel, Hodgson wrote. Soon Anne was teaching sewing to girls of many races—Griqua, Bushman, Bechuana, and Koranna—as she and Elizabeth Archbell had done together at Platberg. Thomas, in the intervals of building their home, was teaching children and adults to read.

It was at Boetsap that little Isabella Hodgson was born in January 1829, amid the rejoicings of her parents. 'Tell my dear mother', Anne wrote to her sisters in England, 'I am happy in the

Divine favour, a kind husband, a lovely child and a useful station.' The people of Boetsap were indeed responding warmly to the affection and diligent care of their new missionaries, who built anew on the foundations that William Anderson had laid at Griqua Town.

Early in 1830 Anne Hodgson felt a pain in her breast whose meaning she did not disguise. In England she had had a tumour removed by the crude surgery of 140 years ago. 'I have reason to believe the cancer in my breast is confirmed', she wrote calmly. 'Humanly speaking, before I can procure medical advice, it will be incurable. A suffering scene is before me, a lingering, painful death—perhaps the very method which Infinite Wisdom will adopt to bring me to a closer communion with Himself. All is well.' At this time she confided to her journal her inner feelings on life as a whole: 'The divine tranquillity, the sacred peace, the resigned will, the wonder, "Why such love to me?"'

In December 1830 the Hodgsons said goodbye to their people at Boetsap, the thriving school, and the flourishing church. Their faithful friends the Archbells helped them across the Vaal, and trekked south with them to attend the Methodist district meeting in Grahamstown. The meeting, at which the Hodgsons' friend William Shaw presided, resolved that Thomas should take Anne and Isabella to England as soon as possible. They reached their native town Darlington in County Durham in the middle of 1831. It was there among her family that Anne, after a few months of intense suffering borne not only with peace but with joy, died on 30 September 1831.

Thomas waited four years in England, perhaps to enable little Isabella to reach a fit age to travel. Then he set sail for South Africa and resumed his original post in Cape Town.

His bold open-air preaching to the Coloured population aroused public opposition. An angry mob stoned him on the Grand Parade. But Thomas Hodgson, who had ventured with wife and child into the land of the Mantatee a dozen years before the first Voortrekker commandos, was not the man to be daunted by a shower of stones. Long before he died at his post in Cape Town in 1850 his manliness, his courtesy, and his gentleness had made him universally respected and beloved. Five thousand mourners of all races attended his funeral.

James and Elizabeth Archbell and their big family at Platberg

had more travels in store. In 1829, two famous trader-explorers from Grahamstown, Robert Scoon and William McLuckie, visited Platberg and told the Archbells that they had met Mzilikazi, king of the Matabele, and found him eager to have a missionary.

The Matabele by now had displaced the shattered Mantatees as the scourge of the Transvaal. Taking his wife with him, Archbell set out by wagon with the trader-explorer David Hume and Barend Barends. James and Elizabeth Archbell were probably the first white people ever to see the bleak, sour ridges of the uninhabited Witwatersrand.

The capital of the Transvaal at that time was in the neighbourhood of the present capital, Pretoria. Mzilikazi's great kraal lay close to the present site of Pretoria North. But the Archbells were in despair of being admitted, till Robert Moffat's wagon unexpectedly drew into sight from the west. Mzilikazi had sent indunas to Kuruman, and now, in Moffat's company, Archbell was able to ride into the great kraal and watch the massed dances with which the absolute ruler of the Matabele welcomed his white visitors.

Describing his pioneer journey through the southern Transvaal to the Magaliesberg and Pretoria, Archbell wrote in his journal: 'I came to an immense nation who call themselves Zoolahs and who at a reasonable estimate cannot be fewer than from 60 to 80 thousand. Their towns are numerous and densely spread over a country 200 miles in extent and one of the finest I ever beheld.' He was struck by the luxuriance of the Matabele's crops of maize and kaffir-corn, pumpkins, and melons.

Was it on this or a later journey that Archbell recovered his little son Joseph, who as a baby had been captured by a roving Matabele impi? The Archbell family tradition asserts that Joseph was recovered after he had been reared for twenty months among the Matabele.

Archbell never beheld again this 'most despotic monarch', before whom 'even his mother and brothers', as he noted, 'appear on their knees or in a low bending posture'. It was Moffat who became the friend and adviser of the terrible king, with far-reaching consequences for the peace of the Bechuana and the rise in our own day of the Central African Federation. Archbell was swept by the currents of history southward to help the Voortrekkers at a critical stage of their trek.

The success of the Platberg mission began it. It is difficult for anyone to picture today the almost continuous wars, forced migrations, and disorders that were the normal life of the Bantu when the white man met them. 'A chief of more than ordinary ability rises,' Livingstone wrote from the depths of his unparalleled experience in Bantu Africa, 'conquers his neighbours and founds a kingdom which he rules till he dies. His successor, not having the talents of the conqueror, cannot hold the dominion. This may be considered normal, and gives rise to frequent and devastating wars, and the people look for a power able to make all dwell in peace. In this light a European colony would be looked upon by natives as an inestimable boon. Thousands of industrious folk would settle round it and engage in peaceful pursuits.'

Livingstone's own experience of the undisciplined and often lawless Voortrekkers of the north-western Transvaal never inclined him to view the Voortrekker occupation north of the Orange as 'an inestimable boon'. He contrasted the Voortrekkers most unfavourably with their more stable, educated, and orderly countrymen in the eastern Cape Colony. But with all their violent racial prejudices, their land-hunger, and their inexperience of settled administration, Voortrekker rule was destined to bring to the Transvaal and Free State a measure of order and public safety such as no Bantu conqueror had ever brought, and with it some chance for the Bantu, at rest from tribal wars, to learn the arts of peace.

Such peace and order as Archbell, with Chief Moroka's help, could foster at Platberg attracted newcomers from far and wide, as Griqua Town had done when Anderson and Kramer first established it. Presently the Barolong, Koranna, and Griqua hangers-on numbered nearly 10,000. The wheat experiments of Hodgson and Broadbent at Maquassi had not been wasted. By the early 1840s Boer stock-farmers were visiting the Bechuana to buy wheat. Meanwhile the population of Platberg had far outgrown the fountain. The Barolong had to find themselves a more spacious and well-watered home, beyond the reach of the Matabele.

In May 1833 Archbell and his assistant John Edwards accompanied a Barolong expedition from Platberg into the future Orange Free State. Up the Modder River valley they moved in wagons and on horses through what seemed a land empty of people but

full of vast herds of blesbok, springbok, wildebeest, and hartebeest, where lions roared by night and the wheels of Archbell's wagon by day crunched from time to time in the lush grass on the bones of tribesmen slaughtered by Matabele impis. Apart from a few Bushmen, the land seemed to have not a human inhabitant left. The few Basuto survivors hid on the flat-topped koppies.

Presently the expedition saw a blue mountain-top, of a height beyond anything they had ever known before, rising above the skyline. It was the towering 'Black Mountain', Thaba Nchu. They passed its fertile, well-watered base on the tenth day and gained Moshesh's agreement to their occupying 600 square miles of empty country there. Later the Barolong tribe with the missionaries' help 'bought' rights to Thaba Nchu from Moshesh in return for eight cattle, thirty-four sheep, and five goats—an undertaking whose real meaning (acknowledgement of Moshesh's overlordship) Archbell did not grasp.

In December 1833 the missionaries joined the Barolong and the people of Boetsap on their great trek. Twelve thousand strong, with friendly Griquas and Korannas among their number, they moved in a body across the level western Free State, within sight, perhaps, of the lonely koppie at whose foot Bloemfontein would rise, and settled around the Black Mountain.

That is why the Voortrekkers, when they moved north with immense numbers of fat-tailed sheep and humped cattle in 1836, found English dwellings at Thaba Nchu, the beginnings of a church, and a whole tribe with its chiefs friendly to 'the Christians', as white men then described themselves. They met a fully ordained clergyman, 'Aartspiel' (with an 1820 Settler colleague, Thomas Hezekiah Sephton), ready to welcome them, to hold divine service for this emigrant and pastorless flock, to baptize their children, marry their sons and daughters, act as their postmaster, and tell them all he knew of the new countries in the north.

The stern Dopper leader, Hendrik Potgieter, found in Archbell, who at that time had trekked much more than himself, a man after his own heart. It was the great regret of the Voortrekkers that they had failed to persuade a single pastor of the under-staffed Dutch Reformed Church to accompany them. Potgieter begged Archbell to become official chaplain to the Great Trek. Archbell did not feel entitled to leave his post but an opportunity soon arose

to show the friendliness of Moroka's people towards Christians in a most practical way.

Bastards with horses and ox-wagons had been attempting to pillage the Matabele's cattle in attacks from the south. This led Mzilikazi to make the southern Transvaal a no-man's-land insulating his own fertile country in the Magaliesberg. Small Voortrekker parties who crossed the Vaal unaware of this situation were promptly destroyed, and a powerful Matabele force fell upon Sarel Cilliers's party of thirty-five men with their families not far south of the Vaal at Vegkop near Heilbron.

In a heroic action lasting several hours Cilliers and his men drove off the impi with heavy loss from their laager. But the Matabele carried off all the Voortrekkers' cattle to Mzilikazi in the north-western Transvaal. Cilliers and his followers were stranded at their wagons. They could not leave Vegkop without losing all chance of again forming a laager against their assailants.

As soon as word reached Thaba Nchu, Archbell sent his own oxen north to help Cilliers and persuaded Moroka to do likewise. They brought the Voortrekkers safely home to the mission. At Thaba Nchu the Archbells and Sephtons were barely 200 miles from Port Natal and the Zulu as the crow flies. In fact, the first white men ever to cross the Drakensberg into Natal were two Englishmen who rode from the Thaba Nchu cluster of Methodist missions to the port in December 1836. But Archbell little guessed, as he and his colleagues opened new and promising mission stations among the pale golden cliffs and lofty blue mountains of the eastern Free State, that his wanderings would yet lead him in the trekkers' wake to Natal.

It is one of the tragedies of the Voortrekker republics in their insecurity that most of these missions were suppressed by the Free State republic during its wars against the Basuto. Similarly, the Transvaal Voortrekkers signaled Britain's recognition of their independence in 1852 by attacking the Bechuana tribes of the western Transvaal and expelling their missionaries—David Livingstone among them.

These reverses for civilization and Christianity lay far in the future at the time when Archbell said goodbye to the Barolong at last. For his own health and his family's education he went overseas in 1838, after publishing his Bechuana grammar and translations of the New Testament in Grahamstown.

When they sailed in July they took with them two Graaff-Reinet boys aged 12 and 10 to be educated in Scotland. John and Andrew Murray were destined in later years to become famous leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church.

The Archbells had lived too long and too intensely in the African wilds to feel at home in the great cities of Britain. By 1841 they were back in Grahamstown. James was fit enough to ride 600 miles to Port Natal, where the Voortrekkers gave him a great welcome, and flocked to hear him preach at Umlazi. He returned on horseback, as he had come, and reported to William Shaw.

That missionary statesman, who combined the courage of a lion, the gentleness of a child, and the wisdom of a serpent, had planned for years to start a Zulu mission to complete his chain of Kaffirland stations, staffed by 1820 Settlers. Only a severe illness had prevented him from interviewing Dingaan at about the time of Piet Retief's arrival in Zululand. Now that the Voortrekkers were in the ascendant and Dingaan had been replaced by his more peaceful brother Mpande, whom could Shaw find better equipped to live at peace with Voortrekkers and Zulus alike than James Archbell?

Shaw sent the Archbells up by wagon along the Kaffirland chain of missions to take advantage of a military escort. Captain Smith was about to move his contingent of 260 soldiers north from Pondoland to assert British sovereignty over Port Natal.

Having faithfully followed the worst wagon road in Africa over the tumbled mountains of the Transkei and Natal with sixty wagons more, Archbell and his family scarcely had time to greet their Voortrekker friends encamped at Congella when the first Anglo-Boer war broke out between Smith and Andries Pretorius.

Along with other British non-combatants, the Archbells were allowed to take refuge in the schooner *Mazeppa* anchored in Durban Bay. Though James acted as interpreter for Pretorius, his sympathies, like those of all the Methodist missionaries after the Voortrekker raid on Chief Ncapai, were undoubtedly with British supervision of the country. He liked and had publicly defended the Voortrekkers, but they were still, in everyone's eyes but their own, British subjects.

The story of the *Mazeppa's* dash for freedom, and its vain

search, with famine rations of food and water, for a British cruiser to come to Captain Smith's rescue has often been told. Elizabeth Archbell was in her element on that risky voyage.

The siege had hardly been raised before her husband was building yet another rough-and-ready home and another simple church, the first Methodist chapel in Natal.

When Shaw sent up missionary reinforcements, the Archbells moved inland to the capital at Pietermaritzburg, where James built one more home and one more church. There he preached in English, in Dutch, and in Zulu.

His popularity with the Voortrekkers who remained in Natal was undiminished. Who could understand them like 'Aartspiel', a trekker himself? It is not surprising that he was appointed, along with Boshoff (future president of the Orange Free State), to a commission to inspect the Voortrekkers' tangled land claims. That was in December 1847—the very month in which, for reasons now lost in oblivion, he withdrew from the Wesleyan Missionary Society and began a vigorous new career as a layman.

He started to farm. Had he not taught the Bechuana to grow wheat? He started the *Natal Independent*, one of the first newspapers in Natal. He began issuing his own bank-notes and founded a bank. He encouraged his son's school-friend in England, James Methley, to settle in Natal and foster the British immigration of 1849 which laid the foundations of modern Natal.

Private disasters beset him. A son was washed over the Howick Falls. Not many months later, a second son died of a fever. These tragedies bore down the resilient spirit of Elizabeth and hastened her death in 1854.

Archbell sought consolation for private grief by throwing himself more fully into the public life of the new colony. He was a founder and became an early president of the Natal Agricultural Society and of the (Royal) Natal Show. In 1857 he was appointed a member of Natal's first legislative council. A year later he became mayor of Pietermaritzburg and one of the first mayors in all South Africa. Courteous, forthright, and kindly, he was re-elected mayor so often that he became an institution. He gloried in the fact that Pietermaritzburg (and Durban) led all South Africa in municipal self-government.

If any man could claim to embody in himself the characteristic contribution of the English-speaking South African to his country,

it was this modest prince of trekkers. At one stage or another of his remarkable life he was explorer, missionary, educator of the Bantu, translator of the gospels into a Bantu tongue, improver of agriculture, champion of free institutions, banker, business man, and journalist. Even the apparent cooling of his spiritual fervour by the middle of the century was symbolic of his people.

When he found rest at last from his long wanderings in a quiet Pietermaritzburg churchyard in 1866, he was honoured and respected by all—Boer, Briton, and Zulu.

## CHAPTER NINE

### TO THE SOURCE OF THE CONGO

Word reached William Anderson at Pacaltsdorp that the light he had kindled and tended among the Griquas had spread to Boetsap, to Platberg, and to Thaba Nchu. He heard that Sifonello had died at Platberg 'seeking the way of salvation' and that his own old friend Barend Barends, despite past back-slidings, had died at last at Boetsap firm in the faith which he had learned at Griqua Town.

Yet the first introduction of Christianity and of civilization into the Transvaal and Orange Free State was only a part of the harvest sown during his twenty disheartening years north of the Orange. As he and Johanna read reports from the London Missionary Society's stations in the far north—that north which lay utterly wild and unknown when he rode into it with Cowan and Donovan in 1808—their thoughts returned again and again to a haggard figure of long ago. Its face caked with dust, its lips black and swollen, that figure had staggered to their door in Griqua Town and made pleading signs for water. When the apparition had drunk enough to be able to speak again, it croaked, astonishingly, 'I am Moffat.'

'Mr. Anderson was not a little surprised to find who it was', Robert Moffat wrote a quarter of a century afterwards. 'Kind-hearted Mrs. Anderson instantly prepared a cup of coffee and some food, which I had not tasted for three days.'

'The society of Anderson and Helm with their partners in labour was most refreshing to my soul. A crowded and attentive congregation and the buzz of the daily school made me forget the toils of the road and cheerfully did I bear my testimony to the word of grace which had been so blessed among the Griquas.'

Moffat had tried to reach Griqua Town by a short cut across the desert from his reed-hut in Namaqualand at the headquarters of

the famous Bastard bandit, Jager Afrikaner. He barely managed to reach the Andersons alive.

After Moffat had recovered, Anderson took him for the first time to the Kuruman district, which Moffat afterwards made famous throughout Christendom. Anderson introduced him to the Bechuana, whose apostle he became. That was not all. It was Anderson's patient work at Griqua Town that made the Kuruman mission possible. Anderson's influence and example, more than anyone else's, induced Mothibi, chief of the baThlapin tribe, to accept a missionary in spite of the fiascos of the past, and so initiate the first permanent Christian mission to the southern Bantu of Africa.

The official leader of the deputation to Mothibi, which changed the destinies of Africa, was a dumpy Scottish minister who traversed the African wastes with a black umbrella to ward off the sun, and a bottle of brandy (so Moffat averred) to subdue a pestering thirst. The Rev. John Campbell was a travelling director of the London Missionary Society and well understood how much was at stake.

Griquas, Hottentots, and Bushmen combined were but a handful of human beings compared with the vast 'Caffre' race (as it was then called). The Bantu peoples of Africa extended from Kuruman in the south-west and the Great Fish River in the south-east to the equator. Not a single mission anywhere in South Africa had yet been established among this great isolated branch of mankind. But Anderson had fostered friendly contacts for years with the Bechuana. When he met Campbell and his escort, James Read of Bethelsdorp, on the banks of the Orange in 1813, he suggested Mothibi might welcome a missionary. Campbell grasped the opportunity.

Within a few days Anderson, Adam Kok, and a party from Griqua Town, including a Bechuana who had learnt Afrikaans at the mission, conducted Campbell and Read northwards at leisure through a country whose rich covering of grass profoundly impressed them after the desolate Karroo. At last they outspanned safely in the kgotla square of Mothibi's headquarters at Lattakoo (Dithakong). They found they were in the largest town of South Africa, bar only Cape Town. Lattakoo housed 7,500 inhabitants in rustic dwellings under the trees. After little Griqua Town, it looked a metropolis.

Mothibi was diplomatically absent, but negotiations were friendly. When the chief at last appeared and held the fateful kgotla with his councillors and people, the deciding factor was surely Anderson.

The dumpy man under the black umbrella could explain as best he might his improbable-sounding story of having been blown for three moons in a floating house across a great water in order to expound to Mothibi the Creation, the Redemption, and the Judgement. What really interested Mothibi appears to have been the growth of his Griqua neighbours in order and prosperity since Anderson and Kramer had settled among them.

The chief expressed doubts and misgivings, of course. He did not want to see his people neglecting their cattle and gardens in order to learn new doctrines. He feared that those doctrines and customs might cut across his own. (Had Adam Kok been telling him how Anderson frowned on polygamy?) He pointed out that in droughts his people had to trek. White men might not be content to share their hardships. Whereupon Anderson told him how he had shared in the homeless treks of the Bastards.

When the chief and his people finally agreed to receive a missionary, it was no doubt a second Anderson that they expected. They had, after all, seen missionary quitters at the Kuruman River before. But William Andersons are not made to order. The extraordinary thing is that the baThlapin a few years later were actually given a second and greater Anderson, and his name was Robert Moffat.

Moffat's years of struggle against the apathy, contempt, and drift of the baThlapin; his endeavours, amid their loud amusement, through months and years to master their language before its key, the euphonic concord, was known; the hard physical labour by which he and his colleague Robert Hamilton diverted the waters of the Kuruman to grow wheat for the mission; the alarms and wars that raged all round them and threatened their homes and families year after year—these are African history now. William and Johanna far away at the southern shore of Africa, in the shadow of the beautiful church they had built at Pacaltsdorp, could picture better than anyone else what Robert and Mary Moffat were suffering and building at Kuruman.

Eight years of disheartening and apparently fruitless struggles elapsed before Moffat gained his first Christian convert in

Bechuanaland. When at length in 1829 he admitted Joseph Arend by baptism to the world-wide company of Christendom, Anderson's heart must have lifted in joyful surprise. Arend? Of course he knew Arend. He was the runaway slave who had been Buys's right-hand man during Anderson's own heart-breaking years at Griqua Town.

In 1842, when the tide had turned at Kuruman, and Christianity was at last finding staunch and eager adherents among the Bechuana, Moffat published his famous book *Missionary Labours in South Africa*. It took the British public by storm. It was Moffat himself, on furlough in Britain for the first time, who decided a rugged young Scot of no courtly graces—David Livingstone himself—that Africa, not China, should be his field.

In quiet Pacaltsdorp, where nearly all the members of Anderson's large family shared in teaching the disinherited Hottentots of the Cape Colony that they were children and not stepchildren of the Creation, William must have read with a full heart the generous tribute Moffat paid in his book to the foundations laid at Griqua Town by himself and Kramer.

Yet the full record of what he and his successors in the mission field were achieving in Africa, where might had been the only right since the beginning of time, and where woe awaited the conquered, remained hidden from Anderson.

He had seen the Fiftieth Ordinance conferring equality before the law on the Hottentots of the Cape Colony, largely at the instance of his own fellow missionaries. But he did not live to see the franchise given in 1854 to Hottentots who could pass the same tests as white men.

The fight that missionaries, and the sons of missionaries who became Native commissioners, would put up to preserve the tribal lands of the Bechuana, the amaXhosa, the Basuto, and the Zulu still lay in the future. He could not know that the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the colony of Basutoland, the Transkeian territories, the Native reserves of the Ciskei, Natal, Zululand, and—under the pressure of Shepstone and the British—the Transvaal as well would be secured to the Bantu peoples as an inalienable possession in face of the land-hunger of British settlers and Voortrekkers and their descendants alike.

In proportion to the growing numbers of the Bantu, these reserves would come to look small and inadequate. Yet how vast



*Native Settlers old House Museum, Durban.*

**HENRY FRANCIS FYNN**

From a sketch by F'Ous



**The Rev. JOHN CAMPBELL**  
in his garb as an African explorer



L'Africana Museum, Johannesburg.

Boer outspan in the Karroo (circa 1890). From a sketch attributed to Charles Bell.

and fertile they were, compared with the Hottentot reserves for which he and his first chief, the courageous van der Kemp, his erratic colleague James Read, George Barker, and kindly old Pacalt had fought at Bethelsdorp, Theopolis, and Pacaltsdorp.

If Anderson knew only in glimpses the great victories still to come, the schools and colleges, which would be crowned by the first Bantu university college in Africa at Fort Hare, the rise of mission hospitals, and the vast growth of the Church, he was spared also the coming schisms and quarrels between warring denominations, and the rise of strange new Bantu separatist churches often far removed from the strict path of Christianity. Nor could he foresee the reversal of the Cape principle of the franchise for all civilized men, the State secularization of mission schools built up by more than a century's labours, and, above all, the ever-growing bitterness between the varied races which saps the foundations of the Union of South Africa today.

The 'aged teacher of the heathen', as a British officer described Anderson in 1836, was spared these blows. His family grew up around him, dedicated to the same task as himself. One of his sons, the Rev. B. E. Anderson, moved north of the Outeniquas to lead a life of dedicated poverty with his brave wife among the Hottentots and Coloured of the Oudtshoorn district.

It was the same unending task as William's—restoring a dispossessed people shattered by the white man's coming and by his clamant demand for labour, and saving them from drunkenness and thieving, ignorance and dirt. Mrs Anderson, like Johanna before her, struggled to raise fourteen children with little but bread to feed them on. She kept a school for fifteen white children, boarding six of them. She ran a dozen small houses for poor members of her husband's flock and was always at call for the sick. When her husband needed a new wagon for his ceaseless tours among the Coloured of the Little Karroo, she bought it with clothing made by her own hands.

One of William Anderson's daughters married Daniel Helm, son of his old Griqua Town colleague. She became the mother of Charles Helm, a pioneer missionary of Mzilikazi and the Matabele at Hope Fountain near Bulawayo. There are descendants of Anderson in the mission field to this day.

In 1848 came the greatest sorrow of William's life. Johanna died. 'Shining in all the graces of a Christian,' he characteristically

inscribed above her grave, 'she discharged with fidelity every duty and prayerfully sought to improve every opportunity of usefulness among her fellow creatures.'

Fidelity, usefulness, prayer—they were the corner-stones of his own life as well as Johanna's. When she was taken from him, he had no more heart at 78 to carry the burdens of Pacaltsdorp and all its out-stations. He retired and lived quietly among his flock.

Before he died in 1852, Livingstone reached the Zambezi and its teeming Bantu peoples on that amazing trek which was to carry him through the heart of Africa. What kind of farthest north would Griqua Town seem when Livingstone died at the source of the Congo?

But Anderson's work had meantime borne other fruits. The mission to the Griquas which he had founded, and Moffat's work for the Bechuana and influence over Mzilikazi the Terrible reached the ears of the founder of the Basuto nation. Moshesh offered the Griquas 100 head of cattle if they would find him a missionary too. And so the French Protestant missionaries were led to Basutoland.

Even the Voortrekkers, with their hatred of James Read, van der Kemp, and Dr John Philip, indirectly owed much of the foundation of their own organized Dutch Reformed Church beyond the Orange to the work begun by William Anderson at Griqua Town and carried northwards to Kuruman. Moffat's friendship with Mzilikazi enabled the first American missionaries to establish themselves among the Matabele near Zeerust, just before the Great Trek. There Hendrik Potgieter's commando of Voortrekkers were amazed to find them quietly living in a kraal of the dreaded Matabele.

That introduction led the Rev. Daniel Lindley, one of the three American missionaries, to devote the best years of his life to helping the pastorless Voortrekkers. His descendants live on in South Africa to this day.

What of the Griquas themselves? So dearly had many loved Anderson that after he settled at Pacaltsdorp a deputation walked all the way from Griqua Town to see him and to bring him the stock that belonged to him. The Griquas owed the ability of their greatest leader Andries Waterboer, who had no European blood, to the friendship and teaching that Anderson and Cornelius Kramer had given him.

At Griqua Town and at Pacaltsdorp alike Anderson had hundreds of friends who owed such peace of heart, such integrity with each other, and such unafraidness of death as they possessed to his humble example and admonition. He did not live to see the Griquas finally lose their land to the oncoming Boers.

Anderson's tombstone records in sonorous Dutch his 'long life devoted to the service of God and the welfare of his fellow beings'. But his true monument lay outside the churchyard: 'Pacaltsdorp became a haven of refuge for the downtrodden and oppressed; it uplifted and instructed the degraded, forlorn and ignorant slaves and Hottentots. Pacaltsdorp, a visitor said in 1831, is one of the places on which the eyes look and the thoughts dwell with peculiar feelings of satisfaction.'

## CHAPTER TEN

### TREKKERS OF THE SEA

In the roaring surf of St Lucia, eight or nine Englishmen and their Xhosa interpreter fought for their lives. The yellow beach that they glimpsed from the top of curling breakers still looked an impossible distance away. Their boat had been swamped by the rising sea nearly a mile off an unexplored coast. That is how the founders of the greatest ocean port of Africa first came ashore in Natal, 130 years ago.

More dead than alive, Alexander Thompson of Cape Town struggled on to the beach at last. As he recovered strength, he looked anxiously round for his companions. He never set eyes again on four of his little band.

To complete the survivors' distress, the two small sailing-ships in which King and Farewell were waiting well beyond the line of breakers hoisted their anchors and ran to seaward to escape the growing storm. Five weeks went by before the brig *Salisbury* and the sloop *Julia* could take off the marooned men.

After such an escape most men would have had enough of the harbourless coast of Zululand and Natal for a lifetime; but Thompson, King, and Farewell put back to Algoa Bay, restocked the brig *Salisbury* and the sloop *Julia* in the small 'English' village which the 1820 Settlers had founded on landing there three years before, and returned to the roaring surf of Natal.

Presently the *Salisbury* was in danger again. Wind and sea rose with frightening rapidity while she lay at anchor off another long beach of yellow sand, with the same crashing surf between. One of the innumerable river-mouths of the coast opened under a jungle-covered hill a mile away. It was scarcely a hopeful prospect. Time after time, King and Farewell had studied these mouths through their telescopes but always found them blocked by dangerous bars of sand.

This bar looked slightly deeper, the east wind was blowing

hard, and the lee shore was dangerously close. Lieutenant James King had fought Napoleon's navies. Suddenly he made up his mind. He cut the anchor cable. The ship gathered way and he steered her straight at the breakers bursting on the bar. After a few minutes of tumult, the brig glided out of the broken water into a glimmering blue lagoon that stretched for miles into the wooded shores. Hippos and waterfowl teemed in its shallow waters.

When writing his eager account of that escape to Earl Bathurst soon after, King did not guess that this harbour, 'small' but 'the only one on this extensive coast', would become the premier ocean port of Africa within a hundred years. The Port Natal which he rediscovered is now among the twelve biggest ports in the world.

No one has ever told the full story of South Africa's ports and the daring of the English-speaking South African seamen who risked and frequently lost their lives to prove and exploit them. They made immense contributions to the rise of a civilized South Africa.

The Bantu tribes of Natal in the early nineteenth century regarded Europeans as white monsters cast up by the sea. These marine animals, they told each other, glided across the ocean in large shells and in time of storm drew near the coast to look for their food—the tusks of elephants. 'If you see these animals,' tribal elders advised, 'lay tusks out on the beach for them. They will take them away and bring beads there instead from the bottom of the sea.'

This superstition about the first ivory traders along the coast of Natal and Zululand enshrines a forgotten truth about civilization in South Africa. It is a sea-borne thing, the creature of the waves. It was in ships that the civilization of the West reached the Americas, Asia, Australia, and Africa. For their Bibles and school-books, for the paper they wrote on and the fire-arms and ammunition which gave them control of the country, every section of civilized and half-civilized society in South Africa depended on ports and ships. If the sea-links with the West were cut, civilization would founder.

Without its ports, developed at a heavy cost in lives and property, South Africa as we know it could never have arisen, and could not now exist. English-speaking South Africans

played an overwhelming part in opening up these ports to the trade of the world. It could scarcely be otherwise. The Dutch East India Company's ban on coastal shipping had stripped the old Dutch colonists of their sea-faring traditions. They took instead to the tented wagons. They navigated the wide interior with straining teams and cracking whips, as their forefathers had navigated the seas.

When Barrow travelled the Cape Colony at the end of the eighteenth century, he found Table Bay and Simon's Bay as hazardous for shipping as when van Riebeeck landed. There were no signs of Dutch ports on hundreds of miles of storm-bound coast other than a new but disused storehouse for wheat at Algoa Bay and a timber store at Plettenberg Bay.

But a new nation of seafarers was already seeking out new harbours. At Knysna, James Callander, late of the Royal Navy, was sounding and charting the river, the mouth, and the bay outside. He talked of starting ship-building within, where forest and river met.

At Algoa Bay the first permanent building erected in the Eastern Province stood guard over the fresh-water supply of the Baakens River. This was General Dundas's Fort Frederick. A progressive Western Province farmer, Dirk Gysbert van Reenen, who visited the fort with General Janssens during the Batavian régime in 1803, admired the neat buildings and the splendid English vegetable-garden but thought the landing-site ill-chosen because of the surf.

Barrow, who was more used to the ways of the sea, knew better. He called it 'the prettiest situation for a small fishing village that could possibly be imagined'. And he noted the heartening effect of this port garrison on the frontier Boers, who previously could find no market for their soap, candles, and butter without taking them 500 miles by ox-wagon to Cape Town.

We cannot assess the full contribution that Fort Frederick and the settlement of Port Elizabeth that grew up at its feet after 1820 made to the rise of civilization in the Eastern Cape and on the Highveld beyond. It broke the Cape's long monopoly as the sole point of contact between the frontier Boers and the civilized world. For a century to come it dispatched to the advancing front of civilization the essential reinforcements of men and supplies.

The shelterless coast exacted a heavy toll. In the narrative of

his marine surveying in the 1820s Captain Owen mentions wreck after wreck on the South African coast. He describes the departure of a South African vessel from Algoa Bay while he was there in 1823 and adds that she (like others) was never heard of again.

One notable sea pioneer was Lieutenant John Bailie, leader of the first party of 1820 Settlers to land in Algoa Bay. The country allocated to him and his 250 followers lay between the sea and the Great Fish River. In the intervals of farming he did his best to prove that the river-mouth was a usable harbour. He took a boat into it from the sea. But even Bailie had to admit the place was too risky.

During the Sixth Kaffir War he undertook a unique military duty by surveying the coast of Kaffirland from the Great Fish River eastwards in search of military landing-places. At last he found what he wanted at the mouth of the Buffalo River. In November 1826 John Findlay, founder of a notable South African family, brought George Rex's stinkwood brig the *Knysna* to the Buffalo mouth, where Bailie was waiting to meet him. To this day East London regards Bailie as its founder, though no village rose on the spot till 1847.

Bailie had suffered much on land. At the end of 1847 he took a post with the Port Elizabeth harbour works and next year started a trading-post at Durban. Still the sea beckoned him. He surveyed the coast from East London to Durban in his yacht *Haidee*. In 1852 he started a coaster service between Durban, the mouth of the Umzimvubu (now Port St Johns), and the Umgazi River in Pondoland.

On one of these voyages he discovered the barque *Hector* in distress on the steep coast south of Umzinto. Taking three of his five men with him he went on board the *Hector* to try to save the ship. But during the night the wind strengthened so much that the *Haidee* had to put out to sea and run for port. After doing all he could for the *Hector* without avail. Bailie sent four men ashore in the one small boat available. It capsized in the surf and was so badly damaged that it could not return.

The rest of the men on the doomed barque reached the shore on spars. But Bailie had injured one hand too badly to strike out for the land. With a lad of 15 he climbed into the rigging of the disintegrating vessel. Those who had reached the shore watched,

utterly helpless, while the old pioneer and the boy clung there for hours before dropping at last into the raging sea.

The romance of one forgotten harbour, Port Beaufort, has recently been told by Edmund H. Burrows in *Overberg Outspan*, together with the labours of Benjamin Moodie and the Barry family of Swellendam, who brought it to prosperity in the days before railways.

But who remembers John Murray, whose schooner and trading-store at Mossel Bay were described by van Reenen as early as 1803; or Henry Nourse, Joseph Dyason, and William Cock, the makers of Port Alfred? The blended tales of Callander, George Rex, and the Thesens from Norway, who between them made Knysna a port, are almost as forgotten today as the tale of the Norwegian settlers who developed William Bazley's Port Shepstone or that of the Transkeian trader-seaman, Sydney Turner, who started Port Grosvenor.

In the days before railways and motor transport these forgotten ports played essential roles in opening up South Africa. George Thompson, the Cape Town merchant and traveller, pointed out in 1827 that all the fertile parts of South Africa then known lay not far inland from the long semicircle of coastline. Could the stormy sea around this coast not be made into South Africa's first national road?

No one tried harder to realize this vision than a young man from Oxfordshire who brought out ninety settlers in 1820 to the country between the Kowie and the Great Fish River. William Cock was too busy finding his feet in those first years to join Henry Nourse, Joseph Dyason, and Robert Hughes in their harbour and shipping adventures at the treacherous mouth of the Kowie River. Nourse's brother, Commodore Nourse of Simon's Bay, assured Lord Charles Somerset in 1823 that the mouth of the river need only be straightened as far inland as the deep part of the Kowie for the scour of the tides to keep the entrance clear. He suggested they build a dredger at Port Kowie, send out engines for it from Europe, and fell the timber on the banks to fuel it.

Commodore Nourse died on the fever-stricken coast of Madagascar, but Cock revived the scheme in 1836 with all the vigour and independence of his remarkable personality. A founder of the parliamentary tradition in South Africa, he sat from 1847 to

1868 in the nominated Cape Legislative Council and in the elected Parliaments that followed it. When he broke with John Fairbairn's methods of boycott in the anti-convict agitation, he made it characteristically clear that he at least was not prepared to starve out Sir Harry Smith and his officials. He sailed from Table Bay to the Kowie with legs of mutton dangling from his masts.

At his own cost, Cock now gave the Kowie River a straight new mouth such as Commodore Nourse had planned. Under his direction hundreds of Hottentots excavated a new channel through the sand-hills and lined it with stone. By 1841 South Africa had its first man-made harbour.

Then Cock risked his boldest gamble. To his fleet of small sailing-vessels he added a brand-new steamship from Britain, the 175-ton *Sir John St Aubyn*, which could carry sixteen passengers and fifty tons of cargo. Except for the paddle-steamer *Hope*, which Fairbairn, Chase, J. B. Ebdon, and other Capetonians had bought in 1836, this was the first steamer owned by South Africans. She came out under sail to Port Frances, as Port Kowie was now styled. Her engines were installed at the Kowie. In October 1842 she steamed out on her maiden voyage to Cape Town with William Cock himself on board. Five months later she lay, a total wreck, at the mouth of the Kowie.

Even this disaster could not deter Cock. He is reputed to have spent £70,000 in all—the equivalent of perhaps £350,000 today—on his Kowie enterprises. In 1859 a private company resumed his harbour development scheme with government help. As a veteran legislator Cock lived to see the golden age of his port, which was renamed after Prince Alfred. Sailing-ships and small steamers freely entered the mouth he had dug from the dunes. From 1875 until far into the eighties mail-ships regularly anchored outside to drop cargo and passengers.

Every pioneer faces the risk of blind alleys. In the new age of railways, Port Elizabeth and its jetty proved too strong a competitor for Port Alfred. William Cock had passed away and Grahamstown had lost its place as the second city of South Africa when Cock's port slowly crumbled. But not every alley that beckons the pioneer is blind. If Port Kowie was doomed, like many another, King's 'small' harbour, 'the only one on this extensive coast', had a different destiny.

Henry Francis Fynn was the supreme representative of its 'sea-Voortrekker' period, just as 'Old Mortality' Milne would represent its William Cock period of home-made harbour works. The man who would make Durban one of the great ports of the world was Harry Escombe, second Prime Minister of Natal.

Fynn was a tall, shy youth, with an attractive face, when he left Robert Hart and the Somerset Farm behind him and walked 600 miles to Cape Town to make his way in the world. In Cape Town the man whom neither Zulu impi nor charging elephants would terrify in coming years almost starved because he could not pluck up courage to ask strangers for a job. At last Henry Nourse put him in charge of cargo on a trading-vessel to Delagoa Bay. His destiny was settled.

Within a year, Fynn was tossing in the twenty-ton sloop *Julia* in the long swell round the coast, on his way to open the first trading-store at Port Natal for Farewell and King, who would follow.

He never forgot his first night ashore at the glimmering lagoon King had rediscovered a few months before. A storm of rain broke at midnight, drenching the four men of the party. While they tried to dry themselves by a fire, starving hyenas attacked them and had to be fought off with burning brands all through the rest of the night. After this experience, Fynn and his artisans made themselves a rough tent with a sail and fortified it with branches before the following night. On the clearing where they put up that tent the railway station of Durban stands today.

From the very beginning the aim of Farewell and King had been to open up trade with a rumoured potentate called Chaka. To find Chaka they had made their first disastrous landing at St Lucia. Fynn's first duty now was to meet Chaka and open the way for a trade agreement, so he struck north with an interpreter across the crocodile-infested Umgeni River. Suddenly, recorded Fynn in his diary recently published in full, 'I saw on my right a dense mass of people coming fast from the direction I had come. My view extended over several miles of the beach, but I could not see the rear of this immense black and continuous mass of natives, all armed and in their war dresses.'

This dense mass of Zulu warriors, divided into disciplined regiments, 'continued to pass by me until sunset, all staring at me with amazement, none interfering with me'.

A year went by before Fynn realized the peril in which he stood of being casually struck down as a sea monster that day. He was saved by his own coolness. Instead of fleeing, he stood perfectly still, kept pointing to where he had come from and where he wanted to go, and repeated the powerful name 'Chaka'. Thus he began a friendship with the Zulu king such as no other white man, and perhaps no other black man, ever enjoyed. That friendship ensured the safety of the tiny white settlement by the lagoon and the success of its ivory trade.

Chaka gave the use of Port Natal and its environs to King and Farewell after the meeting arranged by Fynn. But within four years King had died of his hardships and disappointments. Farewell, with two other traders, was killed by a Native chief after Dingaan's assassination of Chaka. Fynn still bore a charmed life. By his courage and compassion he saved thousands of Bantu from summary execution by the Zulu king or death by starvation.

By 1834 Fynn had decided that Dingaan was in no way to be trusted. He left Natal to serve Sir Benjamin D'Urban among the Xhosa on the Cape frontier.

But the future of the lagoon was assured. Numbers of other traders, including the first white women, had settled there. A church would soon be opened by the missionary Captain Allan Gardiner, and Fynn was among the contributors. There was no prospect that Port Natal would be forgotten once more, as it had been after Simon van der Stel's interest in founding a settlement there 150 years before.

Reports of this harbour and its green hinterland at length reached the future Voortrekkers. These particularly impressed Fynn's friend Piet Retief, who had watched the rise of Port Elizabeth after the landing of the 1820 Settlers and appreciated the necessity of a port for his coming republic. Potgieter thought the Voortrekkers ought to aim for the Transvaal, but Retief led them south-east over the Drakensberg towards Port Natal.

The ensuing war with Dingaan eventually freed the port from the Zulu terror. The Battle of Blood River began a new era for the glimmering lagoon under the jungle-covered hill.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### ROMANCE OF A GREAT PORT

Eleven years after British traders and Voortrekkers had united against Dingaan, a naked Zulu carried John Milne ashore from a lighter at Port Natal.

Why a civil engineer of Edinburgh should elect to leave Scotland at 50 and make a new start with his daughter Jessie on twenty acres of veld in Natal is hard to imagine. Within a month Milne had found a better vocation. He began to improve the notorious harbour of Port Natal which had served the tiny ships of King and Farewell up to a point. King himself was eventually wrecked in the *Mary* while trying to enter the harbour, and the marooned crew had to spend three years constructing a new vessel from the *Mary's* spars and planks sawn from the forests that covered the sites of the future factories and suburbs of Durban.

Daring skippers continued at long intervals to risk crossing the harbour bar at high tide. But once Natal began to fill with British settlers in 1849, not even all the optimism of G. C. Cato, the shipping agent, who had helped Dick King set off on his famous ride, or of genial Captain Bell, the harbour-master, could conceal the horrors of the entrance.

So little can Port Natal be called a natural harbour that Cato actually tried keeping ships at anchor outside off the main beach and bringing their cargoes ashore through the surf on lighters, as was done in Port Elizabeth. The attempt failed. Sometimes ships had to wait a month in all weathers outside the harbour before the bar was deep and calm enough for them to hurry in on a spring-tide. They might be imprisoned inside for weeks by the bar.

When Milne was carried ashore, the practice in the heaving roadstead was to lower passengers from ships into lighters. Then bearded English boatmen—the Zulu still found the sea a wholly foreign element—rowed them towards the white line of surf in

the harbour entrance. As the lighter neared the bar, all passengers were ordered below and the hatches battened down over them to keep out the bursting waves. In pitch darkness the passengers felt the boat reeling, plunging, and leaping in the surf while salt water splashed down from the deck above. Once the lighter slid into calmer water, the hatches were taken off and the great burnished lagoon suddenly came into view. Zulus carried passengers the last few yards to dry land.

It was not always as easy as that. Once a lighter went aground on the bar. For twenty-five minutes the breakers roared and smashed over the helpless craft while water rose deeper and deeper around the passengers in the darkness below. On another occasion a lighter took off a load of passengers from a ship at breakfast-time, but was tugged away from the harbour-mouth by winds and current. It did not reach the customs-house with its unutterably seasick travellers till late in the afternoon.

'The deeply vowed "Never more!" of these occasions has been faithfully kept', wrote George Russell, who entered the bay by lighter about the same time as Milne. 'Numbers surviving that horror have never recrossed the bar, notwithstanding the modern inducements of steam tugs, flags, music and good company.'

Such was 'Port' Natal when John Milne began his harbour work for the almost penniless government. His first task was to arrest the encroachment of the sea on the customs-house at the north-east edge of the bay and on the beach opposite. The massive materials and equipment to which he had been accustomed when working with the great John Rennie in Scotland were out of the question now. Humbly the Scottish engineer made groins of rubble and drove stakes into the sand to stop the drift.

Simon van der Stel had suspected that Port Natal was just as worthless as this. His marine explorers told him its mouth was blocked by a sandbank over which no galliot could pass without touching. Was the glimmering lagoon for which English traders and Afrikaner trekkers had poured out blood and treasure to prove only a costly fiasco? Milne thought not. While Jessie, the belle of Durban, kept his neat little home in sandy West Street, where the traffic roars today, Milne was out early and late in the bay with flags, buoys, and Native helpers. He kept harbour-master Bell ceaselessly busy with soundings.

After long observation and that questing thought for which

lack of funds is the incentive, Milne framed his plans. One was to narrow the harbour-mouth by a pier running out 2,000 feet from the point. Thus began the famous north pier of later controversy. The second, which he later abandoned, was to narrow the mouth still more by building a parallel but somewhat shorter breakwater from the Bluff. He argued that the concentrated scour of the tides filling and emptying the broad lagoon would deepen the narrowed harbour-mouth to twenty-six feet instead of six at half-tide.

The project would cost £78,000. The Natal administration's total revenue at the time was only £33,000 a year. But Milne was allowed to start the north pier. He discovered suitable stone at the Cave Rock beyond the point of the Bluff. To transport it across the sands to the ferry over the harbour-mouth, two new immigrants, Richard Godden and William Campbell (grandfather of the poet Roy Campbell), laid the first South African railway track. It was a crude tram-line of hewn milkwood poles. Oxen, not locomotives, dragged the milkwood trucks with their loads of stone. The same immigrants with the aid of Native labour laid the stone squarely in place. Their work stands to this day as the landward end of the north pier.

Milne's heart was in his task. Jessie Milne capitulated at last to a handsome captain and left the neat little cottage in West Street for a new home in Australia. But her father remained 'always on duty', George Russell wrote, 'hovering over the sand dunes or lingering around the stone workings, dressed in a long Nankeen coat and wearing a broad Manilla hat, from under which his grey hair and thoughtful face could be seen as he plodded, long walking staff in hand, over his "Works" or round the scorching Bluff. He so identified himself with his undertaking that he was playfully spoken of as "Old Mortality".'

Into that rapturous absorption in the task there obtruded, after a half-dozen busy years, a new lieutenant-governor. John Scott had an interest in engineering. He convinced himself that harbour works designed by the 'old Scotch body' must be professionally faulty. In 1857 he had John Milne dismissed.

Seventeen years passed before 'Old Mortality', who seemed as imperishable as his stone pier, looked a tall, bearded Englishman full in the face and explained the theories on which he had worked. Harry Escombe listened intently with his committee around him.

Keenly he questioned the white-haired engineer about the staggering waste of Natal's public moneys, since Milne's dismissal, on a port that by now was a byword with seamen all over the world.

As he listened to the quiet replies of the thrifty old Scot, Escombe's own future was shaping beyond his ken. That glimmering lagoon was to become his life. More than to any other man or combination of men, South Africa owes its greatest modern harbour to the vision, the eloquence, and the patience of Harry Escombe. He foresaw that in the age of steam the colony of Natal was doomed if it did not turn that lagoon into a modern harbour. He realized that if by thrift, courage, and foresight it could achieve that miracle, the port could assure the future of the whole colony by securing the trade of the republics and even of Kimberley. In the years that followed, it was Escombe who inspired the struggling colony with his obsession to create a superb port for all South Africa.

When Escombe headed that inconclusive committee of inquiry in 1874 the outlook was black. Fairbairn, Hercules Jarvis, Abercrombie, and others had long since secured the construction of Cape Town's first successful harbour works. Harbour works were arising or about to arise at Port Elizabeth and East London. There was even talk of linking the Transvaal republic and its new gold-fields by rail with the great natural harbour of Delagoa Bay. But Port Natal was still much as Lieutenant King had found it in 1823.

Since Milne's dismissal, two useless piers had been constructed. One, from the Bluff, was destroyed by the fury of the seas. The other, from Durban beach, was wrongly sited and too frail for the heavy surf. Between them they had cost the little colony far more than £100,000 without the slightest benefit to the harbour.

Only Milne's solid, thrifty work had produced any results at all on the bar. The great overseas expert Sir John Coode recommended a £200,000 scheme, much on Milne's lines, provided no rock bed underlay the harbour entrance. The colony's engineer started probing the sands. Soon he announced the discovery of 'a plateau of rock', 1,000 feet wide, barring the entrance only thirteen feet under sea-level. Sir John Coode responded with a revised scheme to cost nearly half a million. This was too much for Harry Escombe. Milne did not believe

in the plateau of rock. He thought—correctly—that it could be nothing more than a layer of shingle and easily moved boulders. Escombe attacked the £500,000 scheme in a biting broadsheet. It would bankrupt the colony.

Not long after, he was elected for the first time to the Legislative Council of Natal and took the first steps to appoint a self-governing port authority. From the birth of the Natal Harbour Board in 1881 till its dramatic abolition fourteen years later, Advocate Escombe was chairman. He built himself a house looking out over the bay near the present High Court buildings. It was the first in Natal to have electric light. Every morning he rose early for the first rite of his day—surf-bathing off the Bluff. At seven he entered the Harbour Board offices to master the shipping and weather reports and the soundings on the bar. Then he set out on his heavy round of general work and engagements. He was a gifted Queen's Counsel, a rising politician, a founder of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in South Africa, and a keen amateur sportsman and scientist.

He was also, as R. C. A. Samuelson recorded after working in court with him to defend Dinizulu, 'a gentleman to the backbone, possessed of the highest honour, rectitude and sense of justice'. Three times he refused a knighthood. But he dearly loved a fight.

In 1882 Escombe publicly announced the Harbour Board's aim. The objective was 'a harbour accessible to ships of any draught, at all states of the tide, in any weather, by night as well as by day'. To Natal itself, and still more to the rest of South Africa, this challenge sounded almost absurd. Durban, the port of poverty-stricken Natal, had 'of late acquired', as Escombe himself admitted, 'an unenviable notoriety not only for the number of shipwrecks but also casualties to vessels that come inside'. Its too-casual pilots had been known to demand tips.

The board needed a new John Milne. The choice fell on Edward Innes, a young marine engineer from Algoa Bay, who proved a man after Escombe's own heart. He resumed work on Milne's north pier, which had reached only a quarter of its projected length. He started the sturdy breakwater that runs parallel with it from the Bluff to shelter the harbour entrance from the south-east rollers and their load of sand. Wharves appeared along the sandy bay. Swamp land was reclaimed for harbour foreshore. Escombe with eager foresight pressed for a



William Cock's harbour at Port Alfred. From a print by T. W. Bowler.



Durban harbour from Congella. From a painting *circa* 1850.

railway to the coal-fields of northern Natal and got a line built to the Bluff as a first step towards making notorious little Durban the great coaling-port of the Southern hemisphere.

Just before his early death in 1887, Innes hit on the ultimate solution of Durban's harbour problems. He stopped extending the north pier and demanded a long extension of the south breakwater. He had already introduced dredgers to reinforce tidal scour. Escombe felt Innes's death like the loss of a son.

An experienced marine engineer from Scotland, Cathcart Methven, took his place. Presently a dispute flared up between the new engineer and the chairman of the harbour board that was to divide Natal and eject Escombe eventually from the premiership. The quarrel began when Methven decided that a big extension was needed to the north pier. He seemed to have an excellent case. The bar had certainly been much improved by the Innes scheme but now sandbanks were building up instead at the entrance to the harbour works.

To those who watch it daily, the sea is a living thing, capricious and barely predictable. All over the world its wayward currents, and the loads of sand brought or removed by its storms and tides, have puzzled marine engineers. Escombe by now had a long practical experience of the sea's behaviour in the harbour. He had also watched relatively enormous sums of money being wasted from Natal's small treasury on futile schemes by experts. He allowed Methven to lengthen the north pier up to a point. Beyond that, he was adamant. But the board was rent in two by the dispute.

The erratic behaviour of the sea and the bar fast became a public issue. Escombe believed that the big new extension to the north pier would be useless, and might in the end have to be pulled down. He came to believe that dredging, which Methven intensified, was the only effective way of keeping the harbour open to the largest ships then using it. Methven, with his technical training, vigorously maintained that tidal scour was vital for deepening the channel. He planned to concentrate it by prolonging the north pier till it ended abreast of the south breakwater.

To the big political faction that formed behind Methven, Escombe's defiant statement in the Legislative Council on 27 June 1892 that 'tidal scour is an unreliable factor to depend upon' was proof of technical ignorance. The irresistible force, Harry

Escombe, who had charmed hundreds of thousands of pounds from the taxpayers for a port beyond their dreams, 'the port of south-east Africa', had met the immovable object.

Feeling grew intense throughout Natal for and against the new north pier project, against and for the impetuous and brilliant Escombe, host and guest of President Kruger, and champion of a free federation of Natal with the rest of South Africa.

When the efforts of Robinson and Escombe were crowned with the grant of responsible government in 1893 and Sir John Robinson became the first Natal premier, it was whispered that Escombe told inquirers: 'If I join Robinson's ministry, it will all depend on his answer to the question: "John, what are you going to do about that North Pier?"'

Escombe did join the ministry and resigned from the Harbour Board. The board at once approved Methven's scheme—and found itself dissolved by the Cabinet. Responsible government, ministers explained, gave the taxpayers more direct methods of controlling harbour expenditure. But what the public noticed was that in this change Methven lost his post. A storm of protest broke out. There was an action at law and a commission of inquiry, who questioned Escombe closely.

'The engineer and the colony were on one side and you on the other—pitted against both?' the commissioners asked him.

'To a great extent', said Escombe calmly.

On Escombe's triumphant return as Prime Minister from the celebrations of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in London, it was the turn of the irresistible force to be replaced. His government was defeated in the 1897 elections, which largely turned on the harbour issue.

The outgoing government had referred the north pier question to outside experts. A famous British firm of consultants now found in favour of Methven, who later did much notable service for the ports of South Africa. They recommended the further narrowing of the harbour entrance by an extended north pier to help tidal scour. Meanwhile the bar had rapidly deepened under persistent dredging. Larger ships than ever before—a ship of 1,700 tons was then considered large in Durban—were entering safely and docking alongside Escombe's great wharves.

On 31 May 1898 Escombe made his last stand in parliament. He pleaded with the new government to wait six months before

extending the north pier, in case dredging alone proved perfectly satisfactory. His opponents jeered. In those days of easy party discipline, there was no telling whether Escombe might not be premier again in a few months' time. They voted funds for an immediate start on the project he opposed.

In 1900 the seaward end of the north pier came abreast of the seaward end of the breakwater. At first the bar deepened, exactly as Escombe had prophesied. Two years later it began losing depth—as he had prophesied too—in spite of all the tidal scour and the dredging.

The eminent British consultants faced this result by recommending a drastic increase in dredging to the depth Escombe had pleaded for. By 1904 this depth was attained and the first mail-steamer ever to enter Port Natal, the *Armadale Castle*, crossed the vanquished bar in view of an enormous crowd.

But steamships continued to grow in length, as Escombe had forecast that they would. The harbour entrance proved a danger to larger ships, exactly as he had warned. It was too narrow for them, and, because of the lack of overlap by the breakwater, too unsheltered. In the 1920s the South African Railways and Harbours started restoring the overlap by the south breakwater on which Escombe had year after year insisted. In the late thirties the Railways at heavy cost began to demolish the north pier extension against which he had fought. As for tidal scour, the father of Durban harbour has been proved uncannily right against the experts. The greatest ocean port of Africa does not require it. It depends on dredging.

Escombe did not live to see his intuition vindicated in one of the twelve greatest ports of the modern world. One hot day in December 1899 he left his home for work as usual, staggered at the gate, and died. The burdens that he had borne on behalf of the burnished harbour beyond the gate and as a result of the outbreak of the disastrous South African War were gently lifted from Harry Escombe.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THROWING OPEN THE WINDOWS

It was a day to avoid His Irish Excellency. The Governor was in a towering temper. He had achieved a feat almost unheard of. He had built a road in South Africa. Now, shocked at this extravagance, the Colonial Office threatened to charge the road to Sir Lowry's personal account.

Sir Lowry Cole had grown grey in the King's wars. Wellington's generals were not used to being treated like this. It was not so much the threat to his purse that made him fume. The people of the Cape, as soon as they heard of Whitehall's threat, offered to meet the whole cost themselves. The trouble was that Sir Lowry was actually proud of his misdeed. He had recently taken his whole family of boys and girls to see the wonderful new pass taking shape in the Hottentots-Holland.

'I cannot, however much I may wince at the censure I have received, regret having taken this step', he replied acidly to Viscount Goderich, Secretary of State for the Colonies. He apologized, somewhat stiffly, for having undertaken the road without special sanction. Then he put his unanswerable case: 'The Colony is miserably poor, with a semi-barbarous population scattered over an immense tract of bad land, separated from the more civilized parts by mountains over which there are few passes and those of a description that would not be considered passable for a wheel carriage in any other country of the world, I believe. Being cut off from a market for their produce, there is no stimulus for industry and the inhabitants must ever remain in their present state of poverty and semi-barbarism until these passes are made passable.'

Sir Lowry could not foresee, in that hour of gloom in 1830, that a brilliant team of English-speaking South Africans, one of them his own road-builder, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Michell, would soon devote their lives to the great enterprise of making

'these passes passable'. Neither the Dutch East India Company nor its British successors nor the people of South Africa had achieved that task in 190 years. Before the 200th year had come, the band of friends whose names live on in Montagu Pass, Bain's Kloof, Michell's Pass, and Stanger had created 'the Road of South Africa'. Few of their countrymen today know what they and the advance of civilization owe to these great road pioneers.

In 1830 when Sir Lowry wrote to Goderich, almost impassable tracks were all that linked Cape Town across the sandy Cape Flats with Africa. Even when wagons had strained and struggled from the capital across this moat of sand to Paarl or Stellenbosch, a barrier of almost vertical mountains shut off the interior. Van Riebeeck called them 'the Mountain of Africa'. Though a rough and often impassable wagon-track broke through the nearest mountain chain at Tulbagh Kloof, the first man to attempt a lasting solution to the problem of ready access to the hinterland was Lord Charles Somerset.

That creative despot occupied the leisure of the Royal Africa Corps, 'old soldiers' in every sense of the word, by keeping them on the construction of the Fransch Hoek Pass over the first mountain chain, far from the taverns of Cape Town. This first mountain highway gave access to Swellendam and Mossel Bay, beyond which the Outeniqua range barred the east and the north.

The second chain of mountains walling Cape Town off from Africa was pierced by two hair-raising passes. The pass of Mosterts Hoek gave access, in theory, to the north-eastern hinterland of the capital—the Warm Bokkeveld and the Cold Bokkeveld, which are now rich fruit-growing districts, the Roggeveld, the Nieuweveld, Calvinia, and other now prosperous sheep districts. All were poor and without prospects then, for lack of roads.

Even after Jan Mostert, who lived at the foot of this pass, constructed a rough wagon-track up it at his own expense in the mid-eighteenth century, wagons had to be taken to pieces for carriage up or down the mountain. This practice continued far into the nineteenth century.

The second chain of the Mountain of Africa was also pierced by the notorious Hex River Pass to the interior. Even the indomitable Andrew Geddes Bain, who trekked and traded far into the interior and into the forests and mountains of Pondoland,

shuddered at the thought of risking his oxen, his wagons, and his possessions there. On returning to Graaff-Reinet in 1825 from his first wagon trip to the far north, he complained at the sand-drifts, rocks, and extortionate farmers of the Hex River Pass to the *South African Commercial Advertiser*. Unless something was done about that pass and other parts of the road to the Cape, he declared, 'I, with many others of more consequence, must despair of ever showing our "weather-beaten phizes" again in Cape Town'.

On the direct route to the eastern frontier, where civilization was in constant danger of being overwhelmed, the first mountain barrier was the Hottentots-Holland range at Gordon's Bay, only thirty miles from Cape Town. It was here that Sir Lowry Cole encouraged Charles Michell to build the famous Sir Lowry's Pass.

Lady Anne Barnard travelled this route in 1798 in such state as the Cape could provide for the first lady of the Colony. She gives us a vivid picture of the hazards of the pass. Though the wagons used a track of sorts, she found it 'very perpendicular' and strewn with 'huge jutting rocks' up which the straining oxen dragged the wagon. They had to be urged on by Hottentot drivers who lashed them with whips and jabbed them with knives till their flanks streamed with blood.

Not many miles farther, Lady Anne found the track over the Houw Hoek Pass equally alarming. Far to the east, if she could ever have travelled so far, there loomed the most dreaded obstacle of all—the appalling mountain above the future town of George which virtually cut off road communication between the Eastern Province and the Western Province.

'The Cradock Kloof', an army officer reported as late as the 1840s, 'is the most impossible place for horses, much less wagons, to get over I ever beheld. It is positively as perpendicular, in parts, as the face of Table Mountain. The distance is only  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles but what with accidents and detentions it was nothing uncommon for a wagon to be three days in getting over the barrier.'

Such were the obstacles in South Africa, even 190 years after van Riebeeck's landing, to the elementary exchange of people, goods, and ideas without which there can be no civilization. To make matters worse, these obstacles interposed themselves between the chief port and almost the whole of the country.

Without free exchange of goods, South Africa must remain,

in Sir Lowry Cole's words, 'miserably poor'. It could not expect any adequate construction of schools, churches, and hospitals, any adequate public service, or any adequate force of administrators and police to replace commandos as the enforcers of law and order among undeveloped races. It could gain no national independence worth the name.

Without free exchange of people and ideas, the fine flower of a civilized culture could never bloom. The windows of the interior had to be thrown open to the winds of the civilized world before there was any chance for South African literature, South African art, and South African music, to arise in mingled reaction and response.

Within twenty years of Sir Lowry Cole's departure those windows had been flung wide. The diary of Hendrik Hamelberg, the young Dutch lawyer who landed in Cape Town late in 1855 and eventually became consul-general of the Orange Free State in Europe, reveals a profoundly altered South Africa. Hamelberg took popular one-day omnibus jaunts to Paarl and to Stellenbosch from Cape Town without realizing that only ten years earlier ordinary horse-drawn vehicles were a rarity on the Flats, or that there were times when even ox-wagons took weeks to cross the deep sand.

To travel up to the Voortrekker republics, Hamelberg bought himself a buggy and two good horses. He did not know that a few years earlier he would have needed a wagon and fourteen oxen, besides additional cattle hired from farmers at mountain passes. When he gaily set off from Bloemfontein with his young wife Dorcas, to visit her relations in Albany, he drove a Cape cart with four horses. At the end of the journey he expressed no surprise at finding that a public coach would take him on from Grahamstown eighty or ninety miles to Port Elizabeth in a day. South African transport had advanced from the slow pace of the ox to the rattling pace of the Cape cart.

By then John Montagu, who had fathered the great transformation with his imaginative schemes and thrifty organization, lay in an exile's grave in England, worn out by incessant overwork and strain. Bain, the peerless maker of roads, who set a new standard for South Africa with his military highways, was killing himself by inches as he toiled to complete the dizzy Katberg Pass. Colonel Michell, surveyor-general and civil engineer of the Cape Colony

from the building of Sir Lowry's Pass till Montagu's schemes were well under way, died in England only three years after retiring from the country he had served so well.

As for Dr William Stanger, who surveyed the route of South Africa's first national road from Cape Town to Grahamstown, his bones rested for ever in Natal. There he had surveyed and re-aligned the Durban-Pietermaritzburg road, for fast horse-drawn traffic.

Worn out by his labours in mapping Natal and by his earlier hardships as a botanist on the Niger, Stanger died at 42, a few months after Montagu.

Never less than twelve hours' work a day, often fifteen, was the standard John Montagu set for himself in the classic age of South African road-building. This tall, outspoken descendant of Drogo de Monte Acuto, who invaded England with William the Conqueror, contributed greatly to the evolution of the South African public service. As secretary to the colonial government he controlled virtually all the public service that South Africa had from 1843 to 1852.

It was disgrace that brought him to the Cape Colony. After years of prominent public service in Tasmania, where he had launched a much more humane system for the treatment of transported convicts, he was abruptly suspended by the governor. The fact that at the time he was next in rank to the governor made his suspension all the more conspicuous. He set sail for England with the first possible ship, taking his wife and children with him. In London he appealed in person to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Lord Stanley went through his case, exonerated him, and forthwith offered him the Colonial Secretaryship of the Cape Colony.

During the many months that successive governors spent on the eastern frontier during the Kaffir wars, Montagu was virtually in charge of South Africa. The public, who came to know well his firmness and his energy, did not guess his secret. The Colonial Secretary who set to work so vigorously to free the Cape Colony of its crippling debt was himself a ruined man.

Being absent from Tasmania, Montagu had decided to sell his Tasmanian estates by proxy. Mails took months each way and the sale was transacted in the depths of an Australian slump. When news of the results reached him, Montagu found that he was no

longer a man of independent means but a debtor for many thousands of pounds.

He withdrew his eldest son from Cambridge. He sold his country house in the Cape Peninsula and moved into Cape Town so that he could walk to work. The most stringent economy was practised behind the scenes in the home where all the leading visitors to South Africa in the forties and early fifties of last century were entertained in the Governor's absence.

Within two and a half years Montagu wiped out the long-standing paper money debt of the Cape Colony which the Colonial Office had exploited year after year as an excuse for not constructing harbours, roads, and bridges. But it took him the rest of his strenuous life to repay the £21,000 he owed in Tasmania. A month or two after the final payment he died on sick leave in England, haunted by the knowledge that he could bequeath his wife and children nothing.

A man of mercy who had no mercy on himself, Montagu kept his private burdens closely hidden from the public. But when his ceaseless labours met the appreciation of friends, his eyes would fill with tears.

It was towards the convicts of the Cape Colony, white, yellow, and brown, that Montagu most showed that heart of mercy. The Colony had barely 500 in those crime-free days. They were mostly scattered through a dozen tumbledown country gaols, where some had to be kept in the stocks at night to prevent them from escaping. Prison conditions were bad. There was no reward for good conduct, no training for reformation, and no after-care.

It was not long before Montagu, amid all his cares as head of the public service, knew almost every convict's name and story. Within a few months the Montagu Plan for reforming the convicts and building roads at the same time was in full operation.

Montagu's father had died at Seringapatam, fighting for his country. Montagu himself had fought at Waterloo as a youth of 18. It was natural that he believed in discipline. A prisoner should know, he insisted, that he was being punished for his crime and must undergo labour that was really hard. But he must also be well fed and properly clad. He must be trained, above all, for a better life afterwards. That could hardly be done in a dozen small, scattered gaols.

Montagu concentrated the convicts into two big road camps, each of which became a civilizing centre. Days were set aside to teach illiterate convicts to read, write, and reckon and to learn the truths of religion. When the convicts left at the expiry of their sentences, each was given a book of his own to take away as a gift from the State. It was a Bible granted by John Montagu. These rehabilitated men were snapped up, on release, by farmers at superior rates of pay as trained, disciplined labourers.

To decide where these convict gangs should build roads, Montagu called into being the first national road board of South Africa and created the local road boards of the Cape Colony. He called the national body the Central Board of Road Commissioners and became its first chairman.

As his friend Charles Michell no doubt told him, the first essential was still what Sir Lowry had laid down in 1830—to make the 'passes' passable. Behind the great coastal ranges, South Africa is one of the easiest countries in the world for ground communication. From Cradock to the Zoutpansberg the veld lay wide open for wagons and horse-drawn vehicles. No dense forests, no great rivers, no precipitous mountain ranges, extensive swamp-lands, or deserts barred the way. The Voortrekkers met no serious transport troubles till they attempted to descend from the inland plateau to Delagoa Bay and Port Natal.

William Stanger's heart was in botany but he was doomed to ceaseless making of maps. He rode out with orders to survey the route of South Africa's first civilian national road, from the Cape to Grahamstown.

Grahamstown was the inevitable destination. At that time it was the second city of South Africa, the commercial equivalent, in some ways, of Johannesburg today. It was also the headquarters of the frontier, where the Colony had often to fight for its life.

The worst obstacles on this road were not hard to locate. One was the Cape Flats and the other the notorious Cradock Mountain above George. Cradock's Kloof, where the disciplined convicts built the old Montagu Pass, became the first spectacular feat of South African engineering. For five and a half miles it had to be blasted out of the steep mountainside and built up from the abyss below on retaining walls of stone. Captain White, who directed the work, spent nearly £1,800 on gunpowder alone for blasting the mountainside.

When Sir Harry Smith opened White's masterpiece on 19 January 1849, he fittingly called it 'an undertaking which would do honour to a great nation instead of a mere dependency of the British Crown'. In fact this pass, like the others of the Montagu Plan, was designed in a more modern way than those which the engineers of Europe were building at the same time with enormous resources in the Alps. The South African road-builders always approached their passes by some mountain spur instead of zig-zagging directly up the mountain wall by a series of S-bends.

As Captain White and his convicts completed Montagu Pass and the subsidiary passes and bridges to east and west, the immemorial land barrier between the Eastern and Western Provinces lost its formidableness. Soon Montagu had three mails a week speeding each way between Cape Town and Grahamstown. His post-carts on the new national road covered the journey in seventy hours. The single mail a week each way which Hottentot riders previously carried on horseback had taken twice as long. The new mails were cheaper too. Montagu introduced the first uniform postage rate in South Africa. The average charge, under the old system of payment according to distance, had been a shilling an envelope. Now a half-ounce letter could travel anywhere in the Cape Colony for a fourpenny blue triangular stamp.

The local benefits brought by the Montagu Pass were typical. As soon as wagons could traverse in an hour with sixteen oxen the steep part of the climb that previously took them two to three days with thirty-two, the potentially rich Oudtshoorn valley could freely develop its wheat, vines, and tobacco, for a harbour lay handy just over the pass at Mossel Bay. The farmers of the valley no longer needed to take their crops fourteen days by wagon down the Longkloof to Port Elizabeth rather than risk their oxen and wagons on breakneck Cradock Pass.

Another result was a sudden increase in the number of light horse-drawn vehicles for private travel. By the time the Montagu Pass was opened, a wagon-maker in George found he had five years' orders on hand for sprung horse-drawn vehicles. Nor was this all. Soon Montagu, on a 2,000-mile inspection of roads, was studying the possibility of new passes to link the Great Karroo with the Oudtshoorn valley and thus to bring it, too, nearer the sea and its markets and mails.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE MASTER HAND OF BAIN

Even before the British occupation, Cape Town was closer in spirit to Europe than to the South African interior, where the Afrikaner race was silently evolving during the eighteenth century. The lack of a road across the Cape Flats was as adequate a reason for this isolation of the interior as the lack of roads over the mountain barriers.

Even the wine-farmers, the nearest of all the rural burghers to Cape Town, had to struggle across the dunes of the Flats with wagons half empty in order to reach their only market. During south-easters the wagon tracks were quickly erased by new drifts. At such times the Cape Peninsula, cordoned off by hot blasts of rolling sand, became an island off the African coast once more, as in the prehistoric past. Wagons sometimes took a fortnight and even three weeks to cross the dunes.

It was fear of the drifting sand that again and again prevented a start being made on this essential highway, in spite of all John Fairbairn's pleas in the *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the schemes of Cape merchants. Michell faced the risk in the early 1840s and Montagu soon arrived to support him. For twenty-four miles in an almost straight line through Parow and Kuils River they built the Hard Road to the Stellenbosch end of the sand at Eerste River. The road was eventually raised sixteen feet above the Flats, with gently sloping flanks to carry drift-sand up one side and down the other. With bridges to carry it over Salt River and Eerste River, it was completed by the end of 1845 at a cost of £40,000.

Montagu estimated that if 50,000 to 60,000 vehicles used the new road in a year, their saving in time, wear and tear, and cattle, would be worth £20,000 annually to the country. He saw the problem of road finance in its true perspective—a perspective still unfamiliar to South African Cabinets.

Fast horse-drawn traffic to the mainland multiplied enormously. Wine-farmers found they could now get their wine into Cape Town in half the time, with half the oxen. The Hard Road permanently enriched the Afrikaans language with the new word *hardepad* to express the hard labour imposed on convicts.

But the drifting sand was not beaten. Within two years it had buried great stretches of the Hard Road. Montagu called in a humble ally which was perhaps suggested by Stanger. It was a sprawling wild mesembrianthemum, the Hottentot fig. When the winter rains began, 300 acres of sand-dunes, temporarily anchored by wooden screens, were planted with it. The Hottentot fig triumphed where every other contrivance had failed for 200 years. It bound the rolling sand.

Still Montagu was not satisfied. On summer mornings after strong south-easters he would ride out along the Hard Road before dawn to study the latest sand encroachments, then canter back to start his work in office as soon as the doors opened. The drift was not yet completely arrested. He ordered every possible South African bush and tree to be tried in the dunes. The wax-berry gave results, but only in favoured places. At last he turned to the bushes and trees of Australia and found what he wanted. Port Jackson willows, wattles, and hakeas saved the Hard Road. They still save the tarred highways across the Cape Flats today.

And now, with the convict gangs freed for new labours, a man stepped forward who was to become a legend on the roads of South Africa. The foxy whiskers, the intensely blue, twinkling eyes, the keen, humorous, Scottish face, and powerful shoulders of Andrew Geddes Bain appeared at Mosterts Hoek near Tulbagh in October 1845. It was he who would build the Great North Road to the far-off Voortrekker country.

Bain knew the Voortrekkers intimately. From 1822 to 1834 he had lived with his wife Maria Elizabeth (von Backstrom) in Graaff-Reinet, the town of Louis Trichardt, Andries Pretorius, and Gert Maritz. There he and Maritz had a brief but notable quarrel, caused by Bain's brash humour.

Bain had reached Cape Town from northern Scotland in 1816 at the age of 19. By 21 he was married. By 28 he was away in his wagons far to the north, a dozen years before the Great Trek, trading and collecting ivory as far as Kuruman. In 1826

he and J. B. Biddulph trekked as far north as the latitude of Potgietersrus in the wild interior of Bechuanaland.

By then the *Commercial Advertiser* of Fairbairn and Greig was flourishing. The saddler of Graaff-Reinet, who read Shakespeare for relaxation, became one of South Africa's first newspaper correspondents. It so happened that Gert Maritz was involved in a fight with a fellow Graaff-Reineter. Bain joyfully sent an account to Cape Town, which was possibly more picturesque than tactful. Maritz was not amused. In fact, he threatened to assault the journalist. Bain found fresh 'copy' in the threat and soon ruefully learned that the exasperated wagon-maker had sued the *Advertiser* for libel, and won £10 damages into the bargain.

Bain's humour, which still lives today in the sallies of 'Kaatje Kekkelbek', led him into worse scrapes before he learnt to be discreet as well as amused. But he was too human and friendly to harbour feuds. Besides, he had to build roads.

The northward communications of Graaff-Reinet were always bad. Many Voortrekkers went north by first travelling east to Cradock in order to bypass the Sneeuberg ranges. Many years later Bain could still tell the Road Board that at the Naudesberg Pass 'a farmer lately bringing his wool to market unloaded it at the top of the mountain and rolled it down the precipitous face, following slowly along the so-called road with his empty wagons till he reached the bottom, where he quietly loaded it up again'.

At the expense of leading citizens of Graaff-Reinet—the names of C. L. Stretch, Andrew Murray, and Perry have come down to us—Bain constructed the Oudeberg Pass north-west of the town. In places he cut eight to ten feet deep into the hillside to make it. In 1832, Graaff-Reinet presented him with a medal for superintending, without charge, the construction of Van Ryneveld's Pass leading out of the town to the north.

Ruin had been the making of John Montagu. It was the making of Bain. In 1834 his three trading-wagons were captured and burnt far in the north by a Matabele impi. He and young Jan Sauer, taken completely by surprise, narrowly saved their lives by galloping through the enemy.

Returning impoverished to Graaff-Reinet, they found that a new Kaffir War had just broken out. Bain at once enlisted. For his services as captain he was given a farm on the Tyumie in the newly captured province of Queen Adelaide. He sold out at

Graaff-Reinet, built a house on his farm, led water out of the Tyumie through a tunnel for irrigation, and planted his first crops. This completed his ruin, for the province of Queen Adelaide was handed back to the tribes and his farm went with it. Andrew and Maria Bain and their big family were destitute.

In despair Andrew accepted the job of superintending Major Selwyn's construction gangs on the military roads that Sir Benjamin D'Urban had ordered from Grahamstown to his chain of forts in Kaffirland. He now had the benefit of advice from Major Selwyn and his Royal Engineers to reinforce his own practical skill in building the first great South African highway. In honour of Queen Victoria, who was crowned in the year it began, this highway was given the name it still bears today, the 'Queen's Road'.

From Grahamstown it went down the Ecca valley, across the Fish River by the biggest bridge South Africa had ever seen, on to Fort Beaufort, and thence to Blinkwater hill and forest at the foot of the Katberg. For five years Hottentots who had formerly served in the Cape Corps toiled at this civilizing work under Bain's direction. In the intervals of self-taught engineering Bain studied geology and laid the foundations for his coming work, the first geological map of South Africa.

Nothing to compare with these seventy miles of metalled highway, cut out of mountainsides, raised on embankments over ravines, and carried by bridges across the rivers, had ever been seen in South Africa. Bain's next big work was like it. He built the military highway from Grahamstown down Pluto's Vale in the Fish River jungles to Breakfast Vlei, roughly on the route that the modern national road takes to East London.

After eight years' brilliant work, Bain was abruptly dismissed with a bare acknowledgement of his good services. The Royal Engineers were being reorganized and he and his large family had to go. John Montagu and Charles Michell snapped him up. He never forgot their friendship and their enthusiastic assistance.

Montagu put him in charge of road work throughout the Western Province. While his convicts blasted and built Michell's Pass for mile after mile from the mountainside, Bain supervised also the reconstruction of Houw Hoek Pass on the Great East Road, built a highway up the Gydo Pass to link the Cold Bokkeveld with Michell's Pass, and opened a road to the Great

Karoo and the far interior by carrying his 'New Road' over precipitous mountains and up the Karroo Poort.

Once Michell's Pass was formally opened on 1 December 1848 the first fast Cape Town-Free State highway became an accomplished fact. Montagu promptly thrust a new post-cart service through from Cape Town to Beaufort West, Colesberg, and the far-off Orange River. Meanwhile a new town, Ceres, was laid out at the top of Michell's Pass to develop the Warm Bokkeveld valley, whose wealth could at last be economically tapped.

Bain had now reduced the wagon distance between Beaufort West and Cape Town from twenty days to twelve and made express traffic by horse-drawn vehicles easy. But the most spectacular feat on his Great North Road was yet to come. It all began one hot November day in 1846 when Montagu himself rode up to the whitewashed convict camp below Michell's Pass to see the inspector.

Montagu was always on a horse surveying the needs of the country when he was not surrounded by work in his stifling Cape Town office. He asked Bain to accompany him on a tour of the main Western Province roads. As they trotted down the Breede River valley, Bain pointed out a gap in the mountain chain in the direction, he thought, of Wellington, which lay hidden from sight on the other side. Montagu stopped his horse, and gazed fixedly at the gap. 'Bain,' he said at last, 'that's just the line.' And they rode on.

They must have reverted again and again on that tour to the chance of finding a new pass in those Wellington mountains. At the earliest available week-end, Bain rode over to Wellington, found that nobody knew of any pass there, but enlisted four keen farmers—Johannes Retief, Septimus du Toit, and two sons of Daniel Malan—to help with their knowledge of the mountains. At four o'clock on Sunday morning they rode to the mountain-top, where they had to leave their horses, and plunged on foot into what Bain described as 'the repulsive and savagely grand' mountain waste to the east.

Still aching from that day's exploration, Bain sent off a jubilant letter to Montagu: 'The grand problem is solved. The North-west passage is discovered. . . . It will facilitate your idea of a direct communication with the interior and bring the main road



The Montagu Pass shortly after White completed it in 1849.



Stone bridge over the Kat River between Grahamstown and Fort Beaufort, built by Andrew Geddes Bain.  
From a print by T. W. Bowler.

where it ought to be, through the most populous part of the Colony.'

'Your letter quite delighted me', Montagu answered. 'Bain's Poort will be our next job, so get Mosterts Hoek out of hand as soon as possible. . . . It is quite refreshing to work with a man of your zeal and energy in the public service.'

Montagu was dying in England when the completed Bain's Kloof road was opened in 1853. It has remained to this day a showpiece of road engineering. In one place Bain used gunpowder (dynamite had not yet been invented) to blast a passage up to sixty feet deep through solid rock. Another stretch of road crawled for 400 yards along the lip of a lofty precipice. Bain himself described the work here as of 'the most appalling and difficult kind; the lofty retaining walls being built on the very edge of a precipitous cliff 300 feet high whilst the upper half of the road is blasted out of and stolen as it were from the frowning krantzes above'. Bain's retaining walls of dry stone, sometimes fifty or sixty feet high, and intact after a century on his passes, are still the admiration of engineers. He had to train the convict overseers himself to build them. They in turn trained the convicts.

The Bain's Kloof highway doubled the size of Wellington on its completion, saved wagons two more days on the journey from the interior, and, with Michell's Pass, cut transport costs from Ceres to Cape Town to one-fifth of what they had been.

When the discovery of diamonds shook the old South Africa to its foundations, it was up Bain's highway, through Bain's Kloof, Michell's Pass, and Karroo Poort, that coaches with relays of horses thundered north day after day carrying the skill, enterprise, and avarice of the whole civilized world to the diamond-fields.

Of making roads, since Bain and Montagu began it, there has been no end. Picture Bain himself, a lonely widower in his sixties, struggling year after year to continue his old Grahamstown-Blinkwater national road up the waterfalls, cliffs, and forests of the Katberg. There was no pension and no retirement then. At last even the iron frame of Bain could toil no more. Like Montagu ten years earlier, he crossed the seas in search of health. He struggled home to die on South African soil on the way back to his last great pass.

The spirit of Bain lived on in his son Thomas, who had cheered

his years at Bain's Kloof, where he was learner-assistant to the inspector. Thomas Bain completed some of the most spectacular roads in Africa—the Seven Weeks Poort, Prince Alfred's Pass, and the soaring pass over the snows of the Swartberge.

Most of the great roads of South Africa have been planned and carried through by English-speaking South Africans. First, they replaced ox-wagons with stage-coaches, such as rattled in unconscious tribute to Bain and Montagu down their highways in 1952 to the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary in Cape Town. Next, after long eclipse by the State monopoly of railways, they have begun in our own day to supplement the steady pace of the train by the swifter passage of motor-car and lorry.

Much depends on this second road revolution, but the first was far harder. It transformed the whole of South Africa and not merely its farming, trade, or administration. The birth of the great schools and colleges dates from the first decade of safe, easy transport and frequent posts opened up by the great road-builders.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### IF THE SALT LOSE ITS SAVOUR

Tears sprang to the eyes of the Voortrekkers' fathers as they pleaded with the first judges who had ever ventured into their eastern wilds. They begged them for schools to save their children from growing up like savages on the savage frontier.

'The parents were not indifferent', Judge van Ryneveld and his colleagues assured the Governor when they trekked back into Cape Town, travel-stained and sunburnt, in February 1812. 'Most of them expressed their wishes with tears in their eyes . . . feeling themselves that their children, growing up without education, without instruction, without even a knowledge of the first principles of religion and morality, would at best be like nothing else than savages.'

'Like nothing else than savages' . . . The nightmare that primeval Africa would barbarize those who should be the pioneers of civilization and the Gospel haunted thinking men at that time and long after. It haunted Judge van Ryneveld. 'We have passed through districts, mostly inhabited by rich inhabitants,' he told Sir John Cradock, 'in the houses of whom we have met with 12 or more children, the eldest of whom were not even able to read or write his name.' He learned in Graaff-Reinet that of 3,400 white children in that vast frontier district, which twenty years later cradled the Great Trek, only 100 went to school.

The same nightmare haunted the Dutch Reformed Church's famous synod of 1837, which condemned the Great Trek for plunging into the wilderness without an Aaron or a Moses. The trekkers did not heed this warning from pastors who had struggled against enormous difficulties to spread the simplest elements of Christian education on the far-flung frontier. But they quickly discovered their loss.

By 1839 the flower of the Voortrekkers were pleading in Natal

with Daniel Lindley, an American missionary to the Zulus, much as their fathers had pleaded with Judge van Rynveld.

'Probably not one in ten of them, including men, women and children over the age of 10 years, can read understandingly', Lindley wrote in confidence to the American Board of Missions, in a letter imploring permission to minister to the Voortrekkers.

'Books are very scarce among them. They are in no sense a reading people—neither were their fathers. In most of their houses you will find a Bible, for which they all have a hereditary reverence. But this good book is, with a few exceptions, little read and less understood by them. . . .

'I do sincerely believe that the cheapest, speediest, easiest way to convert the heathens here is to convert the white ones first.' (Was Lindley thinking of the gallant company of missionaries that William Shaw had already recruited from the 1820 Settlers to preach the Gospel in the wildest recesses of Kaffirland?)

'When I look at their want of intelligence, their want of religion and their entire want of means for improvement in either, I am overwhelmed with despair in regard to the aborigines. The emigrants [i.e. the Voortrekkers] are as willing to be instructed as any people I have ever seen. Let them be instructed, let them be truly converted . . . and thousands of the aborigines will derive from it unspeakable blessings.'

This is not the kind of Voortrekker portrait that the present generation of South Africans have been trained to recognize. Yet even if Lindley overdrew it a little to wring consent from the American Board, he knew his subject. When he wrote that letter, he had not only toured twelve Voortrekker camps in the Natal Republic; he and Mrs Lindley had previously accompanied Hendrik Potgieter and his victorious commando back from their Matabele campaign in the Western Transvaal to Winburg and Thaba Nchu.

Even forty years later, only twelve White children out of every 100 were at school in the Free State, and only eight in the Transvaal.

The man who, more than any other, dispelled the nightmare that African barbarism would ultimately assimilate its captors was a bright-eyed schoolboy in the far north of Scotland when Judge van Rynveld made his tour of the hinterland. By the time Lindley wrote his letter, James Rose Innes of Banff had met his

life's task. He was about to found the educational system of South Africa. He had just become the first professional Superintendent-General of Education in the Cape Colony—or the world.

The crowded headquarters and serried staff of a superintendent-general of education in South Africa today would have astounded and troubled Rose Innes. He was much more at home with a horse, a Cape cart, or an ox-wagon than with the paraphernalia of bureaucracy. For his first four years as superintendent he had not even a clerk to assist him. He drew up his own syllabuses, wrote the first South African school textbook himself, and added up his own departmental accounts. Till the day he retired, broken in health by twenty years' labour in all weathers, on all roads and on none, he was the only inspector of schools—White, Coloured, and Native—in all South Africa.

South African literature, art, and science—among the Afrikaans-speaking even more than the English-speaking—stem from the labours of that overburdened but indomitable sower of civilization on the scorching wastes of our country. The rise of the Cape Coloured people and that of the Bantu likewise owe much to his patient work for their schooling.

Eighty pounds a year, with a house, were the inducements of the five-year contract that Lord Charles Somerset offered Rose Innes in 1821 to exchange Scotland (when the great Sir Walter Scott was in his prime) for the edge of beyond in Africa. We do not know today what persuaded the youthful Master of Arts from Aberdeen University to accept Somerset's offer. It was conveyed by the Rev. Dr George Thom, first Scottish clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

Was it love of adventure, the quest for health in a summer climate, or the missionary zeal of his deeply religious spirit? Perhaps most of all it was poverty. The seventh child of William Innes, farmer of Netherdale in the Banffshire parish of Marnoch, was a 'lad o' pairts', or his father, with a large family to provide for, would scarcely have sent him to Aberdeen University. The family itself was well connected. William was the natural son of the Laird of Netherdale, which gave him status in Scottish law but not the lairdship; he was a tenant in Netherdale.

Like Benjamin Moodie, ninth laird of Melsetter in Orkney, four years before, and the 1820 Settlers' leaders, the young Master

of Arts may well have felt that his only chance to better the dwindled fortunes of a proud family lay beyond the sea.

And so, one freezing day in February 1822, a young man with a face that would command interest anywhere—sensitive, clean-cut, determined—strode on board the brig *Arethusa* in London docks. There he joined a Scottish gathering whose names are remembered yet in the story of South Africa. Confined in the cabin of the crowded little vessel were Dr and Mrs Thom—sitting in some state—with three more schoolmasters from Aberdeen.

Archibald Brown was a struggling M.A. like himself. William Robertson was an Aberdeen undergraduate of 17, who was going to Africa for his health. William Dawson, an elementary teacher, sat with them while the crying of a new-born baby indicated the task and whereabouts of his wife. Rattray of Dundee was there with his wife and two children. Robert Blair, the third elementary teacher, had arrived from Glasgow. A young man with a grave and peaceful face, who received Dr Thom's special consideration, was Andrew Murray the first, destined to be for forty years the beloved Dutch Reformed pastor of Graaff-Reinet.

Rose Innes cherished all his life the friendships he made on that voyage. In years to come, he and William Robertson, the future pastor of Swellendam, conspired again and again to found new schools, revive old ones, and stimulate everywhere an unfamiliar thirst for learning in South Africa. He and Andrew Murray likewise conspired to raise schools in the Eastern Cape.

For four months these coming educators of a nation shared the narrow deck and crowded cabin of the *Arethusa*. The captain was a casual soul and the transition from the country of their birth to the country they would make their own was adventurous. After evening worship together one night, Innes remarked, 'Time for bed.' Suddenly the vessel gave a violent jolt. 'We are on the land! The breakers are close on our lee bow!' shouted the mate from the deck.

The ship's course had been set too close to one of the Cape Verde Islands. She had crashed on to a reef. But the weather was kind. After hours of intense anxiety, with the breakers roaring close by, the seamen thrust the *Arethusa* off the reef, almost undamaged, on the incoming tide.

On 2 July 1822 she glided to the anchorage in Table Bay with

a rarer cargo than any fleet from the Indies had ever brought South Africa—six trained schoolmasters.

Lord Charles Somerset publicly announced the arrival of Scottish teachers to be 'employed at public expense at every principal place throughout the Colony for the purpose of facilitating the acquirement of the English language to all classes of society . . .'. 'These teachers having now arrived,' his announcement added, 'I order and direct . . . that the English language be exclusively used in all judicial acts and proceedings as from the first day of January 1827.'

Innes and his colleagues were intended to be the spearhead of Lord Charles Somerset's campaign for anglicizing the 40,000 Afrikaans-speaking White inhabitants of South Africa. But Somerset did not know what manner of man Innes was.

Uitenhage was to be his station, and Graaff-Reinet was to be Robertson's. Since no sensible man in those days would attempt to reach the Eastern Cape from Cape Town by land, the two friends took the first ship to the tiny harbour village of Algoa Bay.

The Voortrekkers' fathers, who had pleaded with Judge van Ryneveld for education eleven years before, were fortunate in the small invasion of Scotsmen that descended upon them about this time to provide it. Graaff-Reinet welcomed the Rev. Andrew Murray and William Robertson; Uitenhage had the Rev. Alexander Smith and James Rose Innes; Cradock soon had the Rev. John Taylor; and Somerset East had the Rev. George Morgan.

If the congregations found it difficult to understand the first halting Dutch sermons of their Scottish predikants, the young Scots found the frontier of civilization in Africa at least equally strange. Uitenhage was a straggling border village when Innes arrived in the early spring of 1822 to start the first government free school on the frontier. Elephant-hunting was still a prosperous occupation. But education languished.

On a ride through the district next year to show the new Scottish predikant, Alexander Smith, his parish, Innes and his friend put up at a homestead for the night. The Afrikaner farmer's wife brightened and grew gracious when she discovered that Smith was the new pastor. With obvious respect she turned to him and asked, 'Dominee, what is your friend's calling?'

'He is a schoolmaster', said Alexander Smith.

'A schoolmaster?' Eyeing the M.A.(Aberdeen) in scornful silence for a few seconds, she burst out: 'Aren't you ashamed to be a schoolmaster, a strong, healthy young fellow like you, who can dig in the garden and earn your bread?'

A white man must sink pretty low in South Africa today to have to sell matches in the street. His equivalent when Innes reached Uitenhage was the white man who fell so far through drink, sloth, and vice that he became a *meester*. Cape Town had a few elementary schools, and several hamlets had church clerks who struggled to impart an alphabet they knew none too well themselves. Otherwise, teaching the youth of the white race was a task for hoboes.

The first thing that set Uitenhage district wondering whether Innes was quite different from normal teachers of the day was the odd fact that nobody ever saw him drunk. This *meester* appeared to have no unnatural or too natural vices. Soon parents discovered that here was a teacher of genius.

His official mission was to anglicize, and his school was called the Government English school. But Innes quickly realized that he could do little to help most of his pupils unless he knew their language. Not only did he learn Dutch, a language his pupils found nearly as foreign as he did: he talked to them in Afrikaans, though neither he nor they would have recognized the 'Cape Dutch dialect' by that name.

Lord Charles Somerset was a long way off. Imperturbably Innes exceeded his instructions and used Afrikaans to ground his Afrikaner pupils in reading, writing, reckoning, English, and the Christian religion. Many years later, when he was Superintendent of Education, he would counter demands for the total replacement of Dutch by English in schools with the rejoinder that 'to form good citizens and men . . . and to fit them for a higher state of existence by teaching them those [relations] which connect them with their Maker and Redeemer', the teacher must 'commence with early youth and therefore necessarily in the language which is vernacular'.

If his own interest flagged at times during that first half-year in Uitenhage and his attention wandered like his intoning pupils', he had an excellent reason. Where he first met Miss Margaret Fleisher—during his brief stay in Cape Town, or in Uitenhage itself, or on one of his long rides to raw, dusty Grahamstown—

we do not know. Possibly it was she who helped him to learn Dutch so fast. Margaret, according to the Rose Innes family tradition, was the daughter of a Prussian soldier of fortune who was at one time commandant of the Castle in Cape Town.

Marrying a *meester* was hardly an attractive match for an officer's daughter 130 years ago. But Innes was a different species of *meester*. Within six months of his arrival at Uitenhage he and Margaret married. He was 23 and she 21. Henceforth the young schoolmaster's problem in housing farmers' children was answered. The boarding arrangements were quietly taken over by Margaret Rose Innes. It may have been about the same time that the Cape Government in a burst of generosity raised its Uitenhage schoolmaster's pay to £100 a year.

When the circuit court visited Uitenhage late in 1823 it was astounded by the zest for education in that far-off village. The old-style *meester*, who had run a school in Dutch, fled when his pupils went over in a body to the young Scot who could really teach. In a glowing report to the Bible and School Commission in Cape Town, Judge Truter mentioned that Innes already had seventy-six boys and girls in school, more than half of them 'Dutch', and was giving a secondary education privately to six boys of promise.

His fellow-voyagers in the *Arethusa* were not doing badly either in their first flush of enthusiasm. Already, perhaps, Archibald Brown had begun to teach young Andries du Toit, who thirty years later used Brown's lessons in surveying to lay out Pretoria. But Judge Truter found nobody, not even James's bosom friend William Robertson, who could quite match the marvellous schoolmaster of Uitenhage.

The fame of Innes's school grew with the years. While Margaret kept house for the growing number of boarders and looked after her own children—James was born in January 1824 and William Martin in May 1825—Innes was coming to know and love South Africa.

He rode through the elephant-inhabited forests of what is now Alexandria to visit his Scottish friends the Moodies. He watched the struggles of the 1820 Settlers to find their feet on the land and in the villages, when rust wilted their wheat and floods swept away their pitiful shelters. He visited the Scottish missionaries in Kaffirland and saw the first schools rising there for the Bantu.

Above all, as he rode from farm-house to farm-house in the Uitenhage district to collect church funds as *diaken*, or deacon, of the Dutch Reformed parish, he came to know the rough but kindly and dignified Boer farmers, with their slaves, Hottentots, and Bushmen retainers. Like many another Scot, he found these Boers, with their warm hearts and fierce prejudices, strangely akin to the farming folk of his own country. And they, in turn, responded to James Rose Innes.

Before his five-year contract was up, he had taken a crucial decision. He would throw in his lot with this wild new country and its people. In 1826 he wrote as much to the Government at the Cape. If he returned to Scotland after his contract and qualified for the Presbyterian ministry, he asked, would they consider recommending him for a post in the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape Colony?

Normally the Government would have hesitated. Cape congregations were complaining that they were being swamped with Scotsmen. But Innes was different. He knew the local language, as the Colonial authorities told Whitehall. He had educated the children of all the foremost inhabitants of the Uitenhage district and was highly esteemed by the parents. Whitehall decided that even though Innes was a Scotsman, he should be offered a congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church when he returned from Scotland.

Of course Innes told young Robertson. And Robertson, who was equally happy and respected in a similar nest of Voortrekkers-to-be at Graaff-Reinet, decided to use his bachelor savings and follow the same course when his contract expired in July 1827. He too would return to South Africa as a Dutch Reformed clergyman.

Robertson did so. When he returned to the Cape Colony as an ordained pastor, he did not forget his former pupils and friends. He was one of the first Dutch Reformed clergymen to trek north and visit the Voortrekkers. In after years he became the greatest founder of schools among the Dutch Reformed clergy of his generation. South Africa owes him an incalculable debt.

Innes did not go back to Scotland with Robertson. In spite of his deep piety and his longing to revisit his native land, he decided to stay at his post in Uitenhage. It was a surprising decision. He had more than 100 pupils now, and he taught them from eight till

one and again from two till six. The school was still growing, and with it the burden of keeping all ages and classes busy without a single trained assistant. Uitenhage was a long way from Cape Town, and however absorbing and worth while he found his task, the prospects were small.

Maybe the birth of Elizabeth Rose Innes was the deciding factor. How could he support his growing family during the years of theological study in Scotland? Whatever his reasons, he let Robertson sail for Scotland without him.

Innes must often have wondered during the hard years that followed if he had acted wisely. Lord Charles Somerset had gone and the new régime showed little enthusiasm for teachers. His was the only Government English school that was still an unquestioned success. It now had 160 children. Yet when he wrote to ask if his engagement at Uitenhage would be renewed, the Government did not even answer. When he pleaded for assistants to help him, his request, he protested afterwards, was 'treated with a silence which betokened an unsympathetic indifference to the health of a public servant whom they had acknowledged to be useful'.

Even church life in Uitenhage had become a burden for deacon Innes. Do what the *kerkraad* (church council) might, they could not induce Pohl the builder to complete the church they had paid him to erect. Years went by and Uitenhage's church remained unfinished.

Then, one autumn day in 1830, the first sign that there was greater work for this forgotten schoolmaster to do in South Africa came out of the blue. It was a letter from Cape Town inviting him to apply for the chair of mathematics at a 'South African College'. Innes jumped at the prospect. For this was an invitation to found not only the first effective high school in South Africa but the beginnings of its first university, with all the upsurge of arts, letters, and sciences which that would bring to a country which in 1830 was dark indeed.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### SOUTH AFRICA'S FIRST COLLEGE

James Rose Innes no sooner attempted to join South Africa's first university venture than he fell foul of the government which for so long had ignored his existence. Replying to his letter about his wish to join the South African College, the Colonial Secretary wrote acidly that the schoolmaster must 'sacrifice the prospect of bettering his condition if His Excellency should consider the continuance of his labours at Uitenhage necessary'.

This was too much for an angel, let alone a Scottish gentleman of spirit. For eight years Innes had buried himself in a frontier village, teaching the alphabet to small boys and girls in a class of anything from 100 to 160 children of several races and all ages, coaching bright pupils privately far into the night and sharing his and Margaret's home with boarders, till his health began to break down.

He angrily resigned. The Colonial Secretary replied to this unwarrantable show of spirit with a letter which, Innes remarked, 'if it was meant to wound my feelings, answered its purpose'. Amid the heart-felt good wishes and lamentations of the district, the Innes family set sail for the Cape in the early spring of 1830 to start a new life in the capital. John Fairbairn and James Adamson, both Scotsmen, the founders of the South African College, were there to meet him.

The Rev. Dr James Adamson was a prodigy of learning. He had come to the Cape only three years before to found the first Scottish Presbyterian church in South Africa for the merchants of Cape Town. 'The massive strength of his intellect and the vast range of his erudition were alike extraordinary', one who studied under him at the South African College testified. 'In literature, philosophy and theology, in classical, oriental and modern languages and in every department of physical science, his attain-

ments were such as few students, who have given their lives to a single branch of knowledge, have been able to equal.'

One of Adamson's pastimes in Scotland had been the composing of mathematical articles for the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*. He had worked with Robert Stephenson on locomotives. The great astronomer Sir John Herschel, who saw much of him at the Cape, declared he had never met a man of such encyclopedic mind.

It did not take this paragon of Scottish learning long to discover a certain mental vacuum in Cape Town. The town had not even a functioning high school, let alone a university college. Yet it had been the seat of government in South Africa for nearly 180 years. It was impossible to find an educated man in the capital who had not been trained in Europe, three months' sail across the dangerous sea.

Dr Adamson had an inspiration. He sounded his brother-clergymen about it. The result was a little meeting on 14 October 1828 in the vestry of the Groote Kerk, which brought consequences of immense importance to South Africa.

Judge Truter took the chair. By now he was Sir Johannes, and a power in the land. With him sat the Rev. Abraham Faure, a great South African-born pioneer of the Dutch Reformed Church; the Rev. George Hough, colonial chaplain of the Church of England; the Rev. J. Klock van Staveren, in whose Lutheran church Adamson had been inducted a few months earlier; W. F. Hertzog, the assistant surveyor-general; F. H. Mabile, a merchant who represented the Roman Catholics; and Advocate Johannes de Wet and D. W. Hertzog (grandfather of General Hertzog), who acted as secretaries.

Adamson's inspiration fell on fertile soil. The meeting approved an ambitious scheme for a Cape Town college of science and arts. The report drawn up for the Governor, Sir Lowry Cole, might have been drafted by Adamson himself. 'Scarcely any means exist among us', it told His Excellency, 'of acquiring adequate information in those sciences which elsewhere are so much the object of general attention and contribute so much to the usefulness of human effort. No means exist for attaining experience in the structure and literature of the tongues which serve as channels of communication in other countries.'

Cole gave his conditional blessing. Soon the committee were

sending out subscription lists far and wide, inviting well-wishers to take out £10 shares in a college which would instruct South African youth in subjects so abstruse as physics, astronomy, navigation, chemistry, Latin, and Greek. On 4 June 1829 the shareholders met and elected a council of fifteen members. And here John Fairbairn steps into the annals of the South African College.

Fairbairn of the flashing eye, the short, truculent figure, the broad Scottish accent, which he never shook off, the pen dipped in eloquence and bitterness—what a lion of a man he was! He had newly emerged in triumph from his fight against enormous odds for a free Press in South Africa. He had not yet embarked on his stormy campaign of the 1840s and 1850s which did so much to gain South Africa the parliamentary system.

The shareholders elected Fairbairn to the council, with others who included Advocate Christoffel Brand, Judge Burton, Adamson's parishioner Hamilton Ross, and the original committee. The project of the college was after Fairbairn's own heart. Within four months he was able to report its opening in glowing terms in his *South African Commercial Advertiser*. 'It is a popular institution,' the explosive democrat exulted, 'altogether formed by the people, altogether dependent on the people and devoted exclusively to the general good of the people. It is popular in its form, popular in all its principles and it remains for ever under popular management.'

Lord Charles Somerset, had he still been alive, would have winced to read that pointed paragraph. Sir Lowry Cole, who had held high command under Wellington, may well have lifted an Irish eyebrow. But for the moment the new junior-school-cum-high-school-cum-embryo-university seemed likely to achieve even Fairbairn's dazzling ambitions without need for official favours.

It had an English professor of classics, the Rev. Edward Judge, who had sunk his little grammar school in the new venture, and who was entitled to a full professor's stipend of £300 a year. It had Adamson as professor of mathematics and Faure as professor of Dutch classics, both of whom offered their services free for a year. It had several assistant lecturers and teachers.

The college enrolment was already 100, including small boys. There were no fewer than four classes in ancient Greek. Cape

Town seemed well on the way to becoming, if not the Athens of Africa, at least its Edinburgh. Fairbairn set out, well content, on a tour of the Cape frontier with his redoubtable pastor Dr John Philip.

When this formidable pair of Scots reached Uitenhage they could scarcely avoid meeting Alexander Smith and his deacon, comrade, and friend, James Rose Innes. There and then, perhaps, in the homely Dutch Reformed parsonage, Fairbairn may first have told Innes of his own stormy career as schoolmaster.

He hailed from the Scottish Border, where he was born at Legerwood mill in 1794. In his student days he had been as full of fight and quarrel as Edinburgh University and the famous *Edinburgh Review*, to which he contributed, could make an opinionated Scot. After the spirit and excitement of those student days he probably found his task as a schoolmaster enlightening the English (at Newcastle-on-Tyne) a curb on his exuberant spirit, till a thrilling letter reached him in 1822 from the wilds of Africa.

The letter came from his old Edinburgh friend Thomas Pringle. Of course Innes knew the Pringles of the Baviaans River. Thomas Pringle urged Fairbairn to collect what school-books he could, sail for Cape Town, and help him to start a private high school—'academy' was the fashionable word at the time—to remedy the deplorable lack of education in South Africa. Could Fairbairn help him to start a literary magazine, too, in this unlettered land?

The schoolmaster's spirit flared up like a drooping fire on which paraffin is poured. 'What should hinder us', Fairbairn enthused in his reply, 'from becoming the Franklins of the Kaap? . . .' He went further. He proposed to become the founder of adult education in South Africa. He had already tried his hand at it in Newcastle.

'I suppose you have no such thing as public lectures among you on any subject?' he inquired. 'Yet surely popular lectures on chemistry, geology, botany and other departments of science might be rendered both acceptable and useful to your new countrymen. What should hinder us, my dear friend, from giving to song the unknown streams and nameless mountains of the Kaap?'

Fairbairn set sail with his school-books barely a year after Innes and reached the Cape in October 1823. Soon afterwards the unsuspecting Lord Charles Somerset granted Pringle and Fair-

bairn permission to open a select academy in Cape Town. They followed this up with a literary magazine, the first in our history, entitled the *South African Journal*. Little did Somerset guess what trouble he was sowing for himself and for every subsequent autocrat in South African history.

By the winter of 1824 the little academy had become a fashionable and prosperous school. A large proportion of the civil servants' and army officers' children attended it. New pupils were joining the school almost daily when Lord Charles Somerset hurled the bolt that blasted their hopes. He took drastic exception to Pringle's candid article in the *South African Journal* on the plight of the 1820 Settlers. The fight for the freedom of the Press was unleashed and officers and civil servants found it prudent to withdraw their children from a school run by teachers so peculiarly unpopular with the Governor.

Pringle eventually settled in Britain but Fairbairn and his printer George Greig fought the fight to a finish. Fairbairn was almost ruined by debt and shattered in health before victory was won. At last in 1829-30 he was able to go east, a vindicated and popular editor, to study race relations on the frontier with Philip.

Apart from his meeting Innes, with whom he would so often collaborate in future, other things helped to make that tour of the Cape frontier memorable to Fairbairn. It is probable that Dr Philip discussed with him the suggestion of his daughter Eliza that she start her own school in Cape Town, now that she had joined her father from Britain. Whether Fairbairn deplored this example of feminine emancipation we do not know. Dr Philip undoubtedly did. He wrote to his erring daughter of 20 from Hankey, to warn her against a step which might, 'with the present ideas of society', leave her 'no chance of an offer of marriage such as I would wish to see you accept of'.

Eliza profited by that stern advice. Within a year she accepted an offer of marriage such as even Dr Philip could scarcely refuse. She married fierce, lovable John Fairbairn himself, though he was fifteen or sixteen years her senior. For nine years she brought him the sunshine of her high spirits, her good sense, and her profound loyalty in a hostile world. She bore him several children, of whom the eldest was also named Eliza. Then her untimely death left him lonely for ever at his home in Green Point. Fairbairn never married again.



**WILLIAM SHAW**  
Chaplain of the 1820 Settlers



**JOHN MONTAGU**  
He combined prison reform with road-building.



*John Fairbairn*

**JOHN FAIRBAIRN**  
From a print of 1850



**JAMES ROSE INNES**  
First superintendent of education

But all this lay in the future. While Philip and Fairbairn were still in the Hankey neighbourhood, the South African College blew up. A dispute over religious teaching tore to tatters the unity of the founders, staunch churchmen all. Sir Johannes Truter resigned as chairman and Judge Burton as vice-chairman. Adamson resigned as professor of mathematics, unpaid. Judge resigned as professor of English classics, and resuscitated his grammar school. Abraham Faure was the only professor left and even he planned to resign on account of ill-health.

Such was the ruin that confronted Fairbairn soon after his meeting with Innes. There was only one thing to do. The council must find staff as fast as they could or the college would have to close. They snapped up a young Scottish minister visiting Cape Town, the Rev. John Pears (after whom Pearston is named) and made him professor of English classics. But who could replace Dr Adamson as professor of mathematics? It was then that the council, prompted no doubt by Fairbairn, thought of Rose Innes. On 21 April they wrote to invite him.

As far as one man could restore the popularity and prestige of the South African College, Professor Innes did so. He proved far and away the finest lecturer on the college staff. Patient, lucid, and gracious, he won friends where others made enemies and helped plodders among his pupils to catch up—almost—with their parents' expectations.

Sir Johannes Truter came back as chairman. Faure resigned but asked Leyden University to send a professor of Dutch classics in his place. This brought to South Africa the notable Dr Antoine Changuion. The college was running smoothly once more, until it met the financial crisis that hit the Cape after the emancipation of slaves. From the Scotch Church Adamson came to the rescue of the college. 'In order that its total collapse might be prevented', he offered to act unpaid as fourth professor and lecture on physical science. When the arrangement became permanent, he accepted a salary, but gave it all to the Scottish mission among the slaves of Cape Town.

The college council decided to cut the fixed stipends of the professors to £100 a year, leaving them to make up their incomes as best they might from pupils' fees. Innes patiently accepted the cut, though it involved him in endless private coaching to support Margaret and their ever-growing family. Pears resigned.

Changuion at last decided to follow Innes's example. Innes and Adamson went still further in sacrifice to save South Africa's only institution of higher education. Nobody would replace Pears as professor of English classics for £100 plus fees. Innes and Adamson shared the work without charge to the college, and spent all the fees they earned for English classics on buying essential books and apparatus for the struggling college.

By now Fairbairn's golden vision of 'professors of chemistry, natural philosophy in all its divisions, of surgery and medicine, of law, of moral philosophy and theology, rendering the course of instruction in the South African College as perfect and complete as any in the world' began to look infinitely remote. Numbers dropped to seventy. And Fairbairn himself disappeared from the council.

Whether he did not stand, or stood but was not re-elected, the cause was no doubt the same. His attempts to defend his fellow 'Liberal', as Sir Andries Stockenström would be called today, involved his newspaper in costly libel actions from 1836 onwards and made him highly unpopular.

Though he still gave the college the unfailing friendship of his newspaper, he did not for some years return to the council. Meanwhile, he directed his vivid and influential articles in the *Commercial Advertiser* to the deplorable lack of education all over the country.

In 1800 Barrow had described the rural white population of South Africa—great land-owners though they were—as more ignorant than the humblest peasants of Europe. In fact, the education that white South Africans had received from 1652 to the 1830s may all be described as a series of hopeful beginnings, followed by long breakdowns. The Dutch East India Company failed so badly to provide schools for its countrymen in Africa that they alone, of all the colonial peoples of Europe, lost their language. In two centuries they added not a jot to the letters and arts of the Netherlands. The literary history of Afrikaans-speaking South Africa could not begin till Innes in the fullness of time provided the necessary schools.

The early British régime in the Cape Colony had not done conspicuously better than the Company. Lord Charles Somerset's English free schools were a bold stroke, but they gradually fizzled out; at Innes's own school at Uitenhage, attendance

dropped from 160 to 40 after that brilliant teacher left.

The cure Fairbairn proposed for this long series of educational disasters was not merely generous State grants for education. He urged a State system like that of France or Prussia. 'In this respect', he complained, 'England is still in the rear of civilization.'

He insisted that a single highly trained educationist should be given full charge of the State's educational plans, in place of the paralytic Bible and School Commission. 'Boards', he complained, 'have seldom any brain and never any bowels.' He actually defined for the Government all the functions now entrusted to the Union's superintendents-general of education, although no precedent then existed in the world.

Once Whitehall had convinced itself that this was indeed the solution, there could be only one choice for the office of Superintendent of Education. On 20 April 1839, Fairbairn announced his friend's appointment triumphantly in the *Commercial Advertiser*. 'The Government', he wrote, 'have been peculiarly fortunate in finding on the spot a gentleman [Professor Innes] every way qualified to execute all the duties of such an office.' Within three weeks Innes had delivered his last lecture on mathematics, and the South African College plunged into darkness. Six months after his departure barely thirty-five students remained in the college. Its plight was desperate, and was to grow still worse.

Changuion and Adamson were now doing the work of four professors, yet found themselves poorer than ever, because so few pupils were left to pay fees. Then Adamson left. As minister of the Scotch Church he went on furlough to Scotland with an urgent mandate from the college council to recruit new professors. When the college reopened in 1841, only eleven students turned up to meet the solitary professor of Dutch classics.

A faint glimmer of hope came with March, when Adamson returned with a live professor in tow—inevitably a Scotsman. Professor Main of Glasgow took the chair of mathematics, and Adamson, the versatile genius, became professor of English classics. As though to celebrate their arrival the college's new buildings were formally opened in April. They had cost the enormous sum, for Cape Town in those days, of £3,500—say £20,000 today. The main speaker at the opening was, of course, Professor Adamson. He was fast becoming the South African College in person.

In order to devote his whole time and energies to saving the college, he resigned from the Scotch Church. He was curator of the college property, and secretary of the college senate. After 1842 when Changuion gave up the unequal struggle and Main retired for health reasons, he was sole professor also.

The enrolment had risen to forty after the false dawn of 1840. With Professor Adamson as lecturer in English, classical languages, mathematics, and physics, it fell again to twenty. The end of South Africa's only venture at that time into higher education was in sight, and despairing subscribers voted Fairbairn back to the council in 1844. He declined, in excellent company, for such old and trusty supporters as J. B. Ebdon and Christoffel Brand, editor of his Dutch rival *De Zuid Afrikaan*, left the council. But he still gave the steady support of the *Commercial Advertiser*.

With his back to the wall, Adamson now put up a fight for which all South Africa is indebted to him. From January 1843 he was given complete direction of the college. From 1845 to 1849 there was no quorum at the shareholders' meetings and no elections to council, which made his rule more absolute still. His son Laurence helped him with the teaching.

He had already been forced to meet interest on a government loan to the college from his own pay. Now, when the Government had hinted that it would have to withdraw its grant of £200 a year unless the affairs of the college mended, Adamson replied with such spirit—and at such length—that the Government doubled its grant instead of removing it.

With that doubled grant behind him, Adamson took the plunge and wrote to Sir John Herschel in England, begging him to find the ghost of the South African College a professor of English classics. Herschel produced a winner, who, strangely enough, was an Englishman. Early in 1847 he sent out a young graduate of Queen's College, Oxford, Langham Dale, who was destined to carry through to victory Innes's labours in founding a State education system in South Africa. But the man who had devoted his life to beginning and building the country's first great high school and first university had to make a final sacrifice before higher education in South Africa could come into its own. He had to get out.

With all his brilliance, this powerful Scottish intellectual with the great domed forehead and imperious look was not a teacher.

'Those who knew him best and admired him most', a pupil recorded, 'were compelled to acknowledge with regret that his power of communicating knowledge was far inferior to his facility in acquiring and his grasp in retaining it. He would lecture to a class of little boys in language which would need some modification—in the direction of simplicity—if addressed to advanced university students. It is not marvellous, therefore, that the classes began to fall off.'

Nor had Dr James Adamson, for all his devotion and sincerity, the art of reigning tactfully (his was nothing less than a reign). In the new professor of English classics he met a counter claimant for the throne who possessed qualities that he lacked himself.

The clash came early and it lasted two years. Dale accused Adamson, who was not exactly making a fortune on his meagre stipend, of withdrawing possible students from the college to coach them privately in the college buildings. Whatever the truth of the charges, and similar ones were levelled later against Dale himself, the subscribers, who had not provided a quorum since 1845, woke up with a start in 1850 and arranged for John Fairbairn, Advocate de Wet, and Dr Abercrombie to investigate the college finances. Perhaps the foundation of the Diocesan College by Bishop Gray the year before helped forward their new-found earnestness.

Dr Adamson did not await the inquiry. He had suffered much, he had held the fort when all the rest had withdrawn, he had sacrificed his own income for the college, and now he was embroiled in dispute with his younger colleague. When he received an invitation to help found a missionary college in Pennsylvania, he told the council he was leaving the Colony. Langham Dale became professor of mathematics as well as English classics. This was less arduous than it sounds. The college had only seven pupils left.

But the shareholders were now awake. A new council was elected for the first time since 1845. An energetic new secretary-treasurer, David (later Sir David) Tennant, took over the reins. The professorial stipends that had been cut were at last restored. Within eighteen months the number of students had risen to sixty.

Fairbairn was back on the council. By 1853 he was reinvestigating the finances with Rose Innes, who had served year after

year on the council, and Advocate F. S. Watermeyer, and making provision for more professors, lecturers, and subjects. By 1855 he was able to tell the world through the *Advertiser*: 'The South African College 25 years ago was an experiment. It had to pass through the natural pains and diseases of infancy and childhood. Its original patrimony was spent in nursing. It now exhibits strength and capacity for the great work it was destined to undertake. We have only to give it food and materials on which to operate and it will repay us all a hundredfold.'

He had every right to tell the world. For he now became chairman of the college for which he had fought so long and whose cause he still contested with vision and energy in the newly born Cape Parliament. He remained chairman till his death in 1864.

The battle was won. It is needless to follow the steps by which the now-thriving South African College grew into three different institutions, greatest among them the University of Cape Town. It is needless, too, to trace the part its staff and its old boys played in founding the old examining University of the Cape of Good Hope, which, as the University of South Africa, cradled all our younger universities.

The South African College not merely roused the country to the need for advanced education at a time when even the three R's were almost inaccessible. Its living example of learning became a powerful weapon in the hands of Sir George Grey and Rose Innes in establishing other foundations like it—the Grey College in Bloemfontein, the Grey Institute in Port Elizabeth, and the Graaff-Reinet Academy. Stellenbosch followed suit in 1866 with the high school (called 'gymnasium') which, under its Scottish lecturers, finally blossomed into the Victoria College and Stellenbosch University.

The influence of the South African College on the rise of the Diocesan College at Rondebosch and St Andrew's College in Grahamstown was less direct. No other school in the country can boast an old boys' roll to compare with that of the South African College. One of its first famous pupils was Sir John Brand. He was lecturing at the college when he was called to preside over the Free State.

For its foundation and its survival this mother-school of white South Africa has to thank many illustrious men—Truter and

Faure, de Wet and Changuion, Rose Innes and Sir Langham Dale, Sir Christoffel Brand and William Porter, Sir John Wylde and Sir David Tenannt. But it owed most of all to James Adamson and John Fairbairn.

It was given to Adamson, who had left it in turmoil of spirit, to see his dream of 1828 come true. After playing his part in Pennsylvania he returned in 1860 to South Africa and spent the last fifteen years of his life at Green Point, within easy reach of the South African College in its early prime.

In Green Point, too, in the home that Mrs Eliza Fairbairn had made gay so long ago with her quick and loving spirit, John Fairbairn consoled himself in old age by writing to Eliza Fairbairn the younger. He bore the scars of many an impetuous and honourable fight. He was unpopular still, for he still espoused unpopular causes, and could still be rash and perverse. He was lonely, for many of his fellow-fighters for those causes were dead. But the aged chairman of the South African College had much to look back on with gratitude.

'We have now roads, bridges, mills [i.e. industries], schools and churches,' he wrote to Eliza, 'the five living pillars of a land, and in numbers greater than any of us hoped to see with our own eyes when I began to sound these words in what seemed a sort of desert.'

'The Cape is certainly higher by some inches than when the Natives, the slaves and the people themselves were under tutors and guardians and dared not call their souls their own, or feel quite sure that they had souls.' Only a year before his death, he told her from his heart: 'The country is visibly improving, and a quiet, active man may live as virtuously and die as happily at the Cape as anywhere else.'

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### THE DISCOVERY OF AFRIKAANS

The play had just ended, but Lord Charles Somerset and his lady still sat motionless in the Royal box of the old Cape Town theatre as though awaiting something. All the 800 theatre-goers were waiting for something too. Then amid bursting applause a slender figure broke from the stage and was escorted to His Excellency. It was the boy actor, his cheeks flushed with excitement, who had danced so perfectly in the Dutch comedy that had just ended.

'Louis Meurant', onlookers whispered. The boy bowed deeply to the redoubtable Governor of the Cape and to his wife. Impulsively Lady Somerset drew the lad towards her. Amid deafening applause, she kissed him on the cheek.

This graceful and accomplished English-speaking lad, who acted and sang with such skill in Dutch, French, and English on the Cape Town stage in the early 1820s, gave the first decisive impetus to a new written language, Afrikaans, and produced the first Afrikaans book. Such was the destiny of Louis Henri Meurant, who grew up to be a friend of Retief and Andries Pretorius, a champion of the 1820 Settlers, and a doughty fighter in the frontier wars.

Hardly any of the earliest significant efforts to write Afrikaans came from Afrikaners. The key-figures were C. E. Boniface, a travelled Frenchman who lived in Cape Town from the age of 20; four English-speaking South Africans, Andrew Geddes Bain, his son-in-law Frederick Rex, Louis Meurant, and Henry Cooper; and then, as the tide began to flow more strongly, two gifted Hollanders, Arnoldus Pannevis and P. C. Hoogenhout, around whom gathered that famous society at Paarl, the *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners*.

Little did young Meurant trouble his head with the future of Dutch, as against Afrikaans, during his adventurous youth, when

circumstances prepared him to become the father of a new written language.

The preparation began before he was born. We do not know what induced Louis Balthasar Meurant, a musician of French-Swiss origin, settled in England, to throw up his home and prospects in Chester and emigrate with his young English wife to the Cape of Good Hope during the Napoleonic wars. When he married Eliza Humphrys, she was only a girl in her teens, he a man in his thirties. Their first child Louisa was born in England in 1808. Not long after, they set sail for the Cape.

No doubt Cape Town, with the constant coming and going of warships, merchant vessels, and troops, offered excellent prospects for a musician. Meurant composed a light opera for the Cape theatre. He was a friend of all the small circle of French actors and musicians who lived in the Cape at the time.

In June 1811 Eliza Meurant bore her husband a son, christened Louis Henri. Seven years after occurred the tragedy that altered the whole of this son's later life. In the flower of her youth his mother died. To the English that he spoke at home at No. 3 Kerk Street with his father and sister, the boy now added the Dutch and the Afrikaans that he heard spoken at No. 2, the home of the kindly master-builder Maartens Johannes Smit. So kind was Mrs Smit to the motherless lad of her well-to-do neighbour (Louis's father had become by then a business man of substance) that Louis's wife in later years used to claim that the Smits had brought him up. The English-speaking boy at No. 3 found a second home at No. 2. When he grew up, he married the Smits' daughter Charlotte.

In his own home Louis doubtless continued to use English, for he showed a masterly knowledge of English idiom in later life. But he spoke with a 'slightly foreign accent', which presumably came from his French-Swiss father. With Dutch next door and French lessons at home it is not surprising that Louis and Louisa were in great demand on the multilingual Cape stage in the early 1820s. They took part in the first English play ever produced by Cape colonists, Foote's comedy *The Liar*.

The friends of Louis's father at this time included a Scottish newcomer, George Greig, the first private printer in South Africa. Louis Balthasar Meurant helped to finance Greig, on the understanding that in return he would teach Louis the trade of printing.

And now adventure stepped in. Only five months after Louis had begun his work as printer's devil for the first South African newspaper, the *Commercial Advertiser* (printed by Greig), Lord Charles Somerset intervened. By suppressing the *Advertiser* he precipitated the famous struggle by Greig, Pringle, and Fairbairn for the freedom of the Press.

Behind the scenes Louis Meurant's father took a keen part in the struggle by assuring Greig of the necessary finances. As a small participant in that thrilling fight, the alert lad of 13 saw and heard everything. Sixty years later, in 1884, he wrote a book in English to tell the story and to remind a later generation how precious was their heritage of a free Press beyond the control of the government.

Louis's father died in 1826. There was now little to keep him in Cape Town. His apprenticeship completed, he set off for the eastern border, met and made friends with future Voortrekkers at Graaff-Reinet, hunted with them, and accompanied them deep into Kaffirland in the campaign against Fetcani.

Meantime, Greig and Fairbairn were winning their fight. At last the freedom of the Press was formally announced, and Louis took a bold decision for a youngster of 19. He decided to seize this new liberty to found a newspaper of his own, the first outside Cape Town.

Many adventures elapsed before the *Grahamstown Journal* (in its present form as *Grocott's Daily Mail*, the oldest South African newspaper) appeared for the first time in the streets of that bustling frontier town in 1831. Its 20-year-old proprietor was printer, compositor, proof-reader, reporter, editor, and manager. His hands were certainly full till Robert Godlonton, who had been a printer before migrating from England in 1820, joined him in partnership and became his lifelong friend.

In his lonely and somewhat crusty old age at Riversdale, Meurant was wont to describe these Grahamstown days as the happiest of his life. At home his wife and old Mr Smit, his father-in-law, superintended his family. At work he printed, and very likely translated into its flawless English, Piet Retief's famous manifesto on the causes and aims of the Great Trek. He published many dispatches from Piet Retief and other Voortrekker leaders on their progress and plans. When they faced annihilation in Natal in the terrible year 1838, he published the advertisement in

which one Andries Hendrik Pretorius of Graaff-Reinet offered for sale his farm, with its homestead, vineyard, and citrus orchard, before joining the Trek.

When Pretorius, nine years after his great victory at Blood River, rode into Grahamstown for the last time, to seek an interview with the Governor on the Voortrekkers' grievances in Natal, he stayed with Louis and Charlotte until Sir Henry Pottinger's blunt, inexplicable refusal to see him.

While he thus kept in touch with the Voortrekkers and with the racy, effective language of the frontier Boers, Meurant became a friend of many leading men among the 1820 Settlers and identified himself with their pleas for the separation of the Eastern Cape, as a distinct province, from the rest of the Colony with its overwhelmingly Afrikaans-speaking majority.

After withdrawing from his partnership in the *Grahamstown Journal*, in his independent way, he took to trade, fought in the frontier wars, became one of Sir Harry Smith's interpreters, helped Owen and Hogg as interpreter at the signing of the Sand River Convention, and founded other newspapers, foremost among them the Dutch journal in Grahamstown, *Het Kaapsche Grensblad*.

Dutch might still be a living language to some extent in Cape Town but it was a foreign tongue to the frontier Boers. Meurant recognized the fact and made a clean break with tradition. He placed a whole series of Afrikaans letters in the *Grensblad* between 1844 and 1850. Many were humorous, but several were serious. Most were written by himself.

In his independent, original way Meurant had discovered the cardinal secret hidden for so long from born Afrikaners—that their language was not Dutch and they need in no way be ashamed of it. Far to the north Andries Pretorius was writing letters in an atrocious mixture of biblical Dutch and colloquial Afrikaans, which he and his fellow trekkers believed to be their language and hopefully called 'Dutch'. It fell to Meurant, freed by his origins from the awe for Dutch ingrained in the conservative Boers, to grasp the liberating truth and reduce to writing the language they actually spoke.

In his fiftieth year the chance of his life came to Meurant to use this key to the heart of a people. Once again the English-speaking settlers were agitating for separation of the Eastern Cape from the

slow-moving, impoverished Western Cape, which spent their taxes so freely. But most Afrikaner farmers in the Eastern Province were hostile. They feared that if they were separated from the rest of the old Colony they would be swamped by the settler element. Meurant was now a dignified civil commissioner and magistrate stationed at Cradock, on the threshold of the Afrikaans-speaking part of the Eastern Cape. He decided to help his Grahamstown friends. He began to write sparkling Afrikaans dialogues—anonynously, for more reasons than one—in the *Cradock News* on the case for separation.

The first literature of most languages is poetry. With singular appropriateness the first Afrikaans book is a political tract. And what a captivating tract it is. Its racy charm is in parts as rich and appealing today as on 6 April 1861, when the *Cradocksche Nieuwsblad* reprinted the six dialogues in a 75-page book, *Zamenspraak tusschen Klaas Waarzegger en Jan Twijfelaar over het onderwerp van Afscheiding tusschen de Oostelijke en Westelijke Provincie*. The contents were Afrikaans though the title was Dutch. It meant 'Dialogue between Nick Truth-teller and Jack Doubter on the subject of Separation between the Eastern and Western Province'.

The dialogues had already taken Afrikaans-speaking readers by storm. The first had appeared on 4 December 1860, and the second on 11 December. The public response was almost unbelievable. Three thousand copies each had to be printed of the two issues, giving the obscure *Cradock News* for a fortnight the biggest circulation of any South African newspaper.

Nearly a century had to go by before that early promise of a great Afrikaans-reading public became the accepted commonplace of South African publishing. But as early as March 1861 the *Cape Monthly* drew the true conclusion. The fame of Klaas Waarzegger showed, it wrote, that the Boers really could be induced to read if only they were given the right kind of reading-matter.

J. S. Bold, owner of the *Cradock News*, founded a sister-paper, the *Cradocksche Nieuwsblad*, to carry the remaining four dialogues and the brilliant series of Parliamentary sketches in Afrikaans on which Meurant now embarked to support his cause, separation. So popular with the people were these sketches that they were eagerly taken over even by Dutch newspapers strongly opposed to separation, such as *De Zuid Afrikaan* and *Het Volksblad*

in Cape Town. Thus Meurant's Afrikaans achieved a national circulation.

In the dialogues young Klaas Waarzegger put the case for separation with homely wit and telling skill to Oom Jan Twijfelaar (Uncle Jack Doubter) and his wife Tant' Elsie at the Twijfelaars' Doppe home. With racy similes from farm life he settled Oom Jan Twijfelaar's misgivings, which comprised the Afrikaners' case against separation. Klaas Waarzegger and Oom Jan Twijfelaar alike spoke with dignity as well as homely humour. Both took it for granted that the final standard of good sense and political wisdom was that of the Doppe Boers of the Eastern Province.

In the letters, which purported to have been written from the press gallery in Cape Town but were no doubt composed in the civil commissioner's home at Cradock with the aid of Cape newspaper reports, Klaas Waarzegger gave Oom Jan Twijfelaar a vivid picture of the fight put up for separation by the gallant Eastern Province M.P.s, and the contemptible case made out by the other side. The sparkle of these letters has not dimmed with time, as anyone who cares to re-read them in Dr P. J. Nienaber's edition will find for himself.

A spate of imitations of Klaas Waarzegger, all in Afrikaans, poured into the Dutch press of South Africa in ensuing years. Afrikaans letters to the Dutch press had hitherto been almost unknown. They now became a common feature. None could capture the freshness and sparkle of the original Klaas Waarzegger; these were Meurant's own secrets, a charm of style and observation that made him a kind of Langenhoven born sixty years before his time.

The best of his imitators was another English-speaking South African, Henry Cooper of Fraserburg, who sent twenty-three humorous 'Boerenbrievens' (Boer letters) to *Het Volksblad* in Cape Town in 1870, and eleven 'Kaapsche Schetsen' (Cape sketches) in graver mood in 1871, depicting Parliament, the courts, and the press. Cooper, who wrote under the name 'Zwaartman', subsequently trekked to the Transvaal and became a noted landdrost of Lydenburg.

Through the vivacity and charm of *Klaas Waarzegger*, Meurant gave Afrikaans a popular start as a written language. Up to a point he knew exactly what he was doing. Before him Afrikaans

had been consciously written only for humorous effect as the language of slaves and Hottentots. That was how Boniface had used it, in a farce in which the white characters all spoke impeccable Dutch. That was how Andrew Geddes Bain and Fred Rex used it in their dramatic monologue 'Kaatje Kekkelbek', in which an impudent Hottentot girl from one of Dr John Philip's unpopular missions tells the delights of mission life under the London Missionary Society in a mixture of Hottentot-Afrikaans prose and English-Afrikaans verse.

Though this racy work of 1839, 'dedicated and presented by the Uitenhage Philosophers to the Rev. Dr Philip', enjoyed immense popularity for many years, it gave no hint of the rich possibilities locked up in Afrikaans, as spoken by Afrikaners themselves, for serious thought and literature.

Meurant believed in those possibilities. In a leading article in the *Nieuwsblad* at Cradock he opposed the restriction of essays on agriculture for the Colesberg show to the medium of pure Dutch. 'Our friend Klaas Waarzegger has, to our way of thinking,' he declared, 'chosen the best course to write in a clear, simple way, intelligible to the frontier farmer, not in pure Dutch, but actually in their own every-day plat-Hollandsch [vernacular Dutch], by which the goal is better achieved.'

One of the newspaper's aims in using the 'real South African patois', he said, was to improve frontier agriculture, foster irrigation, and encourage the beautifying of homesteads. He certainly saw far into the future. The rapid and far-reaching improvement of South African farming in recent years has been made possible above all by the use of the Afrikaans-speaking farmers' own language, a potent factor in the rise of South Africa from a backward rural country to a fast-developing young Power.

For many years Meurant amid his other journalistic work produced occasional 'Klaas Waarzegger' articles in Afrikaans. Yet when he was buried at Riversdale in 1893, after a term of years as the Nestor of the upper house in the Cape Parliament, scarcely anyone except J. H. Hofmeyr knew that he was the inventor of Klaas Waarzegger. It was from Hofmeyr, indirectly, that proof that this pioneer of Afrikaans was an 'Engelsman' eventually reached Professor J. J. Smith of Stellenbosch in the 1920s.

The separation of the Eastern Province, for which Meurant

had striven, was never achieved, but before his death the rise of Afrikaans, which he had fostered partly from delight in its racy idiom and partly as a political weapon, was well on its way. The 'Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners' which impelled it had followed the clue that he offered. In fact, one of the Genootskap's most important founders, the Hollander P. C. Hoogenhout, acknowledged the debt by signing much of his work 'Klaas Waarzegger, junior'.

The rise of an Afrikaans literature in the past fifty years has all been built on the discovery, demonstrated in the most practical way by Meurant, that Dutch is a foreign language to the Afrikaner. It is a strange reflection that without the British occupation and the influx of English-speaking settlers Afrikaans could hardly have survived its fresh and unsophisticated childhood on the lips of the Boers and their retainers. Had the Netherlands resumed control of the Cape in 1814 and Dutch officials and immigrants striven to renew the ties with the mother country, Afrikaans would have been driven to the wall, as surely as the dialects of Britain are being ousted by the British Broadcasting Corporation's standard English.

Meurant had little time to devote to the arts in later life, though he wrote with grace and ease. Yet memories of his father's music and the operas and plays in which he delighted as a boy would have made him appreciate keenly the beautiful and moving poetry which is the chief glory of Afrikaans literature today.

Some of that poetry is itself an indirect tribute to the labours of English-speaking teachers who stirred a love for literature and for poetry in the first generation of Afrikaners to enjoy widespread education. Was it to Archdeacon Roberts, who taught him in Pretoria, that Eugene Marais, the first authentic Afrikaans poet, owed his introduction to the beauty of language? Certainly his earliest poems, like those of Louis Leipoldt and some other Afrikaans poets, were written in English.

It was the poetry of England, rather than that of the Netherlands, that set young Afrikaners rhyming after a silence of 250 years. But the language they purified and adorned sprang straight from the veld. It was there that its force and charm were first discovered and then displayed to South Africa by Louis Henri Meurant.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### HE FOUNDED THE SCHOOLS

If Professor Rose Innes seemed curiously absent-minded, even for a professor, during his last lectures at the South African College in 1839, he had good reason.

An almost illiterate country will always be poor, and a poor country cannot spare money to make itself literate. This dilemma had settled upon him in a peculiarly vicious form. His mandate was to provide free State education for all settled parts of South Africa. But Lord Glenelg in Whitehall had decided that since the Cape Colony was in debt to the British government it must be educated on the cheap. The Governor, Sir George Napier, passed on Glenelg's instruction to Innes that he must educate South Africa—all races—for £3,460 a year. It was even worse than that, for £1,000 of this pitiful grant was earmarked for existing commitments. With the rest, Glenelg wanted Innes to found twelve free government schools in the twelve main centres of the Cape Colony.

The announcement shattered the splendid vision of State schools which Sir John Herschel's memoranda to the Governor had created. Sir John had envisaged 'a well-organized system' of free government schools for all races 'throughout the Colony'. It would have been not greatly inferior to the school system that white children enjoy in South Africa now, more than a century later.

'Wholly inadequate' was Innes's summary long afterwards of Lord Glenelg's allocation. How could twelve schoolmasters teach tens of thousands of children of all races, scattered over 150,000 square miles? The sum did not even provide for assistant teachers for the twelve schoolmasters, let alone buildings, furniture, apparatus, or books. It did not even allow the superintendent a secretary or a clerk. For the first four years Innes went without one. He wrote all his own letters and totted up every

account of the Education Department. Not till John Montagu became head of the Cape Public Service in 1843 was he granted a clerk. Pleas for a bigger grant were useless. Sir George Napier, though Governor of the Colony, dared not exceed Glenelg's £3,460.

Having almost no money to throw into the struggle to deliver South Africa from semi-illiteracy, Innes had to think hard. His first public action was simple but far-reaching. On 22 May 1839, he published the first national syllabus for South African schools. It only covered, of course, the coming twelve schools. But it set a standard that would challenge every so-called 'school' in South Africa to live up to its name. The primary course would cover the three R's, 'a sound grammatical knowledge of English' (on this Sir George Napier was most insistent), a grammatical knowledge of Dutch (for schools in Afrikaans areas), elementary geography, an outline of history, drawing (including maps and plans), and 'daily perusal of the Holy Scriptures'.

At one stroke Innes settled the religious question, which has proved so baffling in State schools abroad. For the sake of the children's minds and characters alike he believed that the Christian faith must receive full recognition in South African schools. But how could it be taught in them without offending every denomination at some point or other? Innes offered the clergy every opportunity outside school hours to teach the children of their flock the dogmas of their church. But he insisted that during school hours every child, unless the parents objected, should become acquainted with the Bible, and with the outlines of biblical history and geography to help him grasp what he read.

Innes fought for this principle throughout his career. The solution he announced in 1839 is in force in South Africa today. But later generations have sometimes forgotten his pregnant advice to a country steeped in the Old Testament, that Bible lessons in school should begin with the Gospels.

Innes divided the general work of the primary course into five classes or standards. He also arranged that in first-class schools Latin, Greek, and French, mathematics, general science, and surveying should form the secondary course. Then, having nailed his colours to the mast, as it were, he set out on a wagon and Cape-cart tour of all the Cape Colony to find out how bad the educational outlook really was.

He found abundant reason for despair. The system of government English schools, which Lord Charles Somerset had begun in 1822, had largely collapsed. School after school had been closed for lack of teachers. Others had barely half a dozen pupils. The eleven surviving government schools taught only 500 pupils between them.

The church-clerk schools founded by Sir John Cradock in 1813, after Judge van Ryneveld's disturbing report on rural illiteracy, were in still worse plight. The Government offered Dutch Reformed congregations £30 each to employ a church clerk to run a school at the church. Less than half a dozen of these primitive schools were still in existence. One had only five pupils; another, fifteen. In some towns there were a number of private schools, tied to no syllabus, brief-lived, and—with rare and creditable exceptions like the Tot Nut van 't Algemeen school in Cape Town—badly taught. Innes found that his old friend Andrew Murray, pastor of Graaff-Reinet, had sent his eldest boys by sailing-ship to Scotland a year before because he knew of no reasonably advanced school in all South Africa.

The majority of white children in most districts lived in the countryside, not the towns, and the countryside was still in the grip of the 'meesters'. In the three districts of Caledon, Graaff-Reinet, and Somerset East alone, he found more than ninety 'meesters' giving farmers' children schooling of the briefest and most ignorant kind in exchange for £2 to £3 a month and their board. Many of these 'meesters' were really vagrants. Innes bluntly called them 'illiterate persons'.

In some ways, freed slaves and Hottentot children were better looked after than white children, for there were many missions. These mission schools had by far the biggest, the most crowded, and the most ragged attendance, but few of their pupils stayed long enough to rise above the sub-standards.

Innes returned to his wife and his eight children after months of adventure on the steep, boulder-strewn tracks that passed for roads in 1840. Sometimes his future task sounded utterly impossible as he poured out his impressions to Margaret at home in Cape Town. He had found no thirst for education; it would have to be created. He had found scarcely a competent teacher on his tour. There were no books in the houses of the people. All that most parents, outside the wine-growing districts, wanted

was enough schooling for their children to enable them to scrape through the Dutch Reformed catechism in order to be confirmed in the church. Otherwise they could not marry. English-speaking districts were not much better. The children were wanted at the earliest possible age to help on the labourless farms or in stores and workshops.

There was only one way in which Innes could create a thirst for education or a class of South Africans in the country districts who could foster adequate local effort to provide it. He must recruit first-class teachers in Europe, open free schools or schools charging the lowest possible fees, and train teachers in South Africa for the future. That was Herschel's idea. Herschel had thought it so important to raise the status of teachers in the happy hunting ground of the 'meesters' that he urged no government teacher should receive less than £150 a year from the State. Glenelg recommended salaries ranging from £150 to £300.

On £3,460 a year that was impossible. Innes must find rent for schoolrooms. He was also determined that teachers who drew large attendances or taught many subjects must not be brought to the verge of breakdown for lack of assistant teachers, as he had been at Uitenhage. He must find salaries for these assistants or pupil teachers. He hoped that by passing his examinations they would qualify some day as first-class teachers themselves. The Superintendent had no choice but to lower the top salary to £200 and the minimum to £100. In return he would let teachers charge senior pupils £1 a term for the secondary course. Then he set sail for Scotland to find teachers willing to man his new schools on this thrifty basis.

We do not know whether he was able to take Margaret and his children with him to meet his parents for the first time in Scotland. No doubt he visited Sir John Herschel, and learned that he had passed at sea five teachers selected by Sir John for the new schools. Seven more must be found.

In Edinburgh Innes drew up a circular to the Scottish universities inviting young teachers to emigrate. He was able to offer them a weekly postal service in every village, Presbyterian services in Dutch conducted (mostly) by Scottish ministers, and the cautious hope of a pension of £100 a year at 55. Alas for the pension! His contributory scheme was too far ahead of the times

in South Africa. It was turned down. But he did obtain seven teachers. Among them was John Paterson, destined to found the Standard Bank of South Africa, and the Rev. Thomas Buchanan, who would become head of the intended teacher-training school in Cape Town.

Innes's old university warmed to its son from South Africa. Before he sailed, Aberdeen awarded him an honorary LL.D. From henceforth he would be known as Dr James Rose Innes, Superintendent-General of Public Instruction.

He sailed for home in 1841 with £500 worth of textbooks and classroom maps in his baggage, to educate a new nation. Before the end of the year all twelve government first-class schools were at work under the new teachers and the first step in Innes's programme was a thriving reality. But the vast majority of South African children were still in danger of growing up virtually illiterate, and Innes's next move was to beg the Governor to subsidize the mission schools.

One or two had received small subsidies in the past. Innes proposed that if the mission would let him inspect their schools, would restrict religious teaching during school hours to the Bible, and introduce as much of his elementary syllabus as they could, they should be given annual grants towards teachers' salaries.

The grants helped the missions to extend their schools, which in those days took children of all races. The grants also enabled Innes to ensure that the standard of teaching was raised. For more than a century the subsidy system which he thus launched was destined to provide the Bantu in particular with nearly all the education that South Africa has yet given them. The outcry all over the world that followed Dr Verwoerd's Bantu Education Act of 1953, abolishing aid to mission schools, was an unconscious tribute to Innes's foresight 100 years ago.

The Superintendent had now far more inspection work than the Glenelg plan had envisaged. Besides inspecting every pupil in the government free schools, he had to inspect the mission schools that accepted aid. By hard travelling and hard work in stifling schoolrooms, where the dust raised by crowded pupils from the mud floors hung like a fog, he managed to cover the whole Colony in 1841 and again in 1842. As he drove or rode over the appalling mountain passes, across flats where lions still lurked, and through flooded rivers, he came to know the common people of

South Africa as few have ever known them. Night after night he had to put up at lonely homesteads. He was the kind of visitor who was almost invariably welcome.

His courtesy, his integrity, and his genuine affection for the people and their country were immense assets in creating a thirst for real education where there had been none before. The keen but kindly eye of the Superintendent, as he watched the children of the house over the evening meal, saw much that the parents missed.

He knew how little the future held for almost illiterate people. He knew at what an economic disadvantage the lack of schooling and English would place the South African child, especially the Afrikaner child of the interior, in comparison with immigrants from Europe. Agriculture itself could scarcely rise beyond the subsistence level until the farmers of South Africa began to read. How could he bring them real teachers in place of the drunken 'meesters'?

In 1843 he thought of a way. To quote his own words, he 'again brought to the notice of the Government the destitute condition of the farmers in the country districts in regard to elementary instruction and the means of acquiring a knowledge of the English language'. The result was South Africa's first adequate farm schools. The arrangement was that a committee of farmers could ask the Superintendent for £30 a year towards the salary of a teacher. Though it was hard for Innes to extract even an extra £30 from the Cape Treasury, the sum was not nearly enough for a competent elementary teacher. Innes stipulated that parents must pay fees of at least 5s. a quarter to boost the teacher's income to, say, £70 a year. The farmers' committee could choose any teacher they liked, provided the local clergyman approved him, but they must give him a house and a schoolroom.

It took years for news of this arrangement to spread through the remoter districts, where few farmers ever saw a newspaper. The Superintendent tirelessly brought it to farmers' attention on his tours and begged the rural clergy to do likewise. Some of them, particularly his old friend William Robertson, needed no stirring up. Andrew Murray wrote from Graaff-Reinet to his sons John and Andrew at school in Scotland to tell them they could do valuable work for their country by serving Dr Innes as teachers.

The rise of farmers' schools emphasized still more the need for textbooks as well as teachers. Innes himself wrote the first South African textbook for government schools, a book of exercises in translation from Dutch to English, and his former colleague, Dr Changuion, wrote a second textbook on the Dutch and English languages as an introduction to it. One pupil, in a farmers' school near Paarl, whom Innes must have inspected and who was reared on these textbooks, rose to fame in after years as the Rev. S. J. du Toit, champion of Afrikaans and founder of the first effective educational system in President Kruger's Transvaal.

Teachers remained scarce. Buchanan's 'normal school' in Cape Town consisted of an efficient junior school and a teacher-training department whose students could practise teaching on the junior division. Only a modest fee was demanded of students, but not one ever presented himself. What right-minded South African in the 1840s would pay to be trained as a 'meester'? Buchanan persuaded dozens of his senior boys at various times to manage classes for him as pupil teachers—for a small stipend. But none of them remained in teaching. Dr Innes's eldest son James worked for a while as an assistant teacher for Buchanan, but he eventually became a magistrate at an increased salary.

Yet a few of the pupil teachers in Innes's schools did eventually become first-class schoolmasters. A bright boy called Rowan at the Stellenbosch government free school became a pupil teacher under Maclachlan. He qualified to teach the government second-class school at Malmesbury and then had a brilliant career as schoolmaster at Worcester. In 1872 Rowan became one of South Africa's first full-time inspectors of schools to lessen the burden on Innes's successor, Sir Langham Dale.

The arrival of Montagu as Colonial Secretary smoothed the Superintendent's path. With the aid of this brilliant and sympathetic chief, Innes was able to spend a good deal more than £3,460 a year on education. Within two years of Montagu's arrival he seized the chance to revive the almost extinct church-clerk schools on a new basis as public State-aided district schools. He arranged to have them opened wherever new parishes were founded by the churches or a new magistracy was established.

Innes would have liked elementary education to be free everywhere, as it was in the government schools. He thought it would encourage the largest possible number of children to go to school

and stay there longer than the customary two to three years. But the Cape Colony was much too poor for that. Increasingly, therefore, he offered State grants to foster and encourage schools founded by local initiative, even though they charged fees. So long as he could inspect them every two or three years to ensure the standard, they helped him to cast a network of passable elementary schools far and wide over a country which had known nothing of the kind before.

Of course he encountered opposition and criticism. Some thought his first-class government schools, which combined an elementary and a secondary course, an unwarranted luxury in a rough colony. What nonsense was this, they asked, to teach older pupils in Africa science or classics? Others held that the whole centralized system of free schools was hopelessly inadequate for a population so widely scattered, and was alien to South African tradition. The *Zuid Afrikaan* lamented the policy of anglicization through the schools.

But Innes was not a free agent. It was not he who limited State funds for education. He was always begging and coaxing extra sums from here and there, always trying to encourage local initiative and tap local resources. He had no power to reverse the anglicization policy but did much to modify its harshness and ensure official respect, throughout the Afrikaans districts, for the teaching of Dutch in schools.

One of his biggest initial problems arose from the fact that government schools were not allowed to distinguish between white pupils and children of colour. It was scarcely in Innes's nature, with his deep Christian feeling and broad charity, to wish the policy otherwise. But the practical difficulty in a country with a stiffening colour bar was acute. If zealous missionaries packed a government school with the children of Hottentots and freed slaves, white parents would withdraw their children and the government scheme would collapse. Innes found a judicious compromise. He laid down that children would only be admitted to government schools if 'decently clothed and of good deportment'. Thenceforth the children of more advanced non-Europeans continued to sit side by side with white children in the schools, but any whose primitiveness in clothing, customs, and cleanliness would give the school a bad name were confined to the missions.

After 1844 Innes gave up attempting to inspect annually every

State and State-aided school in the Cape Colony. The task became even more impossible when the Orange River Sovereignty, forerunner of the Orange Free State, was added to his cares in 1848. In 1839 he had found only 500 pupils in government schools. By 1844 he had ten times as many to inspect, thanks to the system of grants-in-aid; and yet the expansion was only beginning. He still made long inspection tours every year. These became a sore trial on his health as he neared 60. But he covered only a part of the country yearly. This gave him more time to address meetings wherever he went, to stir up a thirst for education, and to encourage parents, with offers of State assistance, to take the initiative.

When he retired in 1859 some of the fourteen first-class government schools were well on the way to becoming high schools. But even with the five second-class government schools, they now formed only a small part of the system of public education. Innes had fostered the rise of 38 primary schools of the church-clerk type all over the Colony, 47 State-aided farmers' schools, and 112 aided mission schools.

The foundations of national education had been laid throughout the Cape Colony, which at that date embraced about eighty per cent of all white South Africans. Above all, a new class of educated South African had arisen, trained by the Scottish teachers he had installed nearly twenty years before. It was this new class that now made local initiative dependable.

By today's standards many of these schools were admittedly primitive. Langham Dale, who left his professor's chair at the South African College to succeed Innes, noted on his first inspections as Superintendent-General that at many aided schools only one or two pupils could write at a time because there were no desks and all must take their turn at one small table. At Wellington Dale found a mission school which had only one book for 48 children to read from. At a farmers' school on the Buffeljagts River, an area that sorely tried the initiative and patience of William Robertson, he discovered fourteen pupils crowded into a classroom eight feet square with no ventilation. It was the unfortunate teacher's bedroom. Dale pleaded with the Watermeyer Education Commission of 1861-3 for classrooms with wooden floors, on which tables would stand steady enough for children to write.

He did not think Innes had been unduly successful in ensuring that English was adequately taught in all State-aided schools for white children. At one country school, he complained, the teacher knew no English and he (at that early stage of his career) no Dutch. The interview was continued through an interpreter. But Dale admitted that if the State grants were withdrawn on the score that school committees provided inadequate buildings or furniture, two-thirds of the aided schools would have to close.

Strange things could happen during the two or three years that elapsed before the Superintendent revisited an aided school. Even the government free schools gave their quota of surprises. After inspecting the Fort Beaufort school in December 1853 Innes reported to the new Cape Parliament that he found it in 'a most unsatisfactory state'. There was 'a total absence of textbooks in the elementary course'. Several pupils had been absent for months—a matter for comment even in those days of notoriously slack school attendance. To crown it all, the children showed 'great deficiency' in the three R's. The teacher, 'called upon', Innes says crisply, 'to account for the state into which the school had fallen', blamed the recent Kaffir War. That did not save him. 'More energy on the part of the teacher would soon result in a more satisfactory state of things', the Superintendent announced, and replaced the idler by a better teacher.

All through his twenty years' service, Innes contrived to recruit excellent teachers from abroad—Scottish, Irish, English, and Dutch—to help staff the struggling schools of South Africa. The situation that faced Dale when he took over had changed immeasurably for the better since 1839. His main problem was to decide whether government free schools were still necessary. Their stimulus to the private schools and the aided schools in larger centres had raised up a number of institutions more amply staffed, thanks to the fees they could charge, than the government schools themselves. They had been compelled to catch up with Innes's syllabus; having done so, they could offer wealthier parents the social attractions of 'exclusive' schools instead of State schools open even to the poor, and to children of colour.

Sir Langham Dale's answer during his long reign as Superintendent—he did not retire till 1892—was to turn even the government free schools into aided, fee-charging high schools. This was the next step in the vast task of providing efficient education for

the entire white population and for as many children of other races as the slender finances of the Cape Colony permitted. Dale was likewise able to develop the pupil-teacher system initiated by Innes into a satisfactory means of recruiting young South Africans in almost the required numbers to teach in his ever-multiplying schools.

When Dr James Rose Innes left his office for the last time on 22 November 1859, he was more trusted and beloved than ever before by the scattered towns and villages of his country.

Much that he had hoped for had not yet come to pass. The young Cape Parliament had not accepted his carefully planned system of salary rises for teachers. It had taken fright at his great scheme for extending State-aided education everywhere on a local government system, backed by education rates to be levied by the new divisional councils. Legislators feared new schools would arise so quickly and demand government grants in such numbers that the Treasury would not stand the burden.

Yet Innes had achieved more for South Africa than he himself knew. His work proved vital for the republics as well as for the Cape Colony, and exercised a powerful influence even on Natal. In 1859 education scarcely existed north of the Orange, apart from the college which Sir George Grey had founded in Bloemfontein, perhaps on Innes's advice. Otherwise the old half-illiterate 'meesters' were almost the only intermediaries between youth and its due heritage of civilization. No wonder enlightened parents in the republics sent their children south to the schools of the Cape Colony. At the same time Afrikaners educated in the Colony found their way to the north, bringing the leavening of a new South African learning with them.

Sooner or later Natal, the Free State, and the South African Republic all appointed superintendents of education with the same powers that Fairbairn had suggested in 1838 and that Innes (and after him Dale) had wielded so well. Ideas as well as men were recruited from the Cape Colony for adaptation and service in the north.

None of the northern pioneers of an educated South Africa would have pleased Innes more than the Rev. John Brebner, like himself a son of Aberdeen University. It is possible that the old superintendent met young Brebner more than once. For it was Innes's lifelong friend Robertson who persuaded Brebner to quit

Aberdeen in 1860 and become rector of the Burgersdorp Academy which Innes had helped that small town to found.

As a member of the Cape Board of Public Examiners after his retirement, and as a member with Fairbairn of the Watermeyer Education Commission, Innes had other chances of meeting this young teacher. When Brebner had raised the Burghersdorp Academy from a forlorn collection of twenty small boys and girls to the finest school of the north-eastern Cape, he became professor of classics at Gill College, Somerset East. There he taught Innes's grandson James, who later became Chief Justice of the Union.

Brebner was a young Scot after the old superintendent's own heart—a brilliant teacher, a hard worker and a devout Christian. One week after Innes died at Port Elizabeth at the close of December 1873, Brebner crossed the Orange River to do for the Free State what Innes had done a generation before for the Cape Colony.

He found the Orange Free State almost as backward in education in 1874 as Innes had found the Cape frontier in 1822. School-going was rare and exceedingly brief. But Brebner had one tremendous asset on his side—President Brand, who had sat under Innes and Adamson in the South African College at Cape Town.

With none of the Native wars that had bedevilled Innes's term as superintendent, but with diamonds booming in the west, the Free State was enjoying a frugal prosperity. It was no doubt largely through Brand's foresight that special sources of revenue, lavish indeed compared with Lord Glenelg's allocation to Innes, were earmarked for education. They made the establishment of government schools up and down the country far easier. Nor was Brebner handicapped, as he criss-crossed the Free State in his Cape cart, by the enforced anglicization policy of Lord Charles Somerset and Sir George Napier.

President Brand was succeeded at last by President Reitz, who had grown up under the eye of William Robertson and attended the South African College, and at the end of Reitz's term of office Brebner achieved one of his ambitions. In 1895 he induced the members of the Volksraad, to whom he had always made his reports in person, to enact compulsory education, covering a year or two for each pupil, for all white children living within two miles of a government school.

Brebner did not live to see this first experiment in compulsory

education expand, after the destruction of the South African War, till at last it included all white children in the Union and began also to include all non-Europeans. He died at Cape Town in 1902, leaving behind him, like Innes, a large family to give South Africa illustrious service in peace and war.

Great things grow from small. The advances South Africa has made in education of every kind since Innes struggled to start a national system on £3,460 have immeasurably raised the economic, scientific, and cultural status of South Africa. Many outstanding Afrikaners have helped in the later stages. Yet all the advances rest on the foundations of that popular interest in education, and informed demand for it, which Innes himself created in twenty arduous years on the roads of South Africa. Neither existed when he, with Andrew Murray and William Robertson, was rowed ashore from the brig *Arethusa* on the second day of July 1822.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### PIONEERS

**A**n uncontrollable urge to join the Voortrekkers led Henry Hartley from his parents' home at Bathurst to the discovery of the first payable gold in southern Africa. The vast gold-mining industry of South Africa, and the uranium-mining that now accompanies it, stem from this king of ivory traders and from the young German geologist, Karl Mauch, whom he took to the ancient gold-workings of Rhodesia. The Central African Federation counts Hartley among its earliest pioneers. Even his Transvaal farm 'Thorndale', which is still in the Hartley family, was fruitful for posterity. There his family gave Magaliesberg tobacco its first major impulse towards becoming a national industry.

Who was this hunter-trader whom Mzilikazi and Lobengula trusted as a friend, and whom the Bantu tribes far and wide in the Transvaal and Rhodesia knew with awe by the simple title Oubaas? At 22, when the Voortrekkers were fighting for their existence against Dingaan, Henry Hartley was a well-built Bathurst farmer with fair complexion and steady blue-grey eyes. He was a first-rate shot and an expert horseman. Yet he walked with a limp, as he had done ever since he injured a foot in infancy.

Henry had reached South Africa with his family in 1820 at the age of 4. All of life that he could remember was the struggle for existence on the frontier, the constant watch against Xhosa cattle-raiders, and the excitement of hunting. His father became a noted elephant hunter. Henry himself eclipsed his father's fame and became in the end the greatest, perhaps, of all elephant hunters.

It was natural that reports from the Voortrekkers in the *Grahamstown Journal* of Meurant and Godlonton should fire the young man with longing to see the wide lands of the north. Elephants were becoming scarce near Bathurst, but he could see

for himself in the market square of Grahamstown the magnificent tusks and the skins of strange new antelopes which the trekkers sent south to exchange for ammunition, coffee, sugar, and cloth.

Early in the 1840s Bathurst could hold Hartley no longer. He set out to join the Great Trek. He obtained a farm near Marico in the north-western Transvaal, and later moved to 'Thorndale' (near Magaliesburg), within easy reach of the traders of Potchefstroom and the elephant country beyond Rustenburg.

On 2 May 1846, he reported to Commandant G. J. Kruger at Hekpoort in the Magaliesberg for a permit to take his two wagons of trade goods to Ohrigstad, the eastern Transvaal hamlet which Hendrik Potgieter had made the capital of his republic. Many Voortrekkers wanted the Englishman kept out. But Commandant-General Potgieter knew better. He realized that without trade there was little hope for the people of his republic. Defying public opinion, he welcomed the bearded young trader.

From then onwards, Hartley provided a regular link between the wildest and most isolated part of the Transvaal and Grahamstown, with its merchants, schools, doctors and scientists. At length he ventured across the Limpopo and became, with his wife and children, a familiar figure among the warlike Matabele.

Courage and unflinching presence of mind were his passport. A son-in-law recorded a typical instance of that presence of mind which occurred on his Rhodesian trek of 1862. A chief called Chukuru advanced with armed warriors on his outspanned wagons to demand the party's guns.

'They mean mischief', Hartley told Thackeray. 'You keep the boys [Hartley's three sons, the eldest of whom was then 16] behind the wagon while I deal with them. Hold yourselves ready with your rifles in case they attack us.' Then he climbed on to the wagon and sat astride the box that contained the rifles. His own gun lay across his knees. He could see that Chukuru intended carrying off the fire-arms with his ever-growing body of warriors.

'Chukuru', he called out, 'hear what I have to say before you do anything rash. You have heard about me, how the lion, yes, and the rhinoceros, after which you are named, never see the setting sun again after my gun has spoken. Be warned, then, for my hand is never steadier than when I am provoked.'

'The first attempt to take any single thing that belongs to me will be the signal for brain sauce to flow. The brain that will fill the first bowl will be Chukuru's.'

Grimly he sat on the rifle-box, the breeze blowing his long beard over his shoulders. He looked as calm as though he had a regiment just behind the wagon. Chukuru knew the Oubaas's reputation as a hunter. He was taken aback, whereupon Hartley shouted: 'Send your warriors back to the kraal or, by thunder, I will carry out my threat.'

Chukuru began to retreat. But Hartley knew that once the chief was out of the way there was no one he could use in his place as a guarantee against attack. A sudden rush by the crowd would be enough. Several warriors might fall by his own and his sons' rifles but then the little party, with its slow-firing weapons, would be overwhelmed. 'Send your men away first', Hartley ordered him with raised rifle. 'You shall stay till the last.'

Promptly, though with a bad grace, Chukuru told his men to withdraw. The crisis was over.

Several years after that trip, Hartley met Mauch at Potchefstroom. Hartley had shot an elephant not long before in Mashonaland and found its great bulk sprawled across the workings of an ancient mine. He did not know what substance had been mined there, but he invited Mauch to travel north with him to Mzilikazi's country in 1866. Next year he took him all the way to Mashonaland, where Mauch examined the mine and discovered that the ancients had worked it for gold. The Matabele would not permit them to mine but they identified similar quartz formations on the long trek south. At Tati, beyond the reach of Mzilikazi, Mauch found payable gold. His reports started the first gold-rush in South African history. In 1868 the first party set out from Potchefstroom with Henry Hartley as guide. Others soon followed from other parts of South Africa and from Britain.

Though he played a notable part in the early prospecting of Southern Rhodesia from his base at 'Thorndale', and gave his name to one of the richest gold-districts of that country, Hartley remained essentially a trader and elephant hunter. The Oubaas delighted in tall stories around the camp-fire about his hunting adventures. There is evidence to support one extraordinary story that he told against himself.

His party were in mopani country when a pride of lions

emerged from the bush a few hundred yards away. The Oubaas's eyes lit up. Seizing his gun he told his companions, 'Just watch me *bekruip* [i.e. stalk] the old male and bowl him over.' There were several tall ant-hills between the party and the lions, and the Oubaas used the largest to cover his movements from the old male while he stalked it.

But the lion had seen the wagon and was inquisitive. It began to move, just as quietly, towards the other side of the big ant-heap, which gave it ample cover. Hartley and the lion reached opposite sides of the ant-heap at the same moment. Cautiously each raised his head and gazed over the summit, straight into the eyes of the other. The Oubaas with his great square beard looked like a lion himself. The ordeal proved too much for the king of beasts. He suddenly turned tail and fled for life to the bush. As for Hartley, he was too surprised to shoot. He collapsed on the ant-heap in uncontrollable roars of laughter.

The death charge of a wounded rhino inflicted the injuries which hastened Hartley's death in 1871.

The first gold-mine in the Transvaal was opened a year or two after Tati by Edward Button from Natal. Following Mauch's reports, he arrived with his wagon at Lydenburg in July 1869 together with James Sutherland, a miner with twenty years' experience in California and Australia, and George Parsons, who had been prospecting in Natal. Soon Thomas McLachlan, who later made famous finds in the eastern Transvaal, joined them, and later A. R. Ash.

The first thing Button and his companions did was to confirm Mauch's belief that gold was present near Graskop and on the Selati River in the Lowveld. Then, after many months' prospecting amid all kinds of danger in the Lowveld and Rhodesia, Button discovered a payable reef of white quartz near the little, abandoned village of Potgietersrus. On Button's farm 'Eerste-ling', one morning in December 1871, Thomas Baines the painter and William Leathern from Natal saw the first gold-mine in the Transvaal in full operation.

'We were kindly welcomed by him and Mrs Button and were fortunate', Baines related, 'in being just in time to see some very beautiful specimens of gold quartz, which were already packed to be sent to the diamond fields. Some of these were very rich and



The treeless homestead of a Cape sheep-farmer, 1811. Note the (fat-tailed) sheep, and the store-room and the kitchen separated from the house. William Burchell.



An early 1820 Settler homestead, Thornhill's farm near the mouth of the Kowie River. George Thompson.



[*Central African Archives, Salisbury.*

During an elephant hunt in Mashonaland (*circa* 1864) Henry Hartley makes the first modern discovery of payable gold in Southern Africa — an ancient gold-mine. From a painting by Thomas Baines.

a few packed by Mrs Button exceedingly so, a regular network of gold standing out in high relief all over the stones.

'After breakfast—such as a well stocked up-country farm can produce and a hungry traveller can do ample justice to—we went to see the working.'

No enormous head-gear showed the way to the reef which these men of Natal had proudly christened 'Natalia'. No mine-dump towered above the green grass and bush of 'Eersteling'. Instead, 'close to the house in a deep gully, with a small rill dammed up to contain the water, were two cradles, and across another branch of the rivulet in a broad grassy valley were half a dozen holes side by side like newly made graves. Heaps of soil lay near them, ready for working, and from these the two ounces of gold I saw in Pretoria had been extracted.'

Baines estimated that there were thirty white people at Eersteling, of whom twenty might be classed as miners. Most of them, lacking capital, soon moved off to the diamond-fields, which were just beginning to boom. But Button and his partners, who claimed the Volksraad's offer of £,500 for the first payable gold-field, did not abandon 'Eersteling'.

Resigning his post as first mining commissioner of the Transvaal, Button took a wagon-load of quartz to England, where he had it assayed at no less than seventy-three ounces of gold to the ton. Meanwhile Ash and Pigg at 'Eersteling' worked the quartz reef for him with methods different from those of the Rand today. Ash wrote to Baines at the end of March 1872: 'I purpose sending Mr. Button 20 or 30 ounces of reef gold, nearly half of which has been obtained by grinding the quartz with a hand stone on a slab, as Kaffirs grind their snuff.' This primitive method of crushing the ore took an unconscionable time. The Native grinders complained bitterly that it made their hands sore. Pigg accordingly improvised a home-made battery. He bolted a tree across the top of a large boulder. 'Two Kaffirs ride seesaw on it', Ash explained, 'while he feeds it with small pieces of quartz and another man brushes the fragments under the stone to be crushed finer. What we want', he concluded with a cry from the heart, 'is machinery.'

There is no space to recount the romantic story of later prospectors and their finds, from Tom McLachlan's gold-strike near Sabie, which led to the discovery of Pilgrim's Rest, to the

discovery by the Barbers from Albany of gold at Barberton. Then the pioneer work of the Strubens on the Witwatersrand led to George Walker and George Harrison's epoch-making discovery of the Main Reef and the spectacular rise of Johannesburg. It is enough to encounter Button once again, as Baines did a few months later, and find him bringing a twelve-stamp mining battery from England with him and the first steam-engine, perhaps, that the Transvaal had ever seen. The gold-mining industry of South Africa had begun.

While Hartley and Mauch were in the wilds of the north, a remarkable scene was enacted at Henry Francis Galpin's workshop in Grahamstown.

Galpin's passion was astronomy. But one evening every week when the day's work was done, he would lay aside his jeweller's instruments and reach for his solid-silver concert flute. His son Jim would be summoned to fetch a smaller flute, his brother Walter would tune his 'cello and George his violin. Ernest Edward would fetch his clarinet and Alfred would seat himself at the piano. Then they fell to and enjoyed themselves while Mrs Galpin—disinherited by her wealthy father in Cape Town for eloping with Henry Francis—sat down in peace to enjoy their music with her two youngest sons safely in bed.

But Henry Francis Galpin was differently occupied today. His friend Atherstone (Professor Rose Innes's most brilliant pupil at Uitenhage) had burst into the jeweller's shop in the highest excitement with a shining pebble posted to him for identification from Colesberg by the trader called John O'Reilly, who thought it 'of some value'.

Ernest Edward shared in the excitement. He was a boy of eight at the time. Many years later, when he had won fame as an African botanist, he would still recount the events of that day. It changed the course of South African history, and converted Cecil Rhodes from an obscure cotton-planter in Natal to the founder of an African empire.

William Guybon Atherstone, the first surgeon to use anaesthetics in South Africa, had a keen interest in geology but knew nothing of precious stones. He handed the pebble to Galpin. Galpin felt its weight—he was accustomed to handling gems in his daily work—then picked up a jeweller's file and tried carefully to mark it. Next he tested it with a diamond pencil and examined

it closely under his lens, while Atherstone held his breath. Galpin proclaimed it a diamond.

The watching boy of eight was almost as excited as Dr Atherstone, who hurried off for further tests which confirmed Galpin's finding. Ernest's teacher, Mrs Campbell, was astounded by her pupil's zest for minerals after this adventure. She gave him a book on *Minerals and Metals*, which is still treasured by his descendants.

Hartley, Button, and in later days the boy who treasured *Minerals and Metals*, were all as at home in farming as in trading, prospecting, or botany. It was, and to some extent still is, the hallmark of a gentleman in South Africa to farm. The full tale of South Africa's debt to the agricultural skill and enterprise of its English-speaking farmers, whether of British, German or Jewish extraction, has never been told.

The first notable English-speaking pioneer of improved farming in a country whose traditional agriculture was among the most primitive in the Western world was William Duckitt. This son of a famous English farmer came to the Cape in 1800 as government agriculturist, was rapidly caught up in the van Bredas' meat monopoly scheme and lost his first popularity with the administration. But the land drew him. He elected to stay on in South Africa when the Batavian Republic took over in 1802. He gave Cape farmers their first light and efficient ploughs. His light, practical 'scuffles' for cultivation were in the keenest demand. He taught the Afrikaner farmers of the Western Cape much, but he learned much too from their shrewd practical experience. In the 1820s a leading civil servant complained tartly that Duckitt was now 'a Boor' himself.

The charge was exaggerated. Here is a glimpse of South Africa's first English-speaking master farmer as George Thompson found him in 1824, not far from the present Darling.

'I spent the night', he wrote, 'at Klaiver Vallei, the residence of Mr. Duckitt, an enterprising agriculturist. I found everything in the arrangements of his large establishment so much in the style of a substantial English farmer that, except for the predominance of black servants, I could almost have conceived myself among the scenes of my childhood.

'Mr. Duckitt had, however, found it expedient to adapt that

system of English farming to the circumstances of the country and climate by various modifications suggested by the experience of the elder colonists.'

The willingness to experiment, even through a long run of discouraging years, has been a mark throughout of the English-speaking farmer. It was by long experiment that Daniel de Pass, the first notable Jewish farmer in South African history, saved the struggling sugar-cane industry that Morewood, William Campbell and others had pioneered in Natal. In 1867 de Pass began growing sugar near Isipingo. Year after year he imported cane varieties from other lands in the effort to find a strain hardy enough to make the industry payable. Not till 1883 was his search rewarded with Uba, a strain from Calcutta.

Uba is no longer used today but it was the foundation on which the Natal cane-growers at last rose to prosperity.

Merino wool, South Africa's staple export for the past century and a quarter, owes a great deal of its success to the speed and skill with which the 1820 Settlers introduced the merino sheep to the Eastern Cape. Their example persuaded Karroo and frontier Boers to replace the hairy fat-tailed sheep which they had stocked for 100 years. Here is a glimpse of one of the ablest wool pioneers, Lieutenant Richard Daniell, founder of Sidbury, as a British visitor found him in 1835, at the height of the Sixth Kaffir War.

'One afternoon I went out [from Port Elizabeth] to shoot duikerbok and came upon the merino flock of Lieutenant Daniell, who had driven his valuable sheep for safety near the Bay.

'He was busily engaged in shearing, assisted by yellow Hottentot shepherds and black Mantatees in ox-hide mantles or "karosses". Lieut. Daniell said that he received 7s. 6d. for the wool of each sheep per annum; that his flock amounted to 4,000; that he obtained 5 lb. from each sheep of the half-Merino and half-Cape breed; and that after the second cross the Cape sheep began to lose their fat tails. That the climate and pasture of the Cape Colony were admirably adapted for the woolled sheep. . . .'

A dozen years later sheep-farming had spread so deep into South Africa that English-speaking farmers began the first studs of pedigree sheep with the aid of importations from many parts of the world. The oldest stud with continuous records in South Africa is believed to be Mr Richard Rubidge's at 'Wellwood'

near Graaff-Reinet. His great-grandfather began it in 1850 and it is still thriving.

The most picturesque South African wool pioneers—not excluding even the van Rynevelds and the van Bredas with their earlier work at Swellendam—were the unique Bowker clan at ‘Tharfield’ near Bathurst. There Miles Bowker farmed with his nine home-loving sons. There he brought his first Cape merino rams in 1823.

On the eve of the War of the Axe in 1846, John Mitford Bowker, who had first kept merinos with his father in England, recalled those sheep-farming days near Bathurst: ‘It is now 11 years gone by since my father and mother and their nine grown-up and unmarried sons lived under one roof in this neighbourhood. Our hearts were as one, our exertions united and our home so happy that, though it was high time, yet none of us had married and branched off.

‘My mother and sisters were at the moment busied in making Christmas cakes and puddings and we brothers were busy with sheep-shearing when the field cornet came with a Government order summoning us at once to desert our homes and proceed to Grahamstown, as the Kaffirs had invaded the Colony.

‘We arose from our work to view in bewildered astonishment the smoking ruins of the neighbouring cottages, for it came (as it will come again) like a thunder clap amongst us. My brothers and myself made a vain attempt to collect some of the boldest of our neighbours to make a stand with us against the ruthless invaders, but we were too late.

‘I shall never forget the decision of my dear father (aged 70) on that occasion. He declared he would die with his property or defending it, and nothing but the threat of tying him to his horse induced him to submit to the abandonment of it.

‘I am now in the dreary sheep land [the Bowker brothers had moved inland from the luxuriant scenery of ‘Tharfield’ to the Koonap River] because the Kaffirs as yet cannot steal flocks of sheep. Cows I dare not keep. My horses are stolen annually, so are my oxen. The only milk my children drink is that of goats.’

The mutual attachment of the Bowker brothers saved themselves and their flocks as by a miracle not many months later during the War of the Axe. The Bowkers were in laager with

their neighbours at William Bowker's homestead on 'Thornkloof'. Twenty Englishmen and Afrikaners, with twelve Hottentots, made up the defending force for the women and children in the laager as well as for 40,000 sheep, 200 oxen and 100 horses in the veld around it.

Half an hour before sunset, on Saturday, 2 May 1846, herd-boys ran home from the Fish River Rand, calling out that a band of Kaffirs were among the sheep. The mounted cattle guard had just come in from patrol. William and Miles Bowker junior rode straight out towards the sheep with Willem Nel, their trusted Afrikaner neighbour.

The other horses were some distance away, so John Mitford called for volunteers to follow on foot. His youngest brother James Henry set off at a run with him. So did Jan and Hendrik Nel, J. Atherstone and a youth called Webb. They reached Skietkloof, a densely bushed valley where hundreds of Xhosas could safely lie in ambush, just in time to save William and Miles Bowker and Willem Nel from riding into a trap. While the three riders were firing at a body of Xhosas ahead, at least a hundred Xhosas on horseback swept out of the bush to surround them. Then the mounted Xhosas detected the six farmers on foot and turned instantly to this easier prey. Hundreds more Xhosas on foot swarmed out to cut them off.

'It was a new thing for me to be *running* on foot before Kaffirs mounted on horseback, and the balls whistling like hail about me', John Mitford wrote. 'One shot lifted my foot from off the ground; another struck James Henry's shirt sleeve between us; but God guided them aside.'

The momentary distraction saved the lives of William, Miles, and Willem Nel. But John Mitford's party on foot were two miles from the laager. 'We veered off by the bont bushes as steadily as we could, firing at them whenever we got behind one, which bothered them, until we could nearly always reach the next. But always before we got to the next, hundreds of balls were rattling about our ears.

'Fortunately for us, just as we got to the last bush, four more of my brothers got up, within shot of their front, which was on the point of hemming us in.' Just at this moment of deliverance, a ball smashed Webb's ankle. James Henry lifted the wounded youth on his back and continued the fighting retreat.

Steady, accurate fire by the 'four brothers' who had come out to the rescue—Holden, Septimus and Octavus Bowker, and Elizabeth Bowker's husband Fred Barber—turned the front of the advancing Xhosas sufficiently for John Mitford's party to join them. Webb was lifted on William's horse and all made the laager at once. Five or six hundred Xhosas mustered on the nearest hill, 'no doubt to consult about taking our camp. But as they could not kill 13 men in the open field, and all on foot but three, they concluded to leave us alone.'

'We saved William, and then Holden saved us. It looks like good generalship, but it was God's doings, not ours, for had we been killed our children's brains would have been beat out against the wagon wheels.'

That is how the Bowkers felt about it next day during incessant alarms from the surrounding warriors. But it did the Xhosa less than justice. They almost invariably showed mercy to women and children.

The Bowker brothers had as British a prejudice against abandoning their property to the enemy as their father had shown in 1834. But they knew they could be starved out in a week at Bowker's Camp and by then might have no oxen left to trek with. They buried young Webb and set out on the Tuesday for sanctuary at 'Glen Avon', Somerset East, where their sister Anna Maria lived with her husband, Robert Hart junior. Having left their wives, children and sheep in relative safety with hale old Robert Hart at 'Glen Avon', the Bowker brothers surged back into the war.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### THE MAKERS OF RAILWAYS

Riding 360 miles to town gives a man time to think. Jogging through the Karroo in the 1840s, man and horse might meet no human soul for fifty miles on end and there was little else to distract Commandant John Molteno's mind from the long vistas of thought. He knew by heart the stones and sand of the track, the gaunt koppies, the bleached skeletons of horses and oxen that signposted the way from the Cape to Beaufort West, half-way house to the Orange River Sovereignty.

Time and again he made this ride alone from his great sheep-farm near Beaufort West to the bustle and news of Cape Town. Again and again, in his solid, doggedly independent way his thoughts reverted to their favourite theme, the development of this wide, empty land. No doubt even then they often paused at the notion of railways. Railways for South Africa? Impossible?

A quarter of a century passed and John Molteno of Beaufort was still thinking about South Africa, but this time thinking aloud, while the country listened. For the Lion of Beaufort had won responsible government for by far the largest and most advanced part of South Africa, in a twelve-year struggle. Now he was addressing the first fully elective parliament of the Cape Colony as its first Prime Minister. His noble features and full, flowing beard would have made him a striking figure in any legislature. His rugged, homely words gripped the House as he made his great railway speech of 1874.

Almost everyone in that small Cape House wanted railways. When Sir Henry Barkly opened the first session of this first parliament of responsible government in April 1873, he had foreshadowed Molteno's great railway schemes. Soon after, Molteno himself requested, and obtained, £660,000 from the House to push the Cape-Wellington line to Worcester and the incipient Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage line to Alicedale, as part of a larger

scheme. All through the ensuing spring and summer the engineers imported by Molteno had been making surveys. But the House was stunned when Molteno announced his programme.

'Look at the position of these places with regard to the whole Colony', he said. 'You seem to touch the great producing parts of the Colony and get on towards the Orange River and beyond it. . . .' The first terminus on the Cape Town main line would be Beaufort West itself, more than half-way to Kimberley. On the Port Elizabeth line, it was to be Cradock, and on the East London line Queenstown, each more than half-way to the Orange Free State. 'By having railways', he insisted, 'we benefit our neighbours also. . . .' The great point about reaching Beaufort West and Cradock was that 'there will then be no difficulty in subsequent extensions'. The great mountain barriers would have been conquered.

It was a staggering scheme. He envisaged 800 miles of new line at a cost of some £5,000,000. At the time there were less than 70 miles of railways working in South Africa and no others south of Egypt. 'I admit', he said, seeing the alarm of many members, 'that the scheme is a very large one, but I do not see how it is possible to curtail it.' Railways would, after all, 'have an immense effect upon the progress of this Colony'. He had already given the people of Kaffraria an additional reason. By overcoming natural obstacles, railways would make the Colony's resources unquestionably superior to those of its 'barbarous neighbours'—the Transkei, Pondoland and Basutoland—and remove the need for a large standing army.

His plan was not coast-wise lines, since coastal shipping could provide transport there, but great trunk routes to the north, binding the whole of South Africa together and one day reuniting its scattered peoples.

Every one of Molteno's aims has since been realized. In their achievement English-speaking South Africans played the overwhelming part. They built the hardest sections even of President Kruger's line from Lourenço Marques to Pretoria. They conquered the great mountain gorges, the Drakensberg itself, the waterless Karroo, and the pestilent marshes of Mozambique. It was they who founded the system for working these difficult, narrow-gauged lines (3 feet 6 inches), which they made the standard for Africa. It was they who opened up coal-mines to

give the railways cheap fuel, designed new engines and rolling stock for these novel conditions, and built up the whole vast system of the South African Railways—a State system without a rival in Africa.

Remove the railways, even in these days of fast road transport, and the whole economic fabric of South African life would fall to pieces. With it would crumble our sovereign independence. The mines that extract gold, uranium, copper, asbestos, manganese, diamonds, chrome, and coal from deep under the veld could not exist without the South African Railways. The industries of the Union, from Iscor itself to the humblest mineral water factories, live by grace of the railways, which alone made them possible.

Farming today is equally dependent upon the iron way. Beef and butter, citrus and deciduous fruits, tropical fruits and winter vegetables in the Lowveld, wattles and sugar in Natal, the great forestry plantations of the Union Government, the 3,000,000-ton crops of maize, all depend on the line.

The power of the Union in Africa rests on the steel foundation of 14,000 miles of permanent way maintained and worked by a staff of 200,000.

Sir John Molteno's Cape Government Railways became the model and nucleus for this immense creation. Little Natal—it was then only half its present size—was the first to follow his lead. If the Cape built railways to tap the trade of the diamond-fields and the Free State, what would become of Port Natal and its small, progressive community of traders and pioneer farmers? John Robinson, editor-owner of the *Natal Mercury* since the age of 21, read the omens and clamoured for the extension of Durban's six miles of line.

President Burgers in the embryo Transvaal heeded the omen. The last thing his burghers wanted was a railway—a railway, moreover, to serve the Uitlander miners of the Eastern Transvaal gold-fields. Yet one year after Molteno had launched his great Cape scheme, Burgers induced his Volksraad to appoint a commission to study the railway possibilities.

It is difficult to imagine today the boldness of Molteno's scheme. Many critics at the time were convinced it would ruin the Cape Colony. In spite of his frugal finance, it nearly did. In Natal likewise, Robinson needed the steadiest nerves in years

when the ruin of that little colony seemed assured by the sheer cost of its railway scheme. The capital cost of the Cape scheme seemed staggering at the time. It was eight or nine times the average annual income that the Cape Government had managed to raise in the 1860s. It was five times greater than the record revenue even of 1872, a boom year of diamonds and wool. It would be the equivalent of at least a £100,000,000 scheme for the Union Government today.

Great numbers of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans were solidly opposed to railway construction. Wellington, Paarl and Stellenbosch, which William Brounger, engineer of the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company, had linked with Cape Town early in the 1860s, deplored the influx of trippers from godless Cape Town. Deep into the eighties anti-railway conferences, prompted in part by fears for transport riding, continued to meet in the Free State villages. In 1890 the fears of Transvaal burghers had to be set at rest by calling the first Transvaal railway, built by George Pauling to take Boksburg coal to the Reef mines, the 'Rand Tram'. Only at the turn of the century could the engineer to a firm of railway contractors write the jubilant words: 'The Dutch farmer himself . . . no longer opposes railways with his old bitterness.'

Suspicious of railways, the Afrikaner farmers of Cape Colony, and some at least of their English-speaking neighbours, certainly were. But Molteno enjoyed their confidence. If he, a Karroo farmer himself, insisted on railways, they were prepared to give his scheme a chance. Molteno had shared their droughts and good years alike in the eternal silence and spaces of the Karroo. 'Rooinek' though he was, they had elected him assistant commandant of the Beaufort commando in the War of the Axe. He had fought their case with officialdom for the mistreatment they received from the imported army officers in that war. He had translated his lasting dislike for birds of passage in gorgeous plumage into a long and relentless fight for responsible government. If Molteno wanted railways, his fellow-farmers from the Afrikaans-speaking Karroo would be guided by him.

The English-speaking towns naturally wanted railways. Molteno's old employer, John Bardwell Ebdon, founder of the Cape of Good Hope Bank, with George Thompson and others, was one of the English-speaking merchants of Cape Town who

had subscribed from the start to the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company and sat on its Cape Town committee. With the help of a government guarantee this company built the Woodstock-Stellenbosch-Wellington line between 1859 and 1864. The Wynberg Railway Company, which linked Salt River with Wynberg, was entirely a Cape Town venture.

In sandy Port Natal the 1850 settlers had founded the Natal Railway Company, which operated the first actual train service in South Africa from 1860, carrying passengers and goods two miles from the landing-place at Durban Point, through deep dunes, to the town.

But even the English-speaking towns recoiled at the gigantic scale and cost of Molteno's programme. Again it was Molteno's own name that provided the reassurance. He had come to the Cape in 1831 as a fatherless lad of 17 to work in the South African Library. By 23 he had founded a firm of exporters. Soon Molteno and Co. were exporting Cape wines, wool, wheat, and aloes from the great warehouses he built. When the bottom dropped out of the wine market Molteno closed his business, sold his warehouses to the Government, and set out in 1843 with his young wife to develop the empty expanse of Karroo he had bought near Beaufort West in 1840.

As early as 1841 he decided that wooled sheep, then scarcely known in the western Karroo, would thrive on his farm, and had sent his manager, Naylor, two rams imported direct from Saxony. His Afrikaner neighbours laughed at the young enthusiast. They said that the 'Rooinek' knew just as much about sheep as the sheep knew about him. And yet within five years Molteno had made an infectious success of merino farming at Beaufort West, had built his kraals, dams, and furrows, and had started his irrigated orchards and wheat-fields. He had worked all the more fiercely and desperately, perhaps, because his wife and her child had died in the vast isolation of that Karroo to which she had accompanied him so trustingly in 1843. For a time after that his letters to his mother in England showed that he felt unutterably lost and alone.

When his farm was in first-rate order under his own managers, Molteno moved to Beaufort West itself, built up a great Karroo business there and opened a bank. The business men of Cape Colony had to admit that financial soundness, shrewdness and

thrift marked everything that he had undertaken. Now, as his own Minister of Finance, Molteno prepared the way for his vast railway scheme by a zeal for economy. He met every pound that he could, of the heavy capital cost, from current taxes.

Economy was the secret of the amazing enterprise from which the South African Railways and the very Union itself, a child of the permanent way, would spring within one generation. To reduce the costs of construction, the 4 feet 8½ inches gauge of the Cape Town-Wellington line, which was the gauge of almost the whole civilized world, was reduced to 3 feet 6 inches. For eight years a third rail enabled the new narrow-gauge trucks and engines to use the old line. Thereafter the 'Cape gauge', as Germans call 3 feet 6 inches, became, for better and worse, the standard for Africa.

In other parts of the world railways linked great cities, ports, and mines, or at least, as in India, traversed a densely peopled countryside. Molteno's lines had to climb the frowning escarpments of the South African tableland and cross the desert Karroo in search of the traffic he hoped would develop beyond it. Even the diamond-fields were an inadequate destination to make hundreds of miles of railway pay, through an almost uninhabited land.

If Molteno needed the faith that moves mountains, Robinson and his friends who took up the challenge in Natal needed it more abundantly. When the Natal Government bought the Natal Railway Company's six miles of 4 feet 8½ inches track on New Year's Day, 1877, the Colony had only 16,000 Europeans, compared with more than 200,000 in the Cape Colony. At that time, as Robinson wrote long afterwards, one heard 'intelligent and influential colonists expressing their disbelief that a line of railway would ever be constructed between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. As to an extension over the Drakensberg, such an idea was scouted as fantastic and chimerical.'

That goat's track of a railway up the tumbled mountains and round the awe-inspiring flanks of the Valley of a Thousand Hills did indeed reach Pietermaritzburg in the end. So slender were the resources of Natal, so vast the natural obstacles, that the speed limit for years was fifteen miles an hour at the safe places, eight at the dubious ones, and six at such points of danger as the swaying Inchanga viaduct.

This was a long, rickety bridge of iron, spanning a steep drop at a giddy height and rocking in every breeze. When the wind was too high, the bridge signalman forced trains to stop and the wretched passengers had to walk across the swaying bridge to the other side before the little train would carry them farther. The engines lacked the weighty convenience of coal tenders. Firemen had to load extra bags of coal on the footplates and stand on a heap of the stuff in order to supplement the engine's own small bunkers.

When the first Durban train steamed into Pietermaritzburg on 21 October 1880, Lady Colley drove the engine into the capital with her husband, Sir George Pomeroy Colley, Governor of Natal, on the footplate. The formal opening followed on 1 December. All the leaders of Natal joined the Governor in the rejoicings—Robinson himself, Escombe, Bishop Colenso, and Sir Theophilus Shepstone. Less than three months later Colley lay dead on the blood-stained summit of Majuba.

Though Molteno believed, perforce, in the strictest economy, his main line to the north was never quite so giddy as Natal's. Apart from the Tulbagh Pass, only one great mountain barred the route eventually chosen by Brounger to carry the Cape Town line on to the tableland of the Karroo. The Cape Government Railways made their maximum gradient 1 in 40. This was startlingly steep by the standards of Europe, but tame and flat compared with the 1 in 30 allowed in Natal.

Who built those famous lines? What was the life of the men who set the silent mountains echoing as they blasted a way for the iron road along precipice ledges, across tremendous chasms and out along the desert Karroo by the bleaching bones of cattle, horses and sheep that had died of thirst? Of all that ringing activity, which taxed the slender finances of Molteno's Government to the utmost, almost no echo has survived the soundproof years. Railwaymen write their story in steel, not in books for posterity.

Brounger himself, first manager of a South African railway system, has been recovered from oblivion by Mr Eric Rosenthal. Taught by a railway contractor, who was taught by Robert Stephenson himself, William Brounger had built railways in Denmark and erected the Crystal Palace in London before migrating to South Africa in 1858 as railway engineer of the Cape

Town Railway and Dock Company. Collecting a staff was a forlorn task. The iron age had hardly touched South Africa. To Molteno's cultured mother in England it seemed 'a barbarous country swarming with black men'. Brounger found himself compelled to import nearly all his staff, from the engineers to the navvies. He surveyed the route for his line himself.

Later, when a select committee under Sir Richard Southey, with Molteno its leading elected member, decided in 1872 that the State should acquire the railways, Brounger surveyed new routes for the State. The Molteno plan owed much to this forgotten pioneer, who retired to England, worn out by his labours, in 1883.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### HEX RIVER PASS AND DRAKENSBERG

Brounger gave the tallest of tall orders to his field engineer, Wells Hood, in 1873. On instructions from Molteno's first Minister of Public Works, Abercrombie Smith, he told Hood to find some feasible route for a railway up the Western Cape mountains to Beaufort West. 'Your inspection should', he wrote, 'at all costs include Ceres, Hex River and Cogman's Kloof.'

Mountain barriers equally forbidding had already been conquered in Europe, but at tremendous cost. The railways across the Alps were tunnelled and blasted through mountain-sides for scores of thousands of pounds to the mile. The infant Cape Government Railways must find a way up at a tenth of the price.

A few weeks after Wells Hood's departure with young Maltby to help him, a jubilant letter reached Brounger. 'After spending four or five days on the Hex River mountains and after very considerable climbing about', Hood reported, 'I have found a route that I may say gives every facility for the construction of a cheap railway.' The route of Bain's great north road up Michell's Pass and through Ceres to Beaufort West would be incomparably dearer. That settled it.

Three and a half years later an adventurous invalid from England, John Nixon, went up the Hex River line with his inseparable companion—a tin of Keating's insect powder. He was a friend of 'Mr S', the engineer whose name he thus tantalizingly disguised, who actually built the line up the pass.

Nixon, a devotee of the expensive spas of Europe, was astounded at the frugality of the construction. He found the gradients and curves 'startling'. Every possible cutting had been eliminated by tortuous bends and climbs. On the whole 2,000-foot ascent through scenery as wild as the Alps there were only two small tunnels, but for fourteen miles on end the gradient was one in forty.



**SIR JOHN ROBINSON**  
First Prime Minister of Natal



**SIR JOHN MOLLENO**  
First Prime Minister of the Cape Colony



Xhosas and Hottentots attacking the besieged village of Whitilesea, where Commandant Webster won distinction in the War of Umlanjeni. (See page 205.)

Between complaints about his delicate health, John Nixon has left posterity precious glimpses of how the men lived who built the Hex River line. Not far from the summit he slept at a railway camp in a 'canteen of corrugated iron sheets thrown rather than built together. My bedroom, which had no door, opened on to the bar, which was filled with Natives of all colours in various stages of drunkenness who made night hideous with their songs and quarrels. . . . My bed was a truckle bed on empty brandy cases, filthy to a degree. Luckily I always carry Keatings. . . .'

In 'a wilderness of scrub and stone' near Matjiesfontein he found three wood-and-iron huts—the homes of the doctor, the engineer, and the assistant engineer of No. 3 district. Alongside were stables, indispensable aid for a railwayman in those days, wood-and-iron offices, a vegetable garden run by the engineer, and—oh, sight for homesick English eyes—a full-size billiard table under a roof slung between two huts.

Through clouds of dust and biting flies 'Mr Be', engineer of the next district, drove him by cart over veld and road—Nixon found travel on the veld decidedly smoother—to the wonder of the line, 'Mr Be's' air-conditioned hut at the Buffels River camp. Its corrugated-iron roof was covered thickly with bushes to keep out the midsummer heat. In the windows were frames of coconut fibre down which a stream of water kept dropping. In the living-room was a companion that 'Mr Be' had thoughtfully brought from India, a real punkah. The result, attests the fly-bitten, dust-smothered Nixon, aching at every joint from the jolting cart, was 'a delicious coolness'. But of the wretched hovels, and the bad and scanty food and water of the ordinary workmen, Nixon says never a word.

At Vlak Kraal, the last camp on the line-in-the-making, Nixon spent three weeks of broiling heat, dust, and flies. A navvy had just died of typhoid. More navvies invaded the solitude day after day, seeking work. The bosses and sub-contractors were English, German, Italian, and even Greek. The labourers included all colours—Whites, Malays, Chinese, Hottentots, and even Kaffirs from Kaffirland, who wore little but necklaces and a loin-cloth, and a snuff-box carried in the pierced lobe of one ear.

It was a wretched, comfortless life. It would be duplicated again and again in coming years on the freezing summit of the

Stormberg, in the nameless wilderness that was nearly called Brounger Junction but is now De Aar, and eventually in the waterless wastes of Bechuanaland. How much more drab and grim it must have seemed to men newly recruited in the green isles of Britain.

No sooner had a dusty camp in the shadeless wilderness, with its iron lean-to's and its puddles of infected water, begun to seem like home than it was time to strike camp again. Deeper into the wilderness, farther still from the families for whom they drew their pay at the end of a 53-hour week, the whole caravan of the iron age would rumble, to reassemble its huts in some uninhabited spot and carry Molteno's railways into the heart of South Africa.

It was a harsh apprenticeship to the ways of the veld and the desert, to the wondering, disapproving scrutiny of scattered Boers and to the South African medley of races and tribes held together by a pittance on the task of laying a road for the iron horse through the land of the ox. As they drank or prayed, sweated and yarned, quarrelled and endured, these first railway builders did not see the end to which the apprenticeship led so many—the crowded graves at the end of the line.

Men who die for their country or their religion live long in the memories of their fellows. But who has paid honour to the men who laid down their lives for pay, merely to build a railway? There are few sadder and more moving stories in all South African history than the building of the Lowveld sections of the line from Lourenço Marques to the Rand and of Rhodes's line from Beira to Southern Rhodesia. Many hundreds, possibly thousands, of men died on the job. Malaria, blackwater fever, and dysentery showed no respect for rank or colour. In fact, though Bantu labourers perished in hundreds at their posts, the mortality rate among the white men—Hollanders, Germans, Italians, but above all, men from the British Isles and English-speaking South Africans—was double theirs.

Those tragic lines brought before the world the name of one of the great pioneer railway families of South Africa, the Paulings. The Paulings' work typifies the endurance and achievement of the unsung heroes of South African civilization, the men who laid the line.

The first of the clan to reach South Africa was Henry Pauling, a railway engineer who arrived in the late sixties or early seventies

of last century. By the time George Pauling, his great-nephew, arrived from England in 1875 and applied to Merriman, Molteno's Commissioner for Public Works, for a job, no fewer than three Paulings were helping to build the Wellington-Beaufort West main line. Merriman thought four would be one too many. Would George try the Eastern Province line? That hint was the start of a famous firm. In world railway annals George Pauling, flanked by a tribe of South African cousins, stands out as a prince among railway builders.

'Never are the taxes of a people better laid out in a new country', declared Sir John Robinson, poet, novelist and sturdy politician, 'than in the provision of cheap and easy facilities of transport. By no other means is civilization more effectually advanced. Under no other influence does the wilderness so soon blossom like the rose. By no other policy is the maintenance of law and order more successfully secured and assisted.'

Molteno could never have phrased it so well, though this thought lay at the heart of the Molteno plan. The railway builders themselves hardly realized what it was they were doing for South Africa. True to type, George Pauling gives little inkling in his rollicking autobiography of the fateful significance of the work to which he, his family, and hundreds like them, had put their hands. Most of those men became South Africans in the end. The land that at first meant only a job came to mean home. When the last camp on the line broke up, they stayed to run the trains, to farm, to hunt, or to trade.

George himself nearly became a South African. His great-uncle Henry's family struck such roots that the fourth generation of Paulings is now at work building or rebuilding South African lines. Some years ago Mr J. G. Pauling, son of Harold and grandson of Henry, retired from the South African Railways as Assistant Chief Engineer (Maintenance) after many years of construction. His son, Mr Peter Pauling, carries on the family tradition.

George Pauling's first feat as an independent contractor was to construct the long Waai Nek tunnel on the Grahamstown line in 1876. Half a dozen years later he carried the first of Molteno's main lines through to the Orange River by completing ninety miles of mountain railway from Sterkstroom, on the East London route, over the towering Stormberg, to Aliwal North. With the

profits he wiped out his loss on building the Port Alfred railway and its Bloukrans bridge, 180 feet above the water.

The man himself is unforgettably depicted in his autobiography. He had known the extreme of poverty as a boy in England when his irresponsible engineer-father disappeared for months at a time. His physical strength was a legend. In his Grahams-town days when he ran an ostrich farm, a skating-rink, and an hotel, as sidelines to railway construction, he used to carry a 450-lb. Basuto pony round the billiard room of his hotel. Despite, or perhaps because of, the heaviest exercise, he could never reduce his own weight to sixteen stone. He would knock down a truculent workman or an obstructive railway inspector with equal nonchalance when provoked beyond endurance. George Pauling's appetite, too, was a legend. He and two railway-building friends, A. L. Lawley and Moore, emptied 300 bottles of German beer during forty-eight grilling hours on the Beira line. At Lourenço Marques he and two others sat down to breakfast and did not rise till they had finished 1,000 oysters and eight bottles of champagne. The oysters, Pauling explains, were smallish.

Those were the palmy days. But the first half of the 1880s were far from palmy. Molteno's great gamble appeared to have failed. The steam locomotive could not compete economically with the ox, and for a time all work ceased on building the lines. Even in the war boom year of 1880, the revenue of the Cape Government Railways had been so small that half the interest due on railway loans had to be met from taxes. Natal's railways were still harder hit, and with them Natal's handful of taxpayers.

Worse was to come. The long boom of the 1870s ended and a depression gripped the country in 1882. Diamond companies had failed, the Cape vineyards were insect-ravaged, and spending by the Imperial troops dwindled away as the regiments sailed for home after the wars. Drought lay over the land. Molteno's frugal watch on the Cape's finances had been withdrawn in 1878 when Sir Bartle Frere abruptly dismissed him during the constitutional crisis over the last Kaffir War. Three black years followed, with railway deficits piling up and customs revenue plunging downwards to wreck the budgets. The ox was beating the steam locomotive.

Molteno had always foreseen the need to push the railway far

inland. But even now the main lines were still too close to the sea. Natal's main line was worse. It was only open as far as Pietermaritzburg, though it had raised its speed limit to the Cape's dizzy twenty miles an hour. A gloomy Legislative Council was informed that if the Natal main line were ever to pay it must be extended far into the mountainous interior. Twenty miles an hour, with many stops, and the delay and risk of transshipping freight from wagons to trucks, did not offer merchants sufficient inducement to use the trains; they preferred to use the wagons all the way. The wagons used the cheapest fuel in the country, grass. The trains still had to use the dearest, coal from Wales. The grass was so good on the East London-Queenstown route that the Cape Railways had to offer a specially cut tariff.

Times were catastrophic for railway builders. Work ceased on line after line. The outlook was bleak even for the ever-ingenious George Pauling. It looked bleak, too, to the first South African-born general manager of railways, Charles Elliott. In the depths of that depression he took over the Cape Government lines from Brounger, who was now 63. Though his training for his difficult post was unorthodox—he had been a Cape Town magistrate only a few years before—Elliott and his Minister, Merriman, saw that the only hope was to extend these costly, non-paying lines.

Once they reached far enough towards the diamond-fields and the fertile interior the saving in time must surely, they argued, give trains a decisive victory over the trek ox. The gain in traffic would then enable the railways to reduce their rates far below the transport riders' charges.

It was a gambler's throw, but the only chance left. Scanlen's Cabinet clutched at it. In the depths of its poverty, in 1883, the Cape began extending Molteno's lines with vigour and borrowed £5,000,000 at a stiff rate of interest to do so. Natal was poorer still but it goaded itself to carry its line from Pietermaritzburg to the foot of the Drakensberg and the coal-fields.

The Pauling clan, Jim Butler, and other eager South African railway builders trooped back to their leaky shanties and dusty camps. The Port Elizabeth line reached Colesberg in mid-October, 1883. Next year seventy miles of new line linking the Cape and Port Elizabeth railways created two famous South African junctions, De Aar and Naauwpoort. But neither line reached Kimberley, despite the entreaties of its young M.P.,

Cecil Rhodes. The line from De Aar finally petered out, for lack of funds, at Orange River, eighty miles short of the goal.

Then came a windfall—General Warren's famous expedition with 5,000 men to southern Bechuanaland. On a plea of Imperial military necessity the Cape Government wheedled £400,000 at low interest from the British Government to complete the line. In November 1885 George Pauling finished the job, to the amazement of South Africa, in the then record time of nine months—and promptly went bankrupt.

Natal had no such military windfall. It was reduced in the end to protecting its trains by taxing the wagons that streamed down over the Drakensberg towards the sea.

By the end of 1885 ruin stared both railway systems in the face. Crushed by debt, the Cape could push its three lines no farther north than Kimberley, Colesberg, and Aliwal North. The switch-back main line of Natal was open to Estcourt and rapidly nearing its terminus, Ladysmith. Despite extension, none of the lines had even begun to pay. The gamble to smash through the barrier of African distance had failed. As for President Kruger's line from Lourenço Marques, after the efforts of ten years not a mile had been laid for lack of funds.

Four months later a handful of English-speaking prospectors on the chilly roof of the Transvaal made the biggest gold-strike of history. All the railways were saved—Molteno's, Robinson's, and Kruger's too. A fever of railway building gripped South Africa and did not abate till the South African Railways passed as a splendid dowry to the Union in 1910. Dr Jean van der Poel has traced the intrigues, the fierce competition and strained relations that ensued between the South African countries over railways before that union was achieved. Here it is only necessary to follow the dramatic change in the fortunes of the men who built the lines. It was their golden age.

Henry Pauling was engineer-in-chief of the Cape Government Railways as they advanced into the Free State in the race for the Rand. Meanwhile 'King David' (Sir David Hunter), the Scottish general manager of the Natal Government Railways, beat the ox-wagons at last with his team of Scotsmen. With strange shifts and devices his main line scaled the Drakensberg itself at Majuba and Van Reenen and blossomed into a real tunnel at Laing's Nek.

So impossible had the building of the line seemed to hard-

headed men in Durban that one of them made a wager late in the 1880s with Harry Escombe. Convinced that no line from Natal could ever reach the Rand in face of the physical, economic and diplomatic difficulties, he offered that champion of harbours and railways a glass of beer for lunch every day of his life after the line went through, provided Escombe would give him the same every day till then. Escombe accepted the wager. Day after day for years he supplied that glass of beer.

The outlook for Escombe was poor, for Rhodes himself, with the Paulings to help him, was racing Sir John Robinson. In vain the courtly and gentle Sir John and his silver-tongued comrade, Escombe, tried to thaw the hard heart of President Kruger towards the Natal Government Railways when they had carried the line to his border. They fêted the President all down the railway from Charlestown to Durban in 1891. They strung streamers across the roads: 'Lank leve de President.' But Kruger, if he softened, showed no outer sign of it.

By a dash till then unparalleled, the Cape Government Railways, under Rhodes's spirited lead, reached the Vaal in 1892. The 212 miles from Bloemfontein were laid in 212 days. On 15 September the first high-funnelled locomotive of the C.G.R. steamed into Johannesburg with the first through train from the coast. At once Natal's trade with the Transvaal began to drop disastrously.

But Robinson had a free hand at last. Early in 1893 he won responsible government for Natal and became its first Prime Minister. At once he dispatched a colleague, accompanied by 'King David', to talk to President Kruger and Gert Middelberg, manager of the Netherlands railway company in the republic. Five months later Kruger, knowing he had now no hope of making a harbour of his own at Kosi Bay, and needing a counter to Rhodes and his railway, approved an agreement.

One windy day at Heidelberg in October 1895, while gusts sent silk hats and parasols flying, Dr Leyds drove in the last bolt of the Netherlands railway company's section, Sir John Robinson drove in the other for the Natal Government Railways—and Escombe demanded a glass of beer a day henceforward, for life, from his friend in Durban. The disconcerted pessimist hurriedly commuted for £200.

The railway fever had called George Pauling and his friends back into action. First they built the whole 'Rand Tram' line

from Springs to Krugersdorp for the Netherlands South African Railway Company. Next, despite fever, tsetse, and lions, they laid the dreaded Crocodile Poort section of President Kruger's line from Lourenço Marques.

Harold Pauling, Henry's son, was meanwhile helping to extend the Cape-Kimberley line to Vryburg for the Cape Government—in other words, for Rhodes. Now George contracted direct with Rhodes as head of the B.S.A. Company to extend that line into Rhodes's north.

At the same time George, with his South African cousin Harry to help him, started to build the line that eventually linked Beira with Salisbury across the fever-stricken tsetse country of Mozambique. It was desperately needed if Rhodes's struggling white settlement was to endure. But it cost a terrible price. Often, as his men died at their tasks, George Pauling wished bitterly that he had never attempted it. In each of the first two years thirty per cent of the Native labourers and sixty per cent of the Europeans died. The final horror was the swamp water. Before burial parties had dug a foot into the soil, the water welled into the graves. Before the line was through to the Rhodesian uplands, Harry Pauling slept beside hundreds of his men in that marshland of horror.

Next, rinderpest and the Matabele Rebellion forced Rhodes to complete the Bechuanaland railway at any cost. In return for 'a free hand', George Pauling offered to build a line across the remaining 400 miles in as many days. Rhodes accepted. This amazing feat by South Africans, one of the greatest in railway annals, was carried out to the letter, through the thirstland and under Harold Pauling's supervision, before 1897 had ended.

It fell to the Paulings, despite much other work in the south, to carry the Rhodesian line (by 1910) to Elisabethville in the Belgian Congo. Almost all the 2,300 miles of that Cape-to-Cairo line, which secured the Union its lion's share of South Central African trade, were built with the help of one or another or several of the Pauling clan.

Sir John Molteno did not live to see his vision of the north fulfilled, or the immense development of the Union's internal network by Lord Milner, or the brilliant success with which Sir Charles Elliott, Sir David Hunter, and a whole generation of pioneer English-speaking South Africans solved the novel prob-

lems of operating these difficult, steep, narrow-gauge lines. But when the Lion of Beaufort passed away suddenly, in the fullness of his mental powers, on 1 September 1886, the discovery of the Rand had foreshadowed the complete success of his great railway plan. Millions today who do not even know his name earn their daily bread from the industries, the farms and the mines which his foresight and force of character had made possible.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### POLITICIANS

‘**W**hen it comes to politics’, Cecil Rhodes told Sir James Rose Innes, ‘the Dutch farmer will beat the English shop-keeper every time.’

It was partly a question of single-mindedness. The English shopkeeper had a hundred cares. He reserved political life for his leisure. The old-style Boer, whose agricultural idleness was a byword, let the Hottentot, Fingo or Mantatee tend his flocks and cattle. Like the equally idle Whig and Tory peers in Britain, he conceived his duty to be of a loftier kind. Apart from huntin’ and shootin’—he got few chances of fishin’—it was to defend the State in war and to rule it in peace.

Yet the political achievement of the English-speaking South Africans has been far from contemptible. English-speaking burghers were a stabilizing factor of importance in the chaos of the early Voortrekker republics. Men like the Lyses, the Strubens, William Skinner, G. P. Moodie, R. K. Loveday (in some respects the father of the Kruger National Park), the Jeppes (German by origin), and others meant much as officials or members of the Volksraad and its executive in the early South African Republic. William Robinson, elder brother of Sir J. B. Robinson, was chairman of the committee that completed the Transvaal republican constitution. Jacobus Stuart, a Hollander who later founded a notable English-speaking family in Natal, played a major part in framing the actual document.

In the Orange Free State, President Steyn found his little band of leading civil servants, nearly all English-speaking, loyal to the last in the South African War. They carried on in guerilla fashion when the whole organized fabric of their State had crumbled around them. Those who were captured went into captivity beyond the sea with their Afrikaner fellow-citizens.

To appreciate the stabilizing role of English-speaking burghers

among their Voortrekker compatriots—self-reliant, brave, but little accustomed to public order—one need only recall a lively founder of the republican Free State.

Joseph Orpen was a young Irishman who had farmed at Graaff-Reinet and fought in the War of Umlanjeni. He strongly opposed Britain's abandonment of the Orange River Sovereignty; but once the country between the Orange and the Vaal was left to fend for itself, in 1854, he tried hard and with considerable success, in the first republican Volksraad, to secure it a disciplined constitution on the American model.

Soon afterwards, he was appointed to the tough post of landdrost of Winburg to safeguard the northern frontier of the new republic against the designs of M. W. Pretorius, who seemed likely to extend the anarchy of the Transvaal all the way south to the Orange. Landdrost Schneckhage had laid down his post at Winburg when an unruly crowd at the court house freed a man he had just sentenced to imprisonment, and the people of Winburg begged President Hoffman to appoint Orpen instead. When the Volksraad decided, for reasons of economy, to incorporate Harrismith with Winburg as a single landdrostship, Orpen, without a single policeman, had to govern a district nearly the size of Scotland.

First, he neatly checkmated Pretorius's immediate aspirations to the Orange Free State. Next, he faced an internal crisis. Harrismith refused to accept its loss of status, the result of the removal of the landdrost's court to Winburg; and trouble flared up when Orpen arrived by wagon to carry out the orders of the Volksraad and the President to remove the equipment of the landdrost's office to Winburg. Twenty men—almost the entire adult male population of the village—attempted to stop him. They were headed by W. A. van Aardt, the field-cornet, whose legal duty, of course, was to help his landdrost carry out the Volksraad's decisions. 'We are going to prevent you by force', van Aardt said pleasantly, blocking the doorway.

Orpen was slightly built, and not pugnacious. But he had learned boxing at school in England. He picked up a long ruler and announced that he was transferring it to his wagon, adding, 'Mr. van Aardt, please make way.' He had to push the field-cornet slowly through the others to get out of the doorway. There 'a poor, swilling creature', George Schmidt, unexpectedly

gave him a tremendous blow on the side of his head. As Orpen reeled, van Aardt grabbed the ruler. The young landdrost smelt a plot. He sent van Aardt staggering with a blow on the chest, then put his whole force into an upper-cut under Schmidt's chin, which laid that assailant flat on his back, and turned to face the mob.

Spying among them a Cornish ex-soldier (the gaoler), he shouted: 'Biddle, lay hold here on the other side.' Military instinct got the better of the gaoler, who promptly obeyed the word of command. This help freed Orpen to turn on the field-cornet, who was again squaring up to him. Van Aardt fled, and Biddle, on Orpen's order, hustled the shaken Schmidt into the gaol at the back of the office and locked him up. Orpen made a dash to the wagon for his double-barrelled rifle. He returned just in time to threaten to shoot, as the mob prepared to smash the mud-built gaol. That threat dispersed all but a huge ex-artilleryman, Wilkin.

'Mr. Orpen,' said Wilkin sullenly, 'it is all very well to talk of shooting, but two can play at that game.'

'If I shoot or am shot doing my duty,' retorted Orpen, 'I shall have honour, but if you shoot me you will be hanged.'

Wilkin retired, and now Orpen's powerful brother Arthur arrived to support the landdrost. Orpen opened the court, reprimanded the crowd, sentenced Schmidt to three days in gaol, and left for Winburg in triumph with the equipment.

This fight was not in vain. Van Aardt and Schmidt rode off to the Valsch River and harangued a large meeting of burghers, urging that Harrismith district should rally to Pretorius. At last an old farmer, called Serfontein, rose. 'The case appears to me to be this', he said. 'One lanky Englishman has put you all to flight at Harrismith—and now you come here and want us to rebel against a Government. No thank you!' A shout of laughter ended the incipient rebellion.

Of the Irish strain in English-speaking South Africa there is no more gallant example than Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, champion of the Uitlanders against Krugerism. No one, he pointed out in his once famous book, *The Transvaal from Within*, resented the denial of citizen rights by President Kruger so intensely as the born South Africans. And such was he himself.

His forefathers had suffered much for Ireland and the Roman

Catholic Church. Fitzpatrick showed a like spirit as secretary of the Reform Committee on the Rand. 'He saw himself', Professor J. P. R. Wallis puts it in his recent biography of 'Fitz', 'as a true though unacknowledged Transvaaler, challenging in the Transvaal's own interests a usurping oligarchy's right to deny him civil rights.' He was against the Jameson Raid, treating it as a put-up job from outside. Yet when it was all over and he heard he was not to be tried for his life, on a charge of high treason, with Frank Rhodes, Phillips, Hammond, and Farrar, he broke down and wept from sheer disappointment. His own sentence was a term in gaol and a fine of £2,000.

Fitzpatrick's first encounters with Smuts, who was Kruger's last State Attorney, were not exactly encouraging. 'You are at the bottom of all this trouble', Smuts told him icily. 'I will catch you some day and no considerations of personal friendship will weigh with me. The day I catch you, I'll hang you as high as Haman. You can take that for a dead certainty.'

Olive Schreiner's classic, *The Story of an African Farm*, was first published in 1883. In 1907 appeared the second South African classic, *Jock of the Bushveld*. Jock is cherished by hundreds of thousands of South Africans who know nothing of Fitzpatrick's great work in pioneering citrus-growing nor of the vital part he played as a founder of Union.

A special kind of statesmanship was required of the great Native administrators—all English-speaking—who, when the Native wars with their attendant miseries were over, were called upon to provide for peaceful co-existence of white and black. Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Colonel Griffith, Joseph Orpen, Captain Blyth, Sir Walter Stanford, Sir Henry Elliott, and many more—what men they were in their courage, their profound respect for Bantu custom and tradition, their understanding of the chiefs and people whose welfare they tried to safeguard within the framework of a civilized State.

Charles Brownlee, one of the greatest of them all, was born in Kaffirland in 1821. Half a century later he became the first Minister of Native Affairs in South African history and the founder of the Transkeian Territories as we know them. A man of gigantic stature and fearless candour, Brownlee spoke the Xhosa language with no trace of a European accent. Sometimes he claimed to be a Gaika himself—was he not born and bred among

them? As 'uChalis' he was famous among the tribes from the Great Fish River to Zululand. His adventures in the Kaffir Wars have few parallels. Again and again he went unarmed to the hosts of armed warriors to plead for peace, though as a youth he had seen the vultures settle on the bodies of Piet Retief and his companions at Dingaan's kraal.

Brownlee's second name among the tribes was 'Napakade' (Never). He earned it by his heroic attempt to prevent the national suicide of the amaXhosa in 1857, when tribe after tribe destroyed all its food and stock to fulfil Nongqause's prophecy of a miracle that would drive the white man into the sea. 'It will happen never, never, never' ('napakade, napakade, napakade'), he told the Gaikas among whom he was stationed. Meantime he bought up every possible bag of grain to save the lives of those who would not believe him.

Month after month he warned the tribesmen that their prophets had lied before and were lying again. He saved large numbers, but it was dangerous work. 'I often felt', he wrote in his *Reminiscences*, 'when the fanaticism was at its height and I said goodbye to her [his wife] and my two little boys that the probabilities were that I would never return.' He made a last desperate appeal to Sandili, the Gaika paramount chief, not to kill his cattle. 'It is not for you that I now feel', he said at last, 'but for the helpless women and children who in a few days will be starving all over the country.' His feelings overwhelmed him. The huge, bearded Gaika commissioner sat down in the midst of the tribe, covered his face with his hands, and wept.

The greatest of all English-speaking South African statesmen—great in his achievements, his vision, and his failures—was of course Cecil John Rhodes.

At 18 he grew cotton and won a prize at the Pietermaritzburg Agricultural Show. At 37 he became Prime Minister of the Cape Colony and the founder of both the Rhodesias. Five years later he ruined his own hopes by making the preparations which Jameson finally precipitated on his own initiative in the Raid. He died at 48, leaving his stately Cape Dutch home at Groote Schuur as a legacy to the prime ministers of the united South Africa of his dreams. A Colossus indeed, but what of the personality behind the myths of the Colossus?

Once when Rhodes had returned from the north an intimate

friend arrived at Groote Schuur in the early morning to see him 'Rhodes!' he called quietly at the bedroom door. A feeble voice replied from the bed: 'I am not Rhodes. I am his secretary. He made me sleep here because I've got a fever. You'll find him sleeping in the corridor.' Being secretary to Rhodes was always an adventure. On special occasions Rhodes would toss half-sovereigns and sovereigns among his Bantu employees. At other times he merely gave them his secretaries' clothes.

Gordon le Sueur, who was one of these young men, mentions in his reminiscences that his mackintosh had 'gone the way of all my kit—given away by Rhodes to some Native'.

'Rhodes had a miserable habit,' he wrote, 'when he wished to make one of the Natives a present, of going to my kitbags and presenting the favoured one with the first things that came to hand. Even my rugs and blankets went and on the veld he and I had to share a big sheepskin kaross.' Rhodes's compensation took the form of generous cheques.

An atrocious rider, a South African who spoke villainous Afrikaans and equally villainous Zulu, this strange being who lived always in white flannel trousers fascinated the Matabele. 'He would chaff and tease the chiefs', Sir Lewis Michell records in his life of Rhodes. 'Sometimes one almost fancied he was one of them by the way he adapted himself to their customs. His face would beam all over when he thought he had the best of an argument and had them in a corner.'

Bereft of all authority, for he had resigned his directorship of the Chartered Company after the Jameson Raid, Rhodes, single-handed, achieved a settlement with the Matabele. Completely unarmed, he met the Matabele warriors in the Matopos, not once, but day after day, week after week. He moved among them in constant peril for nearly two months till all their leaders had accepted the peace. There is no comparable feat in African history.

Rhodes was the first South African statesman of the nineteenth century with an eye for beauty. He preserved the eastern side of Table Mountain from vandals and speculative builders. He restored 'The Grange' to its original Cape Dutch style and gave it back its original name, 'Groote Schuur'. He gave Sir Herbert Baker his chance as architect. He instructed Pickstone, the manager of his fruit farms, to find suitable clay and make tiles so

that the unsightly iron roofs of Cape Town could be replaced by something lovelier. He showed an un-South African detestation for discarded tins and bottles in the veld, even in pioneer Rhodesia.

Rhodes was so observant of farm life that he noticed cattle singling out a grass in Rhodesia and collected samples. Rhodes grass became the first South African plant ever used in the world's sown pastures.

For several nights after Jameson's unauthorized dash into the Transvaal, Rhodes never slept. His servant Tony heard him pacing up and down his room at Groote Schuur without pause. At last he asked for Lewis Michell. Michell found the young Prime Minister—Rhodes was 42—looking shattered. The floor of his room was littered with unanswered telegrams. Michell offered to answer them, but Rhodes merely told him to read them. Michell found most of them came from Afrikaners who assured Rhodes of their continued support—provided he disowned Jameson, the man who at the last, against instructions, had launched the raid on his own initiative.

'You see my point', said Rhodes, 'and why there can be no reply.' Unlike many lesser men, he refused to attempt to save himself by sacrificing subordinates.

When the South African War broke out, Rhodes left the safety of Cape Town to share in the perils of Kimberley. He took charge of the safety of 3,000 women and children under Boer bombardment. When his engineer, Labram, constructed a gun which he called Long Cecil to counter-shell the Boers, Rhodes characteristically had the base of every shell inscribed: 'Compliments, C. J. R.'

It is strange what interest clings even today to the simplest utterances of Rhodes, as to those of Kruger, central figures in the tragic clash between the main civilizing forces in South Africa. Even his business telegrams bear the Rhodes hallmark. Here is a typical cable sent to his representatives in London: 'Tell our friends that I well know the predatory instincts of the men of our race, who prey on each other when they cannot prey on the stranger; but I am d—d if they shall prey on me.'

There is little space to tell of the other outstanding English-speaking politicians of the past. Above all else, it was they who shaped the parliamentary tradition in South Africa. On his 71st birthday J. X. Merriman, the most eloquent, the most honourable

and beloved of them all, replied to the congratulations of the Union House of Assembly: 'If I can do anything, it will be my greatest satisfaction at the end of my life to think that in some small degree I have contributed to forming the character of our Parliament.' He cast his mind back 'to those who when I was a young man were in Parliament'—William Porter, Sir John Molteno and Saul Solomon—'who taught me and the young men of that day'.

None of them liked the stiff caucus system which Afrikaner nationalism imported into South African parliamentary life, as Irish nationalism imported it into Westminster. Resignation on grounds of principle, not of calculation, played a prominent part in the cabinets of Cape Colony's English-speaking prime ministers. The high standard of honour maintained by men like Rose Innes, Schreiner, and Merriman was not without its reward. When it became clear at Union that the first Governor-General would ask General Botha, and not Merriman, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, to form the first South African Cabinet, the latter declined to serve under a Transvaal chief. Among the mass of letters that reached him was this from his trusted friend, ex-President Steyn of the Orange Free State: 'Of one thing you can be assured, that though you are not in the Ministry you are in the hearts of all true South Africans who love straightforward, honest and clean statesmanship, and as far as Dutch South Africa is concerned, I sincerely pray that they may never forget what you have been to them in the hour of their trouble, when it was a deadly sin to be a Boer's friend.'

During the First World War, which followed soon after, Merriman characteristically did his utmost as a private member of Parliament to stop the internment of German South Africans.

The most eminent English-speaking South African of German parentage was W. P. Schreiner, whose father brought his English wife to the missions Archbell had founded in the Free State. Schreiner wrote to Merriman at the same time as Steyn. A sentence in that letter is a clue to the character of the man who, as Prime Minister, steered the Cape Colony through the anguish of the outbreak of the South African War, which he had tried in vain to avert, and who later devoted his brilliant gifts as an advocate to defending Chief Dinizulu, without charge, against the injustice of the Natal Government. 'Life's experiences', Schreiner wrote,

'have taught me that the golden thread of justice in every matter is the only clue out of the labyrinth.'

Schreiner's sister Olive, the first great writer South Africa had produced in 250 years, also wrote to Merriman and pointed significantly to the way in which he could still do great service, in the tradition of Porter, Molteno, and Solomon: 'You will now be free', she wrote, 'to act as a leader to those who realise that only by treating the South African Natives [i.e. the Bantu] with justice and binding them to us by affection can we make the future of South Africa great.'

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### THE MEN THEY WERE

The lovely Elizabeth Bailie set many a young man's heart beating faster when she came to Wynberg with her parents from Namaqualand in 1864. The Reverend John Bailie, son of the seafaring 1820 Settler who founded East London, was not unaware of the impression his daughter made. But he was startled when a wealthy widower in his flock drove up in a showy carriage one day and over a cup of tea announced suddenly: 'Mr Bailie, I want to marry your daughter Lizzie.'

Mr M was an elderly and imposing figure. John Bailie recovered his presence of mind and answered calmly: 'Yes, Mr M, I know of others who would also gladly marry Lizzie.' He led the talk round to safer subjects. Soon Mr M departed, with an assurance that he would come again to discuss the matter.

Within a week he was back in his gleaming carriage. As he walked up to the house, a servant followed, carrying a small metal deeds box. The pastor greeted him noncommittally and gazed with surprise at the black box on the table.

'Mr Bailie', the wealthy man began, 'I would like you to open this deeds box and examine it. You will find documents, shares and mortgages there that will convince you of my financial position.'

'But, Mr M, that is quite unnecessary', the other replied. 'I am prepared to take your word. There is no reason why I should investigate your private affairs.'

'Mr Bailie', said his wealthy parishioner, 'I want to repeat my request to marry Lizzie. I am prepared on our wedding day to settle £100,000 upon her.'

John Bailie's calm deserted him. 'Mr M', he snapped, 'I would rather see my daughter in her grave than married to you!' And he showed him the door.

There were two sequels. Bailie had already given the hand of

his eldest daughter Amelia, 'the rose of Namaqualand', to Charles Murray (brother of Dr Andrew Murray). This inspired hope in Murray's friend, Anton Daniel Lückhoff, a hard-pressed young widower who was Dutch Reformed pastor at Colesberg. Anton had nothing to settle on Lizzie except three motherless children. He came of a different nationality, language and church. But when Lizzie accepted him, John Bailie was perfectly satisfied.

The second sequel was disclosed only after Mr M's death. In his will he made bequests of £50 each (a considerable sum at the time) to every Methodist minister in the Cape Peninsula—except John Bailie. Once again Lizzie's father was perfectly satisfied.

A glimpse like this into the personal life of English-speaking South Africa ninety years ago sometimes evokes the image of the past more vividly than formal history. Other personal glimpses that have come down from past generations may well be set down to show what manner of men and women they were.

Here is a picture, for instance, of the terrors of bilingualism for the English-speaking 110 years ago. Its central figure, Sir John Wylde, was South Africa's first full-time Chief Justice (1828-55) and a founder of the great traditions of the South African Bench.

'Just as the shades of evening were closing round us [on a farm near Cradock in 1844], we were startled', wrote Alfred Cole, 'by the sound of a light wagon drawn by six horses coming along the road. It stopped at the door, and from the tented cover emerged the head of Sir John Wylde, who was travelling on circuit. My friend approached the wagon.

"One word!" cried the Chief Justice in a tone of great anxiety and half despair. "Can you speak English?"

"I am ashamed to say I can speak little else", replied my friend.

"Thank God!" exclaimed his lordship. "I am so sick of those d—d Dutchmen. Will you give me a bed?"

"With the greatest pleasure."

'Five minutes afterwards we were all under the sheep farmer's roof—his lordship and myself eating as travellers only can eat.'

Alfred Cole had a shrewd eye for the weakness of his countrymen settled in South Africa. "The English and Dutch have not hitherto fused as kindly as might be desired", he said. 'John Bull is as pompous a fellow in South Africa as in England, and his intense appreciation of his own excellences induces him to look upon the Boers as an inferior order of animals to himself.

'With a due allowance for the want of certain conventional advantages on the part of the Dutchmen, Master John is decidedly mistaken, but it is useless to tell him so.'

Alfred Beit, the most generous and constructive, perhaps, of all the Jewish immigrants who have advanced the industry and wealth of South Africa, was more than a brilliant financier and Cecil Rhodes's right-hand man. He was also a child-like and sensitive human being. When he paid his first visit to Europe after making his fortune in Kimberley, he took his mother in Hamburg for a drive. He was profoundly attached to her; he knew how she had struggled to rear and educate himself and his five brothers and sisters.

'Mother', he asked her as they drew near her home again, 'don't you like this carriage?'

'Yes, I do, Alfred.'

'And how do you like the horses?'

'Splendid.'

'And the coachman?'

'Yes, I like him too.'

'Mother, when I was a boy', Alfred Beit said in triumph, 'I always hoped that one day I should have enough money to give you a carriage. Now my dream has come true. All these', with a wave at the coach, horses and driver, 'are for you.'

In his will—and before his death—Beit treated South Africa and Rhodesia as he had treated his mother.

The development of science in South Africa owes a great debt to English-speaking enthusiasts, whether reared in the country, like William Guybon Atherstone; whether they reached it in youth and made it their home, like Andrew Geddes Bain, or Dr Robert Broome; or whether they were born here, like Dr B. J. F. Schonland.

With exuberant humour Bain set down some of his experiences as the father of South African geology. While building the Queen's Road in 1837 he often stayed with Captain Duncan Campbell and borrowed books for his evenings in camp. One day he took home Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, and read it with avidity, over and over again.

'I was smitten', he said. 'Lyell made a convert of me. I lamented that I had never read his or any other geological work before.'

'I rode about with a large hammer slung in my belt and a bag on my shoulder, which conduct some charitable friends were kind enough to attribute to lunacy, when in truth it was nothing but a severe attack of Lithomania. My mouth was for ever full of stones and fossils, yet with all my hammerings I had not yet found a single fossil.'

But his chance was coming. His work took him with his new road to Fort Beaufort, where he found a kindred spirit in the civil commissioner, M. Borchers, who had also read Lyell. 'We often went out together with hammer and pick to find fossils. At last we discovered a small fossil bone which I have ever since preserved with as much religious veneration as a good Catholic does a piece of the true Cross.'

Soon they found more. Presently Bain had collected so many fossils from far and wide on the frontier that he had to hire a room to store them. He found it harder and harder to convince himself or his wife that he was entitled to spend on science so much money badly needed by his family. But he persevered.

Encamped on the Blinkwater under the Great Winterberg one day, with Captain Forbes of Robert Hart's old regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, he spotted the fossil bones of some prehistoric monster projecting from the edge of a krans. Here was a tremendous find, which he called the 'Blinkwater monster'. He brought it to camp and set about laboriously chipping away the surrounding rock to expose the skeleton.

While chips were flying, a young Boer from the Winterberg came down the road and stood transfixed at the sight. Then he asked what it was.

'Don't you see', said Bain artlessly, pointing to the open mouth and fossil teeth, 'that it is the petrified head of a wildebeest?'

'Allemagtig!' countered the young farmer. 'How came the wildebeest in the stone?'

'Do you read your Bible?' Bain said.

'Oh, yes.'

'Well, did you never read that when Noah was in the Ark one of the wildebeests jumped overboard and before Noah could get out its life buoy it was drowned?'

The young Boer looked bewildered but he did not like to confess ignorance of any reputed part of the Bible.

'Ja, tog', he answered. (Roughly, 'Yes, I do.')

'Well then,' went on the father of South African geology with a grave face, 'you know that the waters covered the tops of the highest mountains and that at that time Noah was floating above the lofty Winterberg, and the wildebeest, falling into the Fishback, became petrified there, where he has lain ever since till I took him out the day before yesterday.'

'Allemagtig, dit is tog wonderlik' ('Heavens, what a wonderful thing'), responded the young Boer and went his way.

But Bain paid the penalty for his irrepressible humour. A day or two later he had to receive a deputation from Winterberg, including elders of the Kirk, and had to show them 'Noah's wildebeest'.

Grahamstown ought to raise a monument to the 1820 Settler who rode east out of the village in sheepskin trousers and jacket, under a home-made straw hat, on 13 November 1823. William Shaw was accompanied by another young man as poor and bold as himself, William Shepstone. Their wagon, bursting with stores for many months, rumbled behind them, with their wives and children aboard. Six-year-old son Theophilus rode in particular glee to his destiny in Bantu Africa.

Shaw would have been an officer in the British Army if he had not cast his prospects behind him to be a despised Methodist preacher. He became the chaplain, the educator, the spokesman and champion of the 1820 Settlers. It was his village of Salem in Albany that came to the rescue of the Voortrekkers in Pietermaritzburg by sending off scores of Dutch Bibles and Testaments to supply Daniel Lindley's bookless Voortrekker school.

In November 1823 Shaw was setting out to fulfil the dream that had lured him to join the 1820 Settlers. He was about to start the first of his chain of missions in independent and warring Kaffirland. Chief Pato in Kaffirland proved to be kindness itself. Within a year Shaw and Shepstone had completed their simple cottages and had more than fifty Ndlambi children attending their Sunday school. Yet good William Shaw and his wife were uneasy about the pupils.

'They are making progress and behave very well', he admitted, 'but I am grieved to see so many children—many of them chiefs by birth—in a state of nudity.' A very few, he admitted, did wear small pieces of calf-skin and the like on their shoulders but the great majority were 'entirely naked'.

To the pre-Victorians a Sunday school, however attentive, seemed unsatisfactory with pupils so coolly clad. 'What must be done', Shaw sighed, 'to raise this degraded race?' Part of his answer was to introduce the first plough. It caused a sensation in a country where all cultivation was done by women armed with hoes.

'A piece of land had been cleared of all trees and stumps, and some of our steadiest oxen were yoked to the plough. As soon as it began to get fairly at work, the people looked on with great surprise and followed up and down the field, uttering all manner of exclamations expressive of their astonishment.

'At last, one young man ran off to call a neighbouring chief, who, when he came to look, seemed very interested. He said nothing, however, for a while, but watched the plough in silence. At length he could not avoid expressing his gratification but, clapping his hands, and shouting to a man who was standing at some distance on the hillside overlooking the valley where the plough was at work, he said: "This thing that the white people have brought into the country is as good as ten wives."'

Shaw's visits to Grahamstown from Wesleyville Mission Station were an adventure in themselves. He and Shepstone hacked a trail through the bush to the Fish River frontier. Elephants swarmed there. Sometimes Shaw saw more than a hundred at once. He found they could be kept at a distance with the crack of a wagon-whip. But on horseback his only safeguard, since he always travelled unarmed, was to keep a sharp look-out.

'My faithful servant Kotongo was once very uneasy that I had no gun', he wrote. 'I said the Kaffirs knew me to be a "fundis" (missionary) and why should a minister carry arms?

"That might be," said Kotongo. But he was not sure that, if we fell in with any elephants, they would recognize me as a "fundis".'

Shaw's relationship to the settlers of Albany was unique. 'It is a great comfort to me', he told an intimate friend in 1842 as they gazed down on Grahamstown, 'that there is not a house in that town in which I have not had the opportunity of offering prayer.'

For all their devotion the early missionaries were apt to cast a Puritan gloom around them. John Moodie noted grimly on a Kaffirland tour in the 1820s that there was 'no vain mirth' at Lovedale, though the 'half-mile grace' at supper did lead up in

the end to 'excellent Scotch whisky'. He deplored 'the gloomy and desponding expressions on the Kaffirs' faces at the missions'. He thought it was due to the prohibition of the singing, dancing and animated ways of the Bantu as 'sinful in their nature'.

A truer and more appreciative view of Bantu customs came only with time and experience. It was hastened perhaps by the arrival with Bishop Gray in 1847 of the first permanent Anglican missions and later the first of the Roman Catholics. Certainly the English Church brought a new element of beauty and graciousness into the stern Puritanism of South African life—and a new gallery of picturesque characters.

Many tales are told of Archdeacon (later Bishop) Merriman, father of the prime minister. He had an intense belief in apostolic simplicity. He put it into practice so thoroughly on his missionary journeys that he unnerved one of his junior clergy *en route* for synod. The young man had put up for the night at a roadside farm. The Afrikaner owner hospitably accorded him all the deference due to a stately Dutch Reformed 'predikant'. During the evening the host casually mentioned that an English tramp was lodged in a stable outside. Wishing to say a kind word to his erring countryman, the young parson sought him out after supper. To his acute embarrassment he found himself face to face with his archdeacon. Merriman sat affably smoking a pipe in the stable. What Boer could recognize this humbly clad stranger, trudging to synod, as a clergyman?

Canon Jenkinson's daughter Margaret was a child of 12 or 13 when a young Natal farmer, Charles Johnson, arrived at her father's mission at Springvale with the crazy idea, for a Natalian, of becoming a missionary. He spoke the Zulu language like his own. Margaret had grown into a beautiful, delicate-looking girl of 18 when Charles Johnson married her and took her with him to start his first Zulu mission at Isandlwana a few months after the famous battle of that name. Their home was a new grass hut. When the rains came, a spring bubbled up through the floor.

'What did you do?' a visitor asked Mrs Johnson many years afterwards.

Her eyes twinkled. 'I built a sort of bridge over it', she said.

The story of Archdeacon Johnson, who founded and built thirty churches among the Zulus, one a veritable cathedral in stone, has been told in a full-length biography by Bishop Lee of

Zululand. But Margaret Johnson, who spoke Zulu from childhood as fluently as her husband, has not been described. She helped him to pass his examinations and be ordained. For fifty years she taught in his Zulu schools, helped him build, made the furniture, managed the mission while he was away on his endless travels, and acted as postmistress for the district. She bore and reared ten children.

Mrs Johnson maintained that she had wasted ten days of her life by obeying medical orders to stay in bed when her first child was born: 'Quite unnecessary, I never did it again.' Her subsequent practice was to go on teaching her class till the last, then give them work to go on with, retire to her room, and come back a little later, leaving her new baby comfortably washed and wrapped up on her bed.

'On one holiday', an English visitor, Mrs Waddy, wrote in her biography of Canon Stacy Waddy, 'they [the Johnsons] were caravanning in a wagon. She sent the children away to play and told them not to come until she rang a bell. When it rang, tea was ready for them—and a new brother.'

Such were the messengers of peace. What of the men of war?

At grey dawn in the 1830s John Stubbs kissed his mother good-bye outside their home in Grahamstown, mounted his horse and trotted off down the sleepy street on a ride of six hundred miles to fortune and adventure. He was off over the hills and valleys and through the forests of Kaffirland, with one faithful pack-horse beside him, to start life on his own at Port Natal.

His father had been murdered by the Kaffirs in 1822 when John was a lad of 14. But he felt little fear of the tribes, who were all at peace. His fame had gone out as an elephant hunter. Sure in the saddle and a deadly shot with his elephant gun, he had the world before him. How could he know he was riding to his doom against Dingaan?

The shadow of Dingaan lay across the little settlement of Port Natal when he reached it. John was there when it was proclaimed the township of Durban. He was there when Piet Retief met his old friends from Albany on his ride to Dingaan's kraal. He was there when Robert Biggar, a young settler of his own age from Albany, raised a force to avenge Retief.

With 16 other English-speaking South Africans, 30 Hottentots and 1,500 Bantu adherents, Biggar's force crossed the Tugela.

On the opposite bank seven regiments of the Zulu army, containing 10,000 fighting men, fell upon the cosmopolitan force.

The first volunteers of English-speaking South Africa put up a magnificent fight. But the odds were too great. Once their forces became divided in two during the battle their doom was sealed. They fought with desperate courage, and their Bantu followers fell around them as round the bodies of their ancestral chiefs. John Stubbs and Robert Biggar were among the dead. Only four Englishmen out of eighteen survived to cross the Tugela and transmit the news at last to the home in Grahamstown from which John had ridden out, light-heartedly in the grey of morning, to find adventure and fortune.

One of the many English-speaking burghers who fought for the Orange Free State in the Basuto wars was Commandant Thomas Webster. Born in the eastern Cape in 1825, he commanded a party of burghers in the War of the Axe at 21. In the War of Umlanjani (1850-3) he played a notable part in the defence of Whittlesea against the tribesmen and the well-armed Hottentot rebels. His father and six of his brothers were also in constant action during that long-drawn fight.

After one long engagement, in full view of the village, the Kaffirs appeared to withdraw. A young English lieutenant, Robert Jefferson, rode straight into the trap. Suddenly the Kaffirs rose from hiding and wounded his horse, which tossed him over its head. With shouts of 'Catch him, catch him!' the enemy rushed up to dispatch him. They were barely twenty yards from their victim when Webster, who had spotted Jefferson's plight from a distance, galloped up alone under fire, told Jefferson to lay hold of his stirrup, and carried him out of danger while bullets hissed all round them.

The rescue had a romantic sequel. Jefferson saw much of Webster's sister during the siege in Whittlesea and eventually married her.

When Webster dismounted to fire from the ground it was said that he never missed. He rode his yellow horse into battle at nearly every major fight in that three years' war. Whenever the Hottentot rebels saw it, they would fling themselves flat on the ground and shout to each other: 'Pas op! Daar kom die geel perd.' ('Look out, there comes the yellow horse.')

Some time after Webster had settled in the Orange Free State

the Basuto wars of 1865-7 broke out. Enlisting as a volunteer on behalf of his adopted country, he shared in both the Boer assaults launched on Moshesh's fastness, Thaba Bosigo, in August 1865. Among his fellow combatants was J. B. Robinson, destined to become the first South African-born millionaire.

Webster was soon afterwards appointed commandant of a corps of white volunteers and Fingo and Barolong levies. As he and thirty of his volunteers took cover behind a low bank from 1,500 Basuto, many of whom had guns, he noticed some of his men were becoming nervy. He jumped up on to the bank, sat there a minute with folded arms while bullets sang round him, then scrambled back, saying cheerily, 'They can't shoot! They can't hit us.'

He was at the storming of Tandjesberg and Thiomie in 1867 as well as at other engagements. After the war Moshesh paid him the supreme compliment: 'You are not a white man; you are a Basuto.'

Among the greatest horsemen South Africa has produced was Sir Walter Currie, a veteran of many campaigns. For fifteen crowded years he was chief of the Frontier Armed Mounted Rifles, which later became the Cape Mounted Riflemen. This magnificently bearded warrior was a year-old child when he reached the Cape frontier with his parents. Major Hook, who served under him, summed up the pioneer police chief thus: 'He was a born fighter. He could ride with or without saddle or go with or without boots, but he couldn't move along without adjectives. Still, there was melody in his language, the same as in the case of Sir Harry Smith. No one liked him less for the infirmity.'

Among many gallant South Africans who served in the C.M.R. few could surpass Major C. J. Sprenger, son of a settler from the Prussian Legion. In the Moirosi campaign of 1879 the C.M.R. and other Cape troops attempted again and again without success to storm Chief Moirosi's mountain, which rose impregnable out of the Orange River in Basutoland. Tier upon tier of breastworks high up the precipitous slopes gave the defenders cover for firing down on the climbers. The final attack, after six months of repulses, was headed by Sprenger and he was first into the enemy breastworks. For his courage he was promoted captain on the spot.

Twenty-one years later he showed the same imperturbable courage at Wepener. The Cape Mounted Rifles with other colonial troops were besieged by the Free Staters. He walked through a rain of shot and shell to cheer his youngsters and was finally killed in action.

It would be invidious to carry the story of the English-speaking South African volunteer to the present day. English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking fought side by side in the Second World War. Their achievements and good name were essentially those of South Africans, regardless of race.

In the First World War, however, the South African Brigade which fought in France was, at the start, overwhelmingly English-speaking. Every South African knows the fame of Delville Wood. How many remember today the gallant stand at Marrières Wood in which the remnant of the original South African Brigade met its end against overwhelming odds? As at Rorke's Drift forty years earlier, three words in a military order made all the difference—the simple phrase 'at all costs'.

Long after his men were surrounded, Brigadier F. S. Dawson, the South African commanding officer in the last great German offensive, on the Somme in 1918, took those three words unquestioningly to mean what they said.

The British Army was driven back to left and right of his position, but Dawson's 500 South Africans clung through an inferno of shell fire, machine-gun fire, and infantry attacks to their small sector of line. General Tudor had told Dawson the previous evening that it must be held at all costs. When all hell was let loose, hour after hour, on his starving force of men, grey with lack of sleep, Dawson's reply was simple but magnificent: 'To retire would be against all the traditions of the service.'

After blocking the German advance for seven hours, the 100 men still able to fight had not a round of ammunition between them. Then and only then Brigadier Dawson, Lieut.-Colonel E. Christian and Captain R. Beverley walked out in front of their men to surrender. They had nothing left to fight with.

'Why have you killed so many of us?' the astonished Germans demanded, according to John Buchan's account of the battle. 'Why didn't you surrender sooner?'

The Kaiser himself stopped British prisoners behind the German lines in hopes of meeting men of the 9th Division, whose

most desperate fighting on that day of heroic resistance came from the remnant of the South African Brigade. 'I want to see a man of that division', he told a group of British officers. 'If all divisions had fought like the 9th, I would not have had any troops left to carry on the attack.'

## EPILOGUE

Great memories still linger around the crumbling forts and Gold farm-houses and missions of the Eastern Province, the cradle-land of the English-speaking South African.

It was from Grahamstown that Robert Scoon, William McLuckie and David Hume set off on the trading journeys that unfolded the map of the Transvaal before the Great Trek was thought of. It was from Robert Hart's government farm at Somerset East that Henry Francis Fynn stepped out with a pack on his back on the adventure that made him the founder of modern Natal. At Uitenhage James Rose Innes began his life's work. At Cradock Joseph Robinson spent his childhood in preparation for a very different career—the major development of gold-mining on the Witwatersrand. On a mountain close to the town lies the grave of South Africa's first great writer, Olive Schreiner. At Salem, in Albany, two school-children, Mary Moffat and her brother John, doing their sums and learning their grammar, prepared to play their part in carrying civilization to unknown Rhodesia. Mary became an explorer of the far interior as Livingstone's wife and dauntless companion and laid down her life on the lower Zambezi.

Many famous names and actions have been omitted from this book. Little or nothing has been said of the pioneer bankers and merchants who built the trade of South Africa. The bold innovators who transformed the country's farming and the men whose organizing skill and vision brought mining and industry to their height have been passed over with barely a mention. The tale of the great Native administrators has been left untold. The fruitful work of the later Christian missions and the famous schools has received as little mention as that of the painters and writers who sowed the arts of the West in the virgin soil of South Africa.

The English-speaking South African is heir to a greater tradition and a richer store of precious memories than he knows. His famous dual allegiance—to South Africa as his home and to the great Christian tradition of freedom and justice evolved in

Europe as his creed and standard—has borne fruit through 150 years of peace and storm in the land of his birth. One more memory of the Eastern Province, which has transmitted it by word of mouth for eighty years, may serve as a beacon in our own race-troubled times. It is the story of Peter Davidson, minister of the Scottish settlers' church at Adelaide.

Davidson was completely a part of the frontier life. His congregation stemmed from the settlers whom Robert Hart had conducted to Glen Lynden on the wild Baviaans River in 1820. They had fought in war after war on the frontier and would no doubt scarcely rank as liberals on race questions. His wife Janet had grown up among the raids and alarms of the Kaffir wars, for she was a daughter of Alexander Welsh, one of Glen Lynden's earliest pastors. If they kept their powder dry, these men yet feared God.

The last of the Kaffir wars was at hand when the Davidsons drove with their children one Sunday in 1879 up the beautiful Mankazana valley to Glen Thorn church under the Great Winterberg. Davidson was to administer Holy Communion that day and the children filed into church with their mother, all but small, golden-haired Ebenezer. Because he was not yet 4 years old, he was allowed to play outside.

By the time the service was over, Ebenezer had vanished. The congregation of farmers scoured the river banks, the hillsides, and the bush for hours, but the parents never saw their son alive again. Ebenezer Anderson, the family tombstone in Adelaide records with silent grief, was 'mysteriously taken, 22nd June, 1879'.

Fourteen years went by. Peter Davidson lost his erect carriage and the steady grip of his right hand. He looked an old man when Jack Pringle came from Glen Thorn in 1893 to tell him the first authentic news of his son. A Xhosa informer had heard a woman blurt out the long-kept secret at a beer drink in a kraal. She described how two Xhosas had seized the little boy near the church that peaceful Sunday morning and how one of them had killed him. The murderer had mistaken Ebenezer for the son of a farmer against whom he entertained a grievance.

The little skeleton was discovered on the summit of Governor's Kop above Glen Thorn. Soon the men were captured and brought to justice. There could scarcely be doubt what the end would be. Then came an unexpected turning in the old frontier

road of violence—the turning which is remembered in the lovely Mankazana valley to this day. Peter Davidson came forward to plead for the life of his son's murderer.

How much it cost the old minister, alone with his God, to take that step will never be known. But his plea succeeded. No second family was plunged into mourning to avenge his child.

## APPENDIX

### HISTORICAL SOURCES

The following bibliography supplies the detailed authority on which the writer has in the main relied. For the general outline of South African history as a background, Eric Walker's *A History of South Africa* (1935) has been consulted throughout, and to a lesser degree C. W. de Kiewiet's *A History of South Africa, Social and Economic* (1941).

No attempt has been made to find a standardized yet recognizable way of spelling historic Bantu names.

#### CHAPTER ONE

G. A. A. Middelberg's letters from the Transvaal (1896 to 1899) were published in the *Hertzog-Annale* of the S.A. Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns, Pretoria, July 1953. References to the Uitlanders, to the 'Engelsch-Afrikaners', etc., are legion. See particularly page 81.

The quotation from Dr G. D. Scholtz is taken from his *Het die Afrikaanse Volk 'n Toekoms?* (Johannesburg, 1954), page 29.

#### CHAPTER TWO

For the state of South Africa in 1795-1806 see Barrow's *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* (1801); Lichtenstein's *Travels in Southern Africa in the years 1803 to 1806* (Van Riebeeck Society reprint); Lady Anne Barnard's *South Africa a Century Ago* (1901); Burchell's *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa* (1822-4); Borchers's *Autobiographical Memoir* (Cape Town, 1861); Theal's *Records of Cape Colony*; Pauw's *Die Beroepsarbeid van die Afrikaner in die Stad* (Cape Town, 1946).

References to Robert Hart abound in travel books from 1820 onwards. See Theal's *Records of Cape Colony* for Somerset Farm and Hart's long litigation with Bishop Burnett. See also Sir James Rose Innes's *Autobiograph* (Cape Town, 1949). The Hart family tradition is that Hart served in all the campaigns in South Africa between 1795 and 1802. This is quite probable: see Dunn-Pattison's account of the campaigns in his *History of the 91st Argyllshire Highlanders* (London, 1910). For the capture of the Cape see Theal's *Records of Cape Colony*, vol. 1, and his *History of South Africa since 1795* (1908).

#### CHAPTER THREE

The eyewitness account of the Third Kaffir War is from Shipp's *Memoirs of the extraordinary military career of John Shipp* (London, 1829). For Hart's family history see Ivan and Raymond Mitford-Barberton's *The Bowlers of Tharfield* (1952). For his life from Grahamstown days onward see especially Cory's *Rise of South Africa*, Thomas Pringle's *Narrative of a Residence at the Cape of Good Hope* (1835), Thompson's *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa* (1827), and Dreyer's *Gedenkboek*

*van die Nederduits-Gereformeerde Kerk Somerset Oos* (Cape Town, 1935). For von Moltke see *A German of the Resistance* (Central News Agency, South Africa, 1947).

#### CHAPTER FOUR

For Graham's life see Duncan's *British South Africa* (London, 1896); Mitford-Barberton's *Barbers of the Peak* (1934); Cory's *Rise of South Africa*; and letters etc. in Dr Killie Campbell's collection at Durban. For the clearing of the Zuurveld and the Battle of Grahamstown see Theal's *Records of Cape Colony and History of South Africa since 1795*, volume 1; Stretch's account in his old age, *Cape Monthly Magazine*, May 1876; and Metrowich's *Assegai Over the Hills* (Cape Town, 1953). According to Stretch, whose account is in general somewhat unreliable, Boesak, the Hottentot chief from Theopolis, and his 130 buffalo hunters lent invaluable aid to the defenders, turning up at the critical moment.

#### CHAPTER FIVE

For a visiting officer's impressions of the 1835 Kaffir War see Alexander's *Narrative of a Voyage of Observation among the Colonies of Western Africa and of a Campaign in Kaffirland on the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief in 1835* (1837); for the wreck of the *Birkenhead*, see Addison and Matthews, *A Deathless Story* (1906).

For Rorke's Drift I have relied mainly on French's *Lord Chelmsford and the Zulu War* (London, 1939), survivors' impressions from Clements's *The Glamour and Tragedy of the Zulu War* (1936); and Dr Killie Campbell's collection in Durban.

#### CHAPTER SIX

Anderson's life has been pieced together from a multitude of fragments. See Lovett's *History of the London Missionary Society* (1899); Borchers's *An Autobiographical Memoir* (Cape Town, 1861); Burchell's *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa* (London, 1822); Campbell's *Travels in South Africa* (London, 1815), and his *Travels in South Africa . . . being the Narrative of a Second Journey in the Interior of the Country* (London, 1822); Moffat's *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (London, 1842); Philip's *Researches in South Africa* (London, 1828); Lichtenstein's *Travels in Southern Africa, 1803-1806*; Theal's *Records of Cape Colony*, Steedman's *Wanderings and Adventures in the Interior of Southern Africa* (1835); Agatha Elizabeth Schoeman's *Life of Coenraad Buys* (Pretoria, 1938); and private information from Mr B. K. Anderson of Walmer, Port Elizabeth (a great-grandson of William Anderson), and from Mr T. A. Anderson of Pinelands, Cape Town, son of a later, unrelated missionary at Pacaltsdorp. For the Griquas see particularly Marais's *The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937* (1939).

#### CHAPTER SEVEN

For the Broadbent-Hodgson expedition see Hodgson's *Memoirs of Mrs. Anne Hodgson* (1836) and Broadbent's *A Narrative of the Introduction of Christianity amongst the Barolong Tribe of Bechuanas . . .* (1865). The curious fact that the nursemaids were English, not Hottentot, is deduced from a reference by Robert Moffat in Schaper's *Apprenticeship at Kuruman* (1951) to Broadbent's English maid.

#### CHAPTER EIGHT

Besides the works cited in Chapter 7, see Shaw's *Memorials of South Africa* (London, 1840); Moffat's *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (1842); Kirby's *The Diary of Dr. Andrew Smith, 1834-36*; Kotze's *Letters of the American Missionaries 1835-38* (Van Riebeeck Society, 1950), which on pp. 192 and 195

records the crossing of the Drakensberg by mounted Englishmen; du Plessis's *History of Christian Missions in South Africa* (London, 1911); Steedman's *Wanderings and Adventures in the Interior of Southern Africa* (especially vol. 2, pp. 31-4); White-side's *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa* (1906); Hattersley's *Portrait of a Colony* (1940), and *British Settlement of Natal* (1950).

I am also indebted to Dr Killie Campbell's manuscript collection at Durban, to Barbara Buchanan's *Pioneer Days in Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, 1934) and *Natal Memories* (Pietermaritzburg, 1941), as well as to Manfred Nathan's *The Voortrekkers of South Africa* (1937) and McKeurtan's *Cradle Days of Natal* (1930). For the Voortrekkers' danger in crossing the Vaal near Parys, instead of entering the Transvaal via Kuruman, the recognized route for peaceful travellers, see Kirby's *Diary of Dr. Andrew Smith*, p. 109 and p. 118 (Van Riebeeck Society, 1939-40). For the later expulsion of missionaries from the Transvaal see particularly Wallis's *Matabele Journals of Robert Moffat* (1945).

#### CHAPTER NINE

The main sources are Moffat's *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa*, Moffat's *Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat* (1889), and, for Anderson's latter years, G. P. Ferguson's *Cusa: The Story of the Churches of the Congregational Union of South Africa* (Paarl, 1940). The closing quotation is from Lovett's *History of the London Missionary Society*.

#### CHAPTER TEN

For the earliest days of Port Natal see Thompson's *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*; Nathaniel Isaacs's *Travels and Adventures in Eastern Africa* (Van Riebeeck Society, 1936-7); Stuart and Malcolm, *Diary of Henry Francis Fynn* (Pietermaritzburg, 1950). For ports in general see Barrow's *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa*; Blommaert and Wiid, *Die Joernaal van Dirk Gysbert van Reenen*, 1803 (Van Riebeeck Society, 1937); Thompson's *Travels . . .*; Owen's *Narrative of Voyages to . . . Africa* (1833).

For the life and adventures of Lieutenant Bailie, see particularly Campbell's *British South Africa* (1897), Cory's *Rise of South Africa*, and Joan Findlay's *The Findlay Letters* (Pretoria, 1954); for Port Alfred see especially Cory's *Rise of South Africa* and Murray's *Ships and South Africa*, which also deals with Knysna; for Port Shepstone and Port Grosvenor I have relied on manuscripts etc. in Dr Killie Campbell's collection.

#### CHAPTER ELEVEN

Besides sources for Chapter 10 see Russell's *Old Durban* (Durban, 1899); *Speeches of the late Right Hon. Harry Escombe* (Pietermaritzburg, 1903); Methven's history of Durban harbour in the *Natal Witness* brochure, 'A Century of Progress in Natal' (Pietermaritzburg, 1924); article by Cicely Tower and H. Colborne-Smith (formerly secretary of the Natal Harbour Board) in *Natal Mercury* on 27 December 1949; and other materials in Dr Killie Campbell's collection.

#### CHAPTER TWELVE

For Sir Lowry Cole and roads see Cole and Gwynn, *Memoirs of Sir Lowry Cole* (London, 1934). For roads in general see *South Africa a Century Ago* (Lady Anne Barnard's letters, 1924); Michell in *Journey of the Royal Geographic Society*, November 1836; Cory's *Rise of South Africa*. For the road-builders see Newman's *Memoir of John Montagu* (1855) and Lister's *Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain* (Van Riebeeck Society, 1949). See also Mossop's *Old Cape Highways* (Cape Town, 1922);

Bunbury's *Journal of a Residence in the Cape of Good Hope* (1848); and Burchell's *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa*. For Hamelberg's road journeys see Spies's *Die Dagboek van H. A. L. Hamelberg 1855-1871* (Van Riebeeck Society, 1952). For the development of postal services see Official Year Book of the Union of South Africa, No. I (1918).

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

For sources see the previous chapter, especially Lister's preface to *Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain*; and Rogers's 'Pioneers in South African Geology', *Transactions of the Geological Society of South Africa*, xxxix; also Borcherd's *Autobiographical Memoir*.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Theal's *Records of Cape Colony* gives valuable reports on the state of education in 1811-12 and immediately after Rose Innes's arrival. Other sources for Innes include Ritchie's *History of the South African College* (Cape Town, 1918); Bunbury's *Journal of a Residence at the Cape of Good Hope* (1848); Sellick's *Uitenhage Past and Present* (Uitenhage, 1904); Moodie's *Ten Years in South Africa* (1835); Report of the Watermeyer Education Commission (Cape Town, 1863); du Plessis's *Life of Andrew Murray* (1920); Malherbe's *Education in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1925); Cory's *Rise of South Africa*; Redgrave's *Port Elizabeth in Bygone Days* (Wynberg, 1947); and family information from Dr R. N. Rose Innes, Kei Road, Cape Province. For Lindley's contemporary letter on the relative illiteracy of the Voortrekkers see Smith's *Life and Times of Daniel Lindley* (1949). For a rosy modern picture of Voortrekker education see Coetzee's *Onderwys in Transvaal 1838-1937* (Pretoria, 1941).

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Sources for John Fairbairn's life include Theal's *Records of Cape Colony*; Una Long's *Index to authors of unofficial, privately-owned manuscripts . . .* (1947); Murray's *Pen and Ink Sketches, by Limner* (Grahamstown, 1864) and *South African Reminiscences* (Cape Town, 1894); the *Cape Monthly Magazine*, vii, June 1860; also 'South African Men of Mark', by the Hon. A. Wilmot, reprinted from *South Africa* (London, 1914). For Adamson's life see *St. Andrew's, Cape Town, A Centenary Record* (Cape Town, 1929). The rise of the South African College is described in Ritchie's *History of the South African College* (Cape Town, 1918) and Walker's *The South African College and the University of Cape Town* (Cape Town, 1929).

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The best sources for Meurant's life and work are his own *Sixty Years Ago* (Cape Town, 1885); Nienaber's reprint of the *Zamenspraak tussen Klaas Waarzegger en Jan Twijfelaar* (Johannesburg, 1940) with its introductory notes; Scholtz in the *Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns* (July 1934 and May 1935); and articles in *Die Huisgenoot* by Dr John Muir of Riversdale (see 29 June 1928 and 14 and 21 February 1930).

Dr Muir described Meurant as an Afrikaner but he is usually regarded among Afrikaners as an English-speaking South African. His attachment to his father and sister, whose common language was surely English, his father's decision to apprentice him to Greig's *Commercial Advertiser*, his happiness in Grahamstown, his politics, and the English inscriptions on his wife's grave and on his own, point in the same direction.

For the earliest writers in Afrikaans see e.g. Nienaber's *Perspektief en Profiel* (Johannesburg, 1951). For the text of *Kaatje Kekkelbek* see Lister's *Journals of Andrew Geddes Bain* (Van Riebeeck Society, 1949).

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Innes's own evidence on his work as superintendent is published in the Watermeyer Education Commission's report, tabled in the Cape Parliament in 1863. This report also gives evidence by Dale, William Robertson, Andrew Murray, Adamson, Rowan and other pioneers of education, besides important State documents on the establishment and development of a State education system. Innes's reports to the Cape Parliament from its inception till his retirement in 1859 are valuable sources. See also Malherbe's *Education in South Africa* (1652-1922) (Cape Town, 1925); Cory's *Rise of South Africa*; Redgrave's *Port Elizabeth in Bygone Days* (Wynberg, 1947); du Toit's *Ds. S. J. du Toit in Weg en Werk* (Paarl, 1917); Bunbury's *Journal of a Residence at the Cape of Good Hope* (1848); Cole's *The Cape and the Kaffirs* (1852); Henderson's *Sir George Grey, Pioneer of Empire in Southern Lands* (1907); Newman's *Biographical Memoir of John Montagu* (1855). For Brebner see *Memoir of the Life and Work of the Rev. John Brebner* (Edinburgh, 1903); also Muller's *Oude Tijden in den Oranje Vrystaat* (Leyden, 1907).

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

For Henry Hartley I have relied on *To Ophir Direct* (anonymous, 1868); le Roux's *Pioneers and Sportsmen of South Africa, 1760-1890* (Salisbury, 1939); Thomas Baines's *The Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa* (1877) with its vivid picture of Button's mine at Eersteling and his *Northern Goldfields Diaries* (1952, edited by Wallis); Pieterse's 'Die Geskiedenis van die Mynindustrie in Transvaal 1836-1886', in the Archives Yearbook for South African History, vol. VI, 1945; somewhat unreliable family tradition as embodied in Capt. R. Hartley Thackeray's article on Hartley in the *Journal of the Royal African Society*, July 1938; Potgieter and Theunissen, *Hendrik Potgieter* (Johannesburg, 1938); Mauch's *Reisen im Inneren von Süd-Afrika 1865-1872* (1874). For Dr Atherstone and Galpin I have relied on family documents made available by Mr E. A. Galpin of Naboomspruit and on Metrowich's *Assegai over the Hills* (1953). For Daniel de Pass see Saron and Hotz, *The Jews in South Africa* (1955) and Hattersley's *The British Settlement of Natal* (1950). For wool I have used Thom's *Die Geskiedenis van die Skaapboerdery in Suid-Afrika* (Amsterdam, 1936); Alexander's *Narrative of a Voyage of Observation among the Colonies of Western Africa . . .* (1837) (for Daniell); and Bowker's *Speeches, Letters and Selections* (Grahamstown, 1864); also information from Mr Sydney Rubidge, of 'Wellwood', Graaff-Reinet.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

See Molteno's *Life and Times of Sir John Charles Molteno* (1900); Wilmot's *Life and Times of Sir Richard Southey* (1904); Robinson's *A Life Time in South Africa* (1900); de Kock's *The Results of Government Ownership in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1922); article by Eric Rosenthal in the *S.A.R. and H. Magazine*, December 1937, on W. G. Brounger; article by A. H. Tatlow, F.R.G.S., in *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 September 1926; Nixon's *Among the Boers* (1882); van der Poel's *Railway and Customs Policies in South Africa, 1885-1910* (1933); Campbell's *The Birth and Development of the Natal Railways; The South African Railways — History, Scope and Organization* (brochure by the Railways, Johannesburg, 1947). For Boer resistance to railways, see e.g. du Toit's *Ds. S. J. du Toit in Weg en Werk*, p. 205.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

Besides the sources for Chapter 19 see George Pauling's *Chronicles of a Contractor* (1926); McDonald's *Rhodes, a Life* (1928); 'The Cape to Cairo Railway' (Sir

Robert Williams's address to the African Society, 21 April 1921); and documents in Dr Killie Campbell's collection, Durban.

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

For William Robinson's chairmanship of the committee that completed the Transvaal Grondwet see Eybers's *Select Constitutional Documents Illustrating South African History* (1918). Le Roux's *Pioneers and Sportsmen of South Africa* gives a brief biography. For Jacobus Stuart see his *De Hollandsche Afrikanen en hunne republiek in Zuid Afrika* (1854); de Kok's *Empires of the Veld* (Cape Town, 1904); and Fitzroy's *Dark Bright Land* (Cape Town, 1955). For Joseph Orpen in the Orange Free State see his *Reminiscences of Life in South Africa* (1908). For Fitzpatrick see, apart from his own works, Wallis's *Fitz* (London, 1955); for Charles Brownlee see his *Reminiscences of Kaffir Life and History* (Lovedale, 1896); and for the great Native administrators in general Brookes's *The History of Native Policy in South Africa* (1924). Anecdotes of Rhodes are legion in books written by his contemporaries. For Merriman see Laurence's *The Life of John X. Merriman* (1930) (strongly criticized for inadequacy by Sir James Rose Innes in his autobiography); for Schreiner see Walker's *W. P. Schreiner, a South African* (1937).

#### CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

For Elizabeth Bailie see account of her son Dr A. D. Lückhoff in *Die Kerkbode*, 19 December 1951; for Sir John Wylde, see Cole's *The Cape and the Kaffirs* (1852); for Beit, see Fort's *Alfred Beit: A Study* (London, 1932) (Beit is a prominent figure in many other books on the period); for Bain's reminiscences see the *Cape Monthly Magazine* (September 1856); for William Shaw, see his own *The Story of My Mission* (London, 1860) and Boyce's *Memoir of the Rev. William Shaw* (London, 1874); for missionary gloom see Moodie's *Ten Years in South Africa* (London, 1835); for the Merriman anecdote see Callaway's *A Shepherd of the Veld* (London, 1912); for Mrs Margaret Johnson see Waddy's *Stacy Waddy* (London, 1938). The account of John Stubbs I owe to Brigadier E. T. Stubbs; and the account of Commandant Thomas Webster to a descendant, Miss M. L. Polkinghorne of Sandown, Johannesburg. For Sir Walter Currie see Hook's *With Sword and Statute: On the Cape of Good Hope Frontier* (Cape Town, 1907); for Major Sprenger, see Young's *Boot and Saddle* (Cape Town, 1955) and Moodie's *The History of the Battles* (1888). For Marrières Wood see John Buchan's *The History of the South African Forces in France*.

#### EPILOGUE

The travels of Hume, Scoon and McLuckie must be pieced together from many early sources. A not entirely reliable summary of their Transvaal discoveries may be found in le Roux's *Pioneers and Sportsmen of South Africa*. There is much about them in Kirby's Van Riebeeck Society publication, *The Diary of Dr. Andrew Smith, 1834-36*. For the story of the Rev. Peter Davidson I am indebted to my friend the Rev. W. J. M. Lund, his present-day successor at Adelaide. On Davidson's representations the death sentence was commuted to imprisonment.

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