

The Helms of Hope Fountain ©



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Paarl, 1999



Contents

		<u>Page</u>
Chapter 1.	ELSBETH	3
Chapter 2.	CHARLES	5
Chapter 3.	NEW HORIZONS	9
Chapter 4.	THE JOURNEY NORTH	14
Chapter 5.	LOBENGULA	17
Chapter 6.	HOPE FOUNTAIN	33
Chapter 7.	UMHLABATINE	54
Chapter 8.	THE CONCESSION SEEKERS	67
Chapter 9.	THE RUDD CONCESSION	70
Chapter 10.	THE MOORE CONTROVERSY	100
Chapter 11.	THE PIONEER COLUMN	123
Chapter 12.	THE MATABELE WAR	130
Chapter 13.	THE REBELLION	148
Chapter 14.	THE DREAM FULFILLED	152
Appendix.	A TREK WAGON	161
Bibliography and List of Illustrations		162 - 165



1. ELSBETH

A small white object was moving slowly, high on the mountainside. Elsbeth Elsbeth realized that it was a wagon ascending the pass that she would travel over the next day. That, Elsbeth told her daughter Jessie in later life, was the only moment in her life that she felt like turning back.

The year was 1874 and Elsbeth, her husband, Charles and their baby, Jessie, had outspanned their wagons at the foot of the Montagu Pass, between George and Oudtshoorn in the Cape Province. This was their first trek up to Matabeleland where Charles was to take up his duties as a missionary with the London Missionary Society. Nothing in her early years had prepared the Baroness Elisabeth (Elsbeth) Eduardine Von Puttkamer for this experience, or, for that matter, her life as a Missionary's wife in a remote area of central Africa.

Born on the 31st of March 1848, on her parents' Estate in Sulzow, Pomerania (although one source states that she was born in Lubzow), she was one of thirteen children, three of whom died in infancy. Her father, the Baron Georg Friedrich Von Puttkamer was a member of an old aristocratic family, who had inherited a family Estate, Gross-Podel, on the death of his father in 1833.

Five years later, at the age of 25, he married 23 year old Delphine Von Zitzewitz. Their eldest child, Marie, was 2 years old when they sold the family Estate and moved to Sulzow in 1841. All their subsequent children were born on this Estate. Elsbeth had happy memories of her childhood and many evenings were spent recalling them for her children. The one particular story that two of her daughters remembered vividly, was that of a rainy afternoon when Elsbeth, with some of her siblings wandered into the newly decorated Ballroom, which was supposedly out of bounds to them. Carrying ripe pears in their hands, temptation, in the form of cherubs at the corner of the ornate ceiling, was irresistible, and soon one of the boy's pears scored a hit. Alerted by their shouts of excitement, their mother arrived on the scene. She advised them that it would be in their best interest to see that the mess was cleared up before their Father found out.

Sadly, in 1860 when Elsbeth was 12 and the youngest child 2, money problems forced the family to sell this Estate and move finally to Stolp (Now in Poland and called Slupsk). Elsbeth, like her sisters, had a Governess in her early years, but her formal education began at the Seminary of Pastor Schultz in Crangen and lasted until 1865, when she transferred for 2 years to the High School for girls in Stolp. During her final year there, her second brother, Otto, died of a chest infection.

When she left school, Elsbeth realized that the lack of family funds could limit her future, so she decided to earn her own living. With the help of some English friends she obtained a post as a companion to Mrs. Bliss, whose husband was the Bodleian Librarian at Oxford in England. She caused great merriment in the Bliss household on the day she rushed in from a walk, and asked the Professor if it was the custom in England to allow lunatics out with such a small guard. She had witnessed her first Rugby match! She returned home at the end of 1867. Her maternal grandmother had died on the 4th of November and her eldest brother Georg had been killed on the 1st of December while mountain climbing. He had been a Lieutenant in the 21st Infantry Regiment in Berlin.

She began the New Year in Dublin, Ireland, as a companion/governess to Lina Greene, a granddaughter of Lord Plunkett. Here Elsbeth became a firm favourite and was accepted as part of the family. Lina's brothers loved to tease her. On one occasion, as she passed one of the boys on the stairs, he gave her a resounding kiss on the cheek, to which she retaliated with a playful slap. At dinner that evening the young man arrived at the table with his face swathed in bandages. When asked for an explanation, he answered with a twinkle in his eyes, "Ask Puttie!" The boys also never allowed her to forget her lapse in English when she referred to the "Tripes of Israel"

1870 was a sad year for Elsbeth as her two older unmarried sisters, 23 year old Olga and 31 year old Marie, died. News of her Father's death in 1872 saw her returning home once more, after having said her final good-bye to the Greens. Lina was now too old to have a Governess, so when Elsbeth returned to England, she went to Lancaster Gate, London, where her new charge, a 17 year old girl, lived. For a while

Elsbeth attended Church with the family but, as she was a Lutheran, she found the services “too high”. The maid suggested that the Congregational Chapel at Craven Hill might be more suitable for her. It was, and Elsbeth became friendly with the Minister’s daughter, and often visited her. Lodging with the Minister, the Rev. Archibald McMillan, was a young man who was attending New College, Hampstead, which was a Congregational training centre for Missionaries. The young man was Charles Daniel Helm.



2. CHARLES

Unlike Elsbeth, Charles Helm's early years had fully prepared him for a Missionary's life. He was born on a Mission station, at Zuurbraak, Cape Province, on the 22nd of September 1844, where his parents Daniel and Johanna Helm were in charge of the Mission. Both sets of Grandparents were also Missionaries with the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) which had been formed in London in 1795. The Directors of the L.M.S., in May 1796, had defined the fundamental principles as follows: *"As the Union of Christians of various denominations in carrying on this great work is a most desirable object, so, to prevent, if possible, any cause of future dissension it is declared to be a fundamental principle of the Missionary Society that our design is not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of Church Order and Government (about which there may be difference of opinion amongst serious persons), but the Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God to the Heathen; and that it shall be left (as it ever ought to be left) to the minds of the persons whom God may call into the fellowship of His Son from among them to assume for themselves such form of Church Government as to them shall appear most agreeable to the Word of God."*

Charles' paternal grandfather was Heinrich Carl Jacob (known as Henry), who was born on the 22nd March 1780, at Neubrandenburg, in the State of Mecklenburg, Strelitz. Henry's wealthy parents owned a sugar refinery in Schleswig Holstein, and

fully expected young Henry to follow in his father's footsteps, so they were dismayed when he decided to study Theology at Rijks-University. Threats of disinheritance did not alter his determination. After leaving University, he became a Chaplain in the Dutch Navy, and it may have been at this stage that he decided to go for Missionary training at the London Missionary Society in England. Once there, he worked as a Clerk to subsidize his studies.

Finally, on the 5th of June 1811, he set sail from Portsmouth on the "Lady Barlow", for Cape Town, South Africa. With him was his new bride, Charlotte (nee White). As she was the daughter of wealthy parents, they had among their belongings in the ship's hold a grand piano, much heavy furniture and silverware. They disembarked at Simon's Town on the 13th September 1811, and travelled to Cape Town to ascertain their first post with the L.M.S. They were appointed to Pella, a desolate part of North-Western South Africa. Their first home was to be a thatched hut, built on a sandy hill, so their furniture was put into storage where it remained for 16 years.

On their journey to Pella, their first son, Samuel David, was born at Steinkopf on the 22nd February 1812. When John Campbell, a Director of the L.M.S. came out on a visit in 1813, he took the Helms with him to visit other stations. He agreed, because of Henry's ill health that they should move to the L.M.S. station at Oram's Kraal, Grootrivier where their second son, Daniel Johannes, was born on the 15th March 1814. He was destined to be the father of Charles. During his visit, Campbell had taken Henry on a visit to the family of William Anderson at the Griquatown mission.

William Anderson was Charles's maternal Grandfather. The Anderson's daughter, Johanna, born in 1813, was to marry Daniel Helm. William had arrived in Cape Town in 1800 and started his ministry among a lawless population, led by a freed slave, Adam Kok. For a while he led a nomadic life with these people, but in 1803 he established a mission station at Klaarwater, which later became Griquatown. After surviving a smallpox epidemic in 1805, he went the following year on leave to Cape Town and while there he married Johanna Maria Schonken, whose antecedents had arrived in Cape Town in the late 17th century. For the next 14 years, the Andersons lived in Griquatown and, during that time, eight children were born to them. Charlotte went to the Andersons for the birth of her next two sons, Henry Charles in 1816 and William Frederick in 1819. Then, in 1820, Lord Charles Somerset, the Governor of Cape Town, demanded recruits from the Griquas for the Cape Corps. When the Griquas refused to enlist, Somerset blamed William Anderson and put pressure on the L.M.S. to remove him from Griquatown. He was placed at Zuurbraak for two years before being transferred to Pacaltsdorp, near George, where he continued his missionary work with great devotion for the next 30 years.

With the removal of Anderson in 1820, the Griquatown mission was without leadership, so the L.M.S. decided that Henry should take it over. The Helms were joined by Robert and Mary Moffat. Robert had arrived in Cape Town on the 13th January 1817, and married Mary Smith at the end of 1819. Two years later their daughter, Mary, was born and she subsequently married David Livingstone. It was

Charlotte who taught Mary the many skills she needed as a Missionary's wife. Following the birth of another son, Frederick Richard, in 1822, Charlotte's health began to cause concern so they were moved to Bethelsdorp. It was here, in 1825, that their last child, George Evans, was born. Finally, in 1827, when Henry was made head of the Caledon Institute of the L.M.S. and placed at Zuurbraak, they were able to recover their furniture from Cape Town and settle for the rest of their lives.

Zuurbraak, a mission village, set in a peaceful valley east of Swellendam, had been established in 1812 when Hans Moos, chief of a branch of the Attaque Khoikhoi requested that a missionary be sent to his people. Siedenfaden of the L.M.S. was sent but was recalled because of unsuitability. Under Henry's supervision the village began to grow along a single main street. In 1831, when Henry was joined by the Rev. Elliot, they took turns to preach at Zuurbraak and Swellendam on alternate Sundays - Elliot in English and Henry in Dutch. By now the village had grown to 61 houses, besides the two mission houses. The school lessons were conducted in both English and Dutch.

In 1833, as the Helm's eldest son, Samuel, was a Wagon maker and Daniel, the second son, was training for missionary work, the third son, Henry, assisted with the teaching in the main school, while his brother, William, aged 14, taught the infants.



The Mission House, Zuurbraak, 1998.



The Church, Zuurbraak, 1998.

Dr. Philips, Superintendent of the L.M.S. in South Africa, along with the Andersons, attended the inauguration in 1834 of the newly built church, which could hold 360 to 400 people. The valley at that time was in the grip of a drought. The following year, when he had finished his training, Daniel married the Anderson's daughter, Johanna, at George, and joined his father at Zuurbraak. He and his wife taught in the schools, which had 129 scholars. His mother, Charlotte, still taught needlework to 22 of the girls. As the enrollment increased it became necessary to build a new schoolhouse, which was completed in 1839. Charlotte died the next year, on the 20th of January, aged 51. When Henry died in 1848, Daniel took over the running of the mission station.

Of Daniel and Johanna's eleven children, two of them, Charles and Samuel trained as Missionaries. Their sister, Catherina Elizabeth, married a Dutch Reformed Church missionary, Johannes Josua Petrus Rossouw, who later took over at Zuurbraak. Charles was educated at Swellendam by his maternal aunt, a Miss Anderson, at a school she had opened there. At the age of 15, he went to the South Africa College School in Cape Town. Afterwards, in order to achieve his ambition to be a Missionary, he taught in Swellendam and Oudtshoorn until he had saved sufficient money to go for training in London. He left for London in 1868 and was ordained in June 1873. At that stage, the salary of a missionary was £150 a year.

3. NEW HORIZONS

The Directors of the L.M.S. wanted Charles to augment the Missionaries in Matabeleland, (now the southern part of Zimbabwe) so he and Elsbeth set their wedding date for the 12th of August 1873. The Rev. McMillan conducted the Service. Witnesses to the marriage were Balfour and Barbara Logie, Anne and Jeanne McMillan, Isabella and Sam Helm, John H. Goodwin, and Margaret Tait Nicoll (who later became Sam Helm's wife). Sam Helm, the 27-year-old brother of Charles, was attending New College prior to becoming a Missionary in England and later in South Africa. Isabella was the 17-year-old sister of Sam and Charles and was presumably attending the school for Missionary children in England.

The newly-weds set sail for Cape Town on the 2nd of September, disembarked on the 20th October, and proceeded to Zuurbraak, where they arrived on the 30th October. Charles wrote to the L.M.S. to acquaint them of their safe arrival. He wrote to the Rev. W. Whitehouse as follows:

Zuurbraak

6th Nov. 1873

Rev. W. Whitehouse

My Dear Sir,

You will be glad to hear we arrived here safely on the 30th ult. We found all quite well and glad to see us. Mrs. Helm was not very well during the voyage and has not yet recovered her usual strength. However, I hope the rest and quiet here will soon set her up again.

I am sorry to have to tell you that the Colony is in a dreadful state of drought. The farmers in the neighbourhood have not been able to plough their lands. Produce is very dear and scarce. Oxen are very dear at present and wagons are all very expensive. From what Mr. MacKay writes, transport is even dearer in the Eastern Province. I am afraid the carriage for my goods up to Kuruman will cost a great deal.

As the Country is at present, it will be impossible for me to travel and I shall be obliged to wait for rain. Mrs. Elliot told me that Mr. Thomas will leave England in March, so I shall, at all events, be at Inyati before he arrives there.

With kind regards,

Yours faithfully,

Charles. D. Helm

A month later Charles wrote to Mr. Whitehouse again:

Zuurbraak

Swellendam

4th December 1873.

Rev. W. Whitehouse

Dear Sir,

In my last letter I mentioned to you that Mrs. Helm had not been very well having suffered a great deal on the voyage and from the land journey and though she is better she is far from strong and not able to endure any fatigue. About three weeks ago she was suffering from a cold and as a Dr. Chand (?) of Swellendam was passing through here, I called him in to see her. He told me she was to be kept very quiet and only to go for short drives in the village where the roads are good and then I told him of our desire and hope to proceed on our journey into the Interior in January next, but he said, in his opinion, that it will not be safe for her to travel even then. He afterwards told my sister at Swellendam that he did not think my wife able to start on her journey till after her confinement, which may be expected in June.

I consulted Dr. Kitching of Cape Province by letter, and he says, by January it is likely all the troublesome symptoms will have gone and we shall be able to judge whether we will safely proceed on our journey. But he advised me strongly to be, in June, where some good medical aid can be obtained if it should be needed.

I am happy to say there is nothing constitutionally wrong with Mrs. Helm. The country through which we have to travel is affected with a severe drought and impassible, without forage for the oxen. The forage is very dear, from 1/6 to 2/6 (one shilling and sixpence to two shillings and sixpence) per bundle, which is the all for one ox per night. In Port Elizabeth, things are in as bad a state or else we might go by sea there and start there. Mr. MacKay wrote to me that it would have been cheaper to have sent my things overland from Cape Town. The rate of transport is very high from Port Elizabeth, 32/- (thirty-two shillings) per 100 pound to Hope Town. Price of wagon and oxen double that of two to three years ago. Wagons £115 to £120, oxen £10 to £11 each yoke and trek for oxen high, and prices may still rise. It is madness to travel with less than 14 oxen. Port Elizabeth prices still higher.

You can judge of my perplexity. I have written to Mr. Thompson [the Society's agent in Cape Town. His son, Wardlaw was later appointed Secretary of the L.M.S. in London] and I asked him whether to procure wagon and oxen at once, or wait. He says, if we are not likely to start in January, not to buy but to obtain the sanction of the Directors to the layout. From the medical opinion, we shall not be able to judge till January, whether we can start or not. The country may continue as dry and even if Mrs. Helm is quite well, we will not be able to start.

[The next part of the letter is taken up by the dilemma of the Mission folk. Charles' father had died in the April of that year and because the L.M.S. now had a policy of handing over self-supporting Missions in order to release funds for the advance to the North, the duty fell on Charles to work out a solution.]

The decision is hard. The people are still not yet decided. The majority is in favour of remaining an independent congregation and to supply their own Minister. Some are in favour of joining the Dutch Church. The latter plan, I deem the more advisable. If everybody willing to continue but they are not (sic). Meanwhile I am holding services for them.

The duty on my goods is very heavy. Eleven percent is the rate on all goods and for my guns I had to pay £3 duty. I have not received my accounts from Mr. M. but shall write again to you about the duty.

Your, etc.

A letter dated 7th February, 1874, informed the L.M.S. that:

Mrs. Helm much improved and hopes to start our journey at the end of the month. The country between Beaufort and Cape Town is still impassable because of drought. Chaff is still 5/- (five shillings) per pound. I hope to receive an answer to last letter when the mail arrives next week. Oxen and wagons still dear.

The congregation is still undecided about joining the Dutch Reformed Church. Will be guided by your next letter. Mr. Fourie has a wagon for £115 and he will not sell it until we come to a decision. I read in the papers that a good deal of rain has fallen in Graaf Reinet.

Mrs. Helm joins me in kind regards, etc.

On the 1st of June 1874, Jessie Constance was born and on the 4th of June Charles wrote to inform Mr. Whitehouse of the L.M.S. of her arrival:

I have much pleasure in informing you that Mrs. Helm presented me with a daughter on the first inst. I am thankful to be able to say that both mother and daughter are doing well. Our Heavenly Father has answered our prayers for support and strength in the hours of need and we have every reason to be duly grateful.

We hope to leave Zuurbraak in August or September. Since I last wrote have bought a wagon for £115, £5 under the usual price. I have not yet bought oxen or gear. £10 is the lowest price.

People still undecided about their options. I have left behind my mariners' compass and would be very grateful if Mrs. Hughes would send it.

A letter received from Whitehouse provoked a response from Charles on the 5th September as follows:

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 31st July 1874. I must own that your letter caused me much surprise and pain. It seems to imply that my delay here has been without sufficient cause. I hope I am mistaken in my supposition and in that case shall readily acknowledge it. We both regret that there has been much delay and are longing to be at work in our own appointed station. We feel no time is to be wasted to get a hold of the language.

I will send a Medical Certificate to prove it is impossible to proceed. Mrs. Helm's health was pretty good for a week or two after baby's birth, but then came a time of great suffering for her. But even if she had continued to get stronger it would have been impossible to have left before August or September, as winter is not over until September. It is impossible to travel with a baby of one month. Snow is severe and inches thick. I intended leaving in August or September but in August Mrs. Helm was so ill that she was confined to the house and only since the beginning of this month has been able to attend public worship. She is still weak and taking Cod Liver Oil. It is a time of great trial and we are hoping the wagon journey will restore her.

On her journeys between England and Germany she proved to be a good sailor and was disappointed to be ill on the voyage out. Adding to this was that the road from Cape Town was in terrible repair.

Busy taking services here, at the Dutch Reformed Church in Swellendam and at the Heidelberg School mission which my sisters conduct.

The rains have come but parts of the country are still suffering from drought.

Yours, etc

A Medical Certificate stating the delicate state of Elsbeth's health was dispatched on the 17th September. Elsbeth, in spite of her difficult pregnancy and other illnesses, had been fitting herself for the tasks ahead. Her Mother-in-law taught her all that would be needed for her life as a Missionary's wife. She learnt how to make soap, candles, to cure and salt ham. She was also taught how to make bread in a pot, Dutch oven, or even, when necessary, in a hollowed out anthill. Each task was carried out with great thoroughness so she was greatly annoyed when Malcolm Moody, her brother-in-law from Swellendam, commented that she looked more fitted to wear a ball gown than to be a Missionary's wife. When able, she also helped her sisters-in-law teach in their Mission school at Heidelberg, and instituted prize giving at the end of term. She made all the prizes: needle cases, bags, pinafores, etc.

Henry Charles Helm, Charles' uncle, who had taught at Zuurbraak, appears to have taken over Heidelberg in 1861 when it started as an out-station. He worked there until his death in 1883.



South Africa & Rhodesia.

4. THE JOURNEY NORTH

Finally, on October 9th, Charles and Elsbeth began their journey, accompanied by Letje, an 11 year old coloured orphan. As was the custom, they had two wagons, one with a hood which would be their living quarters and the second covered by a tarpaulin which held furniture, personal belongings and enough supplies to carry them through for two years. The Moffat's daughter-in-law Emily, wife of John Smith Moffat, who had travelled to Matabeleland fifteen years earlier, paints a picture of life in the wagon: *In the front of it, forming the driver's seat, is what we call "the forechest", containing our daily supplies of tea, coffee, rice, etc. These are kept in small canisters or in a small strong bag. A similar chest, right at the back, we call the "afterchest", from which we fill our forechest weekly. There are small chests on either side, the one for plates, cups and saucers, etc., the other for waggon appendages and necessaries. Immediately at the back of the forechest are my two black boxes, which just fit in and contain our clothing for the journey. This brings us to the cartel, a kind of stretcher, underneath which are all our boxes, and on it is our mattress; the bottom part forms our seat, and a movable back is put up in the day-time and a little table, made to turn up or down, on the right hand side, so, as we sit, the black boxes are our footstools. Behind the cartel are various stores of provisions for the men, flour, tea, biscuits; and right at the back, not under the cover, the tent, to be pitched occasionally; and below, on the trap, all our cooking apparatus. A basket hangs under the waggon with meal in it. Hanging round inside are six carriage-bags made of sail cloth, very useful and handy. Now do you see us in our Pavilion? Is it photographed on your mind? Many hours shall we daily spend there, creeping along, and many evenings beside our little lamp shall we sit writing away to the loved and loving ones at home.*



The Moffat Home, Kuruman, 1998.

Charles and Elsbeth reached Kuruman, after an eventful journey, on the 22nd January 1875. Mary and Robert Moffat, who had been at Griquatown with Charles's grandparents in 1820, had established Kuruman at the end of 1824. It was well known for its wonderful water supply from a natural spring. John Smith Moffat, their son, had been an assistant to his father there from 1865 until 1870 when Robert retired, and thereafter was in charge until 1877. The coloured oxen leaders and wagon drivers were paid-off and returned to their homes.

Elsbeth, who was at the beginning of her second pregnancy, fainted constantly, but fresh fruit and excellent care soon saw a tremendous improvement in her health. Charles wrote to Mullen, the new Secretary of the L.M.S. on the 18th February to inform him of their progress:

Mrs. Helm is now much better. Our oxen need another 4 weeks to fatten. In the meantime, I am going to Griquatown with Moffat where Dutch is spoken and I will be of some use.

After leaving Zuurbraak in October, Mrs. Helm had an attack of bronchitis and was advised by Dr. Laurence of George to stay in Oudtshoorn until she was better. We stayed a fortnight, and then continued. Mrs. Helm got worse but we kept on. A week after, she got well, but soon after got sore eyes and was much weakened and could scarcely get out of the wagon at Kuruman. She often fainted.

Mrs. Ashton at Oudtshoorn built up her strength and after Oudtshoorn there was plenty of rain. Some days we were only able to travel 2 or 3 hours and at one place had to stay for 4 days. The mud was so thick. The locusts were so bad they wiped out the spoor of the wagons.

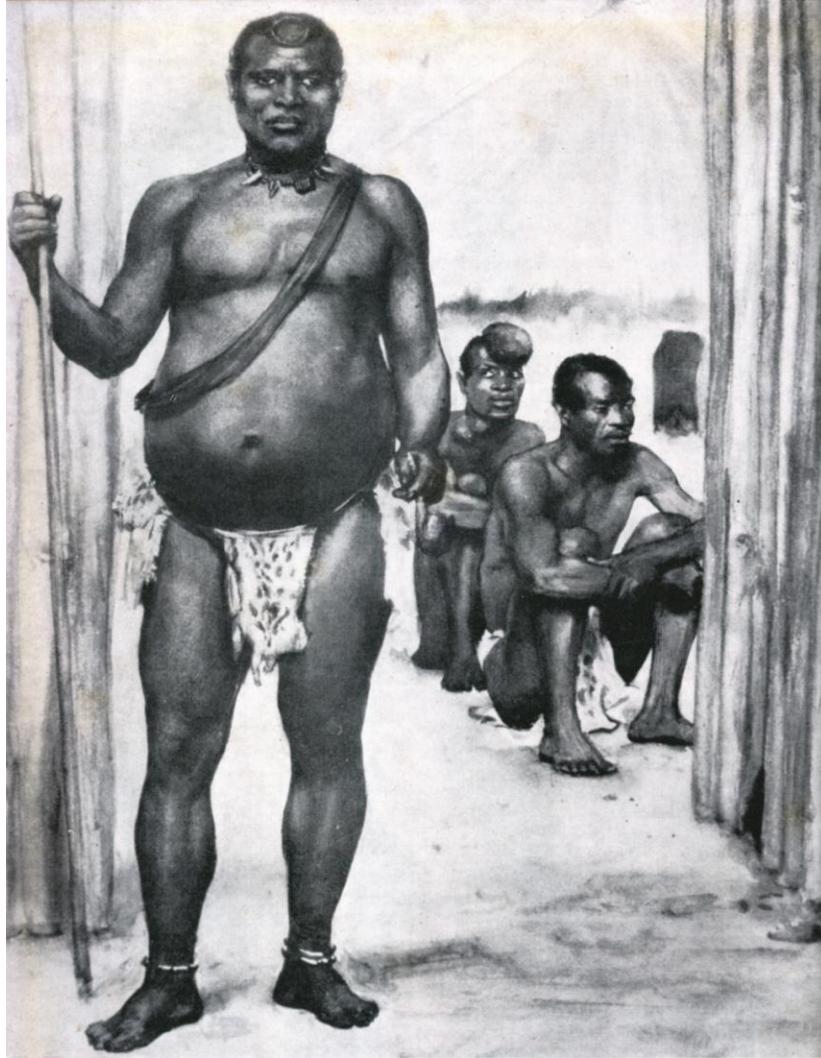
Yours, etc.

In May, when the oxen were sufficiently fit, Bechuanas were taken on as drivers and leaders, and the journey Northwards began. They reached Shoshong at the end of June. This was the capital of Khama, converted Christian Chief of the Bamangwato, and the home of the missionaries Mackenzie and Hepburn and of various traders, among them Messrs. Dawson and Musson. They stayed with the Mackenzies while their oxen were once again given the opportunity to fatten up.

Major Henry Stabb, an officer in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, stationed at King Williams Town, met the Helms at Shoshong when he was on his way up to Matabeleland on a hunting trip. He wrote in his diary that baby Jessie was "*the largest baby I ever saw for its age, one year, weighing 32 pounds, of which it's mother was very proud.*"

Major Stabb continued to Matabeleland with the traders Fairbairn, Francis and Westbeeck.

The first Mission station in Matabeleland, Inyati, was granted to Robert Moffat by Mzilikazi. Mzilikazi was Commander of a regiment in Zululand under Shaka, but after flouting Shaka's authority, in 1822, fled with his followers and for 16 years marauded the Transvaal. During the year 1829 Moffat visited him for the first time and an enduring friendship was established. The Ndebele (also known as the Matabele) were eventually forced across the Limpopo River with Mzilikazi as their King. When, in 1857, the Directors of the L.M.S. decided to try and establish two new missions, Matabeleland was one of the chosen sites and Moffat was asked to seek permission from the king. The Directors knew that Moffat had visited Mzilikazi in Matabeleland in 1854. The two friends had travelled together towards the Zambesi River in an attempt to get supplies to Moffat's son in law, David Livingstone. They turned back before reaching the Zambesi as they had entered Tsetse fly country. The porters, however, continued with the supplies. Mzilikazi granted Moffat's request and gave him a personal grant of land that was 80 kilometers North East of the present Bulawayo. As Moffat himself declined to be the leader at the new mission, Mzilikazi agreed that Robert's son, John Smith Moffat, be one of the missionaries. He with his wife Emily, William Sykes, Thomas Morgan Thomas, his wife and baby son, eventually moved onto the land on the 26th December 1859. They had endured great hardships on the journey up. Sykes wrote to Dr. Tidman, the Secretary of the L.M.S. as follows: *"On that fearful journey from the Cape to Kuruman I shall say little. You have heard sufficient already. The loss we sustained in oxen was attributable I believe to three causes – great scarcity of both grass and water, travelling in the heat of the day under those circumstances, and the extreme poverty of more than half the oxen to begin with. They were a miserable lot. The first six weeks of the journey were wearisome and sometimes distressing. Often being compelled to leave the poor oxen lying by the side of the path to feed the wolves and vultures. Having got fresh oxen at and about Beaufort, and some of us becoming wise enough to take the charge of our own with ease and patience, we proceeded, though still slowly, yet surely and with greater comfort, to the place of our sojourn."* To compound the hardships, when they reached Kuruman, fever broke out and Emily Moffat's four-month old baby, who had been born at Beaufort West on the journey up, caught it and died. Mrs. Sykes and her newborn baby also died of the fever.



5. LOBENGULA

On the death of Mzilikazi in 1868, his son, Lobengula (known as Jandu in his youth), succeeded him. Lobengula's date and place of birth have never been confirmed, but it is generally accepted that he was born in the Marico District of the Transvaal, between the years 1834 to 1837. Fulata, his mother, was a daughter of Malindela, a Swazi princess. As a young man Lobengula was often in the company of white men. He frequently went hunting with George "Elephant" Phillips, who was a friend of Mzilikazi's, and who was called "Playful Elephant" by Lobengula. He also went elephant hunting with Henry Hartley and his sons. Lobengula favoured western clothes and wore a "wide-awake" hat with an ostrich feather in it. (After his inauguration he reverted to traditional dress.) Unlike his people he rode a horse and carried a rifle. After the days hunting, Lobengula and the hunters would sit around the campfire re-living the hunt. On one occasion, Lobengula broke his arm and Hartley set it for him. The Hartley family had hunted north of the Limpopo River from 1859 but from 1865, after obtaining Mzilikazi's permission, they hunted in Mashonaland, North of Matabeleland. While there, they

came across ancient gold-diggings. Henry Hartley told Karl Mauch, a Geologist, about his find and in 1866 Mauch accompanied Hartley to the area (now known as Chigutu and previously called Hartley after the hunter). A year later, in 1867, they returned to hunt, and confirmed the presence of gold. Mauch announced the find to the Transvaal Argus in Pretoria, and the announcement created worldwide interest. In the same year “Elephant” Phillips and Westbeech accompanied Lobengula and a raiding Impi to the Mazoe area in Mashonaland. On their return they were told that Mzilikazi was dead. The neighbouring Mashonas were frequently attacked by the Matabele who took their cattle and their young men and women for slaves. Some of the young men were later absorbed into Matabele regiments.



Lobengula's wives.

Lobengula's succession was contentious, as the heir apparent, Kurumane, had disappeared. When Thomas Baines (the artist, explorer and the first person to obtain a mineral concession in Mashonaland) was in Natal in 1869 he was asked to deliver a letter to Lobengula from the Governor of Natal. The letter stated that Kurumane was working for Theophilus Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs for Natal, under the name of Kanda. Shepstone was an ambitious man and it may have been that he had a hidden agenda in identifying Kanda as Kurumane. Lobengula replied to the Governor in August 1871, in a letter written for him by Baines, and set out the gist of the controversy:



Inside Lobengula's hut, 1869.

To His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor of Natal.

Greetings and friendship.

I Lobengula, chief of the Matabili nation, have to acknowledge the kind and friendly message brought to me by Mr. Baines, and I return to you my best and most sincere thanks for the friendship and service you have rendered me and hope that Your Excellency will continue to favour me in the same manner when occasion may require.

With regard to the message Your Excellency has sent me respecting a person said to be Kuruman, I cannot now listen to it, as I have reliable information from my own people that the true Kuruman was not sent out in the usual manner, but was killed in this country by order of Umziligazi

After the death of Umziligazi there were two opinions in the country, the first that search should be made for Kuruman, the other that he was dead. Search was accordingly made for Kuruman in every direction, and to such an extent that messengers from this country reached Natal and saw the person to whom You Excellency refers, and they declared he was not the real man.

The Matabili then came to me and said, " You are, according to your birth, the next heir of your father, Umziligazi, and we require you to take upon yourself the chieftainship of our nation." This request was made to me in the winter of 1869, about the month of July, and I declined to comply with it as long as there was a hope of Kuruman being found.

I attempted to go out myself to search for my brother, and I applied to Mr. Jewell [Baines's partner in the South African Gold Fields Exploration Company] to give me guides and assistance to reach Natal, but he did not feel at liberty to supply these in the absence of Mr. Baines. All the white men know that I made every endeavour to find my brother, and I refused the chieftainship until my people threatened that they would break up as a nation and disperse themselves among other tribes.

My father Umziligazi gave orders for the destruction of the kraal at Inthaba Isinduna, to which Kuruman's mother belonged. I myself, being a child, was in the village, but was saved by Guabalanda, Induna of the Umthlathlangela, who hid me from the massacre. It was however found that Kuruman was not there but at the kraal of Zwong Endaba [Zwangendaba], and my father sent a Basuto, named Gwabaiiyo, to call him. He came with his servant Gualema, not expecting danger, and Umziligazi ordered the Basuto to take him out and kill him. This Basuto is still living in this country.

After this Guabalanda had a very serious argument with Umnombata, asking him why he had advised, or allowed, Umziligazi to kill Kuruman and destroy his heir and the hope of the Matabili nation. After the death of Kuruman Gualema ran to Zwong Endaba and reported the fact. Then Umziligazi sent for Munto, his son, and Umthlabba, Umnombata's son, and had medicine given them, according to Matabili custom, because their companion Kuruman was killed.

Now when these witnesses, Gwabaiiyo and Gualema, were called before the council of the nation, about August, 1869, Gwabaiiyo said the king's orders to him were, "You must not stab him with an assegai; you must not strangle him with a riem [leather strip]; you must not bruise him with a keereise [knobkerrie/club]; but you must take his head in your own hand and kill him by twisting his neck so as to dislocate it" – and he said he killed him according to these orders.

Gualema at the same time disputed the manner of Kuruman's death, and said Gwabaiiyo did not adhere to the orders of Umziligazi, but took bark off a tree, twisted it into a rope and strangled him by twisting this about his neck. He also broke his keerie in striking Kuruman, but both agreed that he was put to death.

It was the younger people who thought that search should be made, but the older ones, who knew the facts, said, "How can one rise from the dead and be sent out of the country? With whom was he sent, or could a child go so far, or pass through so many enemies as the late king must have made in his progress from Marico."

Umnombata knew also from the first that Kuruman was dead, yet nevertheless, for the satisfaction of the nation, he had consented to the search, and now a letter was received by our missionaries [Sykes and Thomas of Inyati] from Natal in which it was stated that the person living there denied that he was Kuruman, but said that he had known him during his childhood. When Elijah and Mr. Le Vert [Arthur Levert, who took over the management of the London and Limpopo Company from Swinburne] came up, they said they had seen him and questioned him about

Uboothooli, a brother of Kuruman, who was killed at the kraal of Inthaba Isinduna. He seemed to be perfectly ignorant of this, and of many other circumstances which the real Kuruman ought to know.

Up to the time when the testimony I have mentioned was brought before the council of the nation, I was myself one of those who doubted whether Kuruman was not alive, and I exerted myself to search for him, and before I applied to Mr. Jewell, I had already taken six attendants, of whom Umlomo Ngaba, Induna of Ignama (the Ram) was one, and attempted to go out by way of Zoutpansberg, but was taken ill on the road and was obliged to turn back; but I gave my party a black and white ox for provision on their way. They proceeded as far as the place of the Signor Albucini [Joao Albasini of Schoemansdal in the Zoutpansberg area], and then they were told it was unsafe for them to go further, as the tribes in advance were enemies of the Matabili.

When Mr. Le Vert went down to Natal the first time I gave him a large ox in token of friendship and requested him to seek for Kuruman, because it was my brother and blood-relative that I wished to find.

In the face of this testimony both from natives and from white men of whom enquiries had been made, I could no longer refuse to comply with the request repeatedly made by my people, and I consented to accept that dignity which, after Kuruman's death, was mine by birthright.

In February of 1870 [Baines gives the date as 24th January 1870] I was duly installed in the place of my father as chief and king of the Matabili nation. 10 000 warriors were present at the ceremony and many more had paid their homage and departed. A few remained disaffected, but I was patient and said, "Why should I kill my own people?" although the Zwong Endaba, the chief of the disaffected tribes, had frequently made prisoners of men who were loyal to me and had killed two of them.

I avoided all cause of quarrel as long as possible, but at length I was accused of having taken cattle belonging to the Zwong Endaba. I went to their village in person to deny the charge. I did not call up a regular army, but my people gathered and followed me of their own accord. As soon as the Zwong Endaba saw me coming they armed themselves and prepared for war. I sent a messenger, named Umthlatoosa, a petty chief, to say that I wished to speak with Umbeko, the chief of the tribe, but Umbeko at once declared war and sent him back. I then went to speak in person and as I came within range they fired on me from the village.

The people who were with me had not even their war-shields or dresses, but as soon as they saw me in danger they charged with the weapons they had to defend me. After some partial repulses my people forced the entrance and defeated the rebels, and as soon as victory was gained, I gave orders that slaughter should cease and that no one should be killed after the battle was over, because my heart was not for blood. I did not want to shed more than I was compelled, although the war had been forced upon me and I was compelled to fight to defend myself. The survivors I forgave freely and

sent them into other regiments. I have now also subdued all other disaffected persons in my country and my nation is now at peace.

Your Excellency will see from what I have said how loath I was to accept the dignity of sovereign of the nation but, having once consented to do so, I must to the best of my power show myself worthy of the trust reposed in me and not lightly resign my high office.

I beg to assure Your Excellency that I shall appreciate the just and proper course you have pursued in not taking part in a dispute which properly concerns the Matabili themselves, and in desiring the subjects of your Great Queen to remain neutral, and I further beg of you not to give encouragement to the person calling himself Kuruman to disturb the peace which now exists in my country by raising war and bloodshed in it. I shall not begin war. I wish to remain in peace, but if I am attacked I shall defend myself as becomes the king of a nation of warriors like the Matabili.

I am the friend of white men. I am opening my country to them, and I hope in years to come that lasting friendship and advantageous intercourse will be established between us.

I have again to thank Your Excellency very much for the Friendship you have shown to me and to the Matabili nation in forwarding information and advice of so much importance to me and them, and hoping that the friendship between the Matabili and the British people will never be interrupted, but increase as our intercourse becomes more general and frequent, I beg to assure you that I remain

Your Excellency's very sincere friend

Lobengula

+ His sign manual

King of the Matabili nation



The Inauguration of Lobengula.

When this letter was written the inauguration of Lobengula, as king of the Matabele, had already taken place. Thomas Morgan Thomas was present and gives this description of Lobengula's reluctance to become king and his final acceptance:

As for Ulopengule, when first informed by Umcumbata that he was the real heir to the throne, he became so alarmed, and convinced of the existence of a plot against his life, that he escaped from his own town, and riding about fifty miles, took refuge at our house. Three days after, being rather doubtful of the propriety of sheltering him, and having been advised by parties in whose judgment I had the greatest confidence, I prevailed upon him to return home. He would do so, however, only on the condition that I would accompany him, and ascertain from the ruling chief what was the real state of affairs in respect to him. Satisfied with the result of my enquiry, he remained at home.

Then ensued some weeks of daily communications carried on between Umcumbata, who was at Umhlahlanhlela, the capital of the country, and the prince, who remained at his own town. During this time Ulopengule was initiated in all the laws and customs of the tribe, examined, abjured, and lectured, just as the aged chief deemed necessary, in order that thus he might be prepared for the coronation day. As that day drew near, the prince was consulted in matters of importance, and invited to go to the capital in order to assume the reins of government. Declining to do so, and treating the messengers very unkindly, Ulopengule alarmed the old chief; and for a time the latter seemed quite discouraged, and to have given up the attempt. At length, however, it was resumed, and a number of the leading izinduna of the land brought a few oxen to the prince, which were intended to propitiate him. After a very long and spirited debate between them - the prince charging the izinduna with having

departed from the policy and customs of their forefathers, and dishonoured him by believing that he was not the rightful heir, and seeking another king; and they, on the other hand, urging that the error had arisen from the silence of the late king in respect to his successor, and the false report which had come from Natal - he consented to become their king.

The time for the inauguration having arrived, the chief men of the larger number of the Amandebele towns, together with their soldiers, left their homes and came to the neighbourhood of Umhlahlanhlela. They were obliged, on account of the want of accommodation in the town, to encamp in the fields; and their izihonqo (encampments) soon covered every elevated spot near the capital. The custom of the Amandebele upon the occasion of the inauguration of their king in his office, is to fetch him from his own town, and lead him in triumph into the capital. Consequently on the 22nd of January, 1870, the said izinduna and soldiers appeared at Utjotjo, Ulopengule's town, with the view of fetching him "ugu yi tata," or to take him, as they call this part of the business. It was about nine o'clock in the morning, when great clouds of dust were observed ascending towards the skies about a mile to the south of Utjotjo, and the approach of the mighty army soon became known to the people of the town. Now, a very great lamentation was set up by the prince's wives, children, and other relatives who were present, which continued in a greater or less degree until the evening. The army rapidly advancing, was soon near the town, and passing at a quick march on the east side, in a short time stood in battle array on the north, about half a mile distant. When thus situated, it presented a figure of a half moon or semicircular shape, and extended about a mile from east to west. Not understanding exactly what this movement meant, our position, situated as we were with our wagons, between the assembled soldiery and their heathen prince, seemed rather perilous, and at first we felt a little uncomfortable. The king, however, telling us that there was not the least danger or cause of alarm, soon removed our apprehensions. Five hours were spent in making the arrangement for starting, during which time two staffs of officers continued incessantly running between the prince and the army. Before long the whole army began to dance and sing, and as the time drew nigh for making a start, the dance was augmented, the song swelled, and the army slowly advanced towards the town. All this was done at the prince's command and at two o'clock in the afternoon the whole army, fully armed, found itself before the gate-way of the large cattle pen, or kraal. It touched the hedge on the north side of the gate-way, and extended in a curved shape twenty deep, about quarter of a mile towards Umhlahlanhlela. The leading men on both sides then commenced a warm debate, which was continued for about half an hour. The chief speaker on the side of the prince was Utjwalalala - the nearest living male relative of the royal mother; and the chief speaker on the side of the people was Uputaza, the nearest living adult male relative of the late king. Utjwalalala during this debate made several demands upon the people for the umfana, or boy, as he called the prince. Such demands were for the country, the cattle, and their own obedience. Uputaza, on the other hand, promised all this, and urged his friends to deliver their king up to them, that they might take him home to the great city. The two parties having agreed, the prince mounted his

horse, and accompanied by ten white men, who at his earnest request had presented themselves also on horseback, rode out of the kraal, made a rush at the ranks, and returned into the pen. Then, turning his steed round, he darted away at full speed towards Umhlahlanhlela.

Led now by their prince, the six or seven thousand soldiers, in high glee, covered the country for a mile in every direction, dancing and singing the whole way from Utjotjo to Umhlahlanhlela. Before entering the town, a consultation was held between the new comers, as they were called, and the citizens, during which time Ulopengule, with his life guard, stood under a tree nearly surrounded by the dancing and singing crowds. An ox was brought and presented to him, and by this act he was invited to enter the city, which he did by the north gate. Proceeding to the goat kraal - the holy place of the Amandebele, he was welcomed by an aged blind man called Umtamtjana, who acted now as the high priest of the tribe. This man, by instructions, ceremonies, and charms, prepared the prince for the coronation time, and purified all the huge earthen pots and wooden bowls and dishes before the approaching festivities. As for the amatjaha (soldiers) they numbered about seven thousand, and constituted a semicircle within the cattle kraal. This semicircle was about twenty deep, each one with his shield of ox-hide, ornamented with a couple of spears, a centre supporting-rod clothed at the point with the tail of the jackal in his left hand; a long staff in his right, an ample cape of black ostrich feathers, or a bandeau of yellow otter skin, and a blue crane feather fixed in front of it, on his head. His arms and legs were ornamented with brass bangles, threaded beads, or tufts of white ox-tails, a tippet of the fine umpila cat skin covered his shoulders and chest. Bulky kilts of strips of various wild animals' skins were fastened round his waist, and hung loosely round his hips. To a looker-on from the adjacent hillock, where I stood at the time, the view was a fine one. The motley, moving, mighty mass of people presented themselves with their black and white, red and white, speckled, or other colored oblong shields (according to their regiments) in their left hands, and long staves in their right, swelling their songs of praise to their illustrious ancestors and former kings, like the chanting of a great cathedral, while with their feet, as they lifted them in turns from the ground, the time was kept. Whilst thus formed, dressed, and engaged, the whole multitude moved from one side to the other, like the trees of a forest in a strong breeze. One veteran soldier after the other leaped out of the ranks, holding his shield in readiness to defend himself against an imagined foe, and rattling it in his face; at the same time vaunting his expertness in battle, evading armed assailants, leaping over fallen ones, struggling to stand as if hard pushed, then plunging his spear into one after the other, until the whole number of those killed by him were counted. He pointed with his spear, as he repeated his attacks, towards the localities in which his exploits had been achieved, and a deep sneering groan from the whole army, in imitation of the dying ones, accompanied each thrust. To complete the engagement of the day Usibandabukali (one of the izinduna), in a spirited speech, showed that Ulopengule was the rightful heir, denouncing all pretenders and opposers of their new king, and shouting to the people he said, "Nansi inkosi yenu" (There is your king.) Ubukweli and other izinduna, having

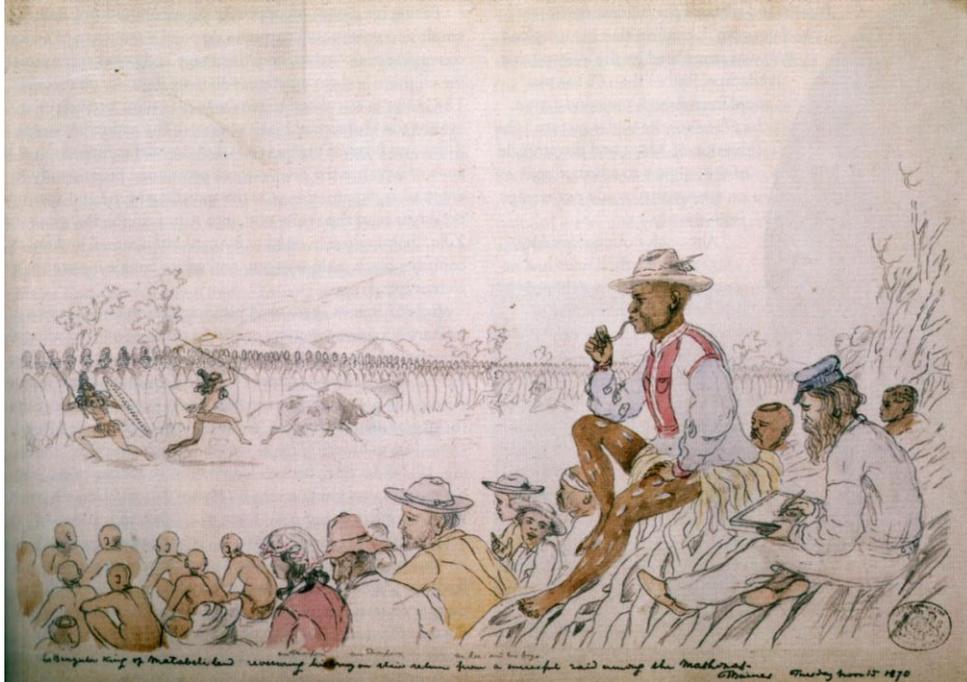
thanked him for the news, and praised the king, the first day was over; and Ulopengule, his life guard, and white friends left, and returned to Utjotjo. The army followed them half the way, dancing, leaping, and singing all the time.

The next day being the Sabbath, all was quiet, but on Monday morning, the king, dressed in a new suit of European clothes, a veldt hat upon his head, under the band of which was fixed a long beautiful blue crane feather, and a bright red - and - yellow handkerchief binding the whole, rode out of his own kraal. Accompanied again by the European missionaries and traders, he proceeded to Umhlahlanhlela, where on arriving, he was received with deafening shouts of joy and praise. He proceeded at once into the goat kraal, where he began to assume the reins of government, performed the first acts of a priest, and discharged the duties of the representative of the people before their gods. Umcumbata, the regent, and Umtamjana, the high priest, having entered, and in a few words, informed him what to do on the occasion, he stood up, and viewing a number of picked black oxen brought there from several towns for his service, he prayed to the spirits of the former kings of the tribe. He addressed each one by name, offered him an ox, enumerated his good qualities, informed him that now he was to succeed him in the government of the country, and solicited his guidance and assistance in this responsible and important office. "Nansi yako Umzilikazi," (There is thine, Umzilikazi) said he pointing to the ox. Then came that of Umatjobana, his grandfather, next that of Ulanga, his great grandfather, and then others, until he had named all the gods to whom the oxen were offered. These, together with two he-goats, were the first to be speared, skinned, and cut up, all of which his majesty super-intended. Then followed and fell a number of oxen of various colours, until the whole of the goat kraal, large though it seemed, was actually filled with dead cattle. The oxen marked out for slaughter being mixed with others outside the gate, Umcetjwa, one of the great izinduna, taking his spear, stabbed eight or ten of the wrong ones. This he did so quickly - laying each ox upon the ground with one stroke behind the shoulder - that their owners, although on the spot, never noticed him until all was over. The slaughtering of sixty oxen, wild as they were, the skinning, cutting them up, and carrying the meat into the appointed royal huts in the isikohlo was an exciting scene of hard work. The meat was arranged in the different huts for the night, in order that during the hours of darkness, the spirits of those men to whom it had been offered might come and sanctify it.

The next day, the beef of thirty oxen having been cooked for about nine hours, in huge earthen pots, was brought in very large wooden dishes, each borne by two or three men, and placed before the king upon the ground in the centre of the cattle kraal. When it had all been arranged by him, a quaint little man leaped out of the crowd, and with his shrill voice, cried as directed by Ulopengule, to each regiment in its turn, saying, "A yi bambe inhlovu!" (Let it take hold of the elephant) meaning the regiment to take hold of the large quantity of meat of which it was invited to accept. The moment the name was uttered, the party rushed at the meat allotted to it, and ran away with the dish - helter-skelter - back to its place. Then ensued a barbarous scene

- about seven thousand men tearing at the flesh, like so many ravenous wolves. Here was a shoulder of beef, there a leg, each trembling between a dozen men's teeth. In one place a party was seated on their heels in a circle round a rump in an umgano (wooden bowl), with their fingers fixed in the boiled flesh and pulling away pieces as large as their fists, and soon demolishing them; while in another direction several were seen, each with a lump of meat in his hands as large as his head. The only man who did not eat of the meat was the king himself; he went home hungry. The rest of the raw meat was disposed of the next day in a similar manner.

The second stage in the inauguration was to build a new town, which would be the capital, and which in time would supplant Umhlahlanhlela. The site for it was a stony plateau, the centre of which stood about two miles to the east of the old capital, elevated about five thousand feet above the sea, surrounded by abundant bush, grass, and water, and on these accounts well suited for the ends in view. Arriving on the spot we found an isikohlo (royal court) constructed, in which there were three temporary huts, - one for the king, and the other two for two of his nearest female relatives, on the mother's side; also a small enclosure, meant to be the sanctuary: and the cooking and wooden vessels which were left by his father. Into this isikohlo the king, with his only sister by the same mother, entered, now separating himself, for a time at least, from his four wives and all his children and living thus for about three months, until all the rites and ceremonies connected with the remaining part of the inauguration were observed. Among these were the putting away from him every garment which before now had in any way touched his body; sacrificing oxen and he-goats to the worthies of former times; purifying himself by charm-water, anointing with oil, and dressing in karosses (skin-robos). Unable to see all the performances of Umtamtjana and his son, who were acting the parts of priest and high priest at present, it was impossible to learn, from a people so averse to be questioned as the Amandebele (especially their priests, whose power and success are to be largely attributed to their great caution and reserve in respect to their profession), what all this meant. Very absurd, however, did the king seem, when on successive days he came out of the goat kraal, in a state of almost entire nudity, with his whole body painted like the wolf, wild dog, or spotted leopard, or, dressed with the skins of some such animals.



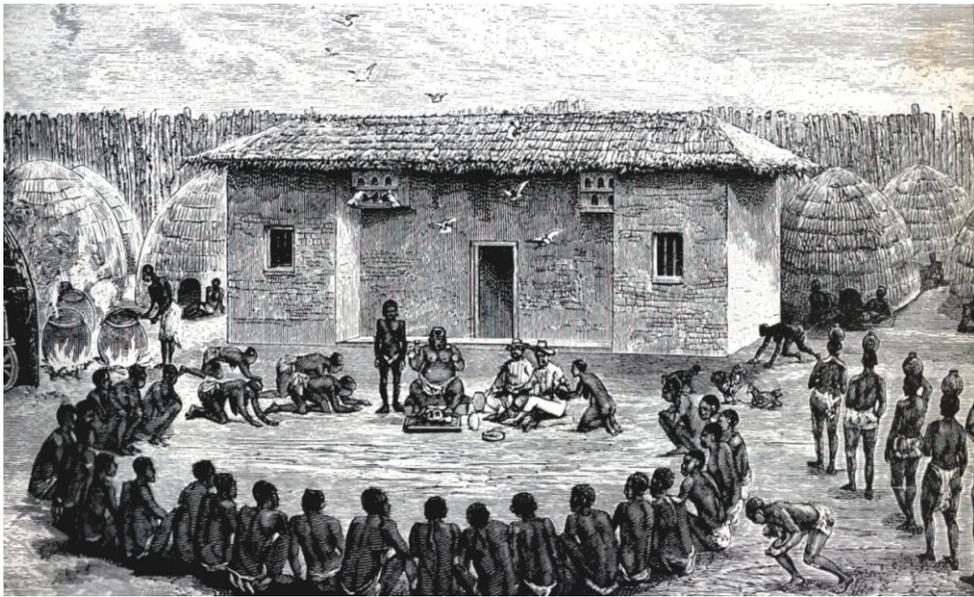
Lobengula reviews an impi returning from a raid, 15/11/1870.

This purifying process continued about six weeks, at the end of which period he put on a new suit of European clothes, and was now considered competent to receive the sovereignty, and to rule the land. In the mean time, better huts had been built in the isikhohlo for the use of the king's nearest relatives, while the late king's wagons and other property had been hauled from Umhlahlanhlela, and handed over to Ulopengule.

On the 17th March, 1870, in the presence of about six thousand people, Umtamtjana gave the king a charge, in which he dwelt upon the laws and customs of the tribe, and the responsibilities and difficulties of the present government of the country. Umcumbata delivered up the cattle, people, and land of his father unto him, saying, "There is the country of thy father, his cattle and his people - take them, and be careful of them: those who sin, punish; but those who obey, reward." So Ulopengule was henceforth the king. He was now the owner of the people, as well as of the cattle and the land; but he must provide and protect, as well as govern them. He had absolute power, but he must pay due attention to the traditions, customs, and opinions of the people. At his bidding, all ranks must immediately present themselves at head quarters, proceed to war, punish offenders, journey to a distant land, or dig his gardens; but a portion of the spoil, provisions for the journey, or food whilst engaged in the work, must be given them by his majesty. The soldiers, who, in rude huts like ill-made hay cocks, irregularly laid out into villages, had now lived with the king about two months, generally engaged in the great dance, sang the praises of the nobles of former days, and now and then added a stanza of their own production to the honour of their new sovereign. Or, squatted around a number of fires, watching

with much interest the clay pots full of flesh, which, with lids closed up with cow dung, were simmering in the centre, they began to depart for their respective homes. But the king, with his life-guards and a number of his most faithful chief men remained at the town.

Lobengula's first capital had been called Gibexhegu (also variously spelt as Ukibbixeku and Gibbkaiku by chroniclers of the time), but, after the battle with the Zwangendaba regiment, he renamed it GuBulawayo, which means, "We have been killed".



Lobengula's House at "Old Bulawayo".

All visitors had to seek Lobengula's permission and pay a "tribute" to come into the country and to move around in it. Baines wrote out a notice at Lobengula's request as follows: -

On the Royal Service, Matabili land.

Notice.

All travellers, hunters or traders wishing to enter Matabili land are requested to come by the main road from Ba-Mangwato to Manyami's where they are to report themselves as usual and obtain permission to come to the king's residence and receive their respective licences.

The hunter's fee for the districts south and west of the Shashani River will be one gun of the value of £ 15 British Sterling, one 5-lb. Bag of powder, two 6 lb. Bars of lead and one bag of 500 caps. No occupation of the country is allowed nor any houses to be built except by the king's special permission.

This notice does not in any way affect the Tati gold diggings. In special cases reference can be made to Mr. John Lee of Mangwe River, who has full power to act as the officer and agent of the king for the southern and western districts of this country.

All persons desirous of proceeding to the northern or eastern districts are to report themselves at Manyami's and obtain permission to come to the king's residence to receive their licences as usual.

Given at the town of Gibbeklaik.

11th April 1870

Lobengula

(Signed with) his X mark

King of the Matabili nation.

On the same day Baines wrote the following, ratifying the appointment of John Lee as Lobengula's agent: -

On the Royal Service

To my Trusted friend John Lee of Mangwe River, Matabili land.

I, Lobengula, Hereditary and elected king of the Matabili nation, knowing the esteem and friendship with which you were regarded by my late father, Umselegasi, do hereby confirm you in the offices and privileges you held during his life time and do also appoint you to serve under myself in the manner herein to be explained and specified.

I hereby appoint you to be my lawful officer and agent on the southern boundary of my kingdom to receive all applications from travellers, hunters, traders or other persons desirous of entering my country, and to grant or withhold permission according to my instructions now given or hereafter to be given or hereafter to be given to you from time to time. And I also empower you to give written authorities or passes to my messengers, requesting surrounding nations and tribes to give safe-conduct to all my subjects thus authorised on their peaceful and lawful errands, and I also empower you to sign with my name such passes or documents as you consider necessary for them.

Also to receive and forward to me all messages, letters or documents intended for me either from persons who apply to you or such as arrive from neighbouring or distant countries.

And I also appoint you to act generally as my agent according to your discretion and best ability for the benefit of myself and of the Matabili nation, pending the receipt of definite instructions from me.

Given at my town of Gibbeklaik

This eleventh day of April, A.D. 1870,

Under my name and sign manual

Lobengula

His X mark

King of the Matabili Nation

The 29-year-old John Boden Thomson and his wife arrived in Matabeleland in 1870 and they visited Lobengula, the King of the Matabele, at his new kraal, on the 23rd April. Thomson had been appointed as a missionary at Inyati, the first Mission to be established in Matabeleland, but the King had moved the Capital from there on his accession, and it was evident that the mission should follow the people. The missionaries decided to approach Lobengula, and seek permission to start a second mission station near the new kraal. Permission was granted for Thomson to look for a new site, in which the hunter, William Hartley, and Thomas Baines assisted him.



Ndebele Warrior.

On the 14th November Baines reported:

The king came down to our tent and Mr. Lee, interpreting for Mr. Thomson, asked him to grant him for mission purposes the valley already chosen. Mr. Thomson explained the grant was not to be made to him personally but to the Society he belonged to, so that if it were the pleasure of the Society he might be removed and another substituted. This had never been previously so fully explained, the privilege accorded to Mr. Sykes and Thomas having been granted to them either as personal favours or because of their friendship to Moffat, and it had often been said to Mr. Thomson, "How can you occupy this place when the king gave it to Thomas?"

The king called Umthlabba and another induna, and several white men came in to listen to the debate. The indunas asked whether it had now become customary for persons to choose for themselves instead of accepting what the king gave them. Mr. Thomson announced that he had asked the king and had received orders to choose, and then return to ask for a place. They wanted to know what this "Message from God" was which Mr. Thomson spoke of and what advantage would result to the tribe from reception of it. And this was difficult to answer, because the spiritual blessings of Christianity offer but little temptation to the natural mind, while the restrictions it imposes are anything but welcome to tribes that rejoice in plurality of wives and obtain their riches by extensive cattle-raids, and also because even the temporary benefits accompanying it are in a great measure not appreciated. Mr. Thomson chose the only course open to a Christian minister and an honest man. He told them of the creation, the fall of man, the promise made to Abraham, the redemption of the world by the death of Christ, and Mr. Hartley advised that full emphasis should also be placed upon the Saviour's resurrection. Examples were also given of the former condition of our own country and recent state of Madagascar, and of the improvement effected in our social and industrial life by Christianity. A watch was opened and the works shown, and various other manufactures alluded to or described. The king said he thought God had made each nation as he wished and as he intended it to remain, the white men skilled in all work, the black possessed in cattle and well accustomed to the chase or war, and that if the black had been intended to fill the same place as the whites, it was unfair that they should have been left so long in destitution and in ignorance. He spoke with some slight bitterness, but rather that of regret than anger. He was evidently friendly, but what he had heard required time for consideration, and, as the indunas were still unconvinced, Mr. Lee deemed it best not to press the subject further, but to leave the truths that he had heard to work their own way into his heart.

Land was granted for the use of the Society on the 16th November 1870 (Baines gives the date as the 21st). The land was to revert to the King if the Society ever left it. The new station was called Hope Fountain, partly because of the natural fountain on the property and partly because it was hoped that the new mission would have more success in converting the people.

When Stabb, Fairbairn, Francis and Weestbeeche had lunch with the Thomsons at Hope Fountain, the subject of the long awaited arrival of the Helms was discussed. At first the Helms had been destined to go to Inyati to replace Thomas Morgan Thomas and to assist Sykes, but Thomas, who had been discharged from the Society for trading activities, was insisting that the house at Inyati was his. (He later moved to Shiloh when Lobengula gave him a site to set up an independent mission where he could carry out his trading.) Apart from the difficulties with Thomas, the Society realised that a more useful venue for the Helms would be at Hope Fountain.

The entry in Major Stabb's diary that evening, gave his impression of the Mission:

“Their house, Hope Fountain, a large roomy one substantially built of brick, is charmingly situated, just under the brow of a hill, with a stream winding down the valley in front of them. Pretty gardens have been formed on the slope leading from the house to the stream, in which were growing luxuriantly orange trees, bananas, apple and peach trees, rose bushes, the castor oil plant and many specimens of English flowers. The valley below, Thomson has capitally irrigated by damming the stream in different places, and here are waving fields of English corn, maize and oats, and vegetable and potato gardens which quite gladden the eyes and bring us back once again to visions of civilization, whilst grazing away up the valley his bullocks, cows and goats add to the pastoral effect. All together it is by far the prettiest, most complete and best-kept Mission I have seen, and it is Thomson's opinion that nearly all temperate and semi-tropical productions would grow well here. He has lately been raising his house, and is now busily engaged with the assistance of a European, John Halyat [sic - Halyet], whom he had brought up from Setcheli's (sic – Sechele) and who to a certain extent understands brick-making and building, getting his roof on so that it may be water-tight before the next rains. [The locals called Halyet “Johnny Mubi” (Johnny Ugly), possibly because of injuries sustained in a gunpowder explosion, the results of which had forced him to remain in Matabeleland]. He is also building a kitchen and a schoolroom near his house, which will when finished, make his Mission station very complete. After this is finished he goes on to enclose with a wall the piece of ground in the valley where lie the remains of those Europeans, among whom is one of his own children, who have found their rest far from home and civilization; the funds for enclosing God's acre in this spot have been subscribed by the traders and hunters, but as the bricks have all to be made and the building done by the Missionary himself with such small assistance as he can get from time to time, it must be a long and rather tedious work even to erect a wall.

Inside we found a capital dinner ready for us with plenty of potatoes and good vegetables and industrious as Thomson appears out his wife must be equally so within. Everything that either of them or the children wear is of her making, all the household work is her charge and everything in the kitchen, if not actually done by herself, must be under her immediate supervision, for her Kaffir servants are not further capable than the nearest drudgery, and in severe cases of sickness among the whites her house is the only hospital, and her nursing all that is available.

After dinner we all walked to the top of the kopje behind the hill, and had a capital view of the surrounding country and could trace for miles the long range of high ground which, commencing from the Neck (Monagobi), [runs] on to Gobulowayo [and] passes by Hope Fountain to a high range of hills beyond and forms the great watershed of the Zambesi. All the springs and rivers running northward from this great range go to swell the Zambesi whilst those to the south flow into the Limpopo. Thus at the spot where we were we could drink of the waters of both of these great rivers. We also came across a curious hole in the ground, to which Thomson tells us the Mashonas come from many miles distant to dig a red clay found there, which very much resembles paint, and with which they stain their bodies. After our walk Mrs. Thomson gave us some delicious coffee with lots of fresh good milk and excellent new bread and butter, a treat that none but those who have been for a length of time without can properly appreciate.

Thomson killed a pig this afternoon, or rather Tainton did for him, and the King came out to witness the operation and was much amused and astonished at the scalding process, asking whether he could convert his subjects into white men by [the] same process, the pig killed being a black one.

Returned to Gobulowayo about dark, and played a game at loo in the evening before retiring.

I have had one or two twinges of rheumatic pains lately, so Thomson gave me some sweet spirits of nitre and quinine to take on going to bed, which I did and found great good from.

Unfortunately, the Helms were not yet in a position to partake of the pleasures of Hope Fountain. Elsbeth was now in her final stage of pregnancy and at Shoshong, on the 18th August, Balfour was born. As Elsbeth was unable to feed him herself, Khama presented her with two half-breed Angora goats. Ten days after the birth, Charles went down with his first attack of malarial fever and was nursed by Elsbeth with the help of some of the traders. Then Elsbeth succumbed to it. Finally on the 8th November they were able to set out for Tati, but were not able to make much progress as they became bogged down in mud. Stabb, who had by this time, returned to Shoshong, reported that his servant, Wood, had seen the Helms “*hopelessly stuck in the mud as were the wagon of two young Dutch boys*”. The two boys, aged 14 and 15, were returning from Tati after buying corn, as Shoshong was at that time slowly recovering from drought. By putting all the spans of oxen together the travellers managed to free themselves. Misfortune struck again when a leopard killed the precious goats. So Balfour, like his sister before him, was fed on gruel and water. Elsbeth, still weak from malaria, became very ill with rheumatic fever just 10 miles outside Tati, and expressed a craving for beer. Charles immediately dispatched one of his drivers to the nearby Tati gold mine, owned by Sir John Swinburne, with a letter giving details of his request for some beer. Without delay Elsbeth had her beer, drank it, and fell into a healing sleep. On awakening, she felt much better and they continued to Tati where they stayed for a week.



6. HOPE FOUNTAIN.

Hope Fountain was reached on the 10th December. They took over the Thomson's first home of pole and dagga (a hut constructed of poles plastered with mud). Unbleached calico was used for the ceilings under the the thatched roof, and a mixture of soil and ant-heap for the floors. Each week more ant-heap mixed with cow dung was smeared on the floors. Charles and little Letje managed to cope with most things while Elsbeth recovered her strength, but the copious washing, generated by two small children, was beyond them. Charles decided to enlist the help of one of the native women and gave her some soap and a bundle of sheets to be washed in the stream. The sheets were eventually returned, washed and dried, but they no longer fitted the beds. The "laundress" had taken her share by cutting strips off the linen with an assegai (spear)!

The attack of rheumatic fever had severely affected Elsbeth's health and, in the first few months of 1876, little improvement was seen in her condition. The missionary community became alarmed by her state of health and William Sykes, senior missionary, rode over to Hope Fountain from Inyati with his second wife, Charlotte,

(sister of the L.M.S. missionary, Kolbe, at Paarl in the Cape) to discuss what should be done. Sykes was well aware of the dangers inherent in the missionary life-style, particularly to the wives and children. His first wife and baby had died at Kuruman on his first journey up to Matabeleland. He had had to make a coffin for Thomas Morgan Thomas' young wife and two-month old baby who had died at Inyati in 1862. Emily Moffat's health was so critical that the Moffats were moved to Kuruman in 1865. The Thomson and Sykes families agreed that the Helms needed to return to Kuruman for a while, before a decision could be made as to whether Elsbeth's health could withstand the rigours of a mission wife in Matabeleland. The Thomsons had been recalled by the Directors, so that he could lead a new expedition into Central Africa. Before taking on this new responsibility, the family were going on furlough to England.

At the end of May wagons were packed and the two families set off. At Shoshong, the Mackenzies, who were moving permanently to Kuruman and also the Hepburns who were going to the annual meeting there joined them. Dr. Holub, a Physician and collector for Museums, who was on route to Kimberley, also accompanied them. Altogether seven wagons set off on the 17th June. They halted at Khama's salt pan, where they were honoured by a visit from the King, who had come to say farewell to the Mackenzies. At Notwani they halted for three days, and there met Lt. Grandy on his way up to Matabeleland to hunt and trade.

Both the journey down and the short stay at Kuruman restored Elsbeth's health. The well trained staff at Kuruman had taken care of the accumulation of dirty linen and after two months the wagons were packed and the journey back to Hope Fountain began. On their arrival at Hope Fountain, they took up residence in the Thomson's brick house, and all went well for a while. So it was with a very heavy heart that Charles wrote to the L.M.S. Secretary, on the 26th February 1877: *"I announce through Mrs. Helm the birth of our little daughter on the 24th December 1876. You will be sorry to hear that it has pleased our Heavenly Father to take our dear baby to Himself. She died on the 17th January after more than a week's illness and suffering. Mrs. Helm felt it so much and was so ill herself that I thought it advisable to take her to Inyati. The visit had the desired effect."*

With the letter Charles enclosed an estimate for a new house at Hope Fountain as he was hoping that a second Missionary would be sent soon. He also wrote of his surprise when on reading the L.M.S. bulletin, he saw he was to be placed at Inyati. He informed the Secretary that no useful purpose would be served by sending him there and that there was no suitable house. He asked Mr. Mullen to tell John Boden Thomson: *"We are all well and the "bairnies" doing very nicely."* Now began a period of settling in. Walls were built to make a safe play area for the children, crops and vegetables were sown and harvested, and animals tended.

From the conversion aspect the next 20 years would appear to the L.M.S. headquarters staff, sitting safely in their London offices, to be completely unrewarding. To the missionaries at Inyati and Hope Fountain those next years also

appeared bleak but as Major Stabb says of Boden Thomson: *“If he is not successful in evangelization he believes himself to be in civilization and the former will follow the latter. He has established schools, and has many attendants, some among them being the King’s children, so doubtless he is doing good work quietly and patiently.”* As Lobengula had held Thomson in high regard, he now afforded the same high regard to Charles. The hindrance to the Matabele conversion was that Mzilikazi had formed them into a powerful military organization, and their continued existence relied, as they saw it, in keeping the surrounding tribes in a constant state of war. Therefore Lobengula knew that if he became a convert, he would lose control of his people. Stabb reported that Lobengula was *“at least a Century in advance of his people, is a far seeing clever man, and like most of the Zulus an eager disputant.”* In a letter dictated to Mr. Thomson for Mr. Southey, Governor of the Diamond Fields, Lobengula said *“Tell Mr. Southey that the word of God came to the white man a long time ago, it has only lately reached the black. We must wait with patience and in good time the black man may profit by it as much as the white.”* Lobengula had previously told Thomson *“I know as well as you do that there is a God, and that he, as you say, made all things, and that everything he does is good. You say that he made both black and white men and loves both equally, but only showed the one the means of salvation. If God meant the black man to be saved in the same way as the white man, he would have sent the same book to both, and it seems to me that it is a great piece of presumption that you, a mere mortal, should come here to alter the working of that God, whom you call good and wise.”*

Early in 1877, the Helms with their two children went on a visit to Thomas Morgan Thomas at Shiloh. Celt Thomas, one of his sons who was a little older than Jessie, recalled the visit, saying it was naturally an outstanding event in the lives of isolated missionaries. Jessie Helm, aged 3, had plenty of playmates there, as the Thomas family was a large one. Mrs. Caroline Thomas was Thomas’s second wife, a daughter of the Elliots, who had served at Zuurbraak with Charles’s grandfather. It is very likely that the Helms had gone over to assist at the birth of Caroline’s eighth child, Annie. Elsbeth was to visit Shiloh again in a very short space of time, as, in May, she and Mr. Sykes dashed over to nurse six members of the family who had succumbed to fever. Mrs. Thomas, David, Morgan, and baby Annie had escaped it. All except Eben, aged 9, who died on 18th June, pulled through. When the invalids were strong enough to be left, Evan Morgan, Thomas’s 18-year-old son from his first marriage, went back with Elsbeth to recuperate at Hope Fountain.

Welcome arrivals at the end of 1877 were the Rev. William Allan Elliott and his wife, Rose, but they were soon redirected to the Inyati mission, after the refusal of the Helms to move. John Halyet, who had built the Thomson’s house, agreed to build the Elliots a house at Inyati. In the meantime, they stayed at Hope Fountain, as Rose’s baby was due to be born very soon. Harold Elliott duly arrived on the 5th October with both the Helms assisting. When the baby was a month old, Sykes arrived from Inyati to escort the Elliots to their new home. The following month, December, the Elliots returned to harvest the grain that Charles had sown for them when he heard that they were trekking up to Matabeleland.

Andrew Anderson, trader, surveyor and artist, met the Helms in January 1878, when he attended the Inxwala (The Great Dance) at Lobengula's kraal. He went to Petersen's Store, near Hope Fountain, where Charles and Elsbeth were having coffee and cakes with the trader. Other guests there were the French missionary Coillard, his wife and niece who were awaiting Lobengula's decision regarding their request to start a mission near the Zimbabwe Ruins, which had been discovered by Adam Render in 1867.

Other participants in the Inxwala that year were the Barber brothers, Frederick and Henry, who had been on a hunting trip to Dett, northwest of GuBulawayo. They were detained, with other Europeans at that time, in Matabeleland because Lobengula was angry with Richard Frewen, another hunter. Frewen had accused Lobengula of ruining his trip and threatened to bring in British troops. The King ordered him to leave the country at once and held the other Europeans for some time as hostages, against Frewen's good behaviour. The day after the celebrations ended, the Barbers rode over to Hope Fountain to visit the Helms.



F.C. Selous

On the 26th April, Elsbeth gave birth to Annie Kate Winnifried and just over a month later, on the 28th May, the Rev. Joseph Cockin and his wife, Annie, arrived to take up their appointment as the long awaited second family at the Mission. The Helms had as their guest at that time the renowned hunter, Frederick Courtney Selous. He had contracted fever while hunting up in Manicaland and had managed to reach Inyati on

May 4th in a very exhausted condition. Sykes nursed him for three weeks and then sent him over to Hope Fountain to recuperate. Selous writes of Elsbeth “*She was one of the kindest and generous hearted of women. Thanks to the wholesome food and unremitting kindness and attention I received beneath their hospitable roof I soon recovered my health and in two months time was well enough to start on another hunting trip.*”

In spite of the L.M.S. having estimates sent a year earlier by Charles for a new house, no progress in the matter had been made, so the Cockins moved into a small kitchen hut of pole and dagga. Annie Cockin found it such a treat after the confinement of a wagon. She, like Elsbeth, was pregnant on the journey up and very ill when she reached Shoshong. They had rested there, until Annie was well again and the rains arrived to provide water for the forward journey. Joseph, in the meantime, helped Hepburn to build a church.

Josephine (Zoe) Cockin was born in September, and the Helms acted as assistants at the birth. Luckily for Mrs Cockin that they did, as when it was decided that instruments would have to be used, Joseph Cockin who was administering the chloroform fainted and Elsbeth had to take over. She was petrified that she would give too much chloroform but fortunately both mother and baby survived!

Witchcraft was rampant among the Matabele and it was in 1878 that Joseph Cockin and Charles heard a piteous cry for water coming from the veld. They found an emaciated middle-aged African woman who had been turned out by her family after she had been accused of witchcraft. The full story appears later in a letter sent on the 15th December 1881 to the L.M.S.

In 1879, the biannual L.M.S. committee meeting was to be held in Kuruman. The Helms set out from Hope Fountain in March. Whilst staying in Kuruman they went on to Kimberley to get some new teeth for Charles, On their return they were delayed in Barkly West as Elsbeth became ill. She was nursed by Mrs Ashton who had nursed her once before (William Ashton had arrived at Kuruman in 1843 and was to work for 54 years in the service of the L.M.S). At Kimberley and Barkly West, Charles helped with the Sunday services. When they reached Shoshong Charles baptized the Hepburn’s baby, Ruth. Unhappily, Ruth died shortly afterwards. The Helm’s drivers refused to go on after Shoshong because of native disturbances and for a while they were stranded there.

In September, back at Hope Fountain, money was received from the L.M.S. for repairs and alterations to the Helm’s house. (The general wear and tear was aggravated by “white ants” (termites) – they ate anything made of wood, as well as carpeting, except coir matting, which was found to be impervious to them. The thatched roofs deteriorated with the weather and the mice assisted this.) Elsbeth had her hands full with two patients to look after and for months afterwards she herself was sick.

It was in 1879 that Charles performed the marriage ceremony for Cornelis van Rooyen, the famous hunter, and Margareta Bloemhof.

Also in that year, Charles instituted and ran a postal service for the traders, hunters and missionaries. “Runners” were sent fortnightly to Tati to hand over the mail to other runners and to bring back any mail for Bulawayo. The charge for this service was between £1.10.0 and £2.10.0 annually and in the case of temporary residents 5/- a letter. When the Jesuit missionaries arrived in September 1879, they made great use of this service and in so doing struck up a friendship with the Helms. One of the Jesuits, Father Croonenberghs, was at first full of condemnation for the Protestant missionaries and their inability to convert the Matabele, while being full of confidence in the Jesuit’s capabilities. However, he was soon to see the realities of the situation. In his diary Croonenberghs describes the anxiety of waiting for the mail:



The Postal Runner.

You in Belgium, who receive the post some six or seven times per day, you would never believe the great interest which we, two thousand leagues from home, take in the arrival of the black postman who brings news from Europe fairly regularly once a fortnight. When the end of the fortnight approaches, the post is the usual subject of all our conversation. At the least delay: - When will it arrive?... Is the Koumalolo river in flood?... Have the black postmen had an accident? – (they are usually mounted on horseback or on oxen)... We start making guesses... Did the post-bearers from Shoshong reach Tati before the Tati postmen left that town?... In addition, Kaffir officers are not always exactly punctual... There is also the fear that they may have met a lion... It is fine to-day in the Matoppo Hills... the Koumalolo must be low enough

to cross. – Oh yes!... the post will arrive in time. – Every white person you meet talks of the same subject... One can think of nothing else.

Now in the distance, we see all at once, in the bush which covers the hill northwards, the white caps of the black riders. Then we see Mr. Helm, the Gubuluwayo postmaster, going to meet them... Yes...It is he...Everyone rushes to our house where Mr. Helm dismounts. – He distributes the letters. – What news of Europe, of England, of Belgium, of the Transvaal, of the Cape? – Nobody listens... The happy people who have received letters go off into a quiet corner: they cannot read fast enough these dear letters from parents and relatives, friends and colleagues. Everyone is quiet.

After a few minutes, the silence is broken. – Well? What news? Thank God, all is well. – Everyone tells everyone else of his happiness. – Then they open the newspapers and hastily read the headlines, leaving until more at leisure the pleasure of reading them in detail.

Not only did the adults look forward to the mail; Jessie remembers the joy of receiving a monthly magazine for children, called “Little Rosebud”. She said she learnt to draw pigs, cats and birds from it, which she drew for her grandchildren in later years.

Charles could already speak Dutch and had soon mastered Sindebele, taking lessons from his wagon drivers. Visitors to Matabeleland often called upon him to act as interpreter when they were at Lobengula’s Kraal. Now that elephants and ostriches were becoming depleted (the ivory and feathers were used by the Ndebele for barter), Lobengula was thinking of restricting hunting permits for them.

Each new baby born to the missionaries was taken over to Lobengula as a matter of courtesy. Ncengengce, Lobengula’s sister (called Nini by the traders) was a very popular and powerful figure for the first nine years of Lobengula’s reign. Nini was a frequent visitor at Hope Fountain and once even offered to adopt one of the Helm’s babies. Frank Oates, a Naturalist, on his visit to Lobengula’s kraal, gives a wonderful description of her as follows: - *“Suddenly the royal sister appeared, and presented a most singular, not to say magnificent appearance. It was something like the appearance of the prima donna at the opera, or the leading spirit in some gorgeous pantomime. She is very stout and tremendously embonpoint and her skin is of a coppery hue. She wore no dress, and the only covering above her waist was a number of gilded chains, some encircling her, some pendent. Round her arms were massive brazen bracelets. A blue and white Freemason’s apron appeared in front, and looked strangely anomalous there, though really not unbecoming. From her waist also there hung down behind a number of brilliantly-coloured woollen neck wraps, red being the predominant colour. Under the apron was a sort of short black skirt, covering the thighs, made of wrought ox-hide. Her legs and feet were bare, but round her ankles were the circlets of bells worn by the women to make a noise when they dance. Her headdress was decidedly pretty – a small bouquet of artificial flowers in front, amongst the hair, standing in all directions, feather of bee-eaters’ tails. A small*

circular ornament, fashioned out of red clay, was on the back of her head. She put herself in posture for the dance, but did not move very much or energetically whilst keeping time; she suffered too much from adiposity. She held one of the large oval black and white ox-hide shield surmounted by a jackal's tail, such as are carried by the warriors."

In spite of Lobengula's despotic rule, Charles showed no fear of him and never hesitated to intercede with the king when the need arose. Hence, as Father Law reported in his diary entry of September 9th, when Fairbairn was worried over an incident that had taken place at Lobengula's kraal, Helm and Cockin went to the kraal with Fairbairn. Apparently, a son of Jensen, the trader, had broken a pot belonging to the King, a crime for which any subject of the king would normally have been executed. Lobengula, however, sent for Jensen and was reported to have pulled out some of his beard during the altercation. What worried Helm and his colleagues was that some of Lobengula's warriors might take this as permission for them to molest all members of the white population which, in turn, would lead to retribution. They suggested to Lobengula that instead of laying hands on the man. It would have been better to send him out of the country. Lobengula denied touching Jensen and said that the dispute concerned only the two people involved and that he would straighten things out with his people.

Visits between the Jesuits Croonenberghs, Depelchin and Law, and the Helms were to become frequent events. The Jesuits enjoyed Elsbeth's cooking and were recipients of fresh fruit and vegetables from her garden, so, on Boxing Day, 1879, Croonenberghs and Law visited the Helms to share the day with them. In return for the other missionaries' hospitality and produce, Croonenberghs painted and sketched their homes and gardens. The Fathers had been painting and repairing Lobengula's wagons and had finished one for Christmas day. They had replaced the sailcloth and Croonenberghs, much to Lobengula's delight, had painted an "L" with a crown above it on one side of the wagon and an "M" (for his father) on the other side.

The Cockins, on Boxing Day, were busy packing for their journey to the Kuruman meeting. Father Croonenberghs presented them with two watercolours of their home. They left Hope Fountain on 9th January 1880, accompanied by C. Johnson, a trader, and a Mr. Coleman.

Once again it was time for the Inxwala, also known as the Ceremony of the First Fruits. This was an annual event held to celebrate the harvest. It took place any time between January and the beginning of March, depending on the rainfall and the consequent ripening of the crops. As no wagons were allowed to leave the country at this time, all the white people in GuBulawayo (from which the present Bulawayo derives its name) were invited to the ceremony. The Inxwala was preceded by the Little Dance. It is thanks to Father Croonenberghs that we have a vivid description of it and also of Lobengula's kraal:

Gubuluwayo, the 11th January 1880.

Longit. E. of Greenwich 28 degrees 16' 45"; latit. South 20 degrees 15' 30" – Altitude 1,628 metres – Barom. 669 to 676 – Therm. Cent. 17 degrees a.m., 38 degrees p.m.

Yesterday, the 10th January, we had the festival of the "New Moon of the summer", of the Matabele; it is called the "Feast of the First Fruits," or the festival of the "Little Dance" to distinguish it from that of the "Great Dance" which takes place a fortnight later, in the full moon.

The plateau of Gubuluwayo, raised some 200 metres above the surrounding plain, might be said to resemble the famous hill of Alesia described by Caesar. It is a sort of square with sides more than a thousand metres in length; the incline of its slope varies from one side to another; here, it is quite steep; there, it is more gentle. To the west side of this square, grouped around a great circular space some 500 metres in diameter, are the huts of the people; within, and towards the back, is the palace, the "isikohlo", the thatched huts of princess Njina [Nini] and of the queens. This august group of buildings is hidden behind a tall palisade which surrounds it, and against the outside of the palisade are the huts of Makwekwe, steward of the capital, and the royal guards, "madjokas", as well as the king's cattle kraal. Inside this kraal or enclosure, in which the ground level has gradually become raised by the hardened dung, the great religious ceremonies take place.

It is also at the entrance to this kraal that king Lobengula presides over the "Little Dance" in the company of the chief witch doctor. From this entrance as far as the external huts, more than a thousand warriors are ranged in a semicircle: bearing on their heads great black ostrich plumes, their shoulders covered with skins of lion, hyena, jackal or panther, they hold a long branch of mimosa in their hands. They are all completely silent; the sight of this assembly has something both imposing and terrible.

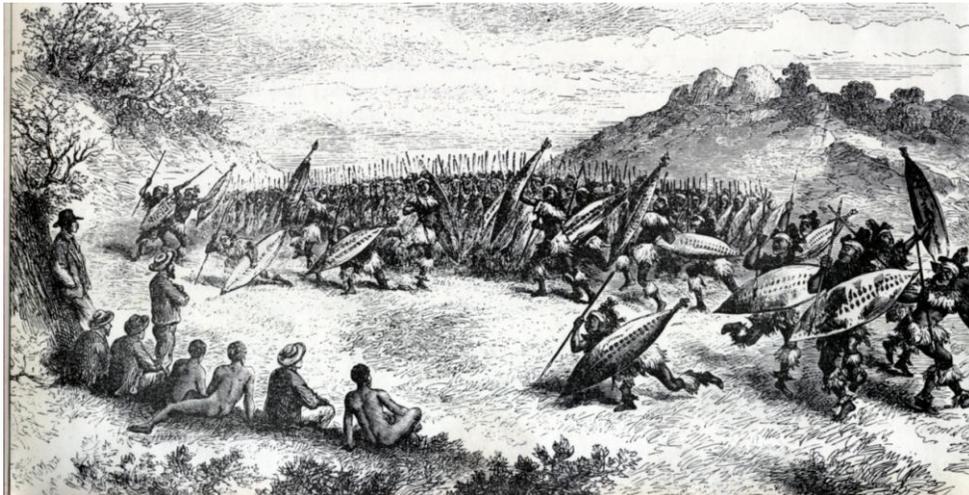
The king appears at the entrance to the kraal; he extends his hand majestically towards the twenty black oxen ranged in front of him, which fill the air with their lowing; the festival begins.

It opens with a solemn dance. Three queens, clad in goatskins fastened with a belt adorned with trinkets, come out of a hut near the kraal and advance to the middle of the semi-circle. At a given signal, all the soldiers stand to attention with attentive eye and outflung chest. With the right foot, they tap the ground in unison; then, all exactly together and in rhythm, they raise and lower their branches of mimosa. At the same time the thousand warriors begin a savage and powerful chant, monotonous, composed of only two notes, interspersed with a sort of neighing sound which clashes like the sound of a cymbal. To these uniform movements and rhythmic accents correspond the posturings of the queens who execute a warlike dance. This dance, which repeats over and over again the same movements, goes on for two hours; the queens, after a while, are replaced by others. At each of these pauses, all the warriors give a long and piercing whistle. The entire populace, the king, the chiefs,

the officers, the thousands of women and children who fill all the far corners of the semicircle, follow and accompany, as it were, the movements and chanting of the soldiers. From a distance, the noise of the festival rather resembles the dull roar of a stormy sea, heard at a distance from the beach.

After some two hours of this rather tiring exercise, the king leaves the entrance to the kraal and advances across the veldt. The "koumalos" or chiefs pass in front of him; bowing deeply, they hand him a branch of green mopani and present to him wheat, maize and the first fruits. The king eats a few grains: then, as a sort of ceremonial purging, he pours water three times over the first fruits of the harvest. Then he retires to the royal palace; a piercing whistle, followed by a great growl, signifying patriotic and religious applause, follow his departure, until he has disappeared from view. And the festival of the New Moon or the Little Dance is finished.

Now the people in their turn are allowed to eat the new season's produce; before the ceremony, before the king had first tasted them, no one would have dared to touch them: the transgression of this law would mean instant death. Who would have thought that in the heart of Africa we would find traces, somewhat obscured admittedly, of primitive religion and of one of the principal festivals of the children of Israel?



The Great Dance

In connection with this ceremony of the "First Fruits" I must say a word about the religion of the Matabele. They seem to have only a very confused idea about a god. They do not pray to their god and they have no real creed. Their entire ritual consists of two Dances: the Little Dance, which I have just described, and the Great Dance, which takes place a fortnight later. At these two festivals, as at the crowning and funeral of their kings, they have three purgings or libations in the form of a sacrifice. The first is in honour of Matchoban, the grandfather of the present king; the second in honour of the great Mosilikatsi, Lobengula's father, who, nearly fifty years ago,

brought the Zulu-Matabele from the frontiers of Natal to the Matoppos Hills, which they occupy to-day. The third libation is in honour of the reigning prince.

THE GREAT DANCE

Gubuluwayo, the 12th February 1880.

To-day I shall give you a few details about the festival of the "Great Dance", or of the "Full Moon" or the "First Fruits". The Little Dance, similar in character, was, as it were, a preparation, a rehearsal for the great festival: the latter should take place always at the full moon of the first month which follows the summer solstice (in the southern hemisphere, the 21st December). This year, however, the full moon was on the 27th January. But the Matabele calendar is not always very accurate, not having been drawn up by knowledgeable astronomers or by clever mathematicians; for this reason, instead of celebrating their Dance at the full moon on the 27th, the Matabele celebrated it only on the evening of January 31st.

King Lobengula, delighted with my sketch of the first Dance, has asked me to paint for him, on a very large canvas which he wishes to send to chief Umzila, king of the Abagasa, the principal scenes of the great festival. I have, therefore, made advance preparations so that I may be able to do the work properly. A few days in advance I took my measurements and outlined in the background the magnificent spectacle of the hills which surround Gubuluwayo. In the fore-ground, I have marked the position which the king will probably occupy, together with his chief indunas, from my recollections of the Little Dances. On the eve of the ceremony, I was busy sketching, on the spot, when the king approached me; with much curiosity, he asked me some questions about my technique, and then bluntly inquired about the exact spot on the canvas in which I planned to place himself. I showed him this place of honour: he was proud and delighted, and his royal face beamed with pleasure.

During the ceremony, all the Fathers and Brothers were to be grouped with the Europeans around the prince: as for me, I had chosen a little spot on high ground, from which I could have a comprehensive view of the whole, and make the sketches and notes which would help me to construct the large canvas ordered by Lobengula. Thus, no detail of the festival escaped me, and I can now give you an account "de visu".

At the time of the Little Dance, I described the theatre of the great festival, the plateau, the king's palace, the cattle kraal, the great open space in front of this kraal. This open space is called in Matabele "Isibaia", or "Isibaia zimbozi", as one would say the "Agora" of Athens or the "Forum" of Rome. - During the rest of the year, the Isibaia enjoys an habitual calm which is entirely oriental, or rather tropical. This great plain is furrowed by the cattle, the goats and their herds who wander about with slow and lazy steps. All around this great plain are the huts of the natives, and behind them there is a wooden palisade, the "Umuzi wabuluwayo", the boulevard of

Gubuluwayo, which forms the external circuit and which protects the flocks and the inhabitants from wild beasts, and, if necessary, from their enemies. Beyond this palisade the white men live.

For several days before the festival, and especially on the actual day, we saw numerous troops of Matabele warriors arriving at this public square, usually so quiet and peaceful. These were the regiments called by the king from all parts of the territory. Seeing them at a distance - their heads crowned with black ostrich plumes - one might almost take them for the Queen's Grenadiers, in tall busbys. But when close at hand, one is quickly undeceived: a leopard skin on their back, that is all their uniform; their arms, an ox-hide shield which they hold in the left hand, assegais and knobkerries which they hold in the right hand.

The festival lasts for four full days, during which the king must feed his people. In return he receives many gifts from his faithful subjects.

The FIRST day is the day of the Great Dance, strictly speaking. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, all the warriors are in their assigned positions. Lobengula appears at the entrance to his cattle kraal, in front of the vast open space; he makes me sit on his left hand, with my drawing paper, at the entrance to the Isibaia: then he climbs a small hill formed of the accumulated dung of all the cattle of Gubuluwayo. From there, he extends his right hand majestically towards the 8,000 warriors, standing in orderly ranks around the semicircle, in lines three to four deep. At this signal, the battalions give a great shout: "Yebo, yebo, yebezu". It is the royal salute: then, while remaining stationary, the soldiers raise and lower their feet in unison; in unison also, the warriors shake their shields as they raise and lower them; still in unison, they raise and lower their knobkerries which appear and disappear, in a most perfect ensemble, above the 8,000 busbys adorned with ostrich plumes. This is the military dance.

From time to time the exercises are interrupted, and then the bravest captains appear in the semicircle and imitate the proceedings and exploits of war; they love to display their strength, their skill and their flexibility at these manoeuvres. They are really terrible to see when they rush upon their enemy with a ferocious air and frightful cries. When one sees them, one gets an idea of the bloody battle fought between the English and the Kaffirs of Cetewayo.

When the chiefs have concluded their warlike dance, I see on my left, emerging in two long files from the neighbouring huts, the procession of queens, magnificently adorned with tinsel of all kinds, ribbons and shawls in vivid colours. In a high pitched tone they sing the royal salute:

"Yebo, yebo, yebezu". With slow and rhythmic pace, they advance into the semicircle: in one hand they hold the conjugal circlet, sign of fidelity, in the other, they bear a green branch, symbol of peace. They perform some fairly quiet dances, and then retire whence they came. It is now almost six o'clock in the evening: the setting sun casts a golden and reddish light, making this strange and primitive scene almost

poetic: one would think oneself transported to the time of the patriarchs in Arabia or on the plains of Chaldea. When the sun has set, everybody goes off to his tent or to his friends for the feast and to enjoy a well-deserved rest.

The next day, the SECOND day of the festival, we see quite a different sight. At midday, when the sun, straight above our heads, pours down its burning rays, we see a crowd of Matabele warriors rush, like an impetuous torrent, towards the district where live the white people. The King approaches at their head, wearing a belt of gold which shines on his skin, and a green scarf across his shoulder: he alone may wear a belt of this colour. He walks along, leaning on his assegai. Suddenly he stops: the human flood at his heels gives a low growl. The chief throws his assegai and it whistles through the air to strike the ground some sixty metres away. A group of savages dashes forward, to see which of them will run the fastest. Soon, one of the warriors, proud of his exploit and of his victory, brings back the royal assegai to the great prince.

This military ceremony is symbolic. The king receives the assegai and says these words: "He who loves me obeys me in all things, as this faithful warrior has followed me from afar and has brought back my assegai." Deafening cries greet the winner and applaud the king's words. Finally, the whole savage crowd returns to the "Isibaia zimbozi" and every-thing is silent once more.

The THIRD day is the day of the immolation or sacrifice of the victims.

Standing near the cattle kraal, on the little hill of which I have already spoken, Lobengula gives the order to bring forward the victims destined for sacrifice. A little later we see two or three hundred horned cattle arrive in the midst of the open plain. In front come ten magnificent pure black bulls. The prince looks upon the great herd with satisfaction: then he extends his right hand towards the assembled beasts. This gesture signifies that everything living belongs to him. And the people reply with their patriotic cry: "Yebo, yebo, Yebezu! Yes yes, to you who are so great!"

After that they sort the beasts and arrange in what order they will be sacrificed. The cattle are brought into the middle of the semicircle, where stands the induna who has been appointed the sacrificer. The induna advances slowly towards the first victim, held by four strong young men: reaching the animal, he quickly glides to the left side; then, with a rapid movement, he plunges his assegai into the body, between the ribs and the shoulder, and pushes it as far as the lung: the animal gives a dull bellow, and all is finished. With the blood pouring from its nostrils, it makes about two steps and falls. This operation is completed with a most astounding rapidity: the space of one hour suffices to sacrifice one hundred beasts. The bodies of the black or sacred bulls are dragged into the king's cattle kraal. Their flesh and their blood will be used as philtres and medicine, and probably also for the feasts of the witch doctors, called "Amazizis". The other animals, divided up on the spot, are distributed to the people, who spend the night gorging themselves with meat and with tyawala. I must confess that this sacrificial scene is not at all pleasant. It is as though one were in a great

charnel house or in a huge abattoir. One's senses of sight, smell and hearing, all receive a most disagreeable impression.

Finally, there dawns, with radiant sunshine, the FOURTH day of the Matabele festival. This day is consecrated to the ceremonies of the "First Fruits", and offers a more poetic spectacle than the massacres of the previous day, though still most realistic.

When the sun appears above the hills to the east, that is, at about nine o'clock in the morning, Lobengula goes to the middle of the Isibaia.

In the middle of the plain there is an immense pyre: this pyre contains the bones of all the animals killed during the past year for the needs of the king and of the people of Gubuluwayo. In front of the pyre is placed the royal seat, a primitive throne, consisting of a simple redwood chair: the king seats himself, then lights the fire; - from time to time he rises and stirs the fire himself with his assegai; slave women are kept continually busy stoking and encouraging the flames.

Whilst the thick clouds of sacred smoke cover the plain and fill the lungs - not very delicate - of these sons of the tropics, the eight thousand warriors range themselves around the pyre, crouched on their haunches and completely still. Behind them crowd the rest of the people, women and children. Within this semicircle, close to the fire and about five paces from the front row of the soldiers, one sees the witch-doctors, the Amazisis, seated on the ground beside young slaves who examine carefully the new plants, separate the sheaves of maize, shake out the ears of amabele or Kaffircorn, etc., etc. These first fruits are offered to the king who gives them a triple libation.

At the same time, the queens, dressed, as on the previous day, in their richest ornaments, file in a procession before the assembled people: several times they file around the pyre, singing hymns to the spirits of Matchoban, father of Mosilikatsi, of Mosilikatsi, father of Lobengula, the prince of peace, the prince of war, the great king, the king of kings, "enkos amakos".

During these lengthy ceremonies, the Matabele women bring roasted meats, the smell of which is fragrant in the air, and modifies a little the acrid smell of the smoke which rises from the pyre.

Finally, when all these rites are concluded, the festival ends, as end the festivals of all primitive peoples, and indeed of other peoples too, with immense and fabulous feasts which leave the people with pleasant memories, and which strengthen their respect for an devotion to king Lobengula.

Sadly, on arrival at Shoshong Joseph Cockin became ill with blackwater fever and died. Mrs. Cockin stayed on at Shoshong until her second baby was born in June and then moved to Kuruman where for a while, she supervised a girl's boarding school. The Cockins possessions were sold at Hope Fountain on 4th March and Fairbairn,

Martin and Father Law attended the sale. The Elliotts were staying at Hope Fountain for a while. Helm wrote to Whitehouse who was now the Secretary of the L.M.S. apprising him of Cockin's death, in the following letter:

*Hope Fountain,
Amandebele Country
Via Marico, Transvaal.*

25th March 1880

My Dear Mr. Whitehouse,

You will have heard from Mr. Hepburn of the sad loss we in this Mission have sustained by the early and unexpected death of my late colleague, Mr. Cockin.

The intelligence came upon us like a thunderclap. Mr. Hepburn had intimated on the envelope that his letter contained sad news but I mislaid his letter and we were first apprised of Mr. Cockin's death by the post runners calling out, "UKwekin ufile" (Cockin is dead),

Mr. and Mrs. Cockin left here in the beginning of January, full of spirits and in good health. From Tati he wrote but said nothing about his health. In less than a fortnight from that time he was dead.

It is true Mr. Cockin has been very much troubled with dysentery ever since he came into the country. (I heard from a trader that he had an attack of it at Tati) but he never attached much importance to it. Indeed we all thought that he was one of the strongest in this Mission. I now remember, however, that he once told me that the trip per Passenger wagon through the Karoo was a great blow to his constitution.

He is gone, called Home to his rest in all the vigour and strength of manhood. What shall, what can we say, Our Father has done it, who does all things well. We cannot see the wisdom but we know that God can only do what is wise. Mr. Cockin was getting on well with the language and had long ago commenced holding services here at Hope Fountain, and we had made arrangements for a regular itinerary on his return.

Mrs. Helm and myself were very happy in having Mr. and Mrs. Cockin as our colleagues and we shall sadly miss them. I believe Mrs. Cockin will say as we do that in looking back at the time we spent together here, there is nothing that we have reason to regret in our social intercourse. Our children were remarkably fond of Mrs. Cockin.

When the tidings of Mr. Cockin's death came here, all the traders and many of the natives from the Chief downwards expressed their deep sympathy and regret. Many of the natives said to me "God took him".

Mr. Wright, a Christian trader from Mangwato, kindly undertook to come and fetch all the things of Mrs. Cockins that could not be sold here. Although there are very few Europeans in this country at present - (trade being so bad) we managed to sell here about £200 worth of things. As there were only 5 buyers at the sale we did not get such good prices as Mr. Thomson got at his sale. Mr. Cockin had for his house some doors and locks, bought at the Fields, also some bricks and lime. These I could not sell here or at Mangwato and have therefore kept them on behalf of the Directors for Mr. Cockin's successor. As I had not Mr. Cockin's papers here I cannot say whether he paid for these things out of the allowance for house building or out of salary. I asked Mr. Hepburn to look through the papers with Mrs. Cockin,

Mr. Elliott and I kept some of the medicines, the rest I sent down to Mrs. Cockin. She will have to sell some or all of it to refund what Mr. Cockin bought in this country out of his own pocket.

Mr. Cockin has a splendid case of surgical instruments whether he bought it himself or got it from the Society I don't know. I am writing to Mr. Hepburn by this that if he finds it belongs to the Society I should like it to be sent here for the benefit of this Mission.

My own allowance for medicines etc. was £10. I need hardly say that I have long since had to buy medicines and pay for them, This reminds me to ask the Directors kindly to send me a set of tooth extracting forceps. I got an old and imperfect set from Mr. Thomson - Mr. Cockin's was stolen so I am often puzzled in my dentistry practice. Should not all medicines be charged to station grant?

By last post I had a letter from Mr. Hepburn saying that he had been very ill again and that both he and Mrs. Hepburn were done up. I am writing to him by this post to say that in my opinion he ought to take his furlough at once. He has had fever so often and so severe an attack at the Lake that I am afraid, unless he has a thorough change and that soon, his constitution will break down entirely. The work at Mangwato is too much for his strength. I know Mr. Hepburn will not like to leave his work among natives and Europeans especially as there is no one fully to take his place, but his health imperatively demands a change. Perhaps I am out of order in writing about a brother missionary without his consent, but I think the circumstances justify me in so doing. [The Lake referred to is Lake Ngami. Chief Moremi had requested that a missionary should be placed there. Hepburn with his family and two Bechuana evangelists had gone there to investigate the viability of this.]

I received your letter a post or two ago complaining about my not writing. I cannot plead guilty as I have written 3 letters to you since my return from the Kuruman meeting, and before that I believe at least once a year. The letters may have miscarried, I sent by Mr. Wookey to the missionary museum a Mandebele war-dress (worth here from £5 to £7) will you please let me know whether you received it. [A.J. Wookey was appointed as a missionary to Kuruman in 1870].

The Jesuits are still in this country. They have bought an iron house for £600 [£500 according to the Jesuits]. They seem to have made up their minds to stay here. But only last week the Chief told Mr. Sykes that he has given them no place in the country, and that they are only staying until the rainy season is over. At Tati where two priests are staying they have succeeded in perverting a young Boer.

There has been great scarcity of food in our neighbourhood and this had interfered with our regular services. Still we get a few to our services here. In the three towns where I have often held services I get as a rule decent congregations. But there is nowhere any eagerness to hear the word of God. The people pay attention and seem interested during the service but the word seems to have no effect on them. One man, Umcala, who can read pretty well, used to walk 4 or 5 miles every Sunday but I have not seen him for months at the services. I am told and believe that the reason is that he is getting afraid that his constant attendance from such a distance will get him into trouble. The belief in witchcraft is a fearful evil. A man has become obnoxious to some one or other. He is accused of bewitching and sooner or later he is killed without any trial or appeal,

Our work here is certainly discouraging but we have the promise that God's word will not return unto him void. We sorely need the continued, earnest prayers of God's people for us and our work.

With kindest regards

I am yrs. sincerely.

Chas. D. Helm.

Regarding witchcraft in the country, Father Croonenberg in his diary entry of 28th March says: - *“All the natives seem to believe in the occult powers, somewhat vaguely defined, of certain mysterious beings, in the witch-doctors, called Abatagati [Umtagati], of the rain makers, Tchabatchaba, in the diviners who smell out those who have cast spells, in magic, in magic herbs, in philtres, etc., etc. Humanity is everywhere the same, and, where Christianity does not exist, the same aberrations exist in all parts of the world... However, in the midst of so many misconceptions, our Kaffirs seem to have a vague conception of a superior god, a supreme being whom in their language they call the “King on high”, the “Enkosi pesoul”. But this conception is decidedly vacillating: they give to this king all sorts of qualities which are incompatible with the idea of divinity. They address no prayer to him, nor do they offer him homage. He is a sort of idol, similar to the one whom other African peoples adorn with the name of Morimo, Molemo, Mejino, etc., etc. [Also known as Makalaka, Mlimo and Mwari, and still alive and well today at Njelele Hill in the Matobo Hills outside Bulawayo]. Externally, their cult is confined to the rites performed once a year, as I have described them in writing about the Great Dance, the festival of the First Fruits.*

As in ancient paganisms, oracles play a big part in the religion and life of the Matabele. I have recently learned that there exists, some eleven miles from Gubulawayo, a famous oracle, that of the god Makalaka. This god lives in a subterranean cave, in the midst of a labyrinth of rocks.

Nobody has ever seen this god; but he has sons and daughters who are priests and priestesses, and who live in the neighbourhood of his cave. A curious detail: quite recently, three of the god's sons were put to death as ordinary mortals for having stolen some of the king's wheat. Most likely, Lobengula said to himself that the sons of a god should behave better than ordinary men, and that, if they betrayed that trust, they were more criminal and more guilty: corruptio optimi pessima. And that is why he decided to make an example of them.

In this cave, there is, they say, a well which is very deep and very black: the well of the abyss. From time to time, dull sounds like thunder issue from this well. The faithful, trembling with fear, place on the edge of the abyss meat and corn, poultry, cakes and other gifts, to appease the hunger of the terrible god and make him propitious. After making their offering, the poor suppliants announce in a loud voice the object of their wishes, and the aim of their coming. They seek information about hidden things, future happenings, the names of people who have bewitched them, the results of their undertakings. After a few minutes of deep silence, they hear, in the midst of the subterranean noises, strange and incomprehensible words, which the witch doctors, the Amazisis, colleagues of the maker of thunder, explain to the credulous devotees.

The replies are often unfavourable ... and the explanations often cost the poor supplicants their lives. Such is the oracle of the Matabele, the oracle which the princess Njina [Ncengence/Nini] is to consult. Poor Njina!"

On April 2nd 1880 Ncengence was executed by orders of Lobengula. In 1879 Lobengula had married Xwalile, the daughter of the King Mzila of Gaza in Manicaland, and the new Queen was jealous of her sister-in-law's popularity. Father Croonenberg gives the following account in his diary entry of 14th April: - *"After Lobengula's marriage to the daughter of the king Umzila, Njina soon perceived that her authority and her credit were waning. They say that she wished to govern, at any price. In preparation for the carrying out of her desires, she urged Lobengula to murder his brothers, of whom there are many, under the stupid pretext that they were seeking his death. In this way, with the king's brothers removed from the scene, Njina could intrigue to get rid of the king himself and of his children, in order to mount the throne of her father, Mosilikatsi, [Mzilikazi] herself. It is said that king Lobengula was keeping a watchful eye on the web which was being woven around him. Several chiefs then accused Njina of evil witchcraft, the object of which was to prevent Lobengula from having heirs. Such a crime would bring the death penalty. The princess, however, wished to prove herself innocent. She decided to appeal to the decision of the god Makalaka, who lives in the underground cave in the Matoppo Hills. Njina, therefore, set off in an ox-wagon to consult the oracle. On the way,*

however, she encountered so many obstacles, doubtless placed in her way by express design, that she was obliged to turn in her tracks and return to her own village. A few days later, by order of the king, this daughter of Mosilikatsi was hanged from a tree in the forest. Her unfortunate remains were devoured by jackals and vultures.

The 2nd April was the date of this last torture of the unfortunate Njina, and since that date, there have been numerous executions. The internal political situation of the kingdom of the Matabele, never particularly brilliant since the death of Mosilikatsi, because of the difficulties connected with Lobengula's ascent to the throne, does not seem to improve at all. After the tragic death of princess Njina, one of Mosilikatsi's surviving wives and a large number of indunas have been executed. Lobengula continues to rid himself, one by one, of the indunas appointed by his father, and to replace them by young men, who will owe everything to himself and who will, therefore, be devoted to his cause. The absolute power of the king replaces all the more usual machinery of government. In this country, there are no judges, no police, no game-keepers, no commissioners, no tax collectors, no such thing as a civil servant. Everything stems from the king, ends in the king and turns around the king. The king is the owner of all the cattle, all the horses, all the hunting rights, all the land. The king is everything, and the whole nation is obliged to carry out his wishes."

Father Law gives his view: - *"Sad news today. Poor Nina, the King's sister has been hanged. She was the Queen of the country before the King's marriage to Umzila's daughter – but then she became no one. However instead of retiring to her own kraal and leaving the court, she still clung to her former position and wished to exercise the same influence and power she had before... [Here he gives the same account of the lead-up to the execution as Croonenberg] ... Poor Nina! How little she thought her death so near! And how little prepared the poor people here are to go before their judge. We all knew Nina very well. We never called on the King without also calling on Nina. And poor old thing, when living here she sent over nearly every morning for some coffee."*

Charles went to Lobengula's Amatsheumhlope (White Rocks) cattle post to remonstrate with the King about Nini's execution. This time he was unsuccessful in his attempt to have the matter discussed and instead was asked by Lobengula to attend one of his sick queens. The King moved to a new kraal, Umganin, just after this. Lobengula had a number of kraals that he would visit for a few weeks at a time. Amatsheumhlope was a very pretty kraal, about 8 miles from Bulawayo, which was his capital. Umganin was near to Tshotsho, the kraal Lobengula had lived in as a child, with his mother. Father Croonenberg states that the move was made because Lobengula thought that Nini had bewitched GuBulawayo. On 19th April, Father Croonenberghs, Mr. Martin and Mr. van Rooyen set out to see the King. Father Croonenberghs wanted to purchase the trader Griete's property and wished to ratify his position regarding the occupation of it with Lobengula, as all land belonged to the King. They stopped on the way to pick up Charles, and were warmly welcomed at Hope Fountain and sat down to an "English" breakfast before continuing on their way. Greite had at first opposed the settling of the Jesuits in the country, but changed

his mind when he decided to leave Matabeleland, and realized he could sell his house to them. The property consisted of two stone houses, a corrugated iron storehouse and stables. Lobengula and the Queens often walked over from Bulawayo to visit the Fathers. The Fathers were generous in their hospitality but sometimes their patience was sorely tried, especially with the Queens. They loved poking into the Fathers' rooms and the Chapel, fingering the chalices, candlesticks, etc., on the altar and remarking that they would like to have them made into bracelets. The altar cloth was also greatly admired but (if the Fathers didn't keep an eye on the ladies) admiration quickly led to possession.

When all the business was concluded they set off on the return journey, passing the kraal of the Amazisis (witch doctors). These were Hottentot "adventurers" from the Cape Colony claiming to be doctors. Croonenberghs' diary entry of 14th April says: *"Mr. Helm and I went into the hut of one of the principal inhabitants of the village, a certain Umluka, who came from the Cape. Umluka appears to know a little about Christianity, and it is possible that he was even baptised at some time in the Cape by a Protestant minister. He often comes to me and I profit by his visits in learning a little Matabele from him. When he is translating the New Testament into that language, he assures me that soon he and all his family will become Catholics. May God so will it! ... I do not, however, count on it much, because I am beginning to learn the exact worth of the word and of the promises of the people of this country.*

Umluka went outside for a moment to buy some maize; his wife entertained us courteously: she spoke Matabele, not the Hottentot tongue, because she is a native of Gubulawayo. One of her neighbours, also a native of Gubulawayo, came in shortly afterwards; the latter immediately recognized Mr. Helm and greeted him respectfully: "Sakou bona umfundisi! Good-day, master!" [Correctly: "I see you, teacher"]. Then she looked at me and said to Mr. Helm; "But who is this?" – "He is also an umfundisi, the umfundisi of Gubulawayo," replied Mr. Helm. "Where is your wife, and where are your children?" asked this curious daughter of Eve. "I have no wife, nor any children," was my reply. – "I suppose you have left them far away in you own country!" "No, I have never had any, nor shall I ever have any ... I have sacrificed all that to come here to teach you the way to heaven and to look after you during any illness or misfortune." "Oh! Oh! That is most strange, and I don't understand that situation at all." Then Umluka's wife explained to her with great animation, no doubt inspired by her husband's conversations about us, how, for the love of God and of the children of God, the Abafundisi of Gubulawayo had renounced the joys of family life; that their religion imposed this sacrifice upon them, so that they might be able to devote themselves the more completely to the poor sick people of the town and district. Umluka's neighbour then looked at me with an air of great astonishment and admiration. The good Mr. Helm, who is a most excellent paterfamilias, not quite knowing how to keep himself in countenance, cloaked himself in a great cloud of smoke, and pulled upon his pipe with exceeding vigour."

Elsbeth as well as looking after her own children was often given, by Lobengula, orphans and coloured children to bring up. She was at that time looking after a child

whose parents had been killed on a witchcraft charge, and also a little girl who was the child of an African woman by a European man. Nini had previously given a child called Bavea, whose parents were slaves to the Matabele, to Elsbeth who taught her English, needlework and cookery. In 1880, Lobengula decided, much against Bavea's will, to send her to Chameluga as a present. Chameluga (or Chaminuka) was a Mashona Chief and had a great reputation as a sorcerer. He was consequently treated with consideration but during 1883 Lobengula ordered his death. Bavea was then taken back to Matabeleland but later ran away to return to Mashonaland and in 1887 told the story of Chameluga's murder to Selous.

In June the Helms were staying in their wagon at Umganin, where Lobengula was residing, when four of the Jesuits came to take leave of the king on their way to Mzila's Kraal. The Jesuits were hoping to have more luck in converting Mzila's people.

That same winter Captain Pulley and his friend were riding over to Hope Fountain when the Captain's horse tripped and threw him. The friend, seeing his arm was badly dislocated, rode on for Charles. After Charles had set the arm, they made their way to Hope Fountain where Pulley and his friend stayed for two weeks.

On December 16th 1880 when Charles wrote to L.M.S. the family were all in good health. He requested that they send £5 to Mrs. Helm's mother on their behalf. He enquired if there was any progress in the appointment of a successor to Cockin.

The big event in the Helm household in 1881 was the birth of Alexis, on 19th April. Jessie, who was seven, remembered seeing to the dinner and burning herself in the process.

As there was a lack of other children to play with the Helm children made their own amusements. They made ox wagons out of mealie husks with the help of Shisho, the goat herd boy. Animal knucklebones or moulded clay were used as oxen. Once when Selous had been on one of his visits, he noticed the children playing with them and, thoughtfully, next time he visited them he brought all the knucklebones he had saved from his hunting trips. To Selous this home of the Helms must have been a haven after months in the veld.

Routine for the family, when at home, began with morning prayers, followed by breakfast at 7.30 a.m. and then Elsbeth set about her household chores. Charles, meanwhile, saw to the livestock, consisting of goats, sheep, cattle and pigs. Later on turkeys, hens, ducks and geese were added. The older children would join their father, bare-footed, while they guided the water from one furrow to another for the crops. When the wheat was ripe it had to be scythed by the missionaries. The stooks were then dried out and later put into the wagon-shed, where it was flailed. Some of the Matabele men would help out on payment of tobacco and when they weren't busy with their own gardens. Their women, with strips of material, would winnow the beaten out grain. Later on, small hand wheat-mills were introduced. At 9 o'clock Charles went to his study outside the house to attend to the queues of sick Africans.

On one of Selous' visits he helped Charles amputate an African's shattered arm. While he attended the sick, Elsbeth undertook the children's schooling. Lunch was at 12.30 and then the family retired to rest, read and sew until 3 o'clock when they all met for tea. After tea Charles went for his daily walk to inspect the Mission and he would then swim in the stream. Elsbeth worked in the garden and it was Jessie and Letje's job to keep the little ones out of mischief while she was working. Like all small children, they loved being around while the plants were being watered and hardly a day went by without one of them getting wet. After supper at sunset evening prayers, in Ndebele, followed for family and servants. Any letter writing, studying or unfinished work was undertaken until about 11 p.m.

For a while, communication between Matabeleland and the L.M.S. came to a halt because the first Boer War had started in the Transvaal. Father Croonenberghs in his diary of the 1st March 1881, said:

We must hope that our communications with the civilized world will soon be re-established.

Quite recently, His Majesty, the king of the Matabele held audience not in his hut, but in his palace, that is to say, in his cottage at Gubuluwayo.

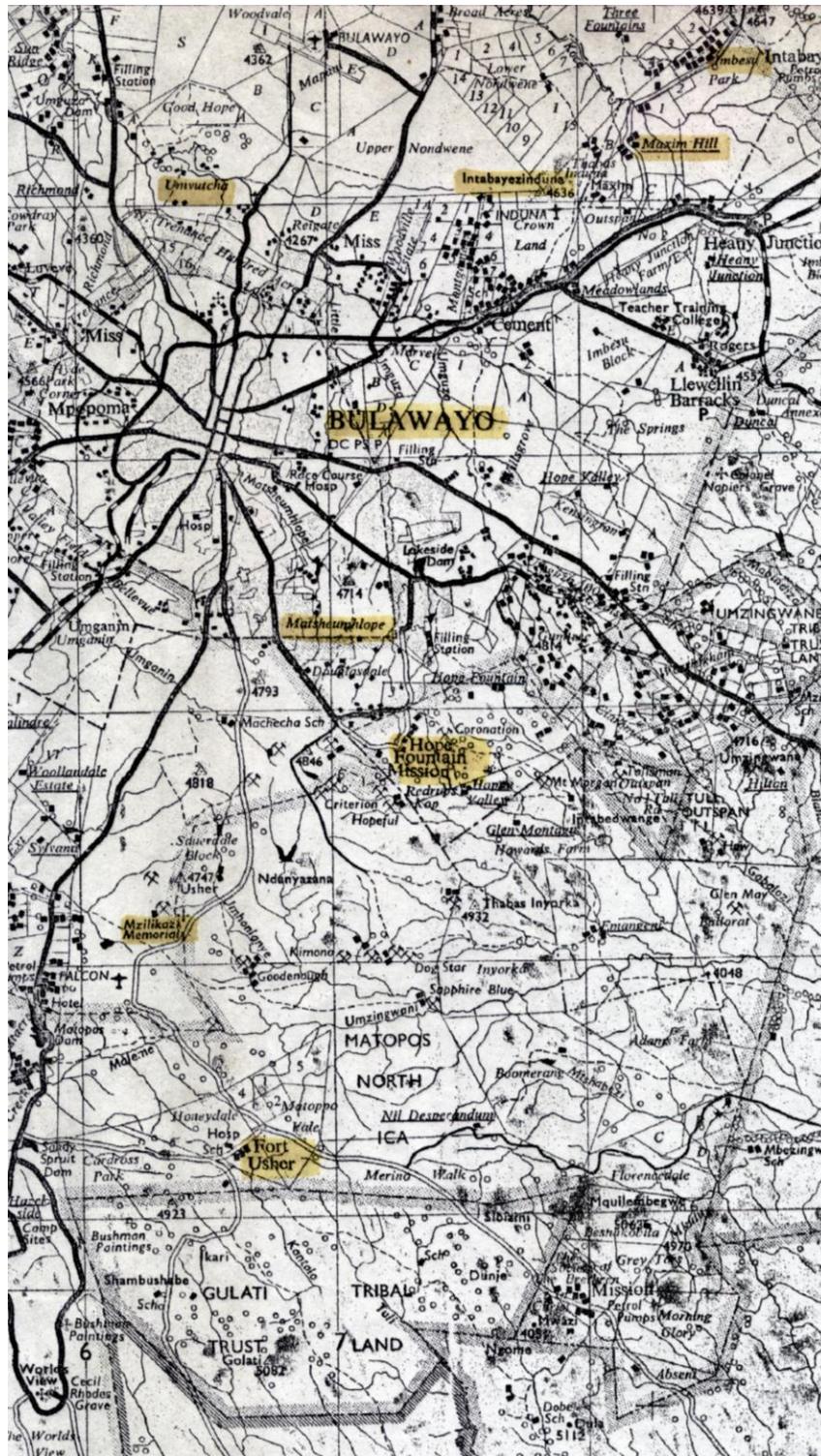
Father Berghegge and I asked to be presented to him with several other Europeans.

Imagine to yourself a modest Flemish farm house in red brick, covered with a roof of thatch: it has only one floor, with a verandah in front resting on four tree trunks. First one enters a hall, or rather a dark, narrow passage from which two small rooms open on each side, each so low that you can touch the ceiling with your hand. The first room on the right is a sort of charnel house, where chunks of raw meat, animal heads, remains of meals etc., are all piled in pell-mell. The smell is enough to turn one's stomach and makes the whole palace stink. The second room on the right is a sort of stone-room, or rather an old clothes shop in which old uniforms of Colonial soldiers have become a prey to the ants and the rats. On the left a door opens into the throne room; take care as you enter not to fall over the squatting courtiers or the calabashes of beer, or the boots and pipes of His Majesty, or the wooden bowls and other household utensils necessary for these receptions. [The Matabele beer is a thick grey brew made out of sorghum, and is an acquired taste, but very nutritious and cooling on a hot day]

In the middle of the room one can see a heavy table which served formerly as a transport chest in the heavy commercial wagons. Behind the table, in a great leathern armchair of which the back is adorned with a crown, the king of the Matabele is haughtily seated. We had taken the precaution of sending him in advance several bottles of Cape wine, and thanks to this thought, we were most graciously welcomed by the king. We took our places besides Messrs. Fairbairn and Martin and waited until the king should deign to address us.

Lobengula, however, did not sleep in his Palace, but preferred his wagon.

When Charles was able, in May to re-establish communication, it was to congratulate Wardlaw Thompson on his appointment as Secretary to the L.M.S. Charles hadn't much news except that he was suffering headaches.



Bulawayo District.

7. UMHLABATINE

Lobengula decided in August 1881 to move his capital to a new site at Umhlabatine where Government House stands today. Croonenberghs reported reported on the 28th August: *Amazing news! and which will doubtless greatly greatly astonish you in Belgium. Gubuluwayo, the city of Lobengula, founded by him in 1870, Gubuluwayo, the capital of the Empire of the Matabele, and the queen of the Matoppo Mountains, Gubuluwayo no longer exists! Three weeks ago, Lobengula informed his subjects that it was his pleasure to transfer the capital to a league beyond his residence of the "White Rocks, Amatsche Amhlope", to a locality called Umhlabatine. Gubuluwayo consisted only of some 200 huts and a thousand inhabitants. But, for the annual feasts of the Great and Little Dance and for ceremonial occasion, the population mounted sometimes to more than 12 000 souls. Lobengula has committed to my care his arsenal and his goods.*

The transfer of the capital will be carried out without great difficulty. You must not imagine anything similar to the removal of a European capital. Here all is simple and primitive. Already most of the families have gone off to build their bamboo huts at the new site. Soon the others will follow, and Gubuluwayo will become a desert like Nineveh and Babylon. Only it will leave no ruins behind, nor traces of its ephemeral existence.

These changes of capital are frequent in the Negro kingdoms; and here is the reason.

After some years, the kaffir kraals begin to have difficulty in subsisting due to the lack of the necessities of life, and the inhabitants must emigrate rather like nomads. After ten or twelve years, all the woods near the village have become despoiled; the trees and scrub have been used for their fires, and it is necessary to go very far indeed to procure the daily requirements of wood for the kitchen. The Court burns a great deal of wood, and the stocks become particularly exhausted during the feasts which last one or two weeks. In addition, the Kaffirs do not manure their lands, and the soil becomes exhausted so that it no longer produces even the poor crop of millet necessary for the subsistence of the inhabitants. They must then think of moving their tents elsewhere. Lobengula, making the great decision, has decided to move to a district fairly near one of his more customary residences. Umhlabatine is situated a good league from the "White Rocks" and six leagues from our house in Gubuluwayo.

We do not yet know what we shall do, and whether we shall follow the king to his new capital. The other white people are in a similar state of indecision. For them, as for us, to move house is not so easy and would necessitate great expense.

20th September 1881.

I have just been present at a most moving spectacle! Five days ago, on Thursday the 15th September, Gubuluwayo was officially destroyed. On the seventh day after the full moon, Makwekwe, the former induna or governor of the capital, received from the king the order to go to the old town and to set all the dwellings on fire.

Makwekwe therefore set about burning the king's palace, the queens' huts, all the buildings in the royal kraal, sheds, stables, coaches, and even the chariot of the old king Mosilikatsi. At first I accompanied Makwekwe in his work of destruction, then I retired to a little hill in order the better to view this spectacle. When his task was finished, Makwekwe came to me, shook me by the hand and said: "Lambile", that is to say, "I am Hungry". He hadn't thought of providing himself with any dinner, and I had to offer him a meal at our Residence of the Sacred Heart.

I fear that, in a few weeks, the inhabitants of the neighbouring kraals will imitate the example of the citizens of Gubuluwayo and go off also to settle down near the new capital. We shall find ourselves very isolated and shall find it difficult to keep in close contact with the Matabele nation, with their chiefs and with their king. Time will doubtless tell us what we must do.

Most descriptions of the new capital were written between 1885 and the mid-1890's. Maund describes the surroundings of Umhlabatine - the new Bulawayo – in 1885:

The road [approaching from the South] rises and falls over frequent undulations for the next six miles up to the Umganin, the soil in the hollows being very rich, and produces splendid crops of mealies. On the Umganin river the King has one of his summer residences or cattle kraals. The nature of the soil here changes to a red sandy loam, and granite gives place to red sandstone. The scenery is pretty here, the banks of the brook being well wooded with acacias, mopani, and mongonono trees.... Passing over a low range of sandstone hills you descend into the rich valley of the Umguza river. Large fields of Kaffir corn wave in the valley. Its richness in quartz I have mentioned. It is, however, denuded of trees round the large kraal of Gubuluwayo, which stands on a eminence overlooking the river.

“Matabele” Wilson describes the town itself in 1888:

The town itself is a large military kraal, about one and a half miles in circumference, surrounded by a fence made partly of poles and partly of thornbush. Immediately inside the fence are the huts, about six deep. On the inner side of the huts there is a large open space and in the centre of this is the king's "isigodlo" which is the abode of the king and his army of wives and followers. The latter is strongly pallisaded round with a strong fence of poles from 8 to 10 feet high, the fence itself being about six feet in thickness. On the inside of this fence he has a brick house with a verandah running along the front. Opposite this and a little to the right is the King's wagon house, in which he always lives, only at times going into his house during the cold weather, mostly when he needs to make a fire or sit on a chair drinking his much-loved kaffir beer. Behind the wagon house and still to the right is the wonderful goat kraal to which the king can retire and, when he does so, none of his people dare to disturb him without his permission. Here he makes rain and fixes up his medicines and takes his indunas and counsellors into private consultations. Many a poor devil has been condemned to death in that goat kraal long before he has been made aware of it himself.

Maund was not aware of the sanctity of the goat kraal and “*not knowing this, I carelessly entered to measure the dimensions and thickness of the walls. I soon found myself surrounded by a howling and gesticulating crowd, who flourished their assegais and drew knives across their throats to indicate to me the fate of anyone committing such an act of sacrilege. The Induna of the town came out and soon appeased the boisterous crew by saying he would himself inform the King.*”

In mid-1890, Cooper-Chadwick gives a similar description, except that he gives the circumference as “*about a mile*”. He adds:

Round the walls of the enclosed courtyard are always seated a number of soldiers, messengers, and slaves when the king is at home, and near the entrance are two large heaps of horns from the bullocks that have been killed from time to time.

He describes Lobengula’s house as “*a well built brick house, that was made for the king by an old sailor named Halyott and meant for a royal residence, but the king seldom occupies it and prefers to live in his waggon. Inside this house the walls are decorated with various prints and paintings, including a large sized oil painting of the Queen in a handsome frame, and he always speaks of the Great White Queen with the greatest reverence and respect. The king has a large pack of dogs of various kinds, but as they are fed solely on meat, present rather a mangy appearance; he has also tame ostriches, peacocks, and pigeons. [At one time, Lobengula had a pet merino ram that drank beer from his tin, held in his hand.]*”

At the end of 1881 the Helm children all went down with Whooping Cough and their father informed Mr. Wardlaw Thompson of the fact and of Capt. Pulley's trial by Lobengula. The details are given in the following letter:

*Hope Fountain,
Amandabele country
Via Transvaal
15th December 1881*

The Rev. W.W.Thompson

Foreign Secretary L.M.S.

My Dear Mr. Thompson,

I began a letter to you several days ago but have been obliged to put off writing till almost the last moment before the post goes.

I was first called to go and see the Chief's eldest daughter who lives about 5 miles from here and who was reported very ill and desired me to come and see her. Yesterday after having been to see her for the third time in the last 4 or 5 days, I

found on my return a boy waiting with a note from the wife of one of the traders asking me to come and see her husband who was very ill, so I had to saddle up again and go for another wet ride.

A gentleman, Lieut. Pulley, who had been hunting in Mashona Country was on his way out attacked by 2 or 3 young fellows about 10 miles beyond Inyati. He says in self-defence he was obliged to shoot one of them. He rode on at once and asked me to go with him to report the matter to the Chief. The Chief said he would have to pay but would not tell him what. The case remained in abeyance for about a month. A few days ago the Chief called all the white people, except the missionaries, to be present at the trial of Mr. Pulley. The white people say they had to put up with a great many indignities from the people and Mr. Pulley who was going up on horseback to the Chief's was dragged off his horse and taken by force to the Chief's. The trial lasted almost a whole day and the white people were not allowed even to go for a drink of water.

All that Mr. Pulley has, including 3 salted horses, were taken from him but his wagon and oxen and 1 gun were restored to him. I had a note however from Mr. Thomas this morning (16th) in which he says that Mr. Pulley will get his things back.

The Chief called Mr. Thomas after the case was tried to write a letter for him to the British Resident in the Transvaal. Mr. Thomas also says that the Chief told him that he had called out the missionaries. But I have had no message as yet and neither Mr. Sykes nor Mr. Elliott says anything about having been called by the Chief in their letters just received.

As a rule the missionaries have very little molestation from the Chief or the people. I believe in their hearts they respect us thoroughly. That few of the traders are respected by the Chief or people is mainly their own fault. Many of them are very immoral and they get drunk whenever they can get brandy. Only last week the Chief had to get one of them carried out of his kraal.

The conduct of most of the traders is one of the hindrances in our work. But the Amandebele themselves are as bad a people as I have known or heard of. They firmly believe in witchcraft with its attendant evils, and it is a fearful instrument in the hand of the envious or avaricious, and that the Amandebele are such they themselves testify. Brother will rise up against brother. Father against son and daughter against mother.



Tainton, G. Phillips, Sam Edwards (who conducted Moffat to Mzilikazi in 1854) & Van Rooyen.

I could give many instances that have come within my knowledge where one member of a family has had another member, perhaps a brother or sister, accused of witchcraft and killed.

Let me give one instance out of many. A little more than three years ago I found a middle-aged woman, in the veld, near our house. She was reduced to skin and bone and was calling out for water when I found her. With Mr. Cockin's help I brought her to our house. We did what we could for her but she was in such a state of terror lest her people should find her out and kill her that we could not persuade her to take any food. In three or four days she died. I sent word to her son-in-law, an Induna or Headman, to come and bury her but he said he was afraid. I ordered my work boys to bury her but they absolutely refused. They offered to tie a riem to her legs and drag her into the veld for the wolves. With the help of two Europeans I buried her myself. When I told the Chief lately what I had done he said it was very good and then gave me her history as follows.

She was a wife of a cousin of the Chief's and was accused of witchcraft and driven from her home by her husband. She went to a son who lived in another town but was again driven away without a morsel of food. She then went to a daughter living near Inyati station, but was again sent away without a morsel to eat. She then went to another daughter living near us, the wife the Headman of a large town, but was again refused shelter and food and so for about three weeks she wandered about the

veld with nothing to eat, except perhaps a few roots. It is a wonder that she escaped the wolves which are sometimes very bold in this country.

I have at present with me a young man belonging to the Chief's own regiment who came here to be doctored. He says two other of the young men were fighting and he tried to separate them. When they turned upon him and one of them bit a good -sized piece off his nose. They picked it up and sewed it on very neatly with some hair of a camel's [giraffe's the Afrikaans name is kameelperd] tail. But the piece sloughed away and when he saw this he begged me to put medicine on his nose to make the biter's teeth fall out. Such are some of the traits of character among the Amandebele.

I wish I could give a brighter picture of the people and could tell of here one and there one forsaking their old habits and sitting at the feet of Jesus to learn of him who is meek and lowly.

The people from the neighbouring little towns continue to attend the services at the Station and I generally get a good congregation when I go out to have services in the towns. I have not been able to establish a regular school yet. But after the gardening season is over I shall make another attempt.

I am sorry to say that I have not had a line from the Mission House since Mr. Cockin's death. But I hope to hear soon that a second missionary for Hope Fountain has been appointed. I do think that if this Mission is to be kept up we should never have fewer than 4 missionaries here, and were it not that more promising fields for mission work are crying out for men I should plead with the Directors for more missionaries for this country,

I am thankful to say that our little ones (4) have now quite recovered from the Hooping [Whooping] Cough and that we are all well. Hope Fountain is I believe one of the healthiest Mission Stations north of the Orange River.

A gentleman (Mr. Ingram) has taken a photograph of our house and of ourselves. He has promised to take the negatives to the Mission House. Will you kindly get some copies printed for us, say a dozen of each and have 6 of each sent out to us. The rest we want to send to friends in England and Germany, I think if the house comes out well it will make a pretty picture for the magazine.

I enclose a letter for Mr. Stacey in which I am asking him to get a few things for us.

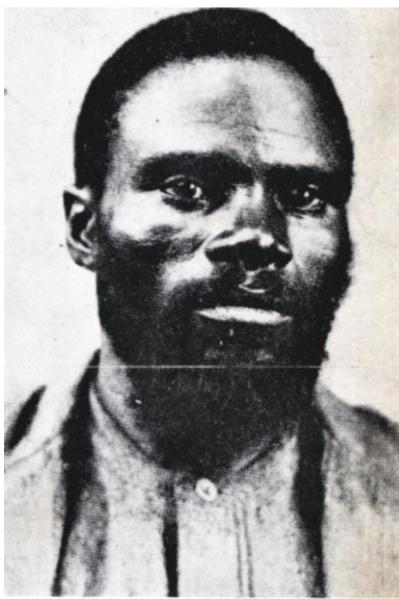
Mrs. Helm unites with me in kindest regards to you and Mrs. Thompson.

I remain

Yours very sincerely,

Chas. D. Helm.

1882 saw the Helms off to another Kuruman meeting. The family had mastered the art of trekking and everything and everyone had its place in the wagon. The children each had a pocket in a large bag hung inside the wagon for their treasures and books. The dogs accompanied them on these trips. The missionaries had learnt that travelling by day, as the first missionaries trekking to Inyati had done, was to court disaster. Jessie Helm recalled that her parents would outspan near water at about 7 a.m. after travelling for about two hours. The cattle would be put out to graze and the breakfast and the mid-day meal would be prepared. Bread was made, clothes washed, and the beds and wagons tidied. By 4 p.m. the wagons were packed and they trekked until sundown. After supper the children were put to bed and the party would trek from 8 p.m. until mid-night and then rest again.



John Grootboom

One of the Helm's drivers was Jan Grootboom, who had first entered the country with them. Whether it was on their first trip or a subsequent one is not recorded but Jessie Helm's memories of him seem to suggest that it could have been the first. She said he was a great favourite with the children; making them whips and telling them stories. During the Matabele War and the Matabele Rebellion, he acted as interpreter and intermediary when the course of Rhodesian history hung in the balance. He took a key part in arranging and participating in the peace Indaba for Rhodes during the rebellion. His tribe is uncertain, as various authors have described him as a Fingo, Zulu, Msuthu, Xhosa and Tembu. What is certain is that all who knew him attributed him with intelligence, great courage, and the ability to extricate himself and any companions from highly dangerous situations. In his account of the Shangani Patrol (an episode during the Matabele War in which Allan Wilson and his patrol of 33 men were wiped out by the fleeing Matabele) Mhlalo of the Nsukamini Regiment (whose Induna was Manondwane) said that Grootboom had been with the white men on the Shangani River. He had fought the Matabele, but had escaped death by hiding down a

large ant-bear hole to avoid detection when the Matabele went up to the dead to disembowel the bodies – a rite to release the spirits. Mhlalo stated that this was a survivor of the Shangani Patrol.

On this trip they stopped at Kimberley for a few days, near the mineral water factory of Fred and Harry Barber and to the children's great joy, were given bottles of lemonade by them. This was the first taste the children had of this drink. The great excitement for the children on these trips was when they reached Kuruman. There, packing cases would be waiting sent from overseas by family and friends. Opened, these would spill the delights of books, toys, games and perhaps a proper doll for the girls. For the adults, there would be new supplies to keep them going for another year. Elsbeth's daughter, Jessie, reported that, as wild honey was plentiful in Matabeleland, her mother used to buy about 200 pounds of it from the locals and put it into jars. This was then distributed to missionaries in less favoured districts. In exchange she would take back jams and jellies made at Kuruman. These visits were especially enjoyable for the women, who had been without the company of other women for so long. They enjoyed morning teas, chatting about new fashions, recipes, children and other subjects dear to their hearts.

Back home in May, Charles wrote to W. Thompson to say he was pleased that Mr. Carnegie had been appointed to Hope Fountain. He asked for new dental instruments to be sent and the medical instruments that Cockin had used to be sent from Shoshong. Mr. Elliott was staying at Hope Fountain, as he was sick.

The arrival of twins to the Helms on 16th August caught everyone unawares. The Elliots had not arrived to help with the confinement (as the expected baby was a week early) and neither had the bottles. Charles spent hours after the birth devising a teat out of ivory but fortunately before it was tried out the bottles arrived. The twins were named Hedwig Louisa and Erica Elise. Hedwig lived only for three weeks.

Father Peter Prestage visited the Helms on 17th and 18th August to collect his post and settle his accounts but had to return on the 18th as the post had not been delivered. He was very impressed with their house and describes it as follows:

“The furnished room in a good model for a residence in a hot climate, height 12ft, width 16ft and breadth 18ft. There are 3 other rooms on the ground floor. There is a verandah and stoep in front.”

What a great delight the arrival of David Carnegie on 13th October must have been for the Helms. The joy of having a neighbour within walking distance and a companion for Charles in his daily walk and swim, must have meant a lot to them all. In those days the rivers were not infected with bilharzia.

In January 1883, the missionaries in Matabeleland held their first sub-committee meeting at Inyati. The distance to Inyati was about 50 miles by winding roads, so in order to save time Charles worked out a more direct route and informed Lobengula of it, as the new road went past a large kraal. Lobengula agreed to the new route and to

inform his Indunas at the kraal. However, something must have gone wrong with his communication system for when the Helms used it for the first time, hostile Matabele surrounded them. The mob chased away the drivers and leaders of the wagon and threatened the Helms. This aroused Charles's temper. Standing on the front of the wagon, he told them, in no uncertain terms, his opinion of them and that Lobengula would be informed of their action. At the mention of Lobengula's name, the Matabele slunk away. Meanwhile, Elsbeth was stationed at the back of the wagon, guarding it from pillage - with a sjambok in her hand. Later, when they were sitting having some tea next to the wagon, the Matabele appeared again, but this time with half an ox as a peace offering, which Charles refused. When Lobengula was informed of their behaviour, he was ready to have some of the Indunas put to death but was persuaded not to by Charles.

Ralph Williams (who was later, in 1901, Resident Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, now Botswana), with his wife and six year old son, visited the Helms about the middle of December. He described Elsbeth as "*a charming lady with many accomplishments, she could sing charmingly and had an overflow fund of happy good humour besides being still a pretty women.*" (Elsbeth was 35) *From her and her husband we received much kindness.*" While they were there Selous arrived on one of his frequent visits. It was his custom, after knocking at the door, to walk in and hang up his hat and coat on the rack next to the door. He usually brought his zither with him and would entertain the family in the evenings with it.

Charles had obtained permission from the L.M.S. for Elsbeth and the children to go to Europe. Elsbeth was much stronger now but her eyes were a constant source of worry to her and her bout of fever when she first arrived In South Africa had left her with rheumatism. She now felt the children needed more schooling than she had time to give them. Another reason for the visit was that Elsbeth's mother was getting old and wished to see her only grandchildren. The last Elsbeth had seen of her family was when she visited them prior to her marriage. The wagons were packed and on January 28th 1884 they trekked off complete with Jessie's parakeet which she gave to the children of a friend in Cape Town when they arrived there.

They reached De Aar, which was the railhead, and Charles saw them on to the train. He then returned alone to Matabeleland arriving on 22nd July. He had a tedious journey as he was first delayed in Barkly west awaiting a case of goods he was to bring up and then he got stuck in mud outside Klerksdorp. Somewhere between Kimberley and Barkly one of the wagon drivers found a tea strainer by the side of the road. Wardlaw Thompson had used this when he had been out visiting the L.M.S. stations with Charles. Charles recognized it and had it repaired at Barkly. He remarked in a letter to Thompson that every cup of tea he poured through it reminded him of their journey to Kimberley.

On his return to Matabeleland Charles intended to stay at Hope Fountain with Carnegie until the new missionary was settled in and conversant with Sindebele, and

then to move into new Bulawayo to be nearer the King's kraal. For the sum of 2 canisters of powder, 1 box of caps and 1 box of lead Charles was having a 14ft diameter hut built. Staying in the Helm's house was a younger brother of the late Julius Montgomery who did the cooking and in return was given an hour's teaching each evening. (This was Thomas Adrian Montgomery, son of Henry Martin Montgomery).

When news came that Elsbeth had been ill again on her journey from De Aar, Charles began to doubt that she would be able to stand up to the rigours of a German winter. He began to make alternative plans for his furlough in case he would have to go to England earlier than anticipated. Fortunately when the family broke their journey at Zuurbraak for a couple of months to stay with Charles's mother. Elsbeth recovered her health. After Zuurbraak, they travelled to Cape Town. This was a complete new experience for the children: traffic, streets, lights, the docks, crowds of people, above all, lots of white faces. They boarded R.M.S. Tartar that took three weeks to reach Southampton. A few days after their arrival on 15th July 1884 they embarked on a boat for Hamburg.

Jessie's recollections of the trip are very happy ones. She remembers being horrified at the bad manners of one little girl who ran along the deck hitting the books of the reading passengers. Reaching Hamburg, they set off on the last lap of their journey to Stolp to be greeted by, as Jessie put it, "*hordes of relatives*". The children couldn't speak German but with their knowledge of Dutch were able to understand it. The older ones picked up German easily when they went to school. Elsbeth rented a flat for them to live in while in Stolp and the children saw their grandmother and four aunts, Anna, Martha, Delphine and Katharine daily. Wintertime caused great excitement in the household - the sleigh rides through the pine forests covered in snow, skating on the frozen river. Xmas day with their relatives was in complete contrast to Xmas spent in Matabeleland when the Helms played host to any trader or traveller in the vicinity and summer was at its height.

In September Father Prestage, who had been at the Jesuit Mission at Tati, took charge of the mission near old Bulawayo so that the ailing Engels, the then head of the station, could be relieved. They both called at Hope Fountain and found that Carnegie was on the point of leaving for Mangwato. While at Tati, Prestage had visited Lobengula twice early in 1884. On his second visit, Prestage had asked Lobengula for permission to set up a school at Bulawayo. Nothing came of the request. On the 1st October he asked for Lobengula's permission to move permanently from Tati to Bulawayo, which was granted. When he visited the king on 1st December, he again discussed the setting up of an industrial school with him. When Charles paid a return visit on 3rd December to Father Prestage, Count de la Panousse (who was on a hunting trip) and Mr. Stuart were with the Priest. Charles's hut was taking rather a long time to build and was further delayed when work stopped completely while preparations for the Great Dance were being made. Eventually, on the 20th January 1885, Lobengula instructed his headman Sindiza to give the Jesuits land for the school, at Empanjeni, 50 miles south of Bulawayo.

News from Stolp was that diphtheria had broken out but Elsbeth wrote to Charles that she had faith that the children would be alright. She also said that, as the cost of living in Germany was rather high, she was having difficulty in coming out with 5 children on £35 a quarter. Charles wrote to Thompson and asked him to send whatever she required – Jessie’s Schoolteacher refused to accept payment for her schooling, as she had been Elsbeth’s governess.

Once Charles had taken up his residence in Bulawayo, he was determined that he would enforce a rule of giving medicines out only in the morning so that he would also have time to hold a service and school each day. When, at the end of February 1885, his hut was still not ready, Charles determined to move over to New Bulawayo (Umhlabatine) and live in his wagons, leaving Hope Fountain in charge of one of the Matabele.

Carnegie arrived back from the “Colony” on the 16th March and the two of them rode over to Hope Fountain together to unload Carnegie’s wagon. On the 18th they returned to Bulawayo and they paid a visit to Lobengula, afterwards riding out to the Elliotts at Inyati. By April, Charles had managed to institute his daily programme. At first he was inundated with beggars but they began to accept that (in Charles’ words) he was “Nectjane” (Ncitschana – i.e. Stingy). Thompson had suggested that Charles began his medicine parade with a Service, and Charles implemented this. He had an average of 30 patients a morning. Sunday services were still poorly attended, as the Matabele were too busy in their gardens. Occasionally with Carnegie, he would visit Prestage, but in spite of keeping busy as possible, Charles missed his family and was pleased when finally, on the 9th December 1885 he set off on his journey to Germany. Carnegie, who had married Margaret Sykes, daughter of the Sykes’ at Inyati, stayed at Hope Fountain.

Charles arrived at Shoshong on 30th December and set off again on the 6th of January in company with the Reverends Hepburn and Lloyd for the meeting at Kuruman, where they arrived on the 6th February. At Kuruman he awaited a reply from the L.M.S. regarding his plans for his trip to Europe. He wrote to Thompson asking his advice on whether he should get a new set of teeth in London or wait until he reached Berlin. He said that he needed them before he could do any public speaking.

He arrived in England in May and then travelled to Stolp where he remained for two months before returning with the rest of the family to England. Charles and Elsbeth, with Alexis and Erica, left England on the 28th September 1887 leaving the three eldest children in boarding schools. Jessie and Winnie went to a Home and School for missionary children in Sevenoaks in Kent and Balfour to the boy's counterpart in Blackheath, London. Jessie, who was at the school for seven years, recalled that she saw many children from every part of the world adapt quickly to their new environment there. It was the parents who suffered most from the long separations. They had to be content with letters that the children had to write every week, often an irksome task for the children. She comments “*My mother remembers a letter from one of my sisters, aged nine: “I hope you are quite well. My friend’s name is Alice.*

We are learning to sing. We are learning a piece of poetry. It is by Longfellow. You may have heard of him. It is called Hiawatha.” Then followed half a dozen lines from the poem- it was a way of filling a letter.” When the Helms stayed in England, it may have been at the Mission House, because, in later letters, the feeling comes through that the Helms and Thompsons had become good friends.

When they reached Zuurbraak, they stayed for ten days and while there a farmer friend gave them two “Ridgeback” dogs to take back to Matabeleland. These dogs, when crossed with others by Cornelius van Rooyen, were the forebears of the Rhodesian Ridgeback.

They arrived at Kimberley on the 27th November to find that the oxen they had asked Wookey and Price to obtain for them had gone astray. Price was married to Bessie Moffat, Robert’s daughter, and had recently moved to Kuruman as a missionary there. (Price had survived the Reverend Holloway Helmore’s disastrous Makololo Mission expedition to Chief Sekeletu, who lived near the confluence of the Chobe and Zambesi Rivers. Eight of the twelve members of the party had died, possibly from poisoning, among them his first wife and child.) Finally, they asked Mr. Ashton to purchase some for them. At Barkly West they met Fred Sykes who was anxious to accompany them to Matabeleland. Sykes’s father had died at Inyati in July and Fred wished to see his grave and then accompany his mother down south. At Kuruman, where they arrived on the 27th December, they unloaded all the parcels to be collected by the various missionaries when they attended the next meeting. The Helms stayed with the Prices, and Fred Sykes with the Rev. J.T.Brown. The Rev. Bowen Rees was at Kuruman, on his way up to Matabeleland to take the place of Rev. Sykes at Inyati, so when they set off again on 3rd January; they had an additional member to their party. They stayed with the missionaries Good at Kanye, and Wookey at Molepolole.

As was customary, on arrival at Bulawayo, they went to visit Lobengula. They found him suffering from gout and lying on the floor of his hut covered with a blanket. In the middle of the floor was an earthenware vessel filled with charcoal and wood to keep him warm. A young buck, a kid and a cat lay next to the fire. Sykes, Rees and Helm sat tailor-fashion while Charles introduced the newcomers to the King. Lobengula gave them a good welcome and said to Elsbeth *“Why did you throw your husband away for so long, but I am glad you have taken him on again”*.

They arrived at Hope Fountain on the 10th March to find that the African who had been left in charge there had been murdered in April, 1886, after a “smelling out” process by the witchdoctors. As Bowen Rees was anxious to see Inyati they left most of their goods unpacked, and set off on the 12th. At Inyati, Charles found the people upset about Sykes’s death, but very pleased to meet Rees. The Elliott’s house was very dilapidated and in as bad a condition as theirs which needed re-thatching.

Back at Hope Fountain, they decided that their kitchen was habitable and they would therefore use it for their living quarters, and sleep in the wagon tent. They resigned themselves to this arrangement until June when the thatching grass would be ready

for the roofing. Even the outhouses were beyond repair, so Charles had a hut built at the cost of 30/-, to serve as a dispensary. Luckily, only one case of their belongings, which Charles had carefully packed before leaving for his furlough, had got wet from the hole in the thatch, and nothing of great value was spoilt. The people of all colours were delighted to have them back again and brought them presents of meat, eggs and vegetables.

Mr. and Mrs. Carnegie with Mrs. Sykes and Fred left on the 21st March for their journey south. Elsbeth was to suffer for a few months from agonising tooth-ache and headaches and the children were not well, but Elsbeth thought that as soon as they had become accustomed to the climate once more, they would recover very quickly. She was pleased to be back in her home in spite of it being only one room. She made it look very homely and was pleased to entertain a Count in it and was hoping to welcome the Bishop of Bloemfontein, Knight-Bruce, later in the year. The Count was Von Schweinitz, about whom Charles had received a letter from John Smith Moffat. Moffat had resigned from the L.M.S. in 1879. In the following years he held a number of Government appointments and, in 1887, was appointed British Representative to Bulawayo. He had, on the 11th February 1888, entered into a treaty with Lobengula, on behalf of the British Government. The Treaty secured Matabeleland and Mashonaland to British influence, ruling out influence from any other country. Moffat wrote to Charles Helm as follows: -

“Khama tells me he is making overtures to Lobengula regarding the boundary line. I hope you will be able to help on a good understanding. You will be a public benefactor. The object of my note is to ask you a favour to undertake a confidential message to the King. I do not like making the request but there is no one else in Matabeleland to be trusted. There is a certain Count [Von] Schweinitz on his way up – a countryman of Mrs. Helm. He is on a shooting-trip but there is reason to believe that there is more behind and the Government wishes Lobengula to be advised, while showing him all civility and kindness, not to let him go out of the back door via the Zambesi or to allow him to make such observations as will facilitate at some future date an in-road on Mashonaland from that side. The young gentleman has already been tampering with subordinates in Government offices to get certain information and it is quite fair to put a check in his way. I hope Mrs. Helm will forgive me.”

We do not know if Helm or Lobengula acted on this advice but Count Von Schweinitz was later with Bishop Knight-Bruce and Selous on the Hunyani River in Mashonaland.

The mix-up with oxen at Kimberley and the death of the oxen they subsequently bought had cost Charles £33. He hoped that the L.M.S. would reimburse some of the money. Elsbeth, however, said when she wrote to the L.M.S., that Charles was more worried about the debts, as their cattle were still dying. She was aware that they would never make a fortune in rearing cattle or anything else. Elsbeth also said she could at least see improvement in the Matabele over the last ten years and although sometimes the future looked dark, she trusted and knew *“the Lord will take care of*

us". She was sorry that Wardlaw Thompson, who had been out to Cape Town on a trip, hadn't been able to come up to see the difference in the people. When Elsbeth was writing in May, Lobengula was already being pestered by gold-seekers but according to Elsbeth, he wouldn't decide on anything. She felt that if he didn't, then the Transvaal would.

Elsbeth was starting a sewing class once she had settled in again. The children at school wrote home regularly. Their letters were written in German, in spite of their having forgotten quite a lot of the language. She felt that Balfour needed a lot of urging on in his work. The two younger children, Alexis and Erica, were now the only children left at home. Erica's daughter recalls her mother telling of the rivalry between her brother and herself as to who could get up first to see the cows being milked. She was at a disadvantage because she had to button on her boots so, in desperation, one night she decided to go to bed with her boots on. When Elsbeth came in to tuck them in for the night she saw the two little bumps in the bed and quietly removed them.

The Bishop of Bloemfontein arrived in May 1888, on his intended journey to Mashonaland, as he was keen to extend the work of the Diocese to the north. Before undertaking the journey, Knight-Bruce had written, early in 1887, to Wardlaw Thompson who had replied to him as follows: -

London Missionary Society

14 Blomfield Street

London

23rd June, 1887

The Right Rev. The Bishop of Bloemfontein

My Dear Sir,

Your note ought to have been replied to before this. Unfortunately it arrived when I was away from town after our annual meetings, and I have not been able to write to you since my return.

I feel that we owe you thanks for your courtesy in writing to us about your projected visit to the Mashona Country. It is true that we have long looked wistfully at the country from our Matabele Mission but our missionaries have hitherto been prevented from visiting it by Lobengula. And even if the opportunity was afforded them to travel or settle there I do not think the Society could venture to undertake any such extension of it's field. We have neither the men nor the means to attempt at present any settlement in such a district. Consequently it seems to me to be our plain duty to wish you good speed on your journey and a satisfactory opening for mission

work in the country. I hope the Matabele King will not refuse you permission to go on.

Our mission in Matabeleland is very weak just now as two of it's most active members are home on furlough. They are both returning in the autumn and if you happen to be journeying northwards at the same time as the Rev. C.D. Helm you will find his knowledge of the country and the people of great use on the road. I am quite sure he and other members of the mission would be glad to do anything in their power to assist you.

I remain, etc.

The Bishop was feeling ill when he arrived at Bulawayo but, as he was anxious to see Charles, he rode out to Hope Fountain. He wrote in his diary:

"The sight of the Mission house after the little ride of 9 miles in contrast to the Chief's Kraal gave me a feeling of the blessedness of Christianity such as I had never understood before."

Charles and the Bishop discussed the customs of the African for a while and then Charles sent a boy to show Knight-Bruce "the road". Charles, concerned that the Bishop was not well, visited him the next morning, which was the 26th May, and walked over with him to visit Lobengula, who questioned the Bishop on his motives for coming into the country. The next day, Sunday, the Bishop's health deteriorated and when Charles walked over on the Monday from his wagon and saw his condition, he placed rugs and coats under him and started to bring him to Hope Fountain in the wagon. The jolting of the wagon was too much for Knight-Bruce so he was transferred to a Basuto pony to finish the journey. That night he slept in the wagon but the next day Elsbeth put him on the sofa in her kitchen, and, as he says, *"Every possible kindness and attention were given me. Never shall I forget the Christian hospitality of the two people"*.

As he slowly recovered, the Helms would sit with him and discuss the state of the country, and their efforts to teach the Matabele. By the 31st the Bishop was well again and went with Charles to see Lobengula to obtain his permission to go to Mashonaland. Elsbeth attended the Bishop's Sunday morning Service with his servant, and Charles asked him to conduct the evening Service for everyone. Preparations began next morning for his journey. While packing his boxes, the Bishop took out some of his medicines and gave them to Charles. A last visit to Lobengula and then the Bishop was on his way.

The Cape Government in August that year made Charles's position as Postmaster official. He was supplied with a 23mm diameter date stamp inscribed "Bechuanaland", in addition to the name of the office. As Charles knew that Lobengula would resent the implication that Matabeleland was part of Bechuanaland, (Lobengula's relations with Khama were already strained over a border dispute) he deleted the offending word and asked Sam Edwards at the Post Office in Tati to do

the same. Sam Edwards, who was the son of the Reverend Roger Edwards of the L.M.S., had gone with Robert Moffat in 1854 on his visit to Mzilikazi in Matabeleland. They were the first Europeans to visit him there, and were given the freedom of the country. When Edwards attempted to get a concession from Lobengula in 1881, the king had made him a personal gift, for a yearly rental, of the Tati Concession, which had been abandoned in 1872.

The British Expedition, led by Sir Charles Warren, had occupied Bechuanaland at Khama's request, in 1884, and it had become a Protectorate of the British Government. Sam Edwards had been sent up to Matabeleland the following year with Lieut. E.A. Maund to inform Lobengula of the establishment of the Protectorate and to assure the king of the continued friendship of the British Government.

8. THE CONCESSION SEEKERS

On the 22nd August, John Smith Moffat, once more in his capacity as British Representative, visited Lobengula at his favourite summer Kraal, Umvutcha. (This kraal was just over four miles northeast of Lobengula's capital, just beyond the Umguza River.) The purpose of Moffat's visit was to seek clarification of a treaty of friendship allegedly made in July 1887 between Lobengula and Pieter Grobler, as Consul for the South African Republic at Bulawayo. (Khama's men subsequently killed Grobler on his way south to collect his family.) Earlier in February, when Moffat had entered into a treaty with the King, Lobengula had denied the existence of any other treaty. Moffat was therefore under the impression that he had secured Matabeleland and Mashonaland to British influence. The Transvaal Government was now challenging the British Government over this treaty and Moffat therefore wanted the King's official denial. In spite of several other people being available to act as interpreter, they awaited the arrival of Charles, because, as Moffat put it, "*Lobengula and he had the most faith in him*". Charles arrived at the kraal with Carnegie. At the conclusion of business, when Lobengula had put his mark on a statement repudiating the Grobler Treaty, the missionaries met some of the men who were camped a little distance away from Moffat's wagon. Moffat had set his wagon under a shady tree (later known as "The Missionary Tree"), a mile from the king's kraal. At that time there were approximately 30 Europeans seeking Lobengula's permission to prospect for gold. This area became known as "The White Man's Camp". Benjamin "Matabele" Wilson with his partners Alex Boggie and John Cooper-Chadwick, were in the Camp at that stage. Wilson apparently accompanied the missionaries back to Hope Fountain, where he was warmly welcomed that day and on many more occasions. Along with the other white men, Wilson was horrified at some of the Matabele punishments. Carnegie, however, told him that on one occasion when he went to voice his disapproval of an incident, the king explained the reasons for his punishment, which were the only practical course for him to take.

"Matabele" Wilson gives us an account of the incident:

The victim was a native who had his face mutilated for stealing the king's beer. The well-known missionary, the Reverend David Carnegie, spoke to the king about this, telling him how barbarous it was and how abhorrent in the eyes of the white people. "What would you advise me to do?" Lobengula asked the missionary. The missionary replied, "King, why don't you build a gaol as the white men do, and put evil-doers there?" The Lobengula asked what a gaol was, and upon being told, remarked, "You give them a house to sleep in, a blanket to lie on, and food to eat. If I build a gaol I would have the whole Matabele nation in there in a week!"

Westbeeche (who had been friends with the king since 1868 and who kept him supplied with the Blue Monkey skins that he wore) had given Wilson and his friends an introductory letter to Lobengula. He also sent a present with them of Blue Crane feathers and Wilson's party gave the king a sporting rifle.

Charles wrote to the L.M.S. on the 15th September, as follows:

My Dear Mr. Thompson,

By last post I wished to inform you of the new Postal Service to Mandebeleland (sic) but Mr. Moffat, the Assistant Commissioner, was desired by the Chief to ask me to come over as he wished me to interpret between Mr. Moffat and himself on important business. Mr. Moffat on his part also urged me to come. I went and could not return on time for the Post.

The Government of British Bechuanaland is now running the Post all the way here and we no longer pay subscriptions. To defray expenses an extra rate is levied on letters and newspapers. In order to obviate the necessity of entering into a number of transactions the additional postage on letters and papers received by us is not prepaid by the senders but is collected by the Postal Agents in cash. I enclose a copy of the regulations.

I have been appointed Postal Agent here. I don't know who mentioned my name to the Postmaster General. There is no salary attached to the office but there is a commission of 2.1/2% on the sale of stamps, which, I am afraid, will not materially add to my income.

It is to be hoped that the affair between Kgama [sic – Khama] and some Boers will be amicably settled. Sir Sydney Shippard has gone down the Crocodile River to the scene of the fray to make enquiries and was to be met there by General Joubert on behalf of the Transvaal.

The brother of the late Mr. Piet Grobler has been up here. He wishes Lobencula (sic) to ask Kgama why he, Kgama, has killed two Boers in his (Lobencula's) country. The Chief said that if his people had been killed he would soon enough have asked Kgama.

But as the Bamangwato had not interfered with him, he had no questions to ask Kgama. He and his people had no quarrel with the Bamangwato.

Mr. Fred Grobler, in leaving this country, said that in six months Kgama will be the late Kgama. He said he was going to Pretoria to ask a Commando against Kgama. If the President refused, he would get volunteers.

But, as the British Government have notified to all whom it may concern, that they have exclusive influence in all this country, we may conclude that the President will not only refuse to send a Commando, but will proclaim as outlaws all who make a raid into the country north of the Transvaal.

There are a great many people in this country to ask for Gold Concessions. But the Chief does not seem willing to open his country for gold digging. He has written to Mr. Edwards at Tati to tell all Hunters – Goldseekers arriving there not to trouble

themselves to come any farther as there was neither game nor gold in his country anymore. [Sam Edwards acted as an Immigration Officer for Lobengula].

Messrs. Fairbairn, Phillips and Leask have obtained a Concession to dig for gold on the land of Lobencula. A Mr. Moore [H.C.Moore, “an American of large gold-field experience”] has also some Concession but what it is I do not know.

You will be surprised to hear that we have not quite finished the thatching of our premises. We had first of all to wait till the grass was fit for cutting, and then for poles to repair the outhouse. By next week, however, I hope we shall have the ridging on. We shall be very glad as the rains promise to come early this year. We have already had a few showers.

I am sorry to say that my estimate for re-thatching was made on insufficient information and was consequently too low. I found that John Halyet’s charge of £15 for thatching was for the main building only. He charged for the rest £10. This he has now reduced to £8, making a total of £23. The grass, hides and ridging and labour will not be much less than £20. I shall lay the accounts for re-thatching before our first Mandebele sub-committee meeting.

Since Mr. Carnegie’s return about five weeks ago we have recommenced our daily school and Service. The school begins at 8 a.m. We have given notice that, as we are first Missionaries and then Doctors, we wish all who come for medicines to be in time for our Service. The attendance varies. So does that of our Sunday Services.

Sometimes the people listen with such eager attention to our preaching that I think they must be impressed with God’s truth and that we shall soon have earnest inquirers after the truth.

At other times again our work seems hopeless – it seems as if nothing can make any impression on the minds and hearts of these people. And I only find encouragement in knowing that it is God’s work and that although the instrument is weak, it is not by power, nor by might but by His spirit that God accomplishes His work.

We are looking anxiously forward to accounts of the meeting on Missions held in London last June. We have joined earnestly in the prayer for the outpouring of God’s spirit and for a large blessing to follow. And you will not wonder when I tell you that our thoughts were very much turned to the Amandebele and that the blessing we most desired was for the baptism of the Spirit on the missionaries and people in this dark land.

Will you kindly inquire if the accounts paid for me at the Mission House have already been forwarded to me? The inconvenience of not having the accounts is very great.

Mr. Carnegie wishes me to say that he will write soon. Mrs. Helm joins me in kindest regards to Mrs. Thompson and yourself, also to her friends at the Mission House.

I remain, dear Mr. Thompson,

Yours sincerely

Chas. D. Helm

9. THE RUDD CONCESSION

White Man's Camp was further enlarged in September 1888 when Charles Charles Dunell Rudd, Frank R. Thompson (later known as "Matabele" Thompson) and James Rochfort Maguire came to represent Cecil John Rhodes, at that time a member of the Cape Parliament. Rhodes, as was the fashion in that era, was an "Imperialist" but was liberal enough to define a civilized man as "*a man whether white or black, who has sufficient education to write his name, has some property or works, in fact is not a loafer*". His ambition was to see the British Empire extended from the Cape to Cairo, and, as the British Government didn't appear to be interested in extending their responsibilities, he decided to raise money to do it privately. Rhodes was a Director of the De Beers Consolidated Company, as was Rudd and they decided to go into partnership over the concession bid. Thompson was the Compound Manager (that is, Manager in charge of the African labour) of De Beers, spoke several native languages and knew their customs. Maguire was a lawyer who had been at Oxford University with Rhodes. They approached Lobengula on the 22nd. September about an interpreter and asked if they might bring Tainton. Tainton had not been in Lobengula's presence for about two months as he had accidentally killed a Matabele man. However, Lobengula gave his consent as he said Tainton had paid his fine. On their approaching Tainton, he was very reluctant to go before Lobengula as yet and suggested they ask Helm. Thompson had been given a letter of introduction to Mrs. Helm from Mrs. Hepburn so they rode over to Hope Fountain. Mrs. Hepburn knew Thompson's father when he lived in Griquatown. As they approached the house, they met Mr. Carnegie with one of the children. The Helms welcomed the party in and insisted they stay for tea. They eventually left their camp at 5.30p.m. On the 24th.of September, Moffat rode over to Rudd's party to inform them that he, with his son and orderly, would be riding over to Hope Fountain to collect the post They stayed overnight there as the post had been delayed. The next day they rode back empty handed, as it had still not arrived.

Charles and Moffat turned up at Rudd's compound, which was a collection of tents, on a ridge a few hundred yards away from Moffat's wagon, at 3pm.on the 26th. At about 5.30 p.m. they all rode over to Lobengula but they asked Charles to go in alone to the King. Charles found Lobengula too tied up with his own people, and after greeting the King courteously, returned to the others. Rudd entertained him to dinner and after a long talk walked back with him to Moffat's camp where Charles was staying. When Rudd walked over to Moffat's camp the next day, the mail had arrived at last. Charles was already over at the King's to see if he could get an audience. This time he was successful and he put Rudd's proposals to Lobengula who promised to talk them over with his people. The whole of the 29th was spent at Lobengula's. He

offered the Rudd party hospitality and told them to come with Charles on the next Tuesday to discuss the proposals fully. Monday morning was to see Maguire and Rudd at Hope Fountain where several other missionaries and people were already present. Elsbeth, whom Rudd describes as “*very kind and homely*”, provided lunch and afternoon tea, after which they all set off for the Kraal. Charles stopped off at Moffat’s and dined with them. Next morning, Tuesday, as arranged with Lobengula, they set off early to see the King. He proved disinclined to discuss business but refused permission for Charles to return to Hope Fountain. As they were on the point of leaving, a letter arrived from Khama and Lobengula asked Charles to read it to him. The reading was interrupted by the arrival of the remains of a large Impi (a Regiment of warriors) that had been away for a long time on a raiding expedition beyond the Zambesi River. Cooper-Chadwick in his book “Three Years with Lobengula” relates that “*Their numbers were greatly diminished from famine, sickness, and fierce contests with other tribes, whom they found a harder nut to crack than wretched Mashonas. In fact, the expedition had been a failure, or, as they said, “The ground opened and swallowed them up.” The captives that were brought back were a wild-looking lot, their bodies tattooed all over and hair curiously arranged into fantastic shapes: many of them showed marks of the ill-usage they suffered along the road as they bowed down trembling before the King, who then distributed them among his people as slaves.*”

During 1885 the Matabele had been thoroughly defeated by the Tawana tribe in Ngamiland, due to the Tawana’s possession of firearms. This raid, during 1888, had been to the Koziwala area in the present Zambia.

Charles went back in the afternoon to see if the King wanted the letter finished. This was declined because of the late hour, as was Charles’s request to return home. Permission was granted the next day with the stipulation that he return on Friday night so that business could begin on Saturday morning. Thompson accompanied Charles home. Saturday’s attempt to discuss matters was unsuccessful and Charles told the King that Rudd’s party was anxious to return to the Colony. Lobengula’s answer was that when they fixed a date for their return he would discuss business. Charles suggested that Shippard, who was arriving, should be treated with respect.

That weekend Charles wrote to the L.M.S. and put them in the picture regarding the situation.

Hope Fountain

Amandebele Country

Via Mafeking

British Bechuanaland

11th October 1888

My Dear Mr. Thompson,

There has been quite a little ferment in the Mandebele country during the last few days. You will have heard that Sir Sidney Shippard [Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate] went to the Crocodile River to make enquiries on the spot about the affray between two Boers [the Grobler party] and Kgama's people. When the enquiry was over, he determined to come up here to see Lobengula. When he arrived at Tati he sent a despatch to Mr. Moffat to see if the Chief would like him to come or not. The Chief at first said the Administrator must best know himself whether he would come or not. This was in the afternoon and Mr. Moffat sent off a despatch with this message. Early next morning, however, old Lotje, the Induna of Induba, came over with a message to Mr. Moffat to send off at once to invite the Administrator to come in.

A day or two after a report was brought to the Chief that an Impi of white men was coming into the country consisting of fifty three wagons, a cannon and a large number of people. The Chief called Mr. Moffat and all the white people at the Chief's to a meeting with his Indunas – they had a meeting of about three hours. The Indunas (the Chief was not present) insisted that Mr. Moffat knew about the Impi, that it was in fact his Impi. Mr. Moffat simply denied that. He said he knew nothing of an Impi. I arrived at Emvutjwa (sic – Umvutcha) just after the meeting broke up. The Chief was as friendly as usual. The next morning I went again to see him. He called me into the buck kraal and told me of the reported Impi. I told them that the people had evidently seen the Administrator's three wagons and water cart and perhaps some other wagons that were at Tati at the time and the escort of His Honour and exaggerated them into fifty-three wagons and a troop of men. I told him that the Administrator as such always travelled with an escort, even in his own country, and that he would naturally, coming so far, have an escort of Police (15), the Captain, Secretary, Cook, etc. But that I was perfectly sure that no English Impi was on its way. For the English didn't make raids like that. He had, the day before, sent a letter to the Administrator (not through Mr. Moffat) to come in with only one wagon and four white men. He has since sent another message to say he can come in with his whole party if he likes. We are going over tomorrow morning to the Chief's to meet the Administrator for we heard today he is likely to arrive tomorrow.

There have been and are a large number of white people in the country to seek concessions and this has helped to emphasise the uneasiness of the people. Some of those who came to seek concessions left yesterday. Some came here to say good-bye and told Mr. Carnegie that we should ask the Directors to discontinue the Mission for a time till things were more settled. We, however, think that if we were to ask to leave the country, the Chief would think there was really an English Impi coming and would refuse us permission to leave. I cannot say that I have felt no uneasiness. But we are not on our own business and we must have clear indications that it is our duty to leave before we can think of doing so. We have committed ourselves to the care of our Father and trust in Him.

It seems to me that unless the Chief comes to some arrangement with a strong company to work the Mashona gold fields and keep out others, there will be a rush there soon and things will come to a climax.

Among those who have come about the gold mining there are Messrs. Rudd, Maguire and Thompson representing the De Beers Mining Company (Kimberley) or if not the Company at all events, some of the largest shareholders of the Company, Mr. Rhodes among them. Mr. Rudd is also a large holder of shares. They represent a large amount of money and have made liberal proposals to the Chief. They have received no answer yet. But are in hopes that this answer will be favourable. Should they get such an answer, they will send a representative to live in the country. Mr. Rudd asked me that seeing their representative will be new to the country and to the ways of the people, whether I would not help them a little. He did not say in what way. I said that I could not undertake anything that might hinder our work and could do nothing without the sanction of the Directors. He said he would state in writing what he wanted and that I could then forward it to you. Today he wrote me a note to say that as they had not had their answer from the Chief, he could not yet make a formal proposal but requested me to mention the subject generally to you.

Mrs. Helm has a very bad cold; the rest of us are quite well. Mrs. Helm bade me specially not to forget to thank you very much for your photograph which came by last post and which we think very good. She will send you your old picture taken from the "Evangelical" some other time as she promised. We all unite in kindest regards to Mrs. Thompson and yourself.

I am sincerely yours

Chas. D. Helm

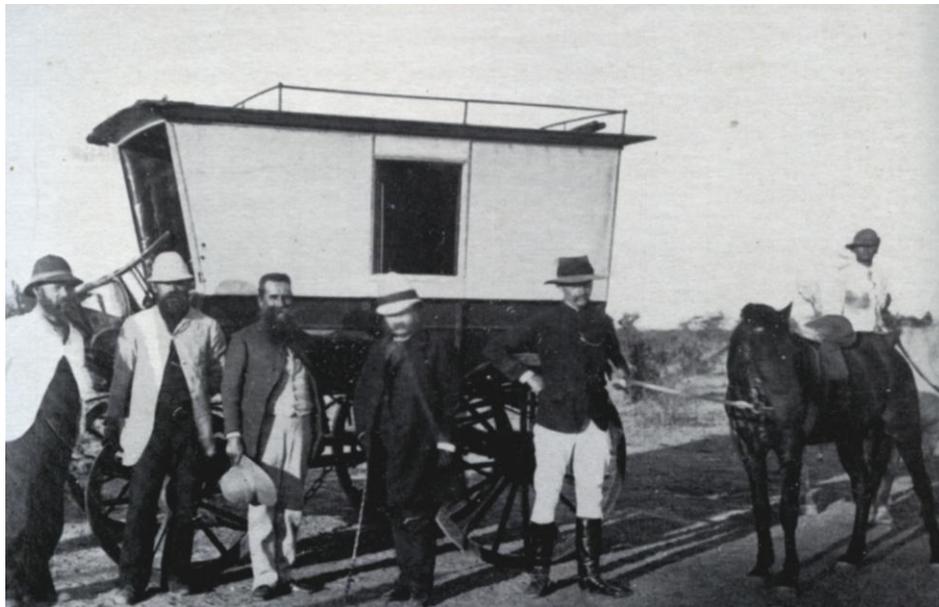
Sir Sidney Shippard arrived on the 15th October, with an escort of Bechuanaland Mounted Police, commanded by Major Goold-Adams. Two days later, early in the morning, Rudd sent his cart over to Hope Fountain for Charles and Carnegie. They all breakfasted together before walking over to Moffat's wagon where Shippard and Knight-Bruce had already gathered. The Bishop had returned from his trip into Mashonaland. They all sat in a large marquee and talked matters over, until Shippard left them as he was suffering from a touch of fever. Next morning they all met again, Thompson leaving after a while to go to Lobengula, who signified his readiness to see Shippard. The entire party went over to the kraal and Shippard was received most graciously. Shippard recalled the visit as follows:

"On arriving at the Chief's kraal I was at once ushered into the innermost enclosure. I was accompanied by the Right Rev. Bishop of Bloemfontein, Mr. J.S. Moffat, Assistant Commissioner, Major Goold-Adams, and the chief missionary at Hope Fountain, who very kindly undertook the onerous duty of interpreting for me. The Rev. D. Carnegie, missionary at Hope Fountain, was also present. I was careful to have seats carried in by my servants as I found that all Europeans here without exception are accustomed to sit on ground before Think Pad , (sic), exactly as the

natives do, some of the old white inhabitants, and some of the new concession seekers actually grovelling before the Amandebele Chief with their hands on their knees and thus sidling up to their places in the circle in the crouching attitude of the natives who are fawning on him for boiled beef and Kaffir beer. A few minutes after I had taken my seat near his wagon a curtain was drawn aside, and the great man appeared and deliberately stepped over the front box of his wagon and sat down on the board before the driver's seat. He was completely naked save for a very long piece of dark blue cloth rolled very small and wound round his body, which it nowise concealed, and a monkey skin worn as a small apron and about the size of a Highland sporran. In person he is rather tall, though considerable shorter than Khama and very stout, though by no means unwieldy. His countenance reminded me of Mr. George French-Argus's portrait of the Zulu Chief 'Mpanda. His colour is a fine bronze and he evidently takes great care of his person, and is scrupulously clean. He wears the leathern ring over his forehead as a matter of course. Altogether he is a very fine-looking man, and, in spite of his obesity, has a most majestic carriage.

Like all the Matabele warriors who despise a stooping gait in a man, Think Pad walks quite erect with his head thrown somewhat back and his broad chest expanded, and as he marches along at a slow pace with his long staff in his right hand, while all the men around shout out his praises, he looks his part to perfection.

As he looked at me I rose and saluted him by lifting my helmet, after which I went up to his wagon and he shook hands with me very cordially. His manner was extremely courteous, and appeared to me to betoken some familiarity with European customs. The interview, though comparatively brief, was highly satisfactory, and Think Pad asked me to return the following morning at about seven a.m., so far as I could understand from his way of indicating the position of the sun."



Sir Sidney Shippard (in frock coat & sun helmet).

This appointment was postponed because of the death of one of Lobengula's children. Shippard expressed his regrets at Lobengula's loss and said that he did not expect to see the King for a few days but he received a message that afternoon that the King wished to see him. Shippard reported that: *"When I arrived he was engaged in the sacred duties of "medicine" or "mystery" of some kind in the holiest of his kraals – the goat or "buck" kraal - and I had to wait till he had washed off the paint and resumed his ordinary aspect. He did not keep me waiting long and received me in a very friendly manner and took me into a shady corner of his great kraal close to the place where he keeps all his meat and dried skins. To the olfactory nerves of a European invalid it was trying, but the Chief evidently meant the selection of this favourite spot to be regarded as a proof of goodwill. He asked me, when all were seated, that is to say, the two Indunas Lootche and Segombo (sic), Mr. Moffat, the Rev. C.D.Helm (interpreter), and Major Goold-Adams, to give him a complete account of what had occurred between Khama and the Transvaal Boers, which, of course, I did. The rest of the conversation so far as material to British interests will be found in the confidential despatch above referred to. At parting, Think Pad asked me to come again between seven and eight o'clock this morning (Saturday the 20th October), when he gave me his replies to all I had said. I need only say here that I left more than satisfied with the results of my interviews. He promised me two men to start with me on Tuesday, the 23rd instant, for the Tati. On Friday afternoon Think Pad expressed a wish to inspect my wagonette. I walked by his side on his right hand through his vast kraals both in going and returning, and I noticed a very large number of Matabele seated on the ground both in the outer kraal and outside it. As the Chief passed through their ranks the cheers and shouting of Think Pad's praises became general and very loud. I took this to be the invariable reception of the Amandabele Chief by his followers, but Mr. Moffat assured me that it was extraordinary, and had a certain significance. For upwards of fifty years the Amandebele had been taught to regard the English as their friends. Their confidence had been shaken by the recent scare and the false reports spread by emissaries from the Transvaal. The people had jumped to the conclusion of treachery on our part. Think Pad, though possessed of superior intelligence, had, of course, been obliged to redouble his incantations, but in the main he had stood firm against the popular delusion, and had decided on receiving the British Deputy Commissioner. Even his returning to examine my vehicle was in the eyes of the people a proof of his superiority of mind, or, at any rate, of the greater power of his own magic. The result has justified his faith and courage; our walking side by side was the visible proof of a cordial understanding, and hence the deafening cheers. Such at least, was the impression I was led to form.*

This afternoon (Saturday, October 20th), at Think Pad's request, Major Goold-Adams put the men of the escort through their drill with rifles and bayonets, but of course without bandoliers. The Chief walked some distance in front of his outer kraal to witness it, and watched everything with the keenest interest. He asked whether the Martini-Henry rifles could be fired without breaking the bayonets, the construction and use of which were fully explained to him. The men managed their horses

admirably, and Lobengula said he could perfectly understand what would be the effect of a large body of such men. Some bayonet exercise with a march past and salute wound up the little review, after which Think Pad said, "I have seen".

Knight-Bruce returned to Hope Fountain with Charles, as he was busy packing for his return home. He sold some of his stores, others (along with his photographic apparatus) he exchanged with Charles for five oxen. To Elsbeth he gave flour and biscuits. The Bishop was very impressed with Charles and with his lack of jealousy regarding the Anglican Church going into Mashonaland. Charles urged the Bishop to write an account of his journey and, in return, the Bishop pressed Charles to write a history of the Matabele as he felt that at that time Charles was the only person qualified to do it. (Unfortunately, as far as we know, Charles never did so, but the Bishop recorded his journey in "Memories of Mashonaland" during 1895.) So much was the Bishop's esteem of the missionaries in Matabeleland that he said: "... *nothing derogatory to the English nation can be laid at the doors of these men.*" The Bishop held two services for the Helms on Sunday and on the next morning he gave a letter for Lobengula to Charles, letting the King know of his departure. Charles took the letter over to Lobengula when he went with Rudd and his party to see the King. They managed to talk some of the concession business over. Shippard took leave of the King that day.

The next few days proved very frustrating, as they could not get any further or any definite answers from Lobengula. On the 29th October they did manage to have a meeting with the Indunas, Charles interpreting. He went through the draft concession with them, twice, explaining each part in detail. On the same day, Sir Sidney Shippard wrote to the British High Commissioner that: "...*Lobengula, possibly the most difficult and dangerous. He knows all about Majuba [the battle fought between the British and Boers for the hill of that name] and the retrocession of the Transvaal, he knows England, after the fairest promises, handed over 750 000 natives to the Boer, who they dread and detest. He is sharp enough and far sighted enough to understand that the English alliance might be his best card if only he could trust the English but there's the rub. England has a bad name in South Africa for breaking faith with the natives.*"

Shippard then reported a remark that Lobengula had made to Charles: "*Did you ever see a chameleon catch a fly? The chameleon gets behind the fly, remains motionless for some time, then he advances very slowly, and gently putting forward one leg and then the other. At last when well within reach he darts his tongue and the fly disappears. England is the chameleon and I am the fly.*"

At 6.30 a.m. on the 30th they all arrived at the kraal and were kept waiting for an hour until four Indunas came and invited them to an Indaba of over a hundred Headmen. After much altercation, Thompson and Induna Lotje went to the King and, after a while, Thompson sent for Rudd, as Lobengula wished to sign the concession. As it was necessary to have the concession witnessed, all the party went in. In Thompson's account of the signing, he states: "*Mr. Helm who had been concerned in watching the*

interests of the natives, and ensuring that all we did was fair and above board, accompanied us". They found the King sitting on a brandy case in the corner of the buck kraal. He was in a good mood but appeared very anxious and for over half an hour he declined to sign the paper, saying that he never signed his name and the suddenly he said: "Hellem, leta lapa." (Helm, bring it here), and signed it. Lobengula would not allow any of his Indunas to sign as he said they had already discussed and agreed on the concession. In this Charles concurred. The Concession read as follows:

THE RUDD CONCESSION.

Know all men by these presents that whereas Charles Dunnell Rudd of Kimberley, Rochfort Maguire of London, and Francis Robert Thompson of Kimberley, hereinafter called the grantees, have covenanted and agreed, and do hereby covenant and agree, to pay to me, my heirs and successors, the sum of one hundred pounds sterling British currency, on the first day of every lunar month, and further to deliver at my Royal Kraal, one thousand Martini-Henry breech loading rifles, together with one hundred thousand rounds of suitable ball cartridge, five hundred of the said rifles, and fifty thousand of the said cartridges to be ordered from England forthwith, and delivered with reasonable despatch, and the remainder of the said rifles and cartridges to be delivered so soon as the said grantees shall have commenced to work mining machinery within my territory, and further to deliver on the Zambesi River a steamboat with guns suitable for defensive purposes upon the said river, or in lieu of the said steamboat, should I so elect, to pay to me the sum of five hundred pounds sterling British currency, on the execution of these presents, I, Lobengula, King of Matabeleland, Mashonaland, and other adjoining territories, in the exercise of my sovereign powers, and in the presence and with the consent of my Council of Indunas, do hereby grant and assign unto the said grantees, their heirs, representatives, and assigns, jointly and severally, the complete and exclusive charge over all metals and minerals situated and contained in my kingdoms, principalities, and dominions, together with full power to do all things that they may deem necessary to win and procure the same, and to hold, collect, and enjoy the profits and revenues, if any, derivable from the said metals and minerals subject to the aforesaid payment, and whereas I have been much molested of late by divers persons seeking and desiring to obtain grants and concessions of land and mining rights in my territories, I do hereby authorise the said grantees, their heirs, representatives, and assigns, to take all necessary and lawful steps to exclude from my kingdoms, principalities, and dominions all persons seeking land, metals, minerals, or mining rights therein, and I do hereby undertake to render them such needful assistance as they may from time to time require for the exclusion of such persons and to grant no concessions of land or mining rights from and after this date without their consent and concurrence, provided that if at any time the said monthly payment of one hundred pounds shall be in arrear for a period of three months then this grant shall cease and determine from the date of the last made payment, and further provided that nothing contained in these presents shall extend to or affect a grant made by me of certain mining rights in a portion of my territory south of the Ramakoban River, which grant is commonly known as the Tati Concession.

This given under my hand this thirtieth day of October in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and eighty-eight at my Royal Kraal.

his mark.
(Signed) Lobengula
 X
C. D. Rudd,
Rochfort Maguire
F.R. Thompson

Witnesses,
(Signed) Chas. D. Helm
J. D. Dreyer

Rudd set off to Kimberley the same day, with the concession, £5 000 in gold and the six best mules. Thompson stated: *“It had been agreed that if Rudd and I obtained the Concession, Maguire would stay in the country, but the position was of such a difficult and delicate nature, being one of purely native diplomacy, that I was fearful of leaving him there alone. I accordingly agreed to remain, keeping him with me. For ten days Rudd got on well enough, and then he lost his road. For a day or two he was without water. So intense did his suffering become that he at last laid himself down to die, having first written a short account of how he had suffered, and where he had hidden the Concession. This letter was fastened to a tree. The native driver went off with the mules in search of water. During the night Rudd in a delirious state wandered for miles until, attracted by the barking of a dog, he came to a camp of Bushmen. These Bushmen in the wet season always fill ostrich eggshells with rainwater and conceal them in different places. When the hunting season comes round they have this scanty supply of water in case of accidents, but they must be hard pressed before they will open a shell. These men opened a shell and gave the water to Rudd, and later took him to Maseru, one of Khama’s headmen, who reported the matter to Khama. When Rudd had recovered a little he asked the Bushmen to take him back to where he had buried the Concession. With great difficulty they managed to trace his tracks back to the tree to which he had tied the letter, and then unearthed the document and the money. On the following day, with the assistance of the Bushmen, he found two of the mules near a waterhole, forty miles away. The other four mules had disappeared. He brought the two mules back to the cart, inspanned and again travelled south, picking up his native driver with one mule five days later. He inspanned this third mule, and with this team he and the driver arrived at Shoshong, where he bought a team of horses. He completed the journey to Mafeking by way of the western Transvaal, thence taking the coach to Kimberley, where he handed the Concession to Rhodes.”*

Sometime during October, Count Von Schweinitz returned from his hunting trip on the Hunyani River with E. Dunne. When Bishop Knight-Bruce had met them there the Count had received a letter from his home informing him of the death of William

I, the German Emperor. The Count's father was Ambassador at the Russian Court, so the Count decided that he had better hurry home as great changes would be taking place. He called at Hope Fountain and Elsbeth gave him several volumes of Dickens's work to give to her friend, Mrs. Hepburn, at Shoshong. Mrs. Hepburn relates how one day her children rushed in from playing, calling "*Mother, there is such a funny man coming up to the house. He has no shoes.*" When she went out, she saw a man with a heavily laden donkey coming up the path. It was the Count with her books. He had left his wagon in the veld but had put the books pannier-fashion on the donkey as his "introduction" to Mrs. Hepburn. She must have mentioned to Elsbeth that she had met Dickens and how she enjoyed his works and so Elsbeth, in her usual thoughtful manner, sent the copies to her. Charles attended the sub-committee meeting at Inyati during November. When Charles wrote to Wardlaw Thompson at the L.M.S. on the 22nd December, he enclosed a letter, written on the 9th November, by "Matabele" Thompson:

"I was very glad to get your letter of the 4th October. I am sorry to hear that the funds of the Society are not increasing in proportion to the expenses. You must often feel wary of the constant worry of trying to make both ends meet. It must sometimes appear to you, or at least, to the Directors as if we missionaries, are not sufficiently thoughtful in the matter of asking for money. But when through accident or misfortune, the money has had to be spent it must come out of the pocket of the missionary who can ill afford to bear any extra expense unless the Society helps.

I made a direct application to you for a grant in part of my losses, because it seems to me not in the course of ordinary expenditure and thus not a matter in which the Committee could very well express their recommendation or otherwise. It would be a gift from the Society. But after your kind letter I will write to the Committee. I shall of course be very glad if the B.D.C. recommend the Directors to give me some help. But under the present financial circumstances of the Society if they do not, I shall not say any more on the subject, more especially as my deficiency is not as large as I feared it would be.

Your letter came too late or I would have laid the matter before our Sub-Committee which met at Inyati last month.

I was vexed when I discovered that the oxen I bought at Barkly were infected with lung sickness. I was assured they were salted and could see no signs of disease among them. If I could have afforded the time I would have returned to Barkly and made the seller take the oxen back. Mr. Ashton writes me there is very little chance now of getting any money from him.

I am sorry to say my losses were not confined to those on the road. Last season was a very bad one for cattle. I have lost through poverty ten trek oxen, five or six cows, six or seven calves. Mr. Elliott and Mr. Rees have also lost a great many. Mr. Elliott, I believe, seventeen and Mr. Rees has, I think, only four of his original span left.

It was most distressing work every morning to have to lift the poor brutes. We tried feeding with Kaffir corn meal, green mealies, etc., but it was no use. I saved only two of the poverty stricken beasts.

I am sorry I have not had the opportunity of consulting the Inyati brethren with reference to your enquiries about Shiloh. Mr. Carnegie and I have talked it over. You are perfectly right in your surmise that no land can be alienated from the people. But Mrs. Thomas, with the consent of the Chief, could sell the building and the purchaser would get the same rights that Mrs. Thomas has now i.e. the same rights the Society has to Hope Fountain and Inyati. Rights, I may say, which are not easily interfered with but which of course still rest only on the will of an independent Chief.

With reference to other Societies getting such rights through Mrs. Thomas I do not think there is any likelihood of the Chief's agreeing to it. He utterly refused the Bishop of Bloemfontein permission to send missionaries into his country and when the Bishop, after leaving, sent him a note through me that he might probably see him next year, the Chief answered "You may come in and visit but not stay".

Mrs. Thomas has, I believe, received an offer from two steady young men who belong to Mr. Moffat's escort, of £30 per annum. But she refused that as not enough. She told us privately that she had let the place for this year for £50.

I do not think that Shiloh can be worked as an out-station from either Inyati or Hope Fountain. The distances are too great. (If we had an evangelist to reside on the place it might answer.) Not only are the distances too great but it would certainly not be worth while to pay say £30 or £35 per annum for the place unless a missionary was resident there, for an occasional visit would give one but small chance of influencing the people. Even where we are living we find it hard to make our influence felt. But as you very justly observe there are special circumstances with regard to Shiloh which would make it more difficult still. Even a resident missionary would have to expect a hard struggle for a year or two before he could make the people accustomed to his way of doing things which I take it for granted would be different from what they were used to.

There are many places nearer both Inyati and Hope Fountain where we can find as many people as at Shiloh – where we have not old habits ... [here his writing is not legible] ...where I may say where we are always kindly received and our message is listened to with respect and attention.

But although the Chief would not allow missionaries of other Societies to settle in the country they might yet gain an entrance through Mrs. Thomas. A Society might send a lay missionary to reside at Shiloh to carry on trade or work as an artisan and teach. In course of time, such a man if he is good and faithful might get the Chief to allow a missionary to follow.

To prevent this it may be worth while either to rent the place or buy the buildings from Mrs. Thomas. As a rental I think £30 is quite enough. To purchase I think £500.

The house is not worth so much but there are a great many fruit trees, a dam and water furrows, all which represent money. But whether rented or purchased to do any good we should have a missionary residing there, or an evangelist. If a missionary be appointed, the house must be built on a higher and healthier site. He might try for a season or two in the old house for it might prove that a different style of living shows the place not so unhealthy as it has proved in the past.

For Mrs. Thomas's sake, I shall be very glad if the Society takes over Shiloh. She has no means to live in the Colony or the Transvaal and is certainly not suited to manage a business in this country. After all she was connected with the Society for a long time and help given her either by renting the place or purchasing the house would be a good act.

If the Directors should decide to send another missionary please let us know in time so that we may arrange with the King. He will want to give special permission to a new man whether he were to reside at Shiloh or elsewhere.

Since writing my last letter things have quieted down again. But one never knows here what may next cause an excitement. You will have seen it stated in the papers that all the white men were preparing to leave the country. That was not correct. A few left and tried to persuade some others. You believed that we should leave the country for a time, but as I said before, we feel we do not come for personal objects and we must have a clear indication of it being our duty to leave before we can think of doing so.

I enclose a letter I received from Thompson referring to a subject I mentioned in my last at the request of Mr. Rudd.

I held out no hope to them that the Directors would agree to my receiving a salary, which would in a sense bind me to the interests of the Company. From what I understand they would only want me to do what I have already done and should at any time be willing to do for them without remuneration.

I have not been to the Chief so frequently of late but in a short time I hope to go with the wagon and stay for a time. At the request of the white people I went to Bulawayo last Sunday afternoon to have English service. There were nineteen Europeans present. I hope to go again on Sunday week, preaching somewhere on my way in the morning, having the English service and returning at night.

Mr. Carnegie and I take week about the home and out-stations or rather neighbouring towns. We have in the towns generally very good attendances.

I find my £5 Phaeton of very great use. It can almost go anywhere. I have two unsalted horses, which cost me £5 each at Kimberley. These may die of horse-sickness any day. But I am so accustomed to losses in cattle, that I thought [I] would run the risk of losing a horse for the sake of the convenience. The last word is however anything but expressive enough, I should rather say the horses are

indispensable. Walk ten or twelve miles there and back is too much for this country, and to in-span twelve oxen in a wagon for that distance is a waste of time.

Mrs. Helm and the children are, I am thankful to say, enjoying good health. Our house is quite comfortable now except that it wants it's calico ceiling still.

We certainly enjoyed the visit of the Bishop and the Count but they certainly have not effaced the memory of your visit to us. We still often refer to the time when you were with us and when we were travelling together. We should only be too delighted if we could have a repetition of you visit. We all unite in wishing you and Mrs. Thompson a happy New Year and with kindest regards to you both

I remain

Sincerely yours

Chas. D. Helm

Please remember us kindly to all friends at the Mission House.

Letter enclosed with above.

F. R. Thompson to C. D. Helm 9th November 1888.

Mr. Rudd asked us to write on behalf of our partnership as follows: -

You will remember what passed between Mr. Rudd and yourself relative to your taking a position as friendly intermediary and advisor between ourselves and the Chief Lobengula in case of our getting a concession and if it was agreed that in the above case Mr. Rudd should write you more definitely on the subject so as to enable you to lay the letter before the Secretary of your Society. We now beg to offer you a subsidy of £200 a year to act as our adviser and intermediary with the Chief Lobengula and to hold yourself to some extent at our disposal should emergency arise, to visit such place as the Chief may be temporarily resident, in our interests. Duties you will say difficult to define, but we can suggest a trial at any rate for one year, feeling sure the trial would result satisfactorily

We need not refer to our views and general policy with which you are already intimately acquainted and which we feel sure your own and others of your Society are in accord.

We trust your Society will take the view that some increase of influence for good will result to them both with the Chief and with ourselves and we might also say with the British Government, through this connection.

Should you desire to discuss matters further before writing we shall be glad to do so.

Sir Sidney Shippard issued a Minute on the subject of the Rudd Concession: -

1. *The 'Indaba' or Council of Matabele Indunas at which Mr. Rudd's Concession was discussed at Umvootcha (sic) and the actual signing of the Concession by the Chief Lobengula took place, as I understand, three days after the departure of Mr. J.S. Moffat, the Assistant Commissioner, and more than a week after I had left the Umguza River on my return from Matabeleland. I had carefully impressed upon Lobengula's mind that her Majesty's Government was not in any way concerned with either mining schemes or trading ventures and that he might be quite certain that any private concession seeker who professed to represent the British Government was trying to deceive him by false representations. No Government officer or representative had any thing to do with the concession in question, and my knowledge of what took place is limited to hearsay and to the contents of the document itself, which was shown to me by Mr. C.D. Rudd, when his mule cart overtook my ox wagons near Palochwe (sic – Palapye), on the road between the Tati and Shoshong.*

2. *The Rev. C.D. Helm, of the London Missionary Society, attested the document, and, as Mr. Rudd informed me, interpreted throughout for him, and was strongly in favour of the concession on two grounds: (a) because the substitution of the long-range rifles for the stabbing assegai would tend to diminish the loss of life in the Matabele raids, and thus prove a distinct gain to the cause of humanity; and (b) because the great increase of trade promised by Mr. Rudd would tend to introduce civilization among the Matabele.*

3. *On the other hand the Right Rev. the Bishop of Bloemfontein and the Rev. J.B. Hepburn, London Missionary at Shoshong, are strongly opposed to the supply of firearms and ammunition to the Matabele on account of the increased facilities likely to be thus afforded for their cruel raids, the atrocity of which appears to be beyond question.*

[The Bishop subsequently withdrew his strictures on obtaining further information "Having heard", wrote the Bishop, "that rifles were about to be sent to the Matabele, I expressed myself strongly as to what I considered the consequence of such action would be. When I afterwards learnt that these rifles were a necessary factor in an agreement by which it was hoped that the Mashona would be benefited, I thought it but just to give others credit for wishing as well to the Mashona as myself and withdrew any reflection that I had made on the transactions.]

4. *I felt it my duty to explain to Khama the conditions of Mr. Rudd's concession especially as related to the promised supply of arms and ammunition to the Matabele. Khama appeared very apprehensive that such a supply of arms and ammunition to the Matabele might be followed by a raid by them on the Bamangwato, Though I did not gather that he would attempt to prevent the conveyance of such arms and ammunition through his territory. Mr. Rudd would, I understand, be prepared to give arms and ammunition to Khama also, for defensive purposes, and the relative position of the Chiefs would remain unchanged.*

5. *As regards the arguments based solely on the humanitarian point of view, I am inclined to agree with the Rev. C.D. Helm in thinking that the gradual substitution of the rifle for the stabbing assegai will directly tend to diminish instead of increasing bloodshed and loss of life. A Matabele Matjaha unaccustomed to the use of firearms with only a rifle in his hands, would, in my opinion, be far less formidable than when, assegai in hand, he stalks his victim as at present. The experience of all those who have fought in Native wars in South Africa proves that bloodshed is decreased in proportion as the Native discards the stabbing assegai and takes to missiles or firearms; and experiences elsewhere, to say nothing of the teachings of history, appears to confirm this view. Mr. Hepburn contends that in this case it will be the stabbing assegai plus the rifle, and that the combination will render the Matabele invincible by any other native race; but this may I think, fairly be doubted. At any rate, I have noticed that other natives who have once acquired familiarity with the use of firearms discard all other weapons in favour of the rifle. The use of firearms in modern warfare has notoriously diminished loss of life in action.*

6. *In a political point of view it would in my opinion be inexpedient to place any restriction on the supply of firearms and ammunition to Lobengula, while, as he is quite aware, we allow an unlimited supply to be furnished to the Bechuana and other chiefs in and beyond our Protectorate. Any such attempted restrictions on our part as regards Lobengula would be wholly inoperative, as he can always obtain large supplies through the Transvaal, and our refusal would merely have the effect of throwing him, so to speak, into the arms of the Transvaal Boers. Lobengula is desirous of defending himself from filibusters from the Transvaal, against marauders claiming to act under Portuguese authority, and against certain regiments of unruly and virtually mutinous Matjaha consisting mainly of Maghole or captives who have grown up to be a source of perpetual danger to him. Bad as Lobengula's government may be from our point of view, it is the only means of maintaining order and preserving any vestige of respect for life and property among his ferocious subjects; and until, in the fullness of time, some salutary changes can be introduced, it will, in my opinion, be sound policy for us to furnish Lobengula with the means of maintaining his authority.*

(Signed) Sidney Shippard

December 20, 1888

In the meantime, Renny-Tailyour, Johan Colenbrander, Edward Maund, who were among the disappointed concession seekers decided to join forces to ask Lobengula for a concession over the eastern area – Manicaland. (Renny-Tailyour was an agent for Edward Amandus Lippert, a German businessman who worked with his brother in the diamond trade in South Africa). Johan Colenbrander was Renny-Tailyour's interpreter. Colenbrander, who was born in Natal, had an extensive knowledge of the Zulu language and their customs and was well regarded by Lobengula. Edward Maund had previously visited Lobengula in 1885.) Surprisingly, Lobengula seemed

agreeable to the proposal, but astonished Maund by asking him to first take two of his Indunas to England to visit the White Queen. Conflicting reports had been heard by Lobengula about the Queen (if she existed), her country and her military strength. At first Maund was reluctant about the whole idea, but on thinking it over, he decided it could be a way of thwarting Rhodes. Maund decided to go ahead with the proposed visit and Lobengula requested that a letter should be written. Maund suggested that in the letter, the king should ask Queen Victoria for a Protectorate, like the one in Bechuanaland.

The missionaries, Carnegie and Helm, were invited to witness it. Helm and Carnegie, however, thought that although the Protectorate might be a good idea, Lobengula's absolute monarchy would be lost. In the end on the 24th November, two letters were written without any mention of the Protectorate. The first letter read:

Lobengula desires to know that there is a Queen. Some of the people who come into this land tell him there is a Queen, some of them tell him there is not.

Lobengula can only find out the truth by sending eyes to see whether there is a Queen. The Indunas are his eyes.

Lobengula desires to ask her to advise and help him, as he is much troubled by white men who come into his country and ask to dig gold.

There is no one with him whom he can trust, and he asks that the Queen will send someone from herself.

The second letter set out Lobengula's boundaries and contested the Portuguese claims to Manicaland.

On the next day Lobengula presented the Indunas, Babyaan and Mtshete to Maund and Colenbrander as his Ambassadors to England. The Indunas set off on their visit wearing loincloths of skin and carrying their shields, small spears and knobkerries. The rest of their possessions were carried in a small bundle.



Babyaan, Maund, Mtshete & Colenbrander.

E.P.Mathers in his book “Zambesia” gives an account of the Indunas’ travels: *“The two men were willing to go - they had no option. The party started, one of the Ambassadors being at first very sulky. The King provided some cattle for the road and agreed to pay all expenses. On asking how much the travelling expenses would be he was informed that their amount would be about £600. His Majesty thereupon got into his wagon and took down a handkerchief full of English sovereigns, some of which had been obtained by the Rudd concession. He then counted out a sum for the expenses of his Embassy, though it was not quite sufficient. "Albeit dirty, Babjaan was," according to Mr. Maund, and we shall allow that gentleman now to talk for himself for a bit, "a charming and dear old man, always ready to do anything he was bid, pleased with everything, and one of the most unselfish of men I have ever met. He gave up all his presents. I never had the least difficulty all the time with him. The other man was about 65 years of age. He was small and odious, was of a gouty temperament, had elephantiasis of one leg, and a weak heart. He was the most vile-tempered man I ever met. It was impossible to please him, do what one would, for he was ever trying to see how much difficulty he could put in the way. He was enormously conceited, and gave me infinite trouble. His abilities, for an untutored man, were of a good order. On the way down he stood up for being the first of the two. He sometimes sulked for three days at a time under a tree and would not speak to any of us because we gave him the same food as the other. I treated him exactly like the other, though he considered he was of a better caste.*

At Bulawayo in December, Tainton, and various other thwarted concession seekers, pointed out to Lobengula that he had signed his country away. H.C.Moore had arrived on the 14th December and added fuel to the fire. There was general unrest all round and mutterings were heard from Lobengula's young bloods that they wished to annihilate every white man in sight. In spite of the uncertainty, Charles and Elsbeth had their usual open house on Christmas day. Among the guests were Maguire, Thompson, Alex Boggie, Ben "Matabele" Wilson and Mr. and Mrs. Bolder. Benjamin Wilson says, " ... after some sports of a kind we had a splendid dinner."

Maund, Colenbrander and the Indunas were well into their journey, which Maund goes on to describe for us:

We got to Shoshong, and finding the western road very dry chose the Transvaal one. I did this also with the idea of impressing them with the paucity in numbers of the Boers and their lack of power when compared subsequently with the English. I dressed them partly at Tati and partly at Shoshong. I halted the wagon several miles out of Pretoria, rode on, and rushed them into a store and clothed them in neat suits of blue serge. The inside of the Johannesburg and Kimberley coach was taken at a cost of £110. I had previously interviewed Oom Paul [Kruger] and [General Piet] Joubert, and found out they knew nothing about the Indunas, whom I thought would be stopped. At Johannesburg men who had booked their seats for the inside were furious at niggers being inside, but I stuck to my point, offering anybody, should it be rainy, to come inside and rest themselves if they liked. Two gentlemen accepted my offer and got into conversation with the Indunas. The health of the old men was very bad from the hard travelling, their legs and feet being swollen to an enormous size through sitting still. We got them down to Kimberley. On getting into the train for the first time at Kimberley a decided look of horror came into their eyes as they began to rush forward. I turned around to Babjaan and said, 'What, a King's soldier and afraid!' on which, to show that he was not, he put his head out of the window and kept it there for half an hour, much to my concern, for I was afraid it might come in contact with something. At Cape Town we found that many lies had preceded us, which I never troubled my head to answer or contradict, well knowing that "though lies travel fast, truth catches them at last." For instance, it was said I had picked up two negroes in the veld for my own purposes. I was delayed at Cape Town for a fortnight, there being some difficulty with Sir Hercules Robinson [the British High Commissioner] about being received there. When I accepted the mission there was no accredited Government agent with Lobengula, he being an independent king beyond English jurisdiction. He had chosen to send the men on his own account, specially instructing me not to halt by "the gates by the sea", but at once to go over the water where the white men came from, and that his Indunas must see with their own eyes before they return to him whether the White Queen was alive."

Early in January, Cooper Chadwick, who had recently left Military service to join the concession hunters, stayed at the Helms and Benjamin "Matabele" Wilson was a frequent visitor. Petersen, on his way down to Tati, got his wagon stuck in a mud hole and Charles lent him some oxen to help pull it out. When this was accomplished, the

oxen were looked after by Wilson until they could be returned to Hope Fountain. The oxen strayed into one of the native gardens and Wilson had to pay in order to retrieve them. Later that month Charles, Thompson and Maguire had breakfast with the King. Lobengula was ill, bleeding profusely from the nose and suffering from a headache. Thompson was most anxious to return to his family and to help pass the time would make frequent calls on the Helms.

Maguire offended the Matabele by inadvertently bathing in the sacred fountain. When some of the Matabele spotted him cleaning his teeth with pink toothpowder, which coloured the sacred water, they suspected him of witchcraft. Although Thompson managed to persuade Lobengula of Maguire's innocence, Maguire, who was always of a nervous disposition, became even more nervous. When Dr. Leander Starr Jameson, Rhodes' representative, and his colleague, Dr. Rutherford Harris, came to Bulawayo at the beginning of April with the first of the promised guns for the Rudd Concession, Maguire went back with them.

After spending Sunday, the 11th February, with the Helms and the Elliotts, who were staying at Hope Fountain in anticipation of the Inxwala, Thompson returned to his camp with a cake made by Elsbeth and some butter to share with his companions.

At Cape Town Maund and Colenbrander were at last given permission to sail for England. The High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, had received the go-ahead from one of the principal Secretaries of State in England, Lord Knutsford, after sending him the following cable dated 2nd February 1889:

"I have had long interviews with the two Matabele who are described as headmen in letter received from Lobengula; they say Lobengula has been so often deceived by Europeans of different nations telling him there is no such person as the Queen, others saying that they come from the Queen, that they want to know whether England and the Queen exist; they have no other message. This, as far as they are concerned, is the sole object of their mission. They are to see with their own eyes and go back and report to King; they say they will be killed on their return if they do not cross the sea. I advise that they may be allowed to proceed. They have funds for such purpose. Mission is most anxious to proceed by next mail".

Maund's description of the voyage follows:

At last a start was made for England on board the "Moor", and the Matabeles had further experience of the ocean which had interested them so much at Cape Town. They went into raptures over the incoming waves, likening the rollers dashing in to the shore to the columns of their impis rushing up to the King at a review. On board the steamer, which they called "the great kraal that pushes through the water", the Indunas were neither sick nor sorry. The officers and passengers were extremely kind to them, and Lady Frederick Cavendish, who was voyaging to England by the steamer, took a special interest in them. So much impression did this lady make on the natives that when they returned Babjaan desired specially to be remembered to

the "Queen's woman Induna." We shall allow Lady Frederick to speak now as to the next experiences of the Matabele envoys

"I had an interview with them, and took pains to convince them that there was a White Queen, assuring them that I had had the honour of serving Her Majesty and had kissed her hand. One of them thereupon touched his eyes and replied, "We believe it, as you say so, but we are taking our own eyes to see." When we got into rough weather in the Bay, they said, "The river is full to-day." Off Lisbon, when told it was Portuguese, they sat on deck with their backs turned to it, and said, -" How is it the White Queen allows Portugal between her and Africa?"

During the voyage I considered very much how I could advance the cause. I became very anxious indeed that it should be successful, and that we should contrive an interview, but I believe we should never have managed it if we had not fortunately touched at Madeira, and taken on board Lord Lothian. I knew very well that, even if Lord Knutsford approved of this deputation, there might still be some difficulty in obtaining Her Majesty's consent to an interview, as she is not in the habit of receiving stray black men, especially with no accredited person in attendance on them. However, when I saw Lord Lothian, I thought at once that he was the best person to interest in the matter, as a member of the Government, though not in the Cabinet. Fortunately I knew him slightly, and I thought if I could interest him he would probably influence the Cabinet, whilst his opinion would be one likely to weigh with Her Majesty. We had not much time, for we took him on board on Friday, and we landed at Southampton on Tuesday, but I at once introduced him to Lieut. Maund and to Mr. Selous (who was also with us, and who knew Matabeleland well, as he spends most of his time hunting there), and by the time we landed, Lord Lothian, after an interview with the two Chiefs, and after hearing the whole history, was quite as keenly interested as I was, and assured me he would do his utmost to bring about the interview. On the Tuesday when we arrived at Southampton a brother of Lieut. Maund came on board, and he caused us some dismay by saying that Her Majesty was going to Biarritz the very following Monday. So we had very little time to spare. Lieut. Maund gave up all for lost, but I assured him that the hurry was all for the best, as there would be so little time for pros and cons. On the Thursday afternoon I received a happy letter from him, saying that consent had been given, and that the Chiefs were to be taken to Windsor Castle on Saturday, at 3 o'clock. I hoped all was now in good train, but on the following day – Friday afternoon – a terrible hitch occurred. Lieut. Maund wrote me word that, though the Chiefs were to be welcomed, he was not to be allowed to accompany them - the fact being, as Sir Hercules had foreseen, that it is not usual for a private gentleman to be received on such a mission at Court. He wrote to me therefore to say he was in a great difficulty; he was not at all anxious to intrude on Her Majesty, but the Chiefs would not stir without him. They said, "The King told us that Maundy was to be our Father. We were not to be afraid of the great White Queen; we don't understand this at all, and if Maundy does not go with us, we shall go straight home to Matabeleland."

I immediately tried to find Lord Knutsford, and put the case before him, but I could not succeed in seeing him; I could merely send a note up to his room. However, late in the evening I ascertained that Lord Lothian had set to work afresh, and had overcome the difficulty and that all was settled for the interview on the following day. It is amusing to notice how these two blacks had brought all the authorities round!

In Matabeleland, on the 14th February, the procession started for Umhlabatine for the beginning of the Inxwala. The Queens led the way and in the rear were the wagons of the Europeans, Moore, Usher, Baker, and O'Reilly and then Maguire and Thompson. On the same day Rhodes wrote to "Matabele" Thompson from Johannesburg as follows:

My dear Thompson,

I wish to write you a letter on the whole situation. In the first place you must not think that I am avoiding coming up but I saw clearly that if I left the guns would never have got through so with great difficulty I have managed to get them through the Colony and Bechuanaland.

I have also to watch at present the political aspect and am advised from Cape Town that I should first run home and lay all our prospects before the Home Government in order to obtain their cordial help as Home Press has rather been attacking the vastness of our Concession without understanding the objects. I also want them to appoint a Resident so as to stop the amateur politicians like Maund poisoning the king's mind as to position of Colony as against England, and pretending there is one Government here and a different one at home. As soon as I feel our base perfectly clear I shall come up but it is no use carting myself at once to Gubulawayo and then finding the guns stopped and the Home Government dead against our Concession.

If I had left when desired not a single gun would have ever got through.

I have read Rudd's letter to you and I support the offers contained therein. We wish you to be the Syndicate's Chief Representative at the kings and to manage the whole matter with Maguire. We offer you £2000 per annum and to build a house at once and to send up Mrs. Thompson. We feel it would be fatal if you left now.

I think you underrate your opponents. I hear tomorrow a flaring notice is coming out in all colonial papers as from Lobengula denying our Concession and saying people may go into his country. You should get Lobengula to contradict this and forward at once, otherwise whole country will trek in. I shall, if necessary, insert Maguire's explanation saying they pretended we had said we had bought the country; but it all shows that if you left the spot just now the whole thing would go wrong.

I ask you plainly: Do you believe you could have a grander chance in the world if the thing succeeds. (Your share alone will make you a millionaire besides all the kudos of carrying through such a work.) When I tell you that the Rand is selling today for thirty million what may I ask is the value of our Concession if we get settled in

harness. Our proposition is do not leave the country until we feel firmly settled and if you agree to this the terms I have named you can consider as agreed to. It may require constant residence for the next two or three years but what a prize you have in view. Your only doubt might be - can I risk Mrs. Thompson in the country. Of that you are the best judge, but I feel sure you would never stand the separation and if Mrs. Helm can risk it, it seems to me the dangers are not excessive, but I should leave the judgment to your wife.

Second. The question occurs would you do better here? I might add no. Everything is driven to a gigantic price and a crash must come. If you speculate you might make a little, but always run the risk of losing whole as prices if they give will give without warning. There is a good deal done in underwriting and I would propose, if you desire to have a punt, to give you a show and underwrite for you.

Third. Please answer definitely as to these points. I think you underrate your opponents. Could you not gradually employ them. Why not offer Moore a piece of country on shares, say, on halves, we finding the expenses. But understand the broad view I take is you must satisfy present opponents. Remember you have country as big as one of the Australian Colonies and if we are too greedy we may lose all...

Fourth. As to prospectors, I propose to go to Kimberley morrow and shall start up two or three parties. Their terms will be stated to you. Maddox of Waldeck's plant will be one.

Fifth. The first prospectors will have special terms, but afterwards I think we should offer men to go in on the following terms. The right to peg ten or more claims on any reef to be divided as follows - one-third to our Company, one-third to prospectors, one-third for capital and machinery - we finding capital and machinery if satisfied. You see a poor man would jump at it. He would get equal to three claims instead of as here one, and also have machinery put in. It would be good enough for us as we should get the details attended to, and if the reef was good easily get the capital from Europe whilst getting a third for company's rights.

By the by Moore was always keen on alluvial. Why not arrange to hand over an alluvial section to him. I do not care much for alluvial. It is out of reefs that you make the money.

Now to sum up.

- (1) I intend coming up as soon as we are safe here.*
- (2) Face boldly the question. Will you stop if necessary a couple of years on terms named, and if so shall we send up your wife with your brother?*
- (3) You must not leave a vacuum now.*
- (4) Try and deal with your opponents.*

- (5) *You have full powers.*
- (6) *We will start first prospectors at once.*
- (7) *Bear in mind it is your only chance in life of a really big thing, and you know better than I how you stand and whether you can carry it through.*
- (8) *Remember if you believe we can carry the Concession through there is hardly any value you can put on it.*
- (9) *Think out carefully your alternative future as against the two or three years required.*
- (10) *Remember you will have Maund back soon and his policy has been to coalesce with all our opponents under promise of distributing something to each.*
- (11) *Always remember that as we must use whites in the country, cannot we more or less use those who are already there and have had the energy to undertake the enterprise....*

I find you think there was some reason for not putting your name in the statement. I do not know the reason but Bower in Cape Town was firm on the matter and altered Rudd's communiqué to the papers which contained your name. I think it was on account of Maguire's name and his former connection with the Colonial Office to whom copy of the Concession was sent. Rudd has told you Leisk has signed and copy will be sent. Of Musson's convoy four waggons belong to us. Jameson desires to take a trip to the Mazoe. I leave all details to you, only do not leave the king alone or run any risk. The thing is too big and until all whites are satisfied you cannot turn your back.

You must also remember that the next five hundred guns will leave as soon as the runner lets us know that Jameson is past Khama's boundary so that they must be waited for and also to receive prospectors.

I should think, disagreeable as it may be, I should let Jameson and Harris go on with their trip alone. They could also prospect on Umgula and Mazoe district

Yours,

C.J. Rhodes

P.S. I am returning to Kimberley and will deal with Tati management. Always remember I am in honour bound to come up and also really desire to do so, but I see clearly at present that I must remain here or even may have to run home in order to get the sanction and support of Her Majesty's Government. Maguire will fully understand it. Please read this to Maguire.

C.J. Rhodes.

Thompson noted that "*Rhodes's letters never contained anything remotely resembling careful punctuation, and often had no punctuation at all.*"

Thompson later recorded: -

In spite of Rhodes's extreme anxiety that I should stay in Matebililand I said at once that I did not wish to expose my wife and family to the dangers and limitations of the life. I promised, however, that I would remain for the present. I stayed on for eight months after receiving his letter, without break of any kind, until I received the news that the Charter was an accomplished fact.

Charles, Carnegie and Elliott went over on the 19th February for the Inxwala and outspanned at Dawson's Store at the White men's Camp before going to see the King. At about 11 a.m. they went to Thompson's camp but at about 12 o'clock Charles and Elliott took their leave.

At the inaugural dance a drunken native started acting belligerently to the fourteen Europeans in attendance. Six of them, Thompson, Maguire, Moore, Baker, Boggie and Cooper-Chadwick thought it wise to retire. The eight who stayed were subjected to several indignities and had to struggle back to their wagons. The next day Lobengula asked the missionaries about the incident and was very upset by it. Charles asked if there would be any further trouble. Lobengula's reply was "*I have nothing further to say at the present.*" It was later learnt that the native in question had been put to death, but Lobengula knew that this was only the beginning of trouble.

Lobengula's envoys had finally reached England on 27th February. Maund continues:

The scene on the arrival of the Indunas at Waterloo may be described. The night was a bitterly cold one, and the Matabeles needed the shelter of heavy overcoats to protect them from the "cauld blasts" which swept London. They had arrived during the day at Southampton, and little time was lost in conveying them to the capital. They left the port by the 5.15 train, and got to Waterloo Station "on time" at 7.40. As the train drew up to the platform one or two pressmen soon scented their presence. They had travelled in a first-class compartment, and were in custody - it almost seemed so - of a white gentleman whom ultimately I recognised as an old friend. A little natural eagerness was shown on the part of the small knot of Fourth Estate Scribes to come near the door of the compartment. Orders were quickly given by the gentleman in charge of the royal spokesmen to allow no one to approach the door. "Aye, aye, sir," was the ready response of two porters, who did not say they had any eye to the main chance in the shape of a possible lump of gold from one of the Matabele concessions. They were quickly joined by a stalwart commissionaire - not commissionaire-whose row of medals, hanging proudly on his manly bosom, glanced fitfully in the dismal lamplight. It was possible, just possible, to get a "keek" at the distinguished arrivals by watching a chance when the persons of the three conscientious guards unbent a very little. They - the distinguished arrivals - did not look happy, well, not so happy as they would have looked had they had no overcoats and no anything on, and had been dancing in a blazing sun a war fandango,

preparatory to a look in on Khama or the Mashonas. They were huddled up in their respective corners, and from beneath their unaccustomed "wideawakes" there was to be seen no trace either of amusement or surprise at the bustling scene being enacted outside. Quite the reverse; they bore themselves, as far as the low temperature would allow them, with that impassive dignity familiar to all South Africans as a characteristic of the superior native. If they had voiced their emotions they would probably have asked for a fire. They were taken to Berner's Hotel, where they remained during their stay in London.

On the Saturday following, the Indunas travelled to Windsor by a train conveying the Cabinet Ministers, and royal carriages awaited them at the station. The Queen had considerably sent for picked men of the 2nd Life Guards, who lined the approaches to St. George's Hall, through which the party marched. The Indunas were so astonished at the immobility of the soldiers, that they concluded they were stuffed, until one of them saw their eyes moving. This speaks well for the steadiness of the troopers. On the conclusion of the business part of the interview, Her Majesty said to the Indunas, "You have come a very long way to see me; I hope the journey has been made pleasant for you, and that you did not suffer from the cold." In acknowledgment, one of them stepped forward, bowing with truly courtier-like gesture, and replied, "How should we feel cold in the presence of the great White Queen?" adding, with a shrug of his shoulders, "Is it not in the power of great kings and queens to make it either hot or cold?" Having lunched and viewed the royal castle, the natives returned to London.

They were greatly delighted at their reception by the Queen, keeping on speaking about it. They said that their eyes had seen and their ears had heard her voice. "It was easy," they declared, "to recognise among the assembly at Windsor which was the White Queen, from her manner and bearing"

Needless to say, the Envoys did a great deal of sightseeing when in England, and some of their quaint impressions may be recorded. They consider (as of course they should) the Queen the greatest woman they ever saw, and Lady Randolph Churchill the most beautiful. Perhaps this latter impression will prove to be a useful passport to Lord Randolph, should he leave his card on Umshete and Babjaan at Bulawayo. The Envoys were taken to "see the lions" - among them the literal lions at the Zoological Gardens, which naturally attracted a good deal of their attention. Their excitement was intense. When they came to these animals Babjaan could scarcely be restrained from attacking one of the lords of his native forest with his umbrella, nor could he understand why he was prevented.

It would interest Lobengula to learn that his representatives went to the Alhambra, and that they were undisguisedly satisfied with the ballet. For that occasion their eyes became twice their natural size. London, they said, was like the ocean; a man might walk, and walk, and walk, and yet never get to the end of the houses. If Englishmen were killed, they reported, for every drop of blood in their bodies

another would spring up to take their places; but what most astonished them was the telephone. They were placed a mile apart, and talked together.

Afterwards they declared that they could imagine such a machine might talk English, but how it could be taught to speak the Kafir language they could not understand. They visited Portsmouth and were shown over the fort by the commander. A steam launch was placed at the disposal of the Envoys, and in this they steamed about, the places of interest being pointed out and described to them by one of the Flag-Captains. To these, however, they seemed to pay but lukewarm attention, and requested that a rocket, which produced such an effect in Zululand, might be sent up and two were fired off for their benefit. The Nordenfelt guns were described to them, after which they were shown rifle practice at movable dummies. "Oh," said they, "is that the way you teach your men to shoot? Capital practice too." As the grand finale to the sightseeing, the Indunas were taken to Aldershot, where a sham fight and inspection was held. It was the first big field day of the year, and it was whispered that the troops were turned out earlier than they otherwise would have been, in order to give the Envoys an idea of the capabilities of the English soldiers. The elements were rather unkind, and the review was opened under lowering skies and a drizzling rain. The programme consisted of an inspection of cavalry and artillery, in the forenoon, in the Long Valley, and subsequently a sham fight upon the Fox Hills, to the west of the North Camp, in which about 10,000 men of all arms were engaged, under the direction of the new commander of the station, Lieut. -General Sir Evelyn Wood. The Envoys, who were escorted by an aide-de-camp of the General, arrived from Aldershot, where they slept overnight, in an open barouche, and from this they witnessed the manoeuvres. Needless to say, the artillery and cavalry moved with that precision and dash, for which the mounted portion, at least, of the British army have so long been deservedly famed. After the charge of the cavalry upon the artillery, the troops sweeping past like a tornado, the Lancers spread out as if in pursuit of a discomfited force. Babjaan and Umshete, who had never seen such a display before, were almost mad with excitement. They fairly jumped with astonishment, and, standing on their seats eagerly watched every movement of the troops. Babjaan was the first to speak. "Such mighty horses - so big, so strong, and such discipline among the men," irresistibly exclaimed the old African warrior. "Come and teach us how to drill and fight like that, and we will fear no nation in Africa," remarked both. After the review, General Wood expressed his pleasure at seeing the two visitors, and wished them a pleasant journey back. He earnestly hoped that the troops they had seen manoeuvring that day would never be required to fight against the Matabele people. The Matabeles replied that they had now seen the real strength of England, and when it was explained to them that it was not a fair idea of what England really could turn out in case of necessity, they were greatly astonished, and remarked, "How can there be more? this must surely be all!" It was explained to them that General Wood was the General who turned Cetewayo out of his stronghold, and brought the assegai to Queen Victoria. Prince Albert Victor, who was with the General's staff, was introduced to the two Chiefs, and they remarked, "We can see

why the Queen puts him with the big warrior - to teach him how to manage the Army himself."

The Indunas were taken over the Bank of England. They were first of all shown the room in which a machine automatically weighs the sovereigns fresh from the Mint. On being allowed to lift some bags of gold the Indunas remarked that it made their hearts sick to see so much gold which they could not put into their pockets. The mode of conveying an idea to them of a quantity of gold was by saying how many bags containing about £1,000 each it would take to give £1 to each of Lobengula's soldiers. The Indunas were next conducted to the bullion room containing many piles of ingots, some of which they tried to lift, Babjaan being scarcely able to raise one of the ingots. To give them an idea of the value of the ingots they were told that if these were made into sovereigns they would give so many to each of to Lobengula's warriors, but at the same time it was impressed upon them that if the same quantity was divided amongst the members of the Queen's Army the individuals constituting the latter would receive a very much smaller sum each. At this point one of the Indunas wished it to be remembered that when any distinguished visitor was received by their King he showed him his flocks and herds, generally selecting the largest beast to present to the stranger. The hint was not taken, I am sorry to say".

The Aborigines' Protection Society held a breakfast for the Indunas, and many distinguished guests were invited. Wardlaw Thompson also attended, as he was a member of the Society. The Society had been keeping an eye on developments in Matabeleland and, after breakfast, they gave the Indunas a letter for Lobengula:

Aborigines' Protection Society

3 Room, Broadway Chambers,

4, Broadway, Westminster,

London, S.W.

To the Chief Lobengula,

Dear Friend,

We send you a greeting by your messengers, whom we have invited to meet us during their stay in London. The Society to which we belong has, for many years, striven to help distant races of men – races not well-known in England, and not knowing England well – to obtain justice at the hands of our fellow-countrymen. We wish you to know that there is such a Society, and that its great aim is to help the weak to live, as well as the strong, and to require that the strong shall also be just. We have to oppose the actions of our own fellow-countrymen when they do wrong, although those they are wronging may be strangers to us, and men of another race.

We are reminded by the presence of your messengers in our country, that our people have long been visitors to you, and to your father, Umsilikase, and that some of them have lived under your protection to the present time, as missionaries and traders.

We think you acted very wisely as a great chief when you despatched messengers to our Queen on the present occasion. The digging of gold is a new industry among your people. It is not new among white men. Hence your wisdom in sending to our Queen and her advisers on this matter. You already know the value of gold, and are aware that it buys cattle, and everything else that is for sale, and that some men set their hearts on it, and dispute about it as other tribes fight for cattle. As you are now being asked by many for permission to seek for gold, and to dig it up in your country, we would have you be wary and firm in resisting proposals that will not bring good to you and your people.

We trust your messengers will return to you accompanied by a messenger from our Queen who will tell you all her words, and who will help you to understand matters on which you may need his assistance.

Wishing you and your people peace and prosperity, we sign ourselves, on behalf of the Aborigines' Protection Society,

Your Friends.

On the evening of the envoys return from Aldershot, they retired to their room for the night, or so Colenbrander thought. The story goes that Colenbrander took the opportunity to go to the theatre with a friend, Captain Dainty. In the interval, Colenbrander had a call from the hotel requiring him to return urgently. It turned out that Babyaan had caused great consternation in the hotel lounge, by searching, stark naked, for his snuffbox, which he had left there! To make matter worse, the Induna couldn't find his snuffbox immediately, as it had fallen beneath a table, from where he proceeded to retrieve it on his hands and knees. The society ladies and gentlemen in the crowded lounge were stunned to silence! He returned to his room muttering that one of the ladies had helped herself to some of his snuff.

While the Indunas were enjoying themselves, Lobengula was still being constantly pestered by the concession seekers, on one hand, and his warriors on the other. Finally, on the 10th March, he agreed to send for Thompson and Charles regarding the concession seekers. The meeting turned out to be very unruly and both H.C.Moore and Tainton, who attended the meeting, lost their tempers and no progress was made. A meeting was held at the kraal on the 12th and on that day, and most of the next, Charles spent six hours in all discussing the Concession. In a final effort to silence the disgruntled concessionaries' claim that Lobengula had signed his country away, he returned to Lobengula two days later and told him that he wanted to have published in the newspapers in South Africa that "*Thompson does not claim the country*". He wanted it drawn up in front of witnesses and he would send it down country. Elliott and Rees were called over from Inyati and letters from Charles and Elliott were later sent to the L.M.S. giving the details of the interview:

“From W.A.Elliott, Inyati, to L.M.S. 27th March 1889.

...in November of last year Mr. Thompson came over to Inyati on a short visit. He then explained to me his plans and his connections in the Colony, and asked my support. I told him as far as I conscientiously could, that Directors' regulations and my own judgement forbade my taking any side for or against him in any “official” sense. I added that the scheme appeared to me to be, under the circumstance, very advantageous to the people, more so than I expected any gold mining scheme to be. The amount paid to the King seemed to me to be small compared to the extensive rights he, (Mr.T.) acquired. My memory of his answer is very indistinct, but I think he spoke of giving more when it was seen how the thing would work.

You will have received my letter anent Umcitwe’s death on March 2nd The same day Lobengula sent a mounted messenger to call Mr. Rees and myself. We arranged to go next morning ... On our arrival at the Chief’s we immediately went to him, and after only a short interval for a rest and a little refreshment, five white men came to meet us. They were Messrs. Dawson, Tainton, Moore, Usher and Cohen, men who banded together in opposition to Thompson and who are themselves seeking concessions, except the last named, a Jew trader. From them we learnt the cause of our being called. Two Indunas presently came to say that the King wanted us to read the document containing the concession to Thompson.

We read through the document, discussed it with the opposition, found that we could not go to the extent they did in interpretation but that, on the whole, we agreed with their reading of it. Then we went to the Chief and I read the latter half of the paper to him and the assembled Headmen. About the first half, concerning receiving pay from Thompson there appeared to be no dispute. A good deal of conversation followed in the course of which the Regent Umhlabe asked me if the mining rights of a like tract of country could be bought anywhere else for a similar sum. Only one answer is possible to that question and we gave it “No!” ... Returning for a minute to the umlandu (affair) at court: - the whole trouble seems to us to be caused by the concession document being drafted in too general terms. As I have told the King and the white men, and Mr. Thompson, in the hands of honourable upright men, all would be well, for Mr. Thompson had given verbal explanations through Mr. Helm that met all the difficulties raised by the opposition, but in the hands of rascals all would be bad for the Matabele. These explanations were unfortunately only verbal and when we read the paper to the King we could not say they were there. It was a thousand pities the document was not particular and explicit. I may add that Mr. Thompson has since submitted a paper of addenda to the King embodying these “verbal” explanations. Mr. Helm thinks they are involved in the original document, but with this I cannot agree. “

Charles’s letter dated the 29th March reads as follows:

“Dear Mr. Thompson,

I informed you some time ago that Messrs. Rudd, Maguire and Thompson had come here to try and get from the Chief a concession of the mineral rights in his country.

As they could get no one to interpret for them, Tainton being under a cloud at the time, having killed a native by accident, they came and asked me to interpret for them. I would rather have had nothing to do with gold concessions and told the Chief so, but not thinking that harm could come from simply interpreting I consented and the Chief said he was glad that I should do so and that he perfectly understood that I had nothing more to do with it.

After a great deal of talk with the Chief and the Indunas, the Chief granted a concession giving the Grantees charge of all the minerals in his country and giving them power to do all they deemed necessary to get out the gold and also promising them assistance to keep others from bothering him any more about concessions. Mr. Rudd then went south leaving Messr. Maguire and Thompson her to watch their interests.

The Grantees explained to the Chief that what was deemed necessary to get out the gold was to erect dwellings for their overseers, to bring in and erect machinery – use wood and water. They promised that they would not bring more than ten white men to work in his country, that they would not dig anywhere near towns etc., and that they and their people would abide by the laws of his country and in fact be as his people.

But these promises were not put in the Concession.

When parts of the Concession was published in the papers and these came hear, Tainton, who had meanwhile again been admitted into the Chief's presence, read the papers to the Chief and told him according to the papers, he had in fact sold his country, that the Grantees could if they so wished bring an armed force into the country. Depose him and put another Chief in his place. Dig anywhere, in his kraals, garden and towns. The Chief then sent for the original (duplicate) Concession he had asked me to keep – sent for me to read it to him. I did and gave the same interpretation as at first. I told him the Concession said nothing about land, only about minerals in the land. That no power was given to the Grantees except to get gold out of the land and that necessarily the Grantees in his country had to abide by the laws of the country. The Concession certainly not abrogating the laws of the country in which it was given, that it was simply nonsense to say that under the Concession the Grantees could do whatever they like in the country.

The Chief said the matter would be discussed again when the Indunas were present. He sent a notice to the papers that there was a misunderstanding about the Concession and that it had to be discussed by the Indunas. This was on the 18th January.

It was about this talk with the Chief that some of the opposition party sent a notice to the papers that I had been tried by the Chief and would probably have to leave the

country. On the 12th inst. I went over to the Chief's and he asked me to read the Concession to his Indunas and the white men present. I did so and a long discussion ensued continuing till sunset. It was resumed next morning and ended about 5 p.m. Mr. Thompson was asked what he told the Chief and what he asked from him. He said, "I told the Chief I had no cattle, no sheep, etc., I want no land, I only want to seek for gold. And today I say the same." He offered to give them a written statement signed for himself and Messrs. Rudd and Maguire, denying that under the Concession they had any power in the country and renewing promises as given before. But the opposition party strongly objected to receive said statement. The same things were said over and over again for a day and a half.

On the afternoon of the second day the Indunas turned to me and asked why I, a teacher who had come to teach Chief and people, had hid from the Chief the bad news in the Papers about his country. I replied I had hid no bad news. As regards the Concession there was nothing bad. It was only what I had interpreted to the Chief from the first. If anybody put another interpretation they were mistaken.

The Indunas then accused me of preventing the traders from giving a fair price for their cattle. They said that Kgama sent men on horseback to me and they came and went without reference to the Chief. That these men came to me before they went to the Chief. That all letters came to and were sent out by me.

I answered I had never interfered with trade. That the only men that came from Kgama to me were men that brought letters to the Chief, that I went with them to the Chief, read the letters and sent back his answers by them. That no white men came first to me. Some came after they had finished their business with the Chief on a friendly visit. That I acted as Postmaster.

The Induna of Bulawayo then said, "White men, Helm is your Chief: there he is". He then said to me, "You must leave the teaching and join the Traders." I answered, "I came into this country to teach, with the Chief's permission. I live in this country. I am no trader and am not going to become one. If the chief does not want me to teach his people, he has simply to tell me to go and I go." The meeting then broke up.

I then spoke to the Induna of Bulawayo and took him to task for what he said, he was friendly, kindly as ever, and said, "Those were only my words. It is only scolding tetisa [Ndebele word for scold] you go in and have a talk with the Chief."

It was too late then but I went next morning and had a long talk with the Chief, but we were interrupted and he said, "You are coming over next week then we'll have another talk." I then left and came home.

Meanwhile the Chief sent for Mr. Elliott and Mr. Rees. Mr. Elliott has told you what passed and I may just say that a concession like the one in question is to be understood in an honourable and reasonable way. Rascals would not have asked for a concession. Also with reference to Umhlaba's question if the mining rights of a like tract of country could be bought anywhere else? I do not agree that there is only one

possible answer. No. For one must take into consideration the state of the country and people. It may take years to get any returns. The Grantees have told me more than once getting the Concession is but the beginning, all will depend on gaining the confidence of the King and people.

Mr. Rees rode over to Hope Fountain and told us what had occurred. Mr. Carnegie and I then went over with him and we all four went to the Chief and had a long talk with him. We tried to explain that the difference between us was not as to who spoke the truth and who not, but as to the interpretation to be put on certain passages. [Six words illegible] conscientiously and were one and unanimous in all other respects as before and that we should [two words illegible]. We are however not quite sure whether we succeeded in making him understand that there can be differences of opinion between perfectly truthful men.

We spoke about what the Indunas said yesterday. (This was done at the request of the brethren). And the Chief said, "That was only scolding." And, in effect, that we should take no notice of such vapourings.

Mr. Carnegie also gave me his letter to you to read. On it I wish to say that I told Mr. Carnegie that Rudd had asked me to interpret and that I had consented. As to the Business itself, I did not discuss that with anyone else as I was only interpreting.

I can only say that I acted as I thought for the best believing that the Rudd Concession was the best way of getting the Chief out of his difficulties with regard to concession seekers. I would rather have been out of it altogether. But even if I had not interpreted I believe we missionaries would have been brought into it at last. If it had not been for the action of the opposition party no difficulty would have occurred. I have written a fair and full account of the matter and must leave myself in the hands of the Directors with regard to the part I had in it.

To judge from the notice that appeared in the Papers after the first talk I had with the Chief, you may expect to see anything in the Papers about what occurred at the last meeting. We are expecting Mr. Moffat, the Assistant Commissioner, shortly.

I forgot to say that the Chief told us he will do nothing more till Mr. Maund returns with the men he sent to the Queen.

I do not think that the state of feeling in the country is nearly so excited as it was when the Administrator was here. At all events we do not see any signs of it. Chief and people treat us as they have ever done. And we hope and pray that God will over-rule all things for the advancement of his Kingdom.

Mrs. Helm is suffering for a stiff neck, I have a very unpleasant cold, and Erica is recovering from a bad attack of sore eyes, Alex has hitherto escaped that affliction.

Mrs. Helm joins me in kindest regards to Mrs. Thompson and yourself.

I remain yours very sincerely,

Chas.D.Helm

I have kept a copy of this to show Mr. Elliott and Mr. Carnegie and Mr. Rees.

While Carnegie and Charles had been writing to the L.M.S., the envoys had their final meeting with Lord Knutsford on the 26th March. He presented each of them with a rams-horn snuffbox mounted in silver and a portrait of the Queen for Lobengula, as well as letters for him.

The following was the Queen's reply to Lobengula:

The Queen has heard the words of Lobengula. She is glad to receive the messengers from Lobengula, and to learn the message which he has sent.

The Queen will send words in reply, through her Secretary of State, for the messengers to take to Lobengula.

A reply to the letter of Lobengula will be sent through the High Commissioner. Lobengula may trust in the advice and words of that officer, as he is specially appointed by the Queen to receive the words of all friendly chiefs in South Africa, and to send to them any reply which the Queen may be pleased to give.

Lord Knutsford carried out Victoria's instruction and sent the following:

(Entrusted to Umshete and Babjaan.)

I, Lord Knutsford, one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, am commanded by the Queen to give the following reply to the message delivered by Umshete and Babjaan.

The Queen has heard the words of Lobengula. She was glad to receive these messengers and to learn the message which they have brought.

They say that Lobengula is much troubled by the white men, who come into his country and ask to dig gold, and that he begs for advice and help. Lobengula is the ruler of his country, and the Queen does not interfere in the government of that country, but as Lobengula desires her advice, Her Majesty is ready to give it, and having therefore consulted Her Principal Secretary Of State holding the Seals of the Colonial Department, now replies as follows: -

In the first place, the Queen wishes Lobengula to understand distinctly that Englishmen who have gone out to Matabeleland to ask leave to dig for stones, have not gone with the Queen's authority, and that he should not believe any statements made by them or any of them to that effect.

The Queen advises Lobengula not to grant hastily concessions of land, or leave to dig, but to consider all applications very carefully.

It is not wise to put too much power into the hands of the men who come first, and to exclude other deserving men. A King gives a stranger an ox, not his whole herd of cattle, otherwise what would other strangers arriving have to eat?

Umshete and Babyaan say that Lobengula asks that the Queen will send him someone from herself. To this request the Queen is advised that Her Majesty may be pleased to accede. But they cannot say whether Lobengula wishes to have an Imperial officer to reside with him permanently, or only to have an officer sent out on a temporary mission, nor do Umshete and Babjaan state what provision Lobengula would be prepared to make for the expenses and maintenance of such an officer. Upon this and any other matters Lobengula should write, and should send his letters to the High Commissioner at the Cape, who will send them direct to the Queen. The High Commissioner is the Queen's officer and she places full trust in him, and Lobengula should also trust him. Those who advise Lobengula otherwise deceive him.

The Queen sends Lobengula a picture of herself to remind him of this message, and that he may be assured that the Queen wishes him peace and order in his country. The Queen thanks Lobengula for the kindness which, following the example of his father, he has shown to many Englishmen visiting and living in Matabeleland. This message has been interpreted to Umshete and Babjaan in my presence, and I have signed it in their presence, and affixed the seal of the Colonial Office.

(Signed) Knutsford.

Colonial Office, March 26 1889

Maund asked Colenbrander to sail alone on the “Grantully Castle”, with Babyaan and Mtshete, as he still had business to attend to. At Madeira Colenbrander went ashore with the Indunas, to await Maund. When Maund arrived, he was highly elated. His Directors, George Cawston and Lord Gifford, with Maund, had joined with the Rhodes faction and formed a new company to facilitate the Rudd Concession. Colenbrander, it is reported, wasn’t too happy about this about-face.

Rhodes had already written from England to Maguire and “Matabele” Thompson. Thompson said:

“When I received the following letter Maguire had left Matebililand and I was holding the fort alone.

Westminster Palace Hotel,

Victoria Street,

London SW.

11th April 1889.

My dear Maguire and Thompson,

We have settled with Maund at the request of H.M. Government so as to have no opposition in interior they will then I believe support Concession. You must work with him and we leave all details to your mutual brains I think you should read my old letter of instructions to you to him and in case faulty amend as you all think best.

You will be really a Council and for goodness sake pull together or you will bogle all.

Yours,

C. J. Rhodes

The Cape Government had sent Lobengula a bath chair on wheels as a present and had asked Charles to deliver it. Charles's mode of transport, which he found most useful, was a "Spider" (a small horse-drawn cart) but on the 18th it had broken down and he arrived at the King's with the bath chair in his wagon. The bath chair had an elephant painted on each side of it and was topped by an umbrella with a gold fringe.

Lobengula had become more apprehensive about the Concession, so he wrote to the Queen:

To Her Majesty Queen Victoria from Lobengula, King of the Amandebele.

*King's Kraal, Umgusa River,
April 23, 1889.*

Greeting:

Some time ago a party of men came into my country, the principal one appearing to be a man named Rudd. They asked me for a place to dig for gold, and said they would give me certain things for the right to do so. I told them to bring what they would give and I would then show them what I would give.

*A document was written and presented to me for signature. I asked what it contained and was told that in it were my words and the words of those men.
I put my hand to it.*

*About three months afterwards I heard from other sources that I had given by that document the right to all the minerals in my country.
I called a meeting of my Indunas and also of the white men, and demanded a copy of the document. It was proved to me that I had signed away the mineral rights of my whole country to Rudd and his friends.*

I have since had a meeting of my Indunas, and they will not recognise the paper, as it contains neither my words nor the words of those who got it.

10. THE MOORE CONTROVERSY

Trouble was now being stirred up in South Africa about the Rudd Concession. A Concession. A correspondent of the Diamond Fields Advertiser had interviewed H.C.Moore, one of the Concession's most voluble critics. He had had made certain remarks about Charles and the situation in Matabeleland. Letters were sent in, repudiating many of Moore's statements and Rutherford Harris not only wrote to the papers but also sent a letter to "Matabele" Thompson telling him how matters stood. Also in July, Wookey wrote to the Diamond Fields Advertiser in defence of Charles, and in August Elliott, Carnegie and Bowen Rees did the same.

Moore's interview reads:

June 1, 1889: - The Truth about the Matabele Concession

An interview with Mr. H. C. Moore, King Lobengula's Agent.

[It is very unlikely that he was Lobengula's agent].

Probably no matter such as the granting of a concession has been so discussed as the one said to have been obtained by the Rudd-Rhodes party; and as Mr. H.C.Moore has just lately returned to Kimberley from GuBulawayo, a representative of ours sought out that gentleman in order to get the truth respecting the reputed Concession.

Mr.Moore, whom we had the pleasure of meeting when he was last in Kimberley, received our representative very courteously and at once divined the motive of our visit. After remarking that he was looking well and hearty, the interviewer at once plunged into the subject.

"Yes," said Mr.Moore, "I have had a most enjoyable trip, and excepting the loss of a few bullocks by lung-sickness, I have little to grumble about."

"In the chat we had before when in Kimberley, did you not expect to start after the rains, somewhere about the beginning of March, for the Mashona country?"

"Yes, but when I got back to GuBulawayo, I found that there had been some considerable amount of underhand work going on, having for it's object the ousting of my rights, and the attempt to establish the supposed concession of the Rudd-Rhodes party, so that I determined to remain at the King's kraal until all was settled - hence I didn't push my prospecting party into the country. In fact, though the miners I got from California had reached as far as London, I cabled to stop them coming any further until everything was "fixed up". Of course, you will understand that I can't at the present tell you the nature of the underhand work - that will come out in time.

“Then, am I to understand” asked our representative, “that you are not working in the interest of the Rudd-Rhodes party? It was currently reported here and in the Cape Town Press that you had joined their swim.”

“Distinctly not. They have made overtures to me, but I have steadfastly refused them. I don’t want their money; I have more than enough to answer my purpose, while, in fact, all the cash I have spent already, amounting to many thousands of pounds, has come out of my own pocket and nobody else’s. Besides,” added Mr. Moore, “they will find that this youth is a pretty tough customer to deal with, and you can give the lie direct that I neither have and never have had any connections with the so-called Rhodes Concession. The truth is that I have got the King and people with me and they haven’t.”

“But how about this so called Concession, as you term it? Does any document exist and what about it’s validity?”

“These are the facts about that now historical piece of paper,” said Mr. Moore, “they have the King’s signature, but he now repudiates it’s validity. He distinctly states that the document was signed by him under misapprehension; that the interpreter for the Rudd-Rhodes’ party misconstrued the meaning of certain important words; that the Rev. Mr. Helm who was the interpreter in question – only indifferently understands the language, and was an incompetent person to translate so important an interview as the one that took place between the King and the Rudd party. In fact, the Rev. Mr. Helm has been tried before the King, and although he has been in the country many years, he has been suspended as a missionary. Personally, I am very sorry for the Rev. Mr. Helm for getting into disfavour with the King, as he is a gentleman universally liked by all the whites in Matabeleland. And while I am speaking of the Rev. Mr. Helm I should like you to contradict an unfounded report which is going the rounds, that I was instrumental, directly or indirectly, in bringing about his suspension. It was solely caused by the displeasure of the King when he found out the true nature of the document which had been obtained by misrepresentation and misconception. Anyhow, nothing more serious than suspension can possibly happen to the Rev. gentleman, as Lobengula has given instructions throughout the whole country that no white man should be molested. The King issued this order when he heard the Rudd party consisted of a score or so of miners and that they were on their way up. He feared that if a “brush” did take place and half a dozen or so obtained their “quietus” it would be a splendid handle for the Rudd-Rhodes crowd to get into the country by the force of British arms, for it certainly would have meant another Expedition.”

“Then, as I take it,” queried our interviewer, “the Rudd-Rhodes concession is absolutely in dispute and not the sure thing they want to make out?”

“Precisely. But as I am down here now in an official capacity, you cannot expect me to divulge the affairs of the country.”

“And your own position in Matabeleland?” was asked.

“My position is as I say” replied Mr. Moore, “an official one. I am the King’s accredited agent and have to do with the business affairs of the country. As soon as we are ready to open out the country it will be opened out on perfectly equitable terms, but it is no use anyone going up there now; they would only be turned back. The King has given strict orders that no white man shall pass Tati – four hard days ride on horseback this side of GuBulawayo, and it is some forty miles from there where the Jameson-Harris wagons are stopped. Dr. Jameson got into GuBulawayo on horseback from the wagons and stayed at the kraal for a few days. He came out of the country with Maguire – the latter not being particularly well liked. Thompson, the interpreter, who went up at first with Rudd and Maguire, is detained in the country. He is not actually confined as a prisoner, but is allowed to roam about at will; yet he can’t leave the country until some further enquiries are gone into. Thompson is kept there pending the arrival from England of the document signed by Lobengula. There will however be nothing done until I get back which will be in about two months time.”

“You haven’t mentioned Dr. Harris – is he still in the country?”

“Yes, he is with the wagons which were stopped. Both he and his party are quite safe from molestation.”

“Didn’t Musson of Bamangwato go up with transport of guns & munition for the Rudd-Rhodes Party?” was asked.

“He did and was also stopped,” replied Mr. Moore, “the guns and ammunition were taken off the wagons by order of the King and left lying on the ground. The King won’t have anything to do with them.”

“What is the superficial extent of GuBulawayo?”

“Some four or five acres and a really pretty place it is. In fact,” said Mr. Moore, “it is the handsomest kraal I have seen in the country.”

“The white men in the country – what do they number?”

“Barely a couple of score, i.e. those who are acknowledged as belonging to the country, meaning, of course, those who have practically settled there as traders, etc. The life is somewhat monotonous until one gets used to it. We get plenty to eat and drink – in fact you can swim in Kaffir beer if you are so minded. One curious custom of the natives is that after the male children are weaned, they are not allowed any more to drink milk; they must stick to their beer, as the common notion is that it not only makes them strong but brave.”

“Is Mr. Moffat still acting on behalf of the British Government?” queried our interviewer.

“Yes, and a splendid man he is too” said Mr. Moore, with emphasis; “a really capital man for the post. I passed him about a week this side of GuBulawayo, on his way up again. Reports can fly about as they like, but I can assure you that Mr. Moffat enjoys the confidence of the King.”

“Had the late visit of the two Indunas to England anything to do with the question of Concessions?”

“None whatever. Other reasons took them across the seas. I don’t know who defrayed the cost, but I do know that Lobengula didn’t, as has been reported.”

“Have you had reason to alter your opinion as to the capabilities of the Matabele and Mashona countries?”

“No, the more I am there, the more I am satisfied of their grand future. These countries will prove marvels in minerals – gold being plentiful both in alluvial and reefs – while the agricultural and pastoral resources are simply splendid. The climate, too, is healthy, but, of course, there are the chances of fever as anywhere else in South Africa. I have travelled pretty well around the world, and seen a good deal,” continued Mr. Moore, “but I doubt whether I ever put my foot on a more promising portion of the globe.”

Thanking Mr. Moore for the interesting interview, our representative left that gentleman to settle the problem of opening up the rich lands of the Mashona and the Matabele.



Charles

The Diamond Field Advertiser later published a letter from Mr. W.S.Lord, QC MLA which had been in the Cape Town paper “of Monday last”: -

“Your issue of today contains a telegram from your Kimberley correspondent, giving certain statements made by Mr. Moore in reference to the Rudd concession. Without

discussing the effect or validity of that concession, will you allow me to say that I have undeniable authority for stating that the concession has not been changed; that the guns alluded to as being refused by Lobengula are at present in the King's possession; and that, so far from Mr. Maguire "escaping from Matabeleland contrary to the King's request," Mr. Maguire not only interviewed the King before leaving Matabeleland, but purposed, when he sailed for England by the mail before last, to return shortly to that country."

The Diamond Fields Advertiser then commented: -

"It seems to us necessary to make a remark or two respecting Mr. W.S.Lord's letter to the Cape Town papers (published by us yesterday on the subject of the Rudd Concession. [The letter is then quoted in full.]

In the first place so far as we can learn there has been no statement published, at least on the authority of Mr. Moore, that the concession has been "changed"; we suppose Mr. Lord means that the allegation is that some other concession has obtained the preference in the eyes of the King. On the contrary the Rudd concession, as was stated in the interview with Mr. Moore, remains at present just where it was, and will do so until the agreement is once more in the hands of the King. With regard to the guns, Mr. Moore said distinctly that the guns are in the King's possession; that is they are within his territory, but at a spot some ninety or a hundred miles distant from GuBulawayo. There is, however, a wide difference between actual possession by the King, and His Majesty making use of the weapons. As to Mr. Maguire having an interview with the King, that is also very far from being denied. What may, under the circumstances, be reasonably doubted is Mr. Maguire's early return to GuBulawayo. Although we entertain strong convictions as to the impudence of the Imperial Government countenancing the granting of any concession in Matabeleland, even should the King himself be a willing party to such an arrangement, we have no desire to champion Mr. Moore's cause in particular. Knowing that Mr. Moor had just returned from Matabeleland, he was interviewed in the ordinary course of journalistic duty, with the hope that some part of the truth, at any rate, would be obtained on a subject respecting which the public are still, it would see, most woefully in the dark."

On the 14th June 1889, they further reported: -

"The Matabele Concession. Every item of information connected with Matabeleland is of interest at the present moment, when the most contradictory statements are in circulation regarding the disposition of Lobengula, and the rival claims of those who profess to hold the potentate's concession for the mineral rights of the country under his sway. We, therefore, gladly give publication to the accompanying extract from a letter received by one of our correspondents whose bona fides is unquestionable. The most pleasing feature in this communications is that Messrs. Rudd and Rhodes, the Concessionaries, intend throwing open the country to prospectors on most liberal terms, reserving to themselves in all probability some small royalty. The concession

which has raised such strong feeling is thus shorn of its most obnoxious characteristic, and the so-called monopoly will really be no monopoly at all. The writer, whose reliability is vouched for by our correspondent, says: -

“I have waited until I was fairly at home here and had gone about a bit before writing to you. I can assure you the prospect dazzles me. I can ride for three entire days, going north to Inyati from the Kumalo river and cross, almost every hundred yards, gold bearing quartz reefs that intercept my path for miles east and west. The box of quartz I have collected has been taken from dozens and dozens of spots but I will not crush any until formal sanction has been given to prospect. Many pieces are full of visible gold, and the blue honey-combed quartz that shows none is, I am positive, full of gold. If a Royal Charter is given to the concessionaires, the most liberal terms will be offered to prospectors and European settlers to come and dwell here, and develop the country. With the wealth behind the present people – including the great house in Capel (New?) Court – the advancement of this great country will be rapid. Its countless rivers and streams, and its general fertility render its exploitation easy, whilst its wealth in gold, copper, iron, and tinstone is unbounded. Its surface is smooth and undulating to Inyati, and then comes a hilly wooded country that Selous has marked on my map as quartz and quartz and quartz. The river here, which I bathe in, gives one a big prospect from the sand. I brought it up in my boots, and washed it in my wagon. A weekly government post has been substituted for the fortnightly service to and from the colony at the express instance of, and paid for by, our people.”

So long as the concession, which must be really valuable, is not intended to be kept as a monopoly, and so long as others will, under certain conditions, be allowed to participate in the mineral wealth of this great tract of country, the chief element of opposition is removed and the sooner the difficulties in the way of the Concessionaries are made easy, the better the exploitation and development of the country.”

In reply to Lobengula's letter of April 23rd to Queen Victoria, Rhodes had instructed Maguire to reply, and the following statement was forwarded to Lord Knutsford:

London, June 21, 1889.

I have read the letter dated April 25 purporting to be written by Lobengula respecting our concession.

It appears to be a portion of the organised opposition offered by a certain section of the white inhabitants of Matabeleland to all attempts to promote the development of that country, of which opposition we have already had some experience.

*With reference to the specific allegations contained in the letter I wish to observe
1. That from the date of the signing of the concession Lobengula has never varied in his assurances to us that he intended to fulfil the obligations which he had*

undertaken towards us, nor do I gather that by this letter, even if genuine, he expresses the intention of repudiating these obligations.

2. Statements have from time to time been made to Lobengula that the concession signed by him was in substance different from the copy left in his custody. This is what would be meant by the statement in the letter on page 3 that neither the Chief nor Indunas would recognise the copy of the concession then in the country. In order to prove that the copy and original are identical the original was sent for by us, but Lobengula has assured Mr. Thompson, one of the concessionaires, that if the documents are identical he will be perfectly satisfied.

3. The Chief never ordered me to remain in the country until this document was brought back.

4. When I resolved to come down country, on the day before my departure I obtained permission from Lobengula, in the usual course, to leave his kraal. The statements therefore contained in the letter respecting myself are untrue, which fact to my mind throws grave doubt upon the credence to be attached to the document.

5. The elephant seal referred to is in the custody of Mr. Fairbairn, a local storekeeper, and is practically at his disposal.

6. Those acquainted with Matabeleland, as a rule, attach little importance to any document stated to be signed by Lobengula which is not witnessed by one of the missionaries, whom the Chief regards as his most independent advisers.

7. Previous statements, detrimental to our concession, have been published purporting to bear the chief's signature, which have subsequently been proved not to have been signed by him.

8. The practical, and to my mind conclusive, answer to the statements contained in this letter consists in the facts that, although the discussions based upon the representations of disappointed concession-seekers have been going on almost from the date of the signature of our concession, still the Chief has throughout regularly continued to receive his payment of £100 per month, and that we have received a cable bringing news from Matabeleland a fortnight later than April 25, stating that the rifles, the principal remaining portion of our payments due to him, had been by his orders brought to one of his royal kraals, this being done, it must be remembered, after a prolonged and exhaustive series of explanations and discussions which render it impossible for Lobengula to say that he is now unaware of the precise nature of the concession which he acknowledges he has granted. These facts appear to afford the best proof possible that he intends to carry out his engagements to us, as indeed he has always stated his intention of doing.

Yours, &c.,

(Signed) Rochfort Maguire

The debate continued:

25th June 1889: The Rhodes-Rudd Concession in Matabeleland.

New Light on the Subject: The Rev. Mr. Helm vindicated.

To the Editor of the D.F. Advertiser.

Dear Sir – I have just returned from Matabeleland and do not wish to lose a moment in writing to you on a subject on which you have been grossly and wilfully misled by a Mr. H.C.Moore. I refer particularly to his statements regarding the Rev. Mr. Helm; and I do this the more readily as I am certain your columns would never knowingly be opened to the perpetration of a criminal libel on a gentleman and a Christian, who is no unworthy follower, I assure you, of such men as Livingstone and Moffat. Mr. H.C Moore has informed you that "the interpreter for the Rudd-Rhodes party (Rev.Mr.Helm) misconstrued and misinterpreted the meaning of certain important words in the concession, that he indifferently understands the language, and that the King signed the document under a misapprehension; that the Rev. Mr. Helm has been tried before the King, and although he has been in the country many years, he has been suspended as a Missionary."

Now, Sir, from first to last this statement of Mr.H.C.Moore's is a deliberate and wilful invention of his own. Nothing is known of it in Matabeleland, where it is supposed to have happened. Mr. Helm has never been accused of misconstruction, has never been fined, and never been suspended. He enjoys to this hour the full and complete confidence of the King, and is as active in preaching, teaching and evangelising, without let or hindrance, as he has ever been during his life long residence in Matabeleland.

You may say this is a very strong statement to make but I make it deliberately; and I will go further. Let the Mayor of Kimberley send the following queries to Her Majesty's representative in Matabeleland, and if the answer to any of them is in the affirmative, I will willingly forfeit £500 to the Kimberley hospital, on condition that Mr. Moore will deposit a similar amount in the hands of the Mayor, to be forfeited in like manner if the answers to them are in the negative.

1st - Has the Rev.Mr.Helm ever been accused by King Lobengula of false interpretations of any words in the Rhodes-Rudd Concession?

2nd - Has he ever been tried for the above offence or threatened with trial?

3rd - Has he ever been suspended or threatened with suspension or has any hindrance of any shape or kind been placed on his movements or his duties as a man or a missionary?

Her Majesty's Representative in the country is Mr. Moffat – who, to quote Mr. Moore's own words, "And a splendid man he is too" said Mr. Moore with emphasis, "a really capital man for the post". Now, I say to this man, with regard to whom I thoroughly endorse every word Mr. Moore has been good enough to say, let my queries be addressed, and if he answers in the affirmative to any one of them, I pay the forfeit but as some penalty should be inflicted on this traducer of innocent men, let Mr. Moore, if he dare, deposit the same amount in the hands of the Mayor.

Now, what are the facts regarding Mr. Maguire? Mr. Moore has stated that he fled from the country in the middle of the night and that he cannot return there. The truth is as follows: - Mr. Maguire left in broad sunlight with his wagon and oxen, after having said goodbye to the King and received a friendly greeting from him in return; and the last person he shook hands with was Mr. Moore himself. The country is as open to Mr. Maguire to return to as Mr. Moore will find it is to him.

Mr. Moore states in answer to the question in your article headed "The Truth about the Matabeleland Concession": -

"You haven't mentioned Dr. Harris – Is he still in the country?" "Yes, he is with the wagons that are stopped. Both he and his party are quite safe from molestation."

Yes, I think I was; for the first time Mr. Moore ever saw me in his life I was in full trek into the country, and about thirty five miles from Bulawayo, and was introduced to the King two days following.

Don't let Mr. Moore evade my statements by raising fresh historical details in reference to the Rhodes Concession. Let him answer my challenge contained in this letter, which I think should give your readers a fair idea of the truth of "Audi Alteram Partem."

I am, etc.,

F. Rutherford Harris

Kimberley Club

June 24th 1889

Continuation of correspondence re Rudd Concession

Extracts from Diamond Fields Advertiser

16 July 1889: Sir – The character and position of the Rev.C.D.Helm, Missionary in Matabeleland, having been assailed lately in your columns, will you kindly allow me to say that I have today a letter from a gentleman who is in Matabeleland at the present time – not a Missionary, but who is intimately acquainted with the state of affairs there, both political and otherwise. He says – "You will have seen that Mr.

Helm has come in for plenty of abuse, but he ought to take it as a compliment to have been abused by such characters. He need only to wait a bit and the tide will turn."

Yours, etc.,

A.J.Wookey, L.N.S. [A printer's gremlin for L.M.S.?]

7th August 1889. _ "Sir - In reference to certain reports which have recently appeared in the newspaper of events connected with gold concessions in Matabeleland, we wish to say that in any help which the Rev.C.D.Helm has given to strangers and others by way of interpretation he has in nowise forfeited our esteem and confidence in his ability to interpret. We believe no reasonable person, competent to judge, can entertain a doubt regarding him. Difference of opinion may exist between the closest friends without any loss of mutual respect, and this is no doubt difficult for the native mind (and other minds akin) to understand, but it is nevertheless a mere truism. Mr. Helm has ever been ready to help anyone in need of an interpreter, in anything reasonable, though not at all anxious to undertake an office not always pleasant. He has never sought or accepted remuneration for any assistance which he has thus been able to render.

We ask you to be good enough to give this note space in your paper inasmuch as you have already inserted reports to a greater or lesser degree false, calculated to injure Mr. Helm in the eyes of those who do not know him and of those who are ever ready to believe anything to the discredit of a missionary.

We are, Sir,

Yours very truly,

W. A. Elliott, Bowen Rees, D. Carnegie – L.M.S.

Matabeleland July 4th 1889

On 25th July 1889 Dr. Harris wrote to "Matabele" Thompson from Rondebosch that he and his wife had paid a long visit to Mrs. Thompson and found the children looking well. He continued: "This morning your wife turned up at breakfast time rather anxious about a paragraph in the Argus that all the police except six had been killed by Lobengula, and she thought you might be included. I told her that I did not even finish reading the paragraph as it was too palpably absurd as Lobengula was 250 miles distant and the police were in Khama's country ... I see from letters from Dawson (private) that Cohen is now the only one who keeps on frightening the King re Original. [That is, the original copy of the Concession – Lobengula seemed to doubt that the copy had the same wording as the original] Moore is at Mafeking and has promised to stay either there or in Kimberley to await Rhodes arrival. So you will not be bothered by him, and I have wired and wired in all directions and cabled Rhodes twice re him and generally left no stone unturned to ensure his absence from Matabeleland till Rhodes comes, so that you may work unfettered. ... and the result

that he will stay here is mainly owing to myself cordially backed by Jameson, who does the friendly business while I do the opposite. He explained, as the reason why he would not reply to my £500 challenge re Helm that " he had promised Rhodes not to notice newspaper attacks." Is that not delicious? I have taken away every newspaper in the Colony from him. ... I think you may fairly reckon upon treating and talking to Tainton and Usher as if Moore would either not return or would return squared, and after trying all markets and introducing himself to all leading men here – Kimberley and Johburg – (such as JBR, King, Eckstein, the Taylors, Hanau, etc.) they have one and all refused to listen to him, and now no one paper supports him even to notice his communications. ... I trust you received the Weekly Advertiser I sent per your brother, as I am very anxious your friends, the Helms, at least will see that one of your friends will not stay down here while they are being traduced without going for the traducer. Why did Rudd not do it?"

The Envoys sent to Queen Victoria, were now back in Matabeleland. Maund wrote the following during 1890: -

" Directly the Indunas got back to the frontiers of their country on their return from Europe they began to be afraid of wearing the English clothes which they loved so well. First one garment disappeared and then another until I found them one day in trousers and jacket only. When we got absolutely to the frontier and were going to be doctored with the mystic rites, Umshete the odious appeared with nothing but his monkey tails around his loins, whereas the gentle Babjaan had on a waistcoat beside the national monkey tails. Every Induna in the country was given a complete set of corduroy clothes, a snuffbox, and a knife, and many of them wore the clothing during the cold weather. It was the dressing of the Matabele nation, for though they pretended to love their savage tail curios and despise the effeminate white man's dress they in reality liked the clothes and begged hard for them when the cold weather came on. For months after our return long palavers went on, and these old fellows gave the most minute descriptions of all they had seen, and very clever were many of their illustrations. Thus, describing the sea to the Indunas, they said it was like the blue vault of heaven at noon, and the floating kraal was as the sun in the centre; the water was mostly thus calmly blue, the kraal being pushed through it by the steamer (engine) from behind. The sapient remark of Lobengula was

" How could such a vast iron kraal be sustained by the water, unless it had supports from the bottom, by which it was pushed along; truly these "Makeeweh " (white men) are the sons of the sea." Sometimes, the old men added, the sea was "full" i.e., like their boisterous rivers in the rainy season; then, the floors and roofs of the kraal rocked till the white men danced. This rough sea was seen after passing the Portuguese gate (Lisbon), and refers to a gale in the Bay of Biscay; but they could not understand how the Queen allowed the Portuguese to have a gate on her water leading to Cape Town. London they described as the place all white men must come from; people, people everywhere, all in a hurry, serious of faces, and always busy like the white ants. There was not room for anyone above ground in this great kraal, for they could see men and horses moving in a stage below, just as they live in houses

built one above the other (this referring to Holborn Viaduct). The fire-carriages, too (locomotives), like those between Kimberley and Cape Town, have to burrow in the earth under the streets for fear of being stopped by the crowd. The sham-fight at Aldershot they described very minutely, and, in my hearing, old Babjaan, turning round to about 30 Indunas, said, "Never talk of fighting the white man again, aough! They rise up line after line, always firing. Their little boys, the sons of headmen, all learn to fight like men (referring to Eton boys). Their generals correct all faults; they won't pass a man who is out of time as they dance by in line coming from the fight (the march past)." Many was the laugh we had over curious, but always reasonable, descriptions of their recollections. Above all, the interview at Windsor most impressed them, and the sight of Cetewayo's assegai in the corridor of arms there. They told us that all the kings and queens at Madame Tussaud's were those whom our present Queen had conquered, because last, and downstairs, came Cetewayo - and was not his assegai at the end of the corridor? This last idea we did not think it necessary to correct. Much more could I tell you of their sayings; but the great result of their visit is what we should appreciate. I have no hesitation in saying that the recent peaceable occupation of Mashonaland by our party of Pioneers is the direct outcome of the clever way in which these two old men told their tale, and the King disseminated it among his people. The Queen did more good for the empire by that kindly interview at Windsor than could have been done by thousands of her soldiers. Had the same policy been followed in Zululand, how much trouble, how many brave lives, and what vast expenditure might have been saved! For the Zulu is our natural ally in South Africa; he admires us for our athletic tastes, manliness, and pluck. I remember well the description of the Bank of England, over which the Indunas were taken. They described every detail of the "Queen's Storehouse" as they called it, to the King. When they told of the many ingots of gold they had seen on trucks in the vaults, the King immediately asked if it were in stone (quartz), and on being told no, that it was all ready to be cut up into money, he rejoined, "Why, if the Queen has so great store of gold, do her people seek more?" "That is the point," said they; "they go all over the world seeking it, not only in our own country, because they are all obliged to pay tribute to her in gold." I believe this made a great impression on the King, and he certainly seems to have taken keenly to gold-mining since, for he has pegged in his own name, by means of authorised agents, forty reef claims and two alluvial gold claims, in accordance with the regulations of the British South Africa Company, which have been recognised as valid. How after this can the opponents of the Company deny that Lobengula does not recognise the jurisdiction he has bestowed on the Chartered Company? The papers were full of lies about the Indunas, it being stated that they were received with disfavour and not listened to by the King. Lobengula really was so interested in what they had to say, that week after week we used to go daily to his kraal, and the Indunas explained to him what they had seen. Any points they could not make properly clear, I did for them. I cannot say too much of the admirable way in which the interpreter, Mr. J. Colenbrander, conducted his work. The success of the mission was a good deal due to his clever tact and forbearance with the black men, and to the able manner in which he translated and described. The Indunas never left the King's presence for nearly two

months, except one of them who had to go home because he was sick. They were always with the King. Sometimes as many as seventy Indunas listened to their accounts of the greatness of England. The Indunas were very minute in their description of the soldiers, and of the cannon (baiunbai), detailing how far the shots could be carried, and how they penetrated armour plate. The Indunas were most reserved, never showing surprise throughout. Their only exclamation of surprise was 'Ugh Maundy,' under their breath. Their descriptions leavened among the Matabele, the story permeated throughout the land, and gradually we began to see its effect by the greater respect with which Englishmen were treated. Of course there were many reports of dangers that were really non-existent. Indabas were constantly held at which the question of the concession was discussed, but I believe the object was merely to educate the nation up to the idea, for the King had given his word. Lobengula was going to behave as he had behaved. I remained there seven months and took up presents to the King from those interested in the concession. I distributed the presents to every Induna in the country, and they all came to my camp to discuss the mission with me. My mornings, from shortly after sunrise until it got too hot, were engaged in doctoring. Among the patients was the King's son, who had broken his arm whilst out hunting; for healing it the King presented me with oxen. The King was very grateful to me for having carried through his mission, and for having brought back the men alive. He said I must build a kraal, live among and be one of them."



Maud's Camp, Bulawayo, 1889.

Maud had written to the Colonial Office on their return: -

The King's Kraal, Matabeleland,

August 7, 1889.

My Lord, I have the honour to inform your lordship of the safe arrival in Matabeleland of the two Envoys, Umshete and Babjaan, recently sent to England under my charge by King Lobengula.

Your lordship's letter and the Queen's picture were duly delivered. The former was read by Mr. Moffat and translated to the King, who expressed himself greatly pleased with the contents and general tenor of the letter.

To-day the King called a meeting of all the white men in this part of the country, and the letter was read out to them.

The King was much struck with Her Majesty's picture, and made the minutest inquiries from the Envoys regarding their visit to Windsor, and ended by saying, "He could well see that it was written in her face - that she was the Great Queen."

After a very trying journey, owing to want of water and grass, the mission entered Matabeleland the 21st ult., and received the heartiest welcome. Every kraal passed turned out, and the headman brought presents in kind. Messengers and ceremonial halts delayed us to satisfy the national customs, and, ultimately, before arriving at the King's kraal, the witch doctors came, at the King's express command, and sprinkled us with some vile concoction according to their rites.

I mention this, as being the first time it has occurred in the country, to show how much importance the King attaches to the mission, and his evident desire that his people should look upon it in the same light.

It will probably be some weeks ere the King and his Indunas have sufficiently digested all his messengers have to tell him for any definite course of action to be decided on. But meanwhile the white men in the country will be more respected, and live in greater security than they have hitherto.

I have, etc.,

(Signed) E. A. MAUND

Sir Sidney Shippard was sent a letter by Lobengula "to be communicated to Her Majesty the Queen"

Matabeleland, August 10, 1889.

Sir, I wish to tell you that Umshete and Babjaan have arrived with Maund. I am thankful for the Queen's word. I have heard Her Majesty's message. The messengers have spoken as my mouth. They have been very well treated.

The white people are troubling me much about gold. If the Queen hears that I have given away the whole country, it is not so. I have no one in my country who knows how to write. I do not understand where the dispute is, because I have no knowledge of writing.

The Portuguese say that Mashonaland is theirs, but it is not so. It is all Umziligazi's country. I hear now that it belongs to the Portuguese.

With regard to Her Majesty's offer to send me an envoy or resident, I thank Her Majesty, but I do not need an officer to be sent. I will ask for one when I am pressed for want of one.

I thank the Queen for the word which my messengers give me by mouth, that the Queen says I am not to let anyone dig for gold in my country, except to dig for me as my servants.

I greet Her Majesty cordially.

(Signed) Lobengula X his mark

Before me.

(Signed) J. S. MOFFAT,

Assistant Commissioner

(Signed) J. W. FILL,

Interpreter. (Signed) J. S. M.

Present:

UMSHETE, BABJAAN, BOYONGWANE.



Group including three Royal Horse Guardsmen who brought Queen Victoria's answer to Lobengula, 1889.

Rhodes was still in England trying to get a Charter for the British South Africa Company. This would have to be granted by Queen Victoria. He contacted a Baroness Burdett-Coutts who advised him to consult the Rev. Dr. Bruce at Edinburgh, one of the leaders in the Central African Missionary work. When he read the Concession and saw Helm's certification he said, "*This is good enough for me. I will help you.*" In Matabeleland the controversy reached boiling point and "Matabele" Thompson was subjected to interrogation by the Indunas. Lotje, who had advised Lobengula to favour the Concession, was made a scapegoat. After a meeting with the Indunas, he passed Helm on the road and said, "*Goodbye, Helm. I am a dead man.*" He and his whole family were duly executed on 10th September. Thompson once more went to Hope Fountain, hoping that things would quieten down in Bulawayo. Unfortunately, when he left to return to Bulawayo, he was still in a nervous state and he allowed the mutterings of a passing Matabele to frighten him. Thinking he was to be Lobengula's next victim he fled the country in panic. In Thompson's own words, he describes his flight:

I cut the fastest horse from the traces, jumped on its back, and rode hard to Dawson's store to borrow a saddle. Then I made for the ford in the Umgusa River, which was the very place to get through to the south. I was soon lost to the hunt in the wildness of the country. In the scurry I lost my hat. After riding for hours in the blazing sun I had to make a hat by tying four knots in my handkerchief, and stuffing it with grass. Towards sundown I found myself in unknown country in the middle of the Kalahari Desert. I had neither food nor water, and I might be attacked by lions. I tied my horse, climbed into a tree and there spent the night. The next day I rode until the horse knocked up, and then I walked. Walking and running I covered thirty or forty miles. My tongue became swollen, and towards evening stuck out of my mouth. My eyes were so bloodshot that I could scarcely see and my breath was short.

At nightfall on the second day I came to a waterhole. I lay down at the edge of the water and bathed my head. My tongue was protruding with thirst and I very painfully drank and drank, the water going into me like water into a hot kettle. As a result I got dysentery next morning. When feeling very weak I met some Makalaka natives cooking a pot of mealies, and from them, in exchange for my pocketknife, I bought some mealies to eat.

I contrived to struggle on, and then luckily came upon a trader with a mule waggon. He gave me a lift to Shoshong and from there I travelled to Mafeking.

I telegraphed to my wife and to Rhodes. I asked my wife to come up at once to Mafeking with my three children. I had not seen any of them for fifteen months. My reply from Rhodes was an urgent request, a frantic plea, that I should return to Bulawayo. The Governor of Cape Colony, in his capacity as High Commissioner, also telegraphed to me asking me to return.

I was surprised and disappointed at these requests, as I judged that I had done more than my fair share. Nevertheless Rhodes insisted that to produce the original of the

Concession, and ceremoniously hand it to Lobengula, was still essential to the Charter; and what was more, that this should be done as soon as possible. I had to agree with him that I was the only man to do it, but I did not relish returning to Bulawayo. I thought it would have been much more to the point had Rhodes himself decided to go to Bulawayo. Now that the Charter was fully secured in all directions it seemed to me that he himself should have appeared with me in Matebililand to institute its administration.

I found Jameson at Mafeking. He had received instructions to go to Bulawayo to represent Rhodes if I refused to return. But as he did not know Lobengula, so far as I was aware, and certainly did not know a native language, and had no experience of treating with natives, I agreed to go back with him, introduce him to Lobengula, and hand to the king the original of the Concession.

Rhodes had written to me from Kimberley dated 28th September 1889:

'I want you to return because the king recognizes you as the Concession and you know perfectly well it will not be ratified unless you are present. As soon as the guns are taken you can come down for your holiday as you stated in your proposals and the relays of mules will save you time in travelling. I have always recognized thoroughly what you have gone through but it seems so hard for your own future that through not seeing it through to the finish which is so near you should lose your credit and reward. Please do not view this as a threat but look at it practically if we lose the Concession we have nothing for the Charter. I should have accompanied Jameson but I have to deal with the following:

(1) Sir S. Shippard (2) the police question to which I am contributing (3) Home Board of Charter (4) Extension of rail way and relations with Sprigg (5) Extension of telegraph Mafeking to Tati for which I am paying (6) Amalgamation with Bechuana Co (7) Negotiations with Paul Kruger to arrange as to his giving up all claim to the north.

If I were to isolate myself in the interior at this moment the whole of the base would go wrong.

Yours truly

C. J. Rhodes

When Thompson reached Kimberley he met Jameson on his way up to Matabeleland. Jameson had the original concession as requested by Lobengula, and he persuaded Thompson to return with him and introduce him to Lobengula. When they returned to Bulawayo, Dennis Doyle, an interpreter, Major Maxwell and the verbose H.C. Moore accompanied them. Moore was now in Rhodes' fold.

Thompson reported that, when he handed the original Concession to Lobengula, the king turned to the thwarted concession seekers and said, "*What have you got to say?*"

There is the paper.” Their spokesman answered, “King, this document is all right. We were wrong in all we said about Thompson.” With a smile on his face the king looked at them, and rubbing his hand across his mouth, he said, “Tomoson, has rubbed fat on your mouths. All you white men are liars. Tomoson, you have lied the least.” As Lobengula couldn’t read, it is possible that the paper of the original and the copy differed and he would only acknowledge the original because he recognised the paper. The sudden change of heart of the other concessionaries may have been brought about by Rhodes’ instruction to “square them off”.

The Charter was granted on the 15th October 1889 and the B.S.A. Company requested that the Colonial Office arrange for a Special Embassy to deliver a letter from Lord Knutsford. Two officers, Captain Victor Ferguson and Surgeon Major H.F. Melladew, with a non-commissioned officer, Corporal-Major White, of the Royal Horse Guards were entrusted with the task. The letter read:

1. Lord Knutsford, one of the Queen's Principal Secretaries of State, am commanded by Her Majesty to send this further message to Lobengula.

The Queen has kept in her mind the letter sent by Lobengula, and the message brought by Umshete and Babjaan in the beginning of this year, and she has now desired Mr. Moffat, whom she trusts, and whom Lobengula knows to be his true friend, to tell him what she has done for him and what she advises him to do.

2. Since the visit of Lobengula's envoys, the Queen has made the fullest inquiries into the particular circumstances of Matabeleland, and understands the trouble caused to Lobengula by different parties of white men coming to his country to look for gold; but wherever gold is, or wherever it is reported to be, there it is impossible for him to exclude white men, and, therefore, the wisest and safest course for him to adopt, and that which will give least trouble to himself and his tribe is to agree, not with one or two white men separately, but with one approved body of white men, who will consult Lobengula's wishes and arrange where white people are to dig, and who will be responsible to the Chief for any annoyance or trouble caused to himself or his people. If he does not agree with one set of men there will be endless disputes among the white men, and he will have all his time taken up in deciding their quarrels.

3. The Queen, therefore, approves of the concessions made by Lobengula to some white men who were represented in his country by Messrs. Rudd, Maguire, and Thompson. The Queen has caused inquiry to be made respecting these persons, and is satisfied that they are men who will fulfil their undertakings, and who may be trusted to carry out the working for gold in the Chiefs country without molesting his people, or in any way interfering with their kraals, gardens, or cattle. And, as some of the Queen's highest and most trusted subjects have joined themselves with those to whom Lobengula gave his concessions, the Queen now thinks Lobengula is acting wisely in carrying out his agreement with these persons, and hopes that he will allow them to conduct their mining operations without interference or molestation from his subjects.

4. *The Queen understands that Lobengula does not like deciding disputes among white men or assuming jurisdiction over them. This is very wise, as these disputes would take up much time, and Lobengula cannot understand the laws and customs of white people; but it is not well to have people in his country who are subject to no law, therefore the Queen thinks Lobengula would be wise to intrust to that body of white men, of whom Mr. Jamieson is now the principal representative in Matabeleland, the duty of deciding disputes and keeping the peace among white persons in his country.*

5. *In order to enable them to act lawfully and with full authority, the Queen has, by her Royal Charter, given to that body of men leave to undertake this duty, and will hold them responsible for their proper performances of such duty. Of course this must be as Lobengula likes, as he is King of the country, and no one can exercise jurisdiction in it without his permission; but it is believed that this will be very convenient for the Chief, and the Queen is informed that he has already made such an arrangement in the Tati district, by which he is there saved all trouble.*

6. *The Queen understands that Lobengula wishes to have some one from her residing with him. The Queen, therefore, has directed her trusted servant, Mr. Moffat, to stay with the Chief as long as he wishes. Mr. Moffat is, as Lobengula knows, a true friend to himself and the Matabele tribe, while he is also in the confidence of the Queen and will from time to time convey the Queen's words to the Chief, and the Chief should always listen to and believe Mr. Moffat's words.*

(Signed) KNUTSFORD,

Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Downing Street, November 15, 1889.

In a letter to the L.M.S. in August, Charles had applied for permission to send Alexis to school in England. Mr. Rees was going down south and could escort him to the boat. The Matabeleland missions had formed themselves into a separate independent committee that year and all matters were put through it, instead of journeying to Kuruman for committee meetings.

Elsbeth was having difficulty with her eyes and was unable to do much by artificial light. In late November she had an attack of dysentery. On 20th December Charles wrote to the L.M.S. and told them of matters in Matabeleland and that the sight in his left eye had begun to trouble him: -

Hope Fountain
Amandebele Country
Via Mafeking
B. Bechuanaland
S. Africa
 20th December 1889

My dear Mr. Thompson,

I enclose my amended transport a/c. As you will see it does not affect the sum of £70 charged according to section 102 g.

The duty we charged under a misapprehension and shall be careful not to do so in future.

I had not forgotten the freight by sea. I made a note in my accounts to the effect that I took no notice of it as the charges by land alone more than swallowed up the £70. Now having deducted the duty I have charged the proportion of the freight by sea. I was under the impression that the amount for freight by sea (£46.12.3) was included in the account of Messrs. Filby and Kemp (£145.16.6) placed to my debit October 4th 1887 and to repay which I sent cheques to Mr. Ashton December 6th 1888. If it was not included in that account I have received no notification of it for it is not mentioned in the list (made out 2nd January 1888) of accounts paid for me at the Mission House. I shall be very obliged if you will kindly have the accounts that were paid for me, sent to me. The want of them has caused me considerable inconvenience. (I should have written some time ago but it always seemed that by next post I should have something definite to tell you about the Chief and the Matabele Concession.

Mr. Rhodes was expected but was unable to come. He sent Dr. Jameson of Kimberley with full powers to act for him. As soon as he arrived he presented to the Chief the original concession. The Chief had it read to him in Mr. Moffat's presence. But gave no answer. A few days after he sent for me to read it to him and some of his Indunas. He gave me a few questions to ask Dr. Jameson and to bring his answers. I did so and I presume the Chief was to a certain extent satisfied with them, for after saying I could go home, he said he would now speak to Jameson himself. But he must wait, as he has still to speak to his Indunas. It seemed then a matter of a couple of days. But it was weeks before he had the final meeting with the Indunas. At last about 10 days ago he told Dr. Jameson he could prospect about Ramakobane River and if he found no gold there he would give him some other place. There is now a somewhat more friendly feeling towards Europeans. But when I was at the Chief's on the above-mentioned occasion the Ngamhlope Division came to dance. The object of their

demonstration was evidently to declare against Europeans getting a footing in the country.

One of the principal men of the country came out in front of the rest and called out loudly that all the Europeans should leave the country. All, he said, every one, John Moffat also. Then came responses from the main body. Yes, that is what we all say, let them clear, let them inspan their wagons at once.

On their way to this scherm that night they used most insulting language to all the white men they saw or whose wagons they passed. The second day they were again abusive. But the third day they were quite quiet. The Chief had most probably given them a good lecture.

The visit to England of Papayane [Babayaan] and Umtjete [Mtshete] has, as far as can be seen, not done much good. Papayane says Umtjete has been telling lies to the Chief. But that his time to speak will come and then the Chief will hear all about England. He (Papayane) is very amusing in his descriptions of English life.

There have been some Portuguese on the Umfuli River, three European officers and about 400 native soldiers. They built a stockade. The Chief, through Mr. Moffat, sent a letter to ask them what they wanted in his country. The messenger returned saying the Portuguese had left. If so they will probably return after the rains are over. Both Chief and people seemed to think that there was collusion between the English and Portuguese. But he was reassured when Mr. Moffat told him if he found any English among the Portuguese, he (Mr. Moffat) would leave them to him.

Should the Portuguese return and an impi go to meet them it would not be advisable for any European to stay there. For the Matabele would come off second best and irritated by defeat they would wreck their vengeance on any Europeans.

Two months ago, about, I thought a crisis had come and that it would be a mercy if any of us got safely out of the country. Now as I said, things are much quieter.

We have not much to report for the past year. The state of ferment in which the country was has been a great hindrance to us in our work, especially in the neighbourhood of headquarters. At Inyati, the congregations were not affected. I have been informed by a Zulu who lives there that the people, Abezansi as well as Maholi, would only be to glad if the English would take over the country.

Owing to the deficient rainfall last season food has been very scarce in our neighbourhood and that has also affected our usual Sunday attendance, the people being more or less scattered. We kept up our daily morning service and school on the station till the picking time came when we had to give them up. Several made fair progress in learning and one at least has learned to read fairly well. But she was so anxious to learn that she went in addition to the school, for private lessons in reading and writing and is making good progress.

It is melancholy duty year after year to tell the same story. It is depressing to see the amount of work to be done and to feel how exceedingly little one is doing.

We were very sorry to see in the Argus Home Edition an account of the murder of Mr. Savage and some native teachers in New Guinea. We have not received our Chronicle for some time past. We cannot understand why, as our other papers come regularly.

I am much obliged to the Directors for their consent to Alex going to England next year. It is our plan to accompany him as far as Palapye, Kgama's New Town.

We have just heard of the death of Kgama's wife at the New Town. It will be a sad loss to Kgama and his people.

A little while ago we started a subscription for a Bell for our church here. One of Mr. Moffat's escorts, Mr. Maloney, kindly offered to take around a list and in a very short time, the money was cheerfully contributed. I sent an order for a bell to Messrs. Filby and Kemp and it is now on its way out.

I append a list of subscribers: -

<i>Rev. J. Moffat</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Assistant Commissioner] [Concession seeker – later Charter Co. agent]
<i>Messrs. G.H. Stevens</i>	£ 1.0.0	[“Matabele” Wilson – Concession seeker]
<i>B. Wilson</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Trader]
<i>G.F. Martin</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Concession seeker]
<i>E.A. Maund</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Concession seeker]
<i>E. Renny-Tailyour</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Concession seeker]
<i>J.W. Colenbrander</i>	6.8	[Interpreter for Renny-Tailyour]
<i>G. Condon</i>	6.8	[Concession seeker] [Concession seeker – later Charter Co. agent]
<i>J. Bauman</i>	6.8	[Trader]
<i>J. Fairbairn</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Concession seeker]
<i>M. Cohen</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Concession seeker's interpreter]
<i>J.W. File</i>	8	[Bechuanaland Border Police Escort] [Concession seeker with Cooper-Chadwick]
<i>B.B.P (Mr. Moffat's escort)</i>	£ 1.5.0	[James Dawson? – Trader]
<i>A .Boggie</i>	£ 1.10.0	[Concession seeker]
<i>J.D.</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Concession seeker]
<i>M. Durrant</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Concession seeker]
<i>J. Fry</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Concession seeker with Wilson and Boggie]
<i>J. Cooper-Chadwick</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Trader]
<i>H. Petersen</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Trader]
<i>W. Tainton</i>	10	[Trader]

<i>W. Usher</i>	10	[Trader]
<i>H.C. Lovemore</i>	£ 1.0.0	[Concession seeker]
<i>A. Friend</i>	10	
<i>Mangenichan</i>	£ 1.0.0	["He who goes into the grass"?]
<i>A. Traveller</i>	£ 1.0.0	
<i>S. Phillips</i>	10	[Trader]
<i>W.B. Thompson</i>	£ 1.0.0	
<i>H. Grant</i>	10	[Trader]

£ 23.3.0

The balance required, whatever that may be, the Matabele Concession will give through Mr. F. R. Thompson.

Mrs. Helm had a severe attack of dysentery about three weeks ago but has happily recovered. Neither of our children has been very bright the last few weeks. I made a rather unpleasant discovery a couple of days ago. I find that the sight of my left eye is anything but good. I hope it is only temporary but shall be glad of an opportunity of having it examined.

I hope the New Year may be a prosperous one for the society and its work for all. We all unite in wishing you a very Happy New Year, also in kindest regards to Mrs. Thompson and yourself.

Mr. and Mrs. Carnegie also wish to be kindly remembered to you.

I remain, etc.

P.S. will you kindly send the stamp on envelope to our boy Balfour at Blackheath.

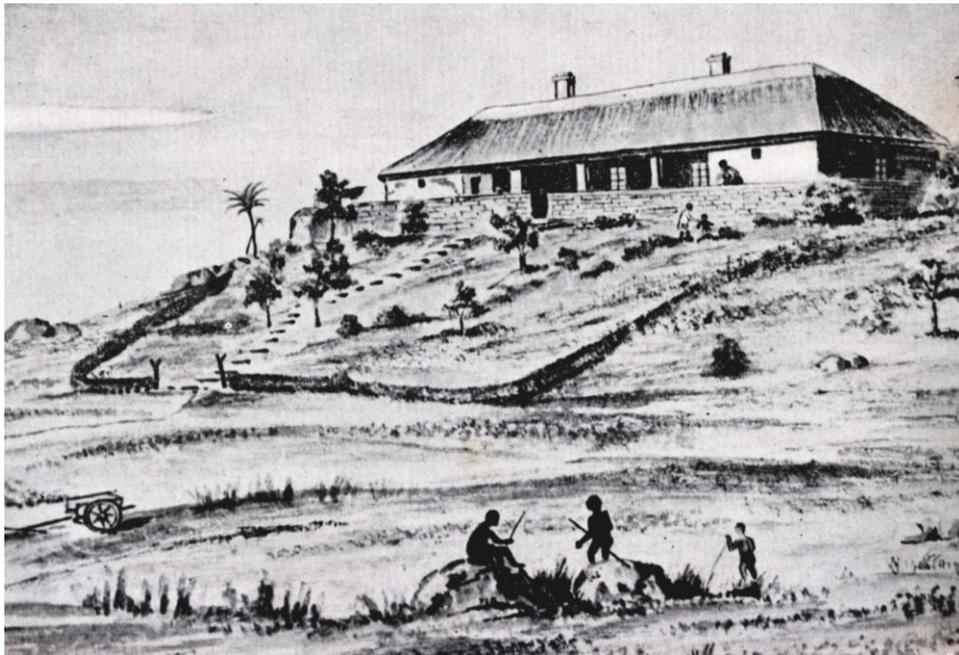
Elsbeth, at the age of 41, was expecting a baby, so, when Dr. Jameson visited Hope Fountain, he advised the Helms that they should go to Kimberley to get proper medical attention, in case of possible complications. At the same time, Charles could see a Doctor about his eyes.

Dr. Jameson made three journeys during 1889 and 1890 to visit Lobengula on behalf of Rhodes. Some accounts say that Jameson treated Lobengula for his gout during these visits. Antony Thomas in his book "Rhodes – The Race for Africa", quoting Colvin as his source, says that "*Lobengula was suffering from gout, brought on by excessive quantities of red meat and champagne, the latter a favourite gift of concession hunters. Jameson relieved the symptoms, though not the causes, by injecting Lobengula with heavy doses of morphine, which soon turned the king into an addict.*" "Matabele" Thompson says, "*I do not believe the story that Jameson attended Lobengula for gout. If he did so, then it must have been at some later date after I had left the country.*"

In 1889, the Portuguese claimed large concessions in Gazaland, Manicaland and the Mazoe area, which Lobengula felt was his by right of conquest.

The special embassy bringing the letter to Lobengula from Lord Knutsford had sailed on the “Hawarden Castle”, and landed at Cape Town prior to travelling to Kimberley. At Kimberley a four-wheeled coach, painted red and yellow with the insignia “VR” and a crown in gold paint, awaited them. It was drawn by four mules. They reached Tati on the 23rd January 1890, where they were met by two of Lobengula’s messengers, who were to escort them to Bulawayo. Another Matabele, who is aptly described by Surgeon-Major Melladew, joined them:

A most unprepossessing individual came up soon after, a greasy, dirty, grizzly-haired little man in a fur waistcoat, old coat, and very shabby wide-awake hat, adorned with cotton band and waving ostrich feather. Through the pierced lobe of each ear was drawn a piece of scarlet rag. He had leather sandals and anklets, a jambok in his hand, a villainous countenance and very fiery eye. But his most curious possessions were hanging from his neck – a choice assortment of all the old leather straps and buckles with which it had ever been his good fortune to meet. Here were cocoons full of snuff, oval divining bones, greasy old pouches, and an ancient powder flask, while attached to his hair behind hung the dried inflated gall bladder of a sheep. A striking oddity worth money to a showman but a very important and dreaded person in his own country, for the little man was no less than Lobengula’s spy and witchdoctor. He had been sent here to report to his master on any suspicious occurrences on the frontier.



The Helms’ home, Hope Fountain 1880.

A water colour sketch by Father Croonenberg who was nursed back to health after a bad attack of malaria and made the sketch during his convalescence.

To lighten the load on the coach, a light cart had been added to the entourage at Palapye. The two additional passengers, the messengers, soon decided to leave the cart when a wheel broke and they were thrown to the ground. The envoys stayed in the “Royal Charter House” enclosure outside the king’s kraal and near to Moffat’s camp. Lobengula wasn’t at the capital at that time but at Umganin. The envoys delivered the letters to Moffat to be read aloud to the king and translated by Mr. Doyle who had come up with Dr. Jameson. The king was then presented with a revolver and case, field glasses, sporting knives, and blankets. Lobengula was especially interested in the breastplates and helmets of the Horse Guards, as he was impressed to see that her Majesty’s soldiers wore “iron” as Babyaan had told him. Babyaan, who was standing behind Lobengula, asked him if he would not in future always believe the accounts he had given him of the wonders to be seen in England. The breastplates also fascinated the Matabele women, who crowded round, with much giggling, to look at their reflections in the highly polished surfaces. Captain Ferguson presented Lobengula with his full dress uniform when he left, as the king had admired it.

It was now time for the Inxwala and Lobengula travelled back to his capital in his wagon, pulled by twelve black oxen. During the festivities Lobengula was suffering from gout and took part in the ceremonies sitting in his bath chair with his assegai in his hand. Three weeks later the soldiers took their leave of Lobengula, who was now at Umvutcha. Before leaving they attended the first race meeting to be held at Bulawayo. One of Lobengula’s sons was to have taken part in the race but, unfortunately, he had broken his arm.

The Helms arrived at Bulawayo on 18th January 1890, to ask Lobengula’s permission to leave the country and to say goodbye to their friends. Bowen Rees accompanied them as he was going to Cape Town to marry a young lady who was coming out from England. They travelled very slowly because Elsbeth was badly affected by the journey. When they reached Barkly West Charles left Elsbeth and the two children and rode ahead to Kimberley to find a house. He took the opportunity of having his eyes examined by a Dr. Lea, who dilated Charles’ eyes with atropine. As they were not fully dilated on the first day, he had to pay a return visit the following day. Dr. Lea found nothing in the eyes to alarm him, but needed to examine them again a fortnight later, when the effect of the atropine had worn off. Charles spent a very weary fortnight, unable to either read or write. On the next examination Dr. Lea told Charles that the trouble in his left eye had always existed but he hadn’t noticed it because, with the eyes being soft, they had adjusted. Now his eyes had lost the power to adapt and Charles would have to have spectacles. In five years he would need a further examination. Dr. Lea refused to take payment for his services, as he knew Charles was a missionary.

The occupants of “White Mans Camp”, in Matabeleland, decided that St. Patrick’s Day on March 17th, couldn’t be ignored, and Cooper-Chadwick recorded it:

In spite of the disturbed state of the country and hostile feeling of the natives towards us, the St. Patrick’s Day of 1890 was a very pleasant one. This day is always well-observed and kept up by all good Irishmen throughout South Africa, and the fair sprinkling from the Emerald Isle at this time in Matabeleland was no exception. We all assembled at Major Maxwell’s camp in the morning, including nearly all the white men in the country, who came to show their respect to our Patron Saint and join in the day’s festivities. It is needless to mention that under the major’s hospitable roof our inner wants were well attended to, and my suggestion that we should all there and then adjourn to the king and ask him to join us in drinking St. Patrick’s health was unanimously agreed upon. Accordingly a general move was made, and two cases of champagne and a hamper of glasses were packed away in the Gubulawayo ‘bus drawn by four horses. When this vehicle was filled to its utmost capacity a start was made for ‘Mvutjwa, three miles distant, where the king was, the remainder following on horseback. Mr. Condon, who hailed from Tipperary, kindly acted as ‘bus-conductor along the road, and gave us a choice selection of music on his silver cornet.

On arrival at the king’s we found the "old buster" in a very good humour, with few of his people around, so a better opportunity could not have been found.

Mr. Dennis Doyle then acted as interpreter, and clearly explained our visit and object with the king, at the same time giving him a short outline of St. Patrick’s history and how he drove the snakes out of Ireland, etc., etc.

The king appeared to take the deepest interest, asking very amusing and shrewd questions, and said St. Patrick must have been a wonderful man, and that he liked the white man’s custom of remembrance.

Lobengula then declared his willingness and pleasure to join us in drinking to the memory of St. Patrick. The champagne and glasses were then produced, and soon corks were flying round the royal quarters. Three small bottles were then placed before the king, who, seated in his arm-chair in front of us, gravely drank them off one after the other without a wink, graciously bending his head and mentioning St. Patrick’s name before each one. When we all had drunk a tumbler each, a few more bottles still remained, and these were again placed before the king. With a smile, the "old buster" declined to have any more himself, though it is doubtful if they would have had any effect on his well-seasoned head; but, instead, he called two of his little sons that were playing about the courtyard, and some of his queens seated around. When the little boys were kneeling before him, the king told them about St. Patrick and then gave them a little champagne to drink his health, and the remainder to the queens. After this, Lobengula again expressed his warm appreciation of the way in which white men celebrated St. Patrick’s Day, and enquiring when the next came

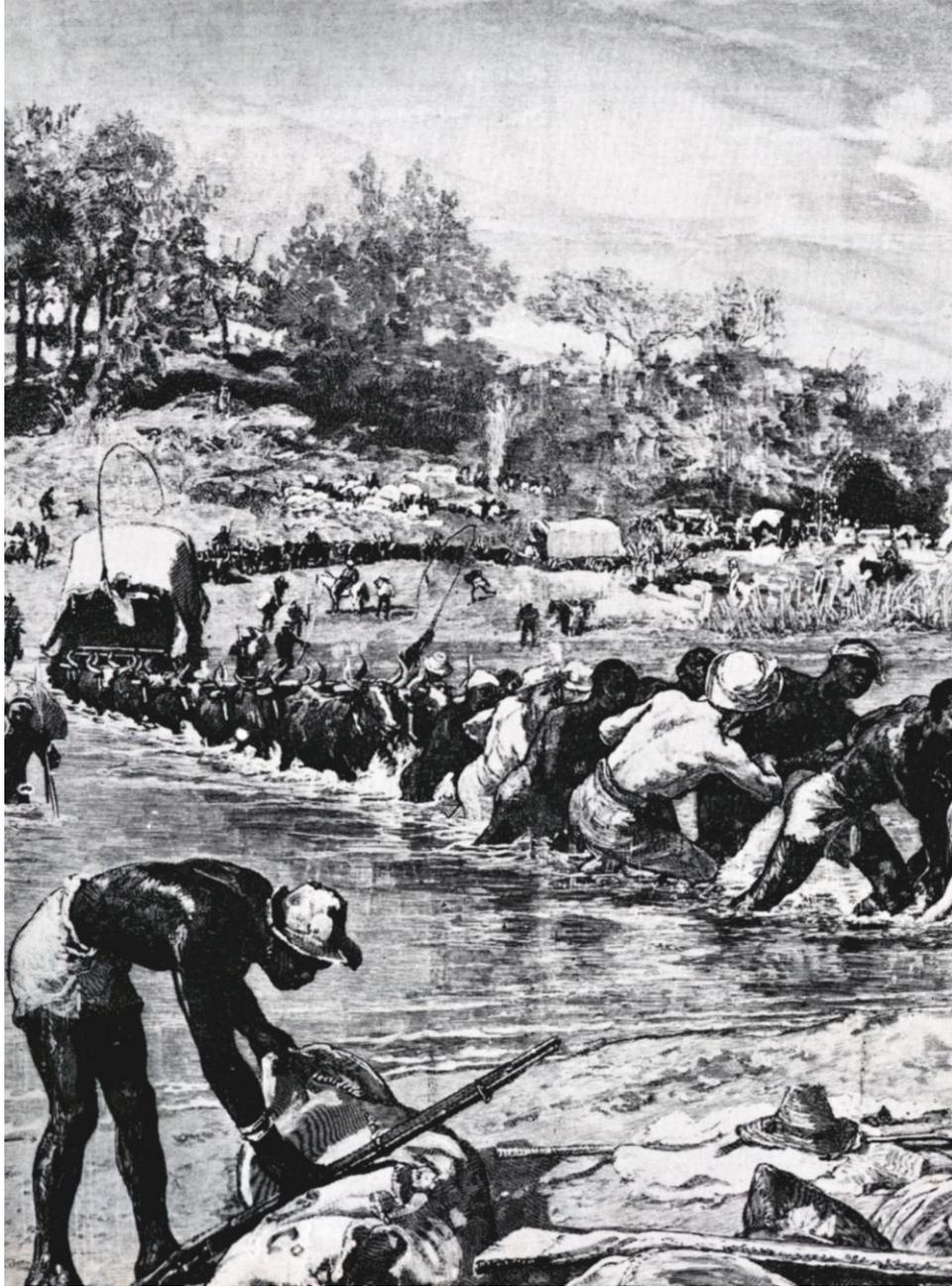
round, said he hoped to see us all before him again, and adding that he was glad to see the whites in his country assembled together in a friendly manner.

The ceremonial part of the day's proceedings being over, we said "Kumalo" and departed in the Gubulawayo 'bus with our energetic conductor, whose joyful notes could be heard far and wide.

A rifle match in the afternoon was keenly contested, as there were several good marksmen among us, and the shooting displayed at our Matabele "Bisley" meeting was well up to the mark. In the evening Major Maxwell gave a sumptuous dinner in the "Charter House," a large, well-built square hut, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion with flags, horns, and Matabele curios. The walls were hung with leopard and other skins, which formed a suitable background for the big war-shields, head-dresses, assegais and other ornaments. Even flowers formed a part of the table decorations, kindly sent from the missionaries' gardens. The sudden and unexpected arrival from Tati of Major Edwards and Mr. F. C. Selous, both well-known and popular celebrities, helped to add to our number, and by their jovial presence considerably added to the evening's convivialities. After a splendid repast, including all the Matabele delicacies of the season, the usual loyal toasts and speeches were made, not forgetting, of course, St. Patrick, in whose honour we assembled. The programme of songs and recitations was ably carried out by the many shining lights in the company, among whom our esteemed host and Mr. F.C. Selous must be specially mentioned, the latter in his famous "Coster" recitation creating uproarious applause. The evening's festivities were not concluded till well into the small hours, when the company dispersed, after passing a vote of thanks to Major Maxwell. And so ended St. Patrick's day in Matabeleland, 1890.

While Charles was searching for a house, he met Rhodes, who, on learning the purpose of his visit, started to make enquiries on Charles' behalf. He found him a free furnished house, belonging to a Captain Tye, near the railway station, and with a large garden and an abundance of water. Charles collected his wife and children from Barkly and arrived back at Kimberley on 5th April 1890.

Five days later Elsbeth gave birth to Cecil attended by Dr. Mackenzie. Much to everyone's relief, the confinement had been the easiest she had experienced. Charles had been gravely worried as she had been ill throughout her pregnancy and all her other confinements had been difficult.



11. THE PIONEER COLUMN

Sir Henry Loch, the Governor of the Cape, was on a visit to Kimberley and, knowing Charles was there, sent for him and questioned him on affairs in Matabeleland. Loch was apparently pleased with the interview that began as a private one with Charles. Afterwards J. S. Moffat and Sir Sidney Shippard joined them.

The Rudd Concession had been obtained by a syndicate called “Central Search Association” that was later amalgamated with the “Exploring Co. Ltd.” to form the “British South Africa Company”. Jameson had had discussions with Lobengula very shortly after the Charter had been granted and asked that he be allowed to prospect to the east of the Ramaquabane River. If no gold was found there, permission to look at further sites was obtained. None was found and Jameson then asked permission to go to Mashonaland. Jameson interpreted a wave of Lobengula’s hand as permission.

Dr. Jameson later advised Lobengula of a new route for the “Pioneer Column”, the expeditionary force which was to establish a British base in Mashonaland for the British South Africa Company. Before the Column was recruited, Frank Johnson, a dynamic young go-getter, had wanted to go into Matabeleland with a troop of free-booters to take it by force. But Selous advised Rhodes against it, and said that it was an insane idea. Selous suggested that the Column skirt Matabeleland to the east, and go into Mashonaland, where gold had previously been found in the Mazoe and Hartley areas. Rhodes accepted his advice. Selous was selected as the Intelligence Officer and designated to cut a road ahead of the Column.

In 1890 Rhodes appointed Frank Johnson as his contractor to raise a Pioneer Column of about 200 men. Johnson was to have the Column in Mashonaland, and the country fit for a civil government, by October 1st 1890. Johnson’s prospectors were selected from men who were equipped with other skills, to enable them to form the nucleus of a community. Rhodes “suggested” that some of the men selected should belong to well-connected families, as he reasoned that in the event of trouble, the families would put pressure on the British Government to go to their aid. Sir Henry Loch, who also had thoughts of trouble, insisted that a force of policemen should be established to march with the Column. Five hundred men, mainly from the Bechuanaland Border Police, were recruited for that purpose, with Lieut. Colonel Pennefather in command.

Bowen Rees and his new wife arrived in Kimberley in April. Alexis and Erica had been attending school in Kimberley, but in May Charles took Alexis down to Cape Town, as there wasn’t anyone else available to accompany him and put him on the ship for England. Charles could not find any Second Class passenger able to look after Alexis on the boat. As the amount of money required by the stewardess to do so was nearly the equivalent of a First Class passage, Charles consulted Mr. Mudie, the L.M.S. representative in Cape Town, on his course of action. Mr. Mudie advised Charles to place him in the First Class under the supervision of a Dr. Stewart from Lovedale and other friends. He forwarded £ 6 for Alexis’ use at Blackheath. On his return journey he stopped at Zuurbraak for a couple of days to see his mother. While he was there he received a telegram from Dr. Mackenzie that Elsbeth was very ill at Kimberley with a bout of fever. A nurse had to be called in from the hospital to look after her. Fortunately, by the time Charles reached Kimberley she was much better but still confined to bed. Next day Charles was confined to his room because of a cold he had caught on the journey up and had to stay there for two weeks. Elsbeth got up to look after Erica who had a severe attack of fever and had to go back to bed with “ague”. By 16th June the fever had left Charles but he still suffered from headaches.

Charles was very anxious to get news from Matabeleland with regard to the Pioneer Column. He had received a letter from Carnegie telling him that the situation was critical. Charles felt that the only thing that would keep the young Matabele warriors from fighting was fear and he wasn't sure whether they had that fear. For another fortnight Elsbeth was confined to bed and when she did get up was prostrated once more by a further attack of fever. Erica was taken by friends, the Steytlers, as Elsbeth continued to have more attacks and she remained with them for 3 weeks. Charles, who was now up and about, held services in Dutch for the German missionary, Mr. Meyer, and services for the Dutch Congregational Church at Kimberley. He had now (he wrote to the L.M.S. on 30th June) preached for every denomination except the Church of England and the Baptists.

Baby Cecil was thriving and, as Charles put it, when he again wrote to the L.M.S. on 21st July, "*a credit to the Kimberley air. He weighed 20 lbs. and no wonder for he has finished two cases (4 dozen tins) of condensed milk.*" Elsbeth was convalescing very slowly.

News from the British South Africa Company was promising – the column was into the country quite some way and there had been no trouble. Lobengula had sent a deputation down to the Government in Cape Town and Mr. Rhodes sent for Charles, asking him to go and interpret for the Government. The deputation had left Matabeleland in mid-June with two letters of protest regarding the Pioneer Column. One was given to Jameson near the Shashi River. The second was addressed to the British High Commissioner, Cape Town. It read as follows:



Lobengula's envoys at Fort Tuli.

Has the King killed any white men that an army is collecting on his border? Or have white men lost anything that they are looking for?

Jameson replied to his letter as follows:

Rhodes has no complaint against the King. These men are a working party, protected by some soldiers, and are going to Mashonaland along the road already arranged with the King, and as authorised by him at Umganine. The road passes at least 100 miles from any of his kraals. No offence will be given to the Matabele.

Lobengula didn't accept this and, in July, sent Colenbrander and Cooper-Chadwick to Jameson with a message saying that he had not given Jameson "the road" and if they came on they would do so at their own risk. Jameson sent back a letter (countersigned by Pennefather) to Lobengula with one of his Headmen:

I cannot stop or return. I have my orders to go to Mashonaland and must obey them. I the King wants to fight or attack us, I cannot help it. You gave us the road and I am avoiding your kraals and people and am not doing anything against my orders.

When Dr. Mackenzie heard of Charles' proposed trip he urged Elsbeth to go with her husband for health reasons. He was so adamant about her going that he took their whole household into his own home. Rhodes paid all their expenses and, in spite of almost continual rain, the holiday in Cape Town did Elsbeth a lot of good. At first Charles had been doubtful about going in case it was not consistent with his duties as a missionary. There was no one to consult so he decided to go, hoping the results would prove he had made a wise decision. Another worry to Charles was Lobengula's reaction on hearing that he had acted as interpreter for the Government. However, when he first met Mtshete, Lobengula's representative (who had previously visited Queen Victoria), his mind was put to rest on that score. Mtshete was very pleased with the results of his visit.

Back in Kimberley in August, reports from Mangwato were that the young regiments were all for driving the Pioneer Column out of the country but Lobengula's answer was "*I know you can fight for a day but can you fight for a year? If you kill these white men, others without number will take their place.*" When Charles wrote of this to the L.M.S. he added that Lobengula would be wise to hold to that view of the matter. Charles went on to say "*I should be sorry to have had anything to do with the introduction of a force of white men into Mashonaland. But now that circumstances have brought it about, I rejoice greatly, hoping that there will be no bloodshed. But whatever may be the result of the forces of the Charter Company in Mashonaland, I firmly believe it will be the better for the Matabele themselves and immeasurably so for the Mashona. The Matabele have for years been oppressing the Mashona, killing numbers and bringing the children into their country, making them as bloodthirsty as themselves. This will be stopped on the East and North east now. Eventually, the nearness of a white colony will, I hope, put a stop to the system of killing for witchcraft, which deprives a large number of people of life every year. It is sincerely hoped the officers of the Charter Company will adhere to the policy laid down by the Directors of the Charter Company, especially in the matter of intoxicating liquor. At present, liquor is not allowed to be sold to the people. They get a ration in the evening. Both Government and Rhodes assure exclusion will be kept.*"

When Charles had said goodbye to Rhodes in Cape Town, Rhodes had said that if anything was needed for his mission he must let him know and he would do what he could to help him. Charles intended to speak to his fellow missionaries as soon as possible to *“strike while the iron was hot.”*

On 12th August they packed the wagon and then set off. All went well until just before Vryburg when Charles' eye suddenly got worse. He was unable to read or write with any comfort. He wrote to Dr. Lea and then took the train back to Kimberley. Dr. Lea examined the eye and found an incurable spot on the back of it but told Charles that with care it could be prevented from spreading and his eyes would be of use for many years. Charles was warned against reading and writing in artificial light and told to rest his eyes as much as possible.

The Pioneer Column had reached their destination of Mount Hampden, but found a better site at what was then named Fort Salisbury. On September 13th 1890 Lieut. E.C.Tyndale-Biscoe R.N. hoisted the Union Jack there.

Charles had now joined Elsbeth and the two children, and they started their journey home. The journey was fraught with difficulties. They passed from drought areas into heavy rain. The drivers and leaders were the worst they had ever had experience of and the oxen began to die. The Tati Company came to their rescue and lent them oxen to finish the journey. It took 20 days to travel from Tati to Hope Fountain, which they reached early in 1891.

Letje, the orphan they had brought with them on their arrival, married one of Zeederberg's drivers in 1891. Zeederburg was the Charter Company's transport contractor. As a replacement, Elsbeth received Putiza who was brought from a distant kraal. She was a dumpy dwarf, 3'6" in height & aged about 15 and she reminded Jessie of the Duchess in Alice in Wonderland. The Matabele usually killed physically handicapped children at birth but, somehow, Putiza had survived. Charles eventually adjusted everything in the kitchen, including the stove, so that the height was more suitable for her. In order to light her way at night Putoze would put the candlestick on her head, as she worked. She stayed with the Helms for many years until her death in the Bulawayo hospital.

Wardlaw Thompson in London was very anxious about the trouble Charles was having with his eyes. He wrote, asking if he needed to get away from Matabeleland because of this problem. Charles had been thinking along the same lines as he made the tedious journey back. He thought that, through direction from the Directors of the L.M.S., he would see "God's will". On receiving Thompson's letter he wrote to Dr. Lea for his opinion. Dr. Lea replied that conditions were alright for his eyes but omitted to make reference to the virulent form of ophthalmia that existed in Matabeleland. Charles wondered if it could possibly have had any effect on his eyes. He also wrote to his brother in Grahamstown, asking if he knew of any vacancies in the church in the Colony. His brother informed him of one at Hankey, fifty miles west

of Port Elizabeth, where the L.M.S. had gathered a small colony of Dutch-speaking coloured people together a century ago.

Charles was very undecided in his feelings. On the one hand, he was weary of seeing no tangible results in the form of conversions to Christianity through his work. On the other hand, he found it difficult to leave the home they had built up over the years, and the interests he had in the Matabele. By moving, the Helms stood to lose financially. It would have been too costly to move all their household possessions as well as farm implements down South and at that time there was no market for such goods in Matabeleland. One thing that would have made up Charles' mind for him, at that stage, was if his dealings with the Concession had made the Matabele look with suspicion on his teaching.

In April 1891 Renny-Tailyour obtained a Concession from Lobengula for Lippert giving him sole right to deal in land in Mashonaland and Matabeleland. The Concession was valid for 100 years and Lobengula was to receive £1000 a year. Lobengula hoped that with this Concession he could limit the power of the B.S.A. Company. Cecil Rhodes was then forced to buy their Concession for £30 000 and 15000 shares in the B.S.A. Company in order to go ahead with his plans.

In June 1891 Charles had an unpleasant discussion with Lobengula regarding a report in the South African papers of an address by his cousin, the Reverend D.P.Helm at Zoutpansberg, to the Dutch Reformed Synod in Cape Town. The address was on the cruelties of the Matabele to the Mashona and Banyai. A telegram in the Bechuanaland News ascribed the report to the Reverend Helm of Matabeleland. When Charles saw it he wrote a letter asking the paper to make a correction. This they duly did. No more was heard of the matter until Renny-Tailyour told Lobengula that Charles had given the address. Lobengula preferred to disbelieve Charles' explanation of the matter and said the Missionaries had two tongues, one in the country and one down South. Carnegie and Charles remonstrated with the King on this point and Charles heard later that Renny-Tailyour told Lobengula it was all a mistake.

One bright thing for him at this time was the long awaited arrival of Charles' spectacles from England. They were found to be of great use to him. The matter of the Helms leaving Matabeleland was still dragging on in August. A Port Elizabeth church was most anxious to have Samuel, Charles' brother at Grahamstown, but Samuel's present congregation was loath to lose him. However, Samuel felt that if Charles would take over his congregation, the people would consent to his leaving them. By now Charles was feeling the need for a change but one obstacle was how the L.M.S. would react to his changing from missionary work to that of a Minister. He wrote to ask them their feelings on the subject, also as to whether the children's allowance would be continued, and, in the event of his eyes failing him, if he would receive a pension. He felt that after so many years working as a missionary, they should still regard him as one, even if he engaged in other work and received a salary from another source. Hankey was also showing an interest in having Charles. Samuel decided to remain at Grahamstown, which left Port Elizabeth still without a minister.

Charles, however, felt that Port Elizabeth would not be beneficial to his eyes. They had been good until the middle of October when he complained of the heat and glare causing "*flickering opaque light*" which prevented him reading and writing as only part of the work could be seen. The effect would go after a couple of hours and was probably classic migraine and not due to his eyes. Charles hoped that all would be well once the rains came.

Lobengula had an attack of gout and Charles had taken medicine over to him. Locusts had again invaded the countryside.

A further suggestion regarding a new post came from his brother Samuel, in the form of the community at Alexandria who were in need of someone to do country work among the Dutch-speaking people. Charles wondered if this would be the place for them if the L.M.S. would give him a retiring allowance.

Permission was requested, in September, for Erica to go to school in England. She was to be accompanied by the Carnegies, who were going on furlough. Miss Unwin at Sevenoaks School had written and asked the Helms if Jessie, without any cost to them, could stay and enter for the London Matriculation examination. Charles wrote to Balfour's headmaster, Mr. Waite, with regard to Balfour's future, as he had just realized that boys were supposed to leave school at the age of 16.

On 31st October Edward Amandus Lippert and his wife, Marie, visited Hope Fountain. Marie Lippert described Charles as "*educated*" and Elsbeth as "*very smart and imposing; one would recognize her anywhere as the smart officer's wife, without the trace of a missionary – a typical Puttkamer.*" The house she described as "*very pretentious, with a few old Berlin tea-cups, family coats of arms, portrait of a Prussian officer from old wars of Liberation, also give the Puttkamer flavour.*" No one else ever described Elsbeth as "pretentious" and it is obvious that the two women did not take to each other. (Molly Colenbrander seems to have disliked Mrs. Lippert as well and said she was "*a pallid young lady*".) It would appear that Mrs. Lippert was surprised to see high standards of civilization in a remote mission station. It is quite incredible that, no matter what happened, Elsbeth's high standards never slipped. Meals were served on china and, in spite of difficulties in obtaining replacements, chipped china was never seen at the table, which was itself always covered in snow-white linen. Visitors who were asked to stay for a meal and had come without a jacket, could help themselves from spare calico ones, made by Elsbeth, which hung in the hall for that purpose.

The beginning of 1892 saw the country in the grip of drought, hunger and locusts. In January John Halyet, the builder, fell ill with dysentery and was tended by Carnegie and Charles. (Apparently he was, according to Charles, a diligent reader who didn't neglect his bible.) In spite of good nursing, Halyet's "*heart became diseased*" and he died. By his own request, he was buried in his garden. His three children, by a wife given to him by Lobengula, were taken in by Rees, Carnegie and Charles.

Erica left for school with the Carnegies in March. Charles had wanted to go as far as Tati with them but Elsbeth preferred to say her good-byes at Hope Fountain, so they stayed behind. The Helms paid a visit to the Colenbranders that same month and invited Lionel Decle, who had been taken ill while staying at the Colenbranders, to recuperate at Hope Fountain. Decle was studying ethnology and anthropology in Matabeleland on behalf of the French Government. Weakened by his illness, Decle had been ready to give up and go home. However, after the luxury of a room and a bed with a spring mattress, combined with Elsbeth's inevitable good nursing and cooking, he decided to resume his journey. He was most impressed by the rows of shelves which surrounded the sitting room and which were filled with very valuable books. Charles was able to assist Decle in his work in collecting and compiling notes on native customs. Decle was highly appreciative of Charles' sterling qualities that had gained for him the "*universal love of all blacks and whites alike.*"

While they had been looking after Decle, Charles' mother, Johanna Wilhelmina, had died on 16th March in her 79th year. Charles wrote to W. Thompson that they had hoped that, as she was still so active, she would have lived longer "*for the sake of my youngest brother who was and always would be as a child.*" His mother had been a good wife and mother who had never had any money, as she was constantly giving to the poor. When her husband died in 1873, she had eleven living children, and two of her elder sisters had moved to Zuurbraak to be near her.

The Oudtshoorn Church requested Charles' services in April, but the Helms had now decided that they would remain in Matabeleland. In December Charles requested the L.M.S. to make plans for Jessie and Balfour to return from school in England. They had decided that it wouldn't be in Balfour's best interests to settle in Matabeleland, so Charles wrote to Samuel at Grahamstown to ask if he could stay with them. Carnegie was still on furlough and, as Charles did not want to leave Hope Fountain unattended, he requested permission for Elsbeth to journey with Cecil to Vryburg to meet Jessie.

12. THE MATABELE WAR.

For most of February and March Charles was “*sadly out of sorts*” with lumbago and neuralgia. His lumbago was so severe that he had to hold services in his sitting room. Elsbeth was bothered by rheumatism. Captain Lendy, the Magistrate at Fort Victoria (now Masvingo), arrived in Bulawayo with a letter to Lobengula from Dr. Jameson, the Administrator of Mashonaland. In it Jameson stated his views about the tampering with, and theft of, the telegraph wires by the Mashonas during April. The Colenbranders offered Lendy accommodation but not his party, so he declined and went to Hope Fountain where the entire party was welcomed by the Helms.

Jessie and Balfour had written to say that the matriculation results would be out at the end of March and they thought, as most children do, that they had failed. They finally sailed for home on 1st April. Balfour’s results must have been pleasing as he obtained a very good position in the office of South African Goldfields at Cape Town, with a salary of £150 per annum. He soon settled in to the new life and made several good friends. Elsbeth and Cecil had travelled to Vryburg, in the meantime, to meet Jessie. When Jessie arrived they set off for Matabeleland. At Hope Fountain, Charles had spent his days finishing the building of his wagon hut and seeing to its thatching. A couple of days before he left to meet his wife and children at the Macloutsie River, his crop of wheat was eaten by locusts. Leaving his house in the charge of Jan Grootboom, he set off from Hope Fountain on 12th July and arrived at Tati on the 15th. Elsbeth and family had arrived at Palapye on the same day and stayed at the home of John Smith Moffat.

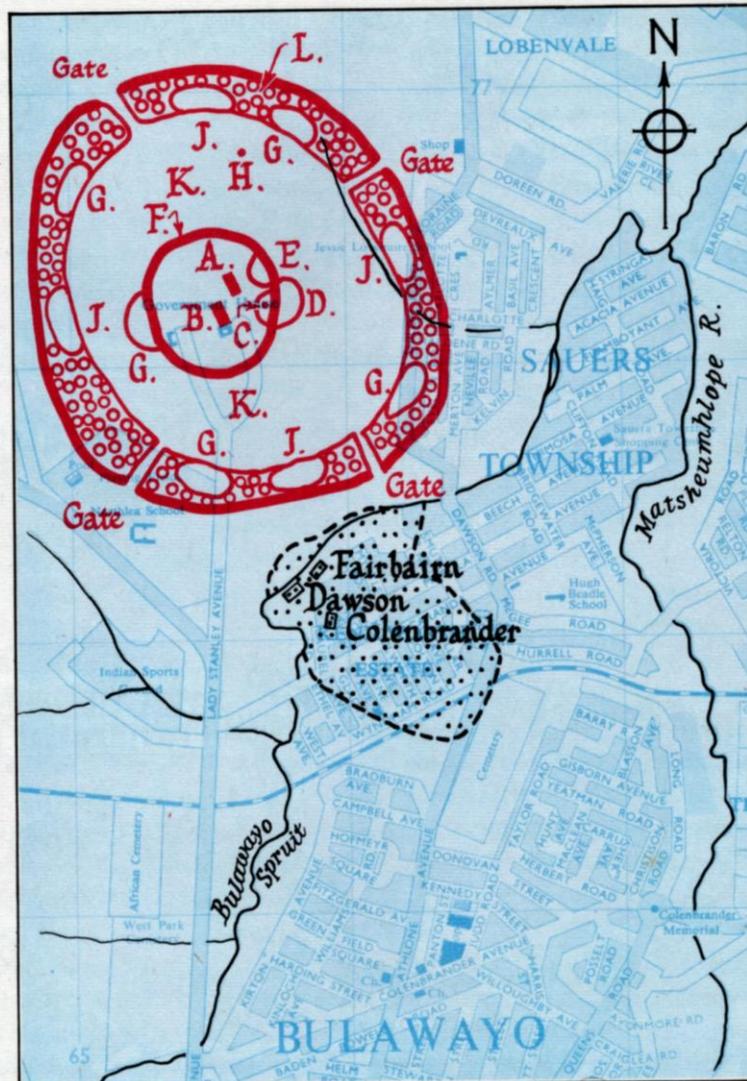
It was during Elsbeth’s stay at Palapye that news was brought of the incident at Fort Victoria that was to trigger off the Matabele War. On the 18th July 1893 a Matabele Impi raided Mashona villages outside Fort Victoria, supposedly to recover Lobengula’s cattle stolen by the Mashona. They overstepped the mark when they entered the town and killed a Mashona servant of one of the traders, in the presence of his master. The Induna of the Impi was warned to leave the area or else Captain Lendy and his men would chase them out. After an hour or so, Lendy and his men rode out and fired on the Matabele. The reports on the incident and the number of casualties differ. Some sources blame Lendy for the incident, others the Matabele. Dr. Jameson telegraphed Major Patrick Forbes, Magistrate at Fort Salisbury, on the 19th July and instructed him to prepare to march on Matabeleland.

Elsbeth went to meet Charles at the Macloutsie River and told him that Moffat had suggested that they return to Palapye until they saw how things turned out in Matabeleland. Charles found Elsbeth in much better health and was pleased to have Jessie with them once more. His one regret was that he had been unable to see Balfour. They remained at the Macloutsie for a while, but water was getting scarce so they thought it safer to return to Palapye. Charles had arrived in his buggy and hadn’t taken many clothes, as he had not envisaged being away from home for long. The oxen from Elsbeth’s wagon went missing while at Palapye and Khama, who had

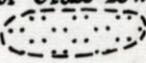
moved his capital there in 1889, sent out an impi to look for them, as he was under the impression that some Boers had taken them. The cattle were eventually found in such poor condition that they were unfit for use.

For a while the Helms lived with the Moffats until they acquired a hut for themselves. Elsbeth set to work making a garden, declaring, in characteristic manner, that someone would eventually derive the benefit. Jessie, who had decided she wanted to teach when she arrived home, started to teach some of the traders' children. She also occupied herself in reading in Dutch with her father, and, after procuring a sidesaddle, taught herself to ride. In the afternoon she would accompany Moffat when he was riding on his rounds.

LOBENGULA'S KRAAL c.1893



Reference

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| A. Wagon Shed | E. { Enclosure heaped
with cattle horns | K. Parade ground |
| B. King's House | F. King's private enclosure | L. Huts inside Palisade |
| C. Indaba Tree | H. King's well | Approximate area
of "Grass Town" |
| D. Kraal of the Sacred
Black Cattle | K+J. Goat kraal and
cattle |  |

As the Rees' had left Matabeleland, Usher wrote to ask if he could do anything at Hope Fountain for the Helms. Charles wrote back, asking him to take over his calicos (used for lining the ceilings of the houses) and to take charge of his cash box and any papers he could get at. Charles wrote quite frequently to the L.M.S. apprising them of conditions and of the murder of the two indunas brought to Palapye by Dawson: -

Palapye

Via Mahalapye

B. Bechuanaland.

9th October 1893

The Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson

Foreign Secretary L.M. Society

My Dear Mr. Thompson,

On Saturday 7th I got your letter dated 9th September. I noticed that you had not received my letter written from Motloutsi River on or about 27th July. I am rather surprised at that as Winnie in her letter received by last post acknowledged the receipt of a letter from Jessie written from Motloutsi on the 4th August. You will have received my other letters from here.

The telegram you refer to must have been sent by Mr. Mudie. It is almost certain now that there will be war. A number of men the B.B. Police are going to occupy Tati. Also a number of Kgama's people, Kgama accompanying them. On what grounds this is done I cannot understand for war has not been declared yet. Altogether I do not like the way things are being done. There are rumours of large impis on the borders of Mashonaland and yet both Dawson and Fairbairn write from Bulawayo that the Matabele are perfectly quiet and that Lobengula still declares he is not going to fight the white people. He will simply defend himself if he is attacked. If large impis (one report states that an impi 6 000 strong was seen near Victoria) are out, Dawson and Fairbairn must know of it.

As you know it is my opinion that we shall never do much good in Matabeleland until the Matabele have had a lesson. And their treatment of the Mashona and other tribes deserve punishment. But I wish we entered on a war with clean hands.

I have had letters from a friend at Victoria and have seen other letters as well and I think the following account of the affair at Victoria is as correct as we can expect. The Matabele impi took up a position on a hill not far from Victoria and from there went on expeditions to the surrounding Mashona Villages, looting and murdering, as is their wont. The lights from the burning villages were seen from Victoria. Then parts of the impi came to Victoria to kill the Mashona that were working for the white people. One boy was killed as he was leading his master's donkey; his master there but helpless to protect his "boy". A good many, but how many I don't know, were killed in and about the town. The Matabele had also taken a good many cattle belonging to the whites. Then Dr. Jameson called the Matabele Indunas and told them that if they were not across the Shasha [sic – Shashi River] (30 miles away) in 2

hours he would drive them off by force. It is said the Indunas were very cheeky but at all events they moved off at once with their people. Before the 2 hours were expired Captain Lendy and 40 mounted police started off after the impi and of course came up to them long before they got to the Shasha. One eyewitness says he saw about 40 or 50 Matabele, another says he saw about 150. So there could not have been many of them. When the police came in sight of them they were ordered to fire. They fired and the Matabele scattered. The police then selected each his man and followed him, as he came up to him the Sintebele turned round, dropped on one knee and held up his shield without uttering a sound and so was shot. Only one Sintebele, an old man who had been wounded, fired a harmless shot. One of the police following up his man, lost his horse and says the Sintebele could easily have assagaied him but instead of that allowed himself to be shot. He had 8 bullet wounds. It is supposed that about 10 Matabele were killed although the published account says 32. More would doubtless have been killed but the bush being thick many escaped from their pursuers. Allowing for the excitement and exasperation of the white man after seeing the Mashona killed, the account is scarcely credible.

If war is declared and the B.S.A. forces enter Matabeleland this month or next, it will lead to terrible disaster I am afraid. The number is not sufficiently large. To begin with, I see it is estimated at about 8 or 900 mounted men. (They ought to have from two to three thousand). The rains will soon begin. They are going without wagons, which means that they will have food for a few days only. The probability is that a large number of horses are unsalted and will die. The country is thickly wooded and the Matabele will fight for their country especially if they see any chance of success.

I shall wait for you latest letter before making preparations for Barkly. The oxen are still too poor to inspan, but we are quite willing to go there to await events. My Boer congregation is rapidly diminishing. This week two more families are leaving for the Transvaal, among them is my "Voorzinger".

Mrs. Helm and Jessie join in kindest regards.

I remain. Etc

Meanwhile, Major Forbes had raised three columns in order to occupy Matabeleland. These were the Victoria column, commanded by Captain Allan Wilson (later Major, and leader of the ill-fated Shangani Patrol), the Salisbury column, commanded by Forbes, and the Fort Tuli column, commanded by Commandant Raaff. The columns also included friendly "native contingents". Raaff's column was to come from the south via Mangwe, and the other two were to rendezvous at Iron Mine Hill. The Salisbury Column arrived there on the 14th October and Allan Wilson's column joined them two days later.

On the 23rd October, Charles wrote to Wardlaw Thompson from Palapye: -

A little while ago I sent you an account of the affair at Victoria on 18th July, as told to some friends of ours by 2 eyewitnesses. Yesterday morning after the Dutch service I

went to Sam Blackbeard's to wait for the English service which begins at 11. We were crying shame on the conduct of Capt. Lendy and his men when a young boer, Petrus Viljoen, who was sitting there and who understands English, flared up and said he also was an eyewitness and that nothing of the kind (such as described) occurred. Not a man was killed at less than 100 yds and only one man at that. The rest were shot from 200 to 400 yds. I then asked him to tell his story which he did in Dutch, something as follows: - The Matabele were ordered to cross the border in 2 hours. An hour later the Police or volunteers (I'll call them police) of whom Viljoen was one, saddled up and followed. They found the Matabele 3? miles from Victoria, surrounding a Mashona village, however when they saw the police they went off. A shot was then fired by the Matabele whether at the police or anything else or whether the gun went off by accident he does not know. The police were then ordered to fire and charge, the fire did no damage, as the distance was too great. When the police came nearer the Matabele fired 4 shots at them; another order to fire was given. Some Matabele were killed, but the others ran away. Captain Lendy ordered "cease fire". He, Viljoen, and some others heard this but others did not hear and kept on firing till the Matabele got out of range which they could easily do as they were in some Makalaka gardens which as you know is about as rough a riding ground as the pursued could wish for. The police still followed on at a distance. They then returned. On their way back to Victoria they found another lot of Matabele surrounding a Mashona village. The men were eager to pursue them as they retired but Captain Lendy seeing the Matabele going with a will would not allow a shot to be fired. Viljoen finished off with this; If any man or number of men say they saw the police firing at Matabele kneeling down at 7 or 10 yds, they tell lies. I have thought it only right to send you this as I gave you the other a/c lately. I hope the truth will come out. But I fancy it will only come out when some member of Parliament will request that all the papers relating to the affair at Victoria and in fact to the whole Matabele affairs, be laid on the table of the House of Commons. The Blue books don't contain all the papers and telegrams. The whole matter of this Matabele war has been so unrighteous that searching inquiry should be made. False rumours have been sent to Cape Town about Matabele impis on the borders and the movements of the king and his special regiments. Information was sent to Cape Town, that if any big impi was out, Dawson and Fairbairn must know of it, that they never mentioned anything of the kind and that they always wrote of the Chief as at the Umgusa River, that men who had just come from Bulawayo with oxen and whom I interviewed, stated that the Chief was at Umgusa, has never been away, that no impis were out. But the false rumours were taken as true and the true account altogether ignored. The Volunteers and B.B.P. from Mashonaland and Motloutsi camp have entered Matabeleland from both sides – as far as I know war has not been declared nor any ultimatum sent to Lobengula. Is this the way a civilized and Christian nation goes to war with a barbarous and heathen people?

But I have another and more horrible story to tell. It is almost past belief and yet there can be no doubt of its truth.

Mr. Dawson and Ngubongubo, Lobengula's brother arrived here yesterday morning at one o'clock. Their story is that lately, say within the last fortnight, special messengers arrived at Bulawayo with a letter to the Chief asking him to send some of his big Indunas to Palapye to be in communication with the Government by telegraph, the Chief replied that Umtjete had been already sent by him and was then in Cape Town, what would be the good of sending others. Immediately after other messengers came with another letter from the Governor telling the Chief of some other rumours about his people firing on the patrols of the police, etc. which were false and the Chief sent for Dawson and Ngubongubo and told them to take with them Mantusi the induna of Amapokatwana and Ngubo the induna of Matjoveni and go with all speed on horseback to Palapye to Mr. Moffat and ask him to give them 2 white men and an interpreter to go with them to show the place where his impi had encamped on the border and where they had shot the patrols. They came to Tati on Wednesday afternoon and found Col. Goold-Adams and other officers there. They off saddled and Dawson went into the house to get a drink of water, the 3 Matabele also went to get a drink of water and returned to the place where they had off saddled. Dawson then went to have a talk with Selous. Meanwhile some of the police came to the envoys and asked them where they were going. They replied we are sent by Lobengula with a letter to Mr. Moffat. The police then took both of them and said come with us. They said where are you taking us. They took them across the river where the camp was and told them to sit down and that they were going to shoot them. Ngubongubo sat down; they took off his trousers and tied his legs, some men holding him by his shoulders. Mantusi seeing this wanted to run away and they fired and killed him on the spot. Ngubo also tried to get away – he was shot and wounded and died soon after. Then someone, as Ngubongubo was lying down tied, gave him a knock on the side of the head. After lying there some time, Dawson came to him and said what! Have they tied you up Kumalo (his isibongo [surname])? Yes, he said. Dawson said where are the other two. He replied they were shot. Dawson said what did you do. He said, nothing. He remained tied up that night and the greater part of the next day. Then he was loosed and after the forces had left Tati he was brought to Dawson and told they had seen the letter to Mr. Moffat and that he could go on. Ngubongubo has just left after making this statement through me to Mr. Moffat and I have given you almost his own words. I had just begun writing an a/c of this business when he came in here with Mr. Moffat. I had seen him yesterday. Dawson says he does not think much more than an hour passed from the time of their arrival at Tati and his call at the camp when he found this dastardly outrage had been committed. Col. Goold-Adams, I hear, says he did not know that they were messengers sent by the Chief. But even if he did not know he saw the men arrive with Dawson, heard Dawson speak of them as his (Dawson's) men after whose comfort he had to see and it would not have been an extraordinary amount of condescension on his part to have asked Dawson who these men were and where they were going. But even supposing they were Mandebele going on their own account what was the need of shooting them. Mantusi certainly tried to get away and got hold of a bayonet and inflicted a slight wound on one of the men. But surely in a camp of 200 men or more with horses at hand, they might have mastered 2 (Ngubongubo was tied up) unarmed men. But

another outrage was committed next day. Two post boys with a companion had arrived from Bulawayo with the regular post. They were put under arrest. For some reason or other they tried to escape. They had probably heard that the 2 indunas were killed. At all events Dawson saw them running from the house on the hill near the river. One was shot dead as he ran. Another was wounded and caught and is probably dead by this time. The third escaped, supposed to be wounded. How can one look a Matabele in the face again? We have for years been talking to them about their cruelty in warfare and killing people without cause. And here the first time they come in contact with English under the command of an English officer of standing all our talk is belied.

Perhaps you remember Mantusi, the young induna of Amapokatwana, the 2nd town after you leave Bulawayo. Ngubo I did not know personally. He was a cousin of Gambo, the induna of Amagogo, the 1st town after you leave Bulawayo on the Kama (Kumalo) river.

I am thinking of leaving for the South next week. Then we shall get your letter giving us the decision of the Directors on the road.

Mrs. Helm had a fall on Saturday and badly twisted her ankle. She has to lie in a stretcher all day. Jessie has been asked by telegraph to go to the Graaff-Reinet Ladies seminary. She has promised provisionally; will decide on receipt of letter that is coming.

We all send kindest regards,

I remain, etc.

The Columns were now on their way towards Bulawayo. On the way the Matabele attacked them twice. On the 25th on the upper Shangani River they fought them off and once more on the 1st November at the Bembesi River. The Matabele casualties were high in these engagements, due to the superior firepower of the columns. The Matabele possessed rifles but they were not trained to use them properly. Besides Martini-Henry rifles, the columns were equipped with Maxim, Nordenfeldt and Gardner guns, a 1-pounder Hotchkiss gun, and two 7-pounder screw guns. The Columns' casualties were light. After the Battle of Bembesi, Lobengula gave orders to set fire to his capital. The two columns advancing on the town heard loud explosions as Lobengula's magazine exploded and saw the smoke columns from a distance. Before the king fled, he remembered his white friends and sent a message to James Fairbairn and William Usher thanking them for cattle and wagons. The message read as follows: "*Stay where you are: you need not be afraid of my people, as you are not personally responsible for the row; and if you get killed it will be by your own colour, as they will very likely also kill me.*" The columns occupied Bulawayo on the 4th November. The Helm's faithful driver, John Grootboom, who had been left in charge of their house, had joined the Salisbury Column and served under Captain Nesbitt. When Jameson decided to send a letter of amnesty to Lobengula, Grootboom volunteered to take the letter with two other "Colonial boys".

The Imbezu Regiment took them prisoner at Shiloh and the letter was handed to Lobengula. Umjaan, the Imbezu Induna, told Grootboom that the Imbezu and Ingulu did not want to continue fighting but other regiments did. Grootboom returned to Jameson on the 9th with a letter from Lobengula, written by John Jacobs, to say that he wanted pen and paper, and details of where he could live if he accepted the amnesty. It soon became obvious, though, that the king was not surrendering but was fleeing north.



“Allan Wilson’s Last Stand”.

Raaff’s Tuli column arrived in Bulawayo on the 14th. They had been attacked once on the way, in an engagement in which Selous was wounded. Jameson gave orders that a new column be formed under Major Forbes to go in pursuit of Lobengula. The Patrol set out in heavy rain with inadequate provisions and followed the king’s route up the Shangani River. Lobengula, who was ill and weary, sent back one of his Indunas with a bag of gold as a peace offering, but this was handed to two troopers, Daniels and Wilson, who hid the money and did not report the king’s submission to their superiors. The pursuit of the king therefore continued. Many of the men in the column were suffering from fever, their clothes were in rags, their boots coming apart and rations had been cut. The horses that remained, after battling through the heavy mud, were starving and in a critical condition. Forbes decided to rest the Column and sent out a reconnaissance patrol under Major Wilson’s command and gave instructions for them to return before dark. Wilson, ignoring this command, sent a

message back that he was near the king and asked Forbes to send the Column. Forbes, who disagreed with Wilson over most issues, decided it would be better to send reinforcements instead. He sent Captain Borrow with 23 men, intending to join Wilson in the morning. The next morning, the 4th December, Forbes moved the Column down to the river but was ambushed. While the ambush was taking place, firing was heard on the other side of the river, and later the scouts Burnham, Gooding and Ingram rode into Forbes' laager. They said that Wilson had sent them back to get reinforcements but they now assumed that they were the sole survivors of Wilson's patrol. The Shangani River then came down in flood, so Forbes decided to retreat, as the Column was now being surrounded by the Matabele. The retreat became a shambles and Forbes handed command over to Commandant Raaff who, very competently, led the tattered remnants of the Column back to Bulawayo. Raaff, who had been ill during the campaign, died shortly afterwards in Bulawayo. The slaughter of Wilson and his men became known as "The Shangani Patrol".

Captain Donovan, who had been caught up in the Matabele war, had breakfast with the Helms at Moffat's house, on his way down from Matabeleland. He was able to give them up-to-date news and Charles voiced his fears that Hope Fountain might be in a similar state to Inyati, which had been destroyed. Charles decided to return to Matabeleland but, as women were not allowed to return at this stage, wagons were packed for Elsbeth, Jessie and Cecil to go down south. Jessie was to take up an appointment as teacher at a school in Graaff-Reinet. They would journey together to Vryburg where Jessie was to take a train and Elsbeth was to go to Grahamstown to pass the time until it was safe for them to return home. They would probably have stayed with Charles' brother, Samuel.

Charles arrived at Hope Fountain on 31st December 1893 and found that the people were pleased to see him back. He wrote to Thompson on the 5th January 1894: -

It is strange but I have not had a line from you in answer to any of my letters written since the Matabele trouble first began in July. I had one letter at Palapye but that was written before you got my letter. I left Palapye on the 12th Dec. – stayed Sunday and Monday at Tati, was delayed from Wednesday to Monday at Ramakobane, got to Bulawayo on the 29th. One of my oxen was lame and the oxen I borrowed did not turn up till late Saturday night so I left Sunday morning early and got here about 9.30 on the last day of '93.

I found the house looted of almost everything, what the Matabele left the whites had taken. But in except a few instances the officers left lists of what they had taken. Carnegie's house is also empty. Several doors and windows were smashed. And as to the broken panes, I have not had the patience to count them yet. In Carnegie's house 2 doors are smashed and one window. All his surgical instruments are gone. At Emhlangeni the houses are more completely [section of the letter missing here] ... and almost all the books of Elliott and Rees destroyed as well. The people of this neighbourhood are almost all back and seem satisfied under the new arrangements. Trouble may still arise but at present it does not seem likely. Still I am glad Mrs.

Helm is not here and I have advised Carnegie to come alone. The Inyati people have not come to see me. They came back on Tuesday. But as they took and spoiled our things here and at Inyati I think they are ashamed or afraid to come near me. Almost all the Emnqunyeni people have been to see me and express themselves as highly delighted that I am back. They now say that their women will come to work in their gardens, as I will protect them from insult by wandering whites. Dr. Jameson told me I can get corn and oxen for slaughter for my patients etc. The king is said to be down on the Tjangani [Shangani] with very few people. The Imbizo and Ingubo have left him and also all the old regiments. Only the young regiments are with him. I have had such a busy week that I have had no time to write. I shall write at greater length if I can next week. This is only a hurried note to tell you of my arrival.

I wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year.

With kindest regards,

I remain yrs. Sincerely,

Chas.D.Helm.

Mr. Vavasseur is here staying with me.

P.S. I am going to see Dr. Jameson tomorrow about the H.Fn. land and those of John Halyet. The people say I must get a big place so that they may live on our place.

On the 12th January he wrote to Thompson: -

I had some difficulty in getting away from Palapye, the oxen getting lost and want of boys. But I got away on 12th Dec. and got here on the 31st, having been delayed several days by the swollen Ramakobane. As I did not deem it safe yet for Mrs. Helm to come in and as Jessie was to go South, Mrs. Helm started with the wagon for Vryburg and I asked her to go on to Grahamstown on a visit as that will help her to pass the time till it is thought safe for her to come in. I hired a small spring wagon from Kosti at a small figure per month. I said 30/- but I think he ought to get a little more than that.

On arrival at Bulawayo I saw Dr. Jameson and Col. Goold-Adams - said what I thought about the way commencing the war and the affair at Tati. Both justified their conduct under the circumstances in which they were placed. But I can't say I am convinced. But I think on the other hand you are mistaken in your opinion that the Co. forced on the war to suit their convenience and at the time most suitable. I am and have been for a long time fully persuaded that the Co. did not wish to come into collision with the Matabele for 2 or 3 years yet. I know that Dr. Jameson would not allow prospectors to go beyond a certain line, although it was known that to the west of that line there was a rich belt of gold and mining there would have materially increased the revenue of the colony. He was afraid that if that line was crossed, although it is about 50 miles from the nearest Matabele Maholi kraals, trouble might

come. If the Co. had chosen their own time they would have commenced operations at the beginning of winter not of summer, they knew that in October and November they would find no grass for horses and oxen, that the days would be unbearably hot and that before they could do much the rains would be upon them and horse-sickness commence.

But after the Matabele raided so near Victoria, killed the Mashonas and took the cattle of the white men and the mules of the post stations then the Co. forced on the war and my objections to their proceedings lies in the fact that they did not send an ultimatum to Lobengula. As you know I thought that Lobengula would not have consented to any terms. But now from what I hear from the people I believe he would have submitted to pay compensation and to have given up all claim to Mashonaland, even as far as the East side of the Matopo hills.

I have made many enquiries from the natives about the manner in which the war was conducted with reference to the treatment of the wounded and of women and children and men not armed and they are unanimous in their testimony that these were all well treated. Men who were with the column have told me that in a few cases perfectly hopeless cases of wounded were put out of their misery. An old driver of mine [Grootboom] who has won a name for himself and who received a wagon and span of oxen and 100 morgen of ground for taking a letter to their Chief and another span of oxen for coming to get help for Major Forbes on the retreat from Tjangani, is enthusiastic in his praise of Dr. Jameson and the doctors generally, for their care of the wounded. From native accounts I should say the number of killed has been greatly overestimated. For instance they say of the Imbizo and Ingubo about 40 of each regiment was killed – of the Insuga about 50 and these are the regiments that are said to have suffered most.

You will have seen in the papers that Major Alan Wilson and 31 others were cut off by the Matabele beyond the Tjangani. Not one escaped. Among them was Argent Kirton, the husband of Carry Thomas [Thomas Morgan Thomas' daughter]. Major Forbes and his column had a hard time of it in their retreat; they were continually harassed by the Matabele who were in thick bush. They had to leave behind one night the carriages of the Maxims and about 100 horses. They were reduced to living on horseflesh. The people in this neighbourhood have now nearly all returned, many of them waited only for one of us to come. The Inyati people are also returning, but they have as yet avoided me, as they feel rather guilty, having broken open and looted our houses here. In this house they smashed 3 or 4 doors, damaged others, 2 windows and any number of panes of glass. Cupboards, boxes and cases smashed. They destroyed a lot of medicines, took my tooth forceps, smashed some crockery and wrenched off the lid of the organ. A few books were also destroyed. As regards clothing and house linen, not a scrap was left, all the ammunition was taken, my rifle and shotgun were taken. The rifle was returned yesterday. A few cattle and sheep and goats were here when I arrived. The boy in charge of them had taken them into the hills. The white men have done a little damage also. The officers of the B.S.A. and B.B.P. have taken most of the furniture and crockery but have given me a list of what

they took. They also took all the provisions we had in store such as coffee, sugar, jams, etc. For these I shall get well paid. As to the rest, Mr. Rhodes says we must send the a/c privately to him and he will settle with us. Whether he meant that to apply to the other missionaries I do not know. In Carnegie's house 2 doors and 7 windows are smashed and a lot of crockery destroyed. Also his surgical instruments are all gone. At Emhlangeni the houses are simply gutted. Elliott's cattle are all right, but most of Rees' were taken and lost, they were mixed up with native cattle. The B.B.P. are occupying both mission houses at Emhlangeni.

At present I feel quite safe here and from the people that are here there is no danger to be apprehended. There is still cause of anxiety on account of the people still in the Tjangani and with the Chief. There may be also some disaffected people in the Matopo Hills. But I think I shall get fair warning if any danger threatens for the people about here know they will get short shrift if the king comes back here with these people who have not yet given in. They say if the white men leave the country now they will leave too. At the same time they say that the chief has very few people with him. The only towns of importance that have not returned are Bulawayo and Umhlahlandela. Four of the chief's brothers are back that I know of. The only one of importance that is not here is Ngubongubo. He is said to be with the chief.

I am writing a letter to Dr. Jameson today at his suggestion to ask him for several farms as Mission stations. I am sorry that there is no one here with whom I can consult. Of course Hope Fountain and Emhlangeni ["Among the reeds" – the other name for Inyati – which was named for the Buffalo regiment there] are admittedly ours. In addition to these, I shall ask for a farm somewhere near Empandeni, another near the Nek among the Makalanga, another near Kodlwayo, another near Elibeni and another on the other side of Emhlangeni. For I hope that we shall now have more opportunity of work and with more hope of success and that I for one shall not need any longer to hesitate to ask the Directors to increase our staff of missionaries. I think the time has come now that we shall be able comfortably to have one missionary at one station and for other stations we may be able to get native teachers. I have not yet considered your proposal of an Industrial mission. When the others come we shall fully discuss the subject and draw up a report. Prospectors tell me there is no indication of payable gold in this neighbourhood for which I am glad.

Dr. Jameson seems to be most anxious to deal justly and fairly with the natives. He has given instructions to all his subordinates at the various camps to tell the natives to report any case of oppression at once. He is particularly urgent in any case of interference with the women and girls. He says the first man that is found guilty will be deported to Salisbury and imprisoned in the gaol there for at least 6 months.

I expect Mr. Carnegie in about 2 months' time. He will probably come in alone leaving Mrs. Carnegie to follow later. That at least was my advice to him. After his arrival in consultation with him I wish to go down to fetch Mrs. Helm and now ask you kindly to give the necessary permission. But on account of my eyes and general health I should like to go to Cape Town to consult a doctor there. I hope the

Directors will allow me this also. If the permission is given I hope you will write to Mr. Mudie and ask him to telegraph to me at Tati for by that time I have no doubt the line will be opened so far.

I have sent no balance sheet to Mr. Ashton for last year as I had not the necessary papers and besides my account was hopelessly overdrawn. But as soon as I get some money I expect and find my papers I shall try to get my a/cs all settled.

I am writing in a hurry for there are many interruptions, that I have not nearly written the letters that ought to go this week's post.

I can't write to Mr. Elliott and shall be glad if you will let him know about his cattle.

With kindest and sincerest regards, etc.

During January 1894, Jameson sent James Dawson with James "Paddy" Reilly and five Matabele to find out what had happened to Lobengula. Dawson sent a letter back to Jameson from "Lo Ben's Drift, Changani" on 24th February:

I have not sent you any advice for some time because there was little of importance to communicate.

We have been here since the 15th and the River has been full until yesterday, when we were able to cross. We have been in communication with the people across the River since we arrived and immediately we were able to cross we went to where Wilson's party fought and carefully collected all the Bones and buried them in one large grave under a mopani tree marking it with a cross and the inscription "To Brave Men". We collected only 33 skulls, the others [there was only one other] we could not find. All except one were lying in a circle of about 15 yards in diameter, piled closely together with the bones of a good many horses. The one exception was found on an ant heap about 20 yards outside the ring. He was the man who was difficult to kill. He is described as a strong built, dark not very tall with a long moustache and close cut black beard. We have brought this head away as on account of the peculiar stopping of the teeth and from the description he may be recognized. We would have brought the lot, but it is a large pile and may be got another time if desired. (The remains were later disinterred and buried at Zimbabwe ruins near Fort Victoria. The "Shangani Patrol" was then given a place of honour in the history of the country when the remains were once more moved and buried in a monument near Rhodes' grave at "View of the World" in the Matopos Hills.)

I confirm the news of Lo Ben's death that it was from ordinary fever and not smallpox. He must have died about 22nd or 23rd of last month some 30 or 40 miles South of the Zambesi. He was nearly alone at the time and Bugangwan, who was with him left without assisting to bury him upon the arrival of M'jan. The latter is now lying sick about 15 miles from here and has sent several messengers thanking us for what we have told them and sent 2 Headmen to come in with us to see you and

arrange where they may go and live. They are anxious about the Queens and the children of Lo Ben. Where they are to live and what they are to eat.

People are crossing the River ... fast returning ... bringing passes but I cannot take their arms and have told them to give them up as soon as they can. Your Police will of course meet a lot of parties carrying arms, but I assure you they are quite harmless. They are indeed surprisingly meek. There are a great many of the young rowdies of the Army about us but they are very civil and carry our messages. Maxims, hunger and fever seem to have knocked the life out of them.

We have now 3 parties of messengers out to Ingobougobo, M'Jan and Inyamande. Upon their arrival we will either go to see them on horseback or come straight, in any event we will probably leave this in 30 days and expect to be in Emhlangeni [Inyati] in 5 returning by the shortest road.

You will have no occasion to send your people down here, as the greatest anxiety of those remaining seems to get well and hurry in. A very great number are sick and a great many have died.

With regard to the suspicions that some of the men had received money. I am told that Pitchan (who has gone in) with Selholoholo and another man were sent by Lo Ben with £1000 to give the man in command of the white men and ask him to stop that they may talk. This was a short distance from the place towards Emhlangeni. They met two men who appeared to hear what they had to say, took the money and told them to go back it was all right, they would tell the white induna. This appears to be what happened.

In collecting the bones of Wilson's party we found some scraps of paper and note Books but they will be of little value, I am afraid.

I am your obediently,

JM (or Jim) Dawson

Mtjane Kumalo, Induna of the Imbizo Regiment, subsequently told Dawson that he had remained with Lobengula until the end. He and Busangwane, the chief witchdoctor, had then buried him in a cave, sitting upright in all his regalia, complete with shields and assegais. In accordance with their custom of releasing the spirit, Mtjane had opened his stomach with an assegai. *"The Calf of the Elephant belched"*, said Mtjane. In 1933, "Matabele" Wilson paid a fitting tribute to Lobengula:

I do not want to pose as a champion of Lobengula. I only ask for fair play to a black man who stood by the white men to the end of his life. I must say this, that no man could condone all the terrible things that happened in this country, even in my time – superstition, witchcraft, bloodshed, and the massacre of thousands of people within the reach of their spears. I shall always have a kindly feeling towards the one man who deserved a better fate. Lobengula died a king. It was better than death in

captivity. Had those two rascally troopers on Forbes' patrol only approached the authorities, as Lobengula desired, the Wilson disaster on Shangani might never have happened. It was another instance of Lobengula's thought for the white people.

Another champion of Lobengula was Maund, who, around 1891, had answered questions about the king, put to him by E.P. Mathers:

"Lieut. Haynes, R.E., and Lieut. Stokes, R.A., and I went up in 1885 to acquaint Lobengula with the protectorate that had been declared over his foe, the Bechuana chief Khama, as a rumour was about that he was coming down to attack Khama. We were to tell him to have hands off; he wrote a letter saying he would be friendly with Khama, and he has acted up to it. I have never seen Lobengula drunk. When a certain White man had been on the booze for a week, he said to me, "Maundy, a man should never get drunk during the day, but wait for the night, and then get drunk in his hut with his women." Lobengula is neither short nor tall; he looks shorter than he is, because of his great obesity. He is something of the proportions of Cetewayo, only not quite so big. He has got sore eyes, probably from the smoke in his hut, and I have often for weeks doctored them; it is a sort of epidemic among the natives, and it is worse in the cold weather when they have fires than at any other time. This gives him what people call a cruel look, but on closer observation I believe it to be due to this weakness of the eyes."

"Is he personally a cruel man?"

"No. You see, he has to rule by fear, and you can't have half measures with savages. He was made king rather against his will. Naturally, by instinct, he is a farmer, delighting in his cattle, and I believe he would sooner be leading a farmer's life than that of a king. He has got rid of men who were plotting, or whom he thought were doing so, against him. King Lobengula is by no means so black as he is painted (I mean in character). I must differ from those who say he is "deadly cruel". We must not judge him by our standard. He has to rule a turbulent people, who do not know the value of life. Speaking one day to me of killing, he said, "You see, you white men have prisons and can lock a man up safely. I have not. What am I to do? When a man would not listen to orders, I used to have his ears cut off as being useless; but whatever their punishment they frequently repeated the offence.

Now I warn them - and then a knobkerried man never repeats his offence." This, for a savage, was fairly logical. It may appear to us cruel; but remember how short a time it is since we hanged for sheep-stealing, and certainly the savage execution with the knobkerrie is not so revolting, and is less painful than a civilised execution refined with electricity. A blow on the back of the head, and all is over. Lobengula is very hospitable to white men, and likes them always about him. He is, in my opinion, much more adapted to a farmer's life - being very fond of his cattle - than to ruling the crew he does. As a young man, he was a keen sportsman, but is now too grossly fat to get on a horse. Though his head kraal has the sinister name of "Gubulawayo", or the "place of killing", yet all that sort of thing has much toned down, and one sees little of such horrors. Lobengula is far too refined to ornament the approach to his kraal with human heads, as chiefs do further removed from civilisation.

Notwithstanding all the malicious reports to the contrary, the King and people have kept to their promises of friendship to the English, and acted up to their engagements. The Matabeles have great respect for the missionaries, who, though they have done very little in the way of conversion, yet by their example have done much in the way of teaching the natives house-building and to till their gardens, besides being of service as doctors. Like all native races the Matabele has great respect for the medicine man. On one occasion at Mabuquswai, a Matabele town of truculent fellows, the natives were somewhat rude to me in '88. I said I would be revenged, and when I returned with the Indunas, the young men came in hundreds to be doctored. To one and all I gave a good jalap pill. On again visiting the town I was received with great affection. But talking of the King, he has done very cruel acts undoubtedly, but kings' characters are to be judged by the policy they have been forced to pursue. His nation is a marauding one by instinct as well as tradition, killing those they have come in contact with for the sake of their cattle. I have now paid him three long visits at a very trying time, and I must say that throughout he has behaved splendidly to the white men. I only judge him by his acts. Constantly he used to send me oxen and sheep, keeping me supplied with them for months. Whenever any white man comes up to his kraal, there is always Kafir beer to be drunk, and very often he supplies them with rough bits of meat to eat."

"Would you call Lobengula a sincere man?"

"He is not to be compared with Khama. They are as different as light from dark. Khama is in his way a charming man and also a Christian, but then he has had the benefits of education which the other man has not. He has lived with traders and missionaries who have had civilising influences over him. Lobengula is essentially a savage despot. He is all supreme - if he says a man has to die, he has to without a trial. His great idea in dealing with white men is to set them at variance in order to hear what they say about each other. From this, undoubtedly, he has got the name of being very insincere. There is no doubt he is grasping; he likes to get all he can out of the white men. He has not seen enough of the white men, and those he has had any connection with he looks upon not as food for plunder, but as being there for what they can get out of him. People are too rash in saying he is insincere, for he has been very considerate throughout with Englishmen, whom he admires as hunters and for their straightforwardness. He knows the difference between a Boer and an Englishman immediately. He has got the idea of getting the best out of everything. He cannot go by our laws as to what is upright, as to signing his name and so forth. I have seen men knocked on the head as witches; but that you cannot call cruelty, for we used to burn for witchcraft less than a hundred years ago. I attended a niece of the King, she having had a finger bitten off in a fight, and Lobengula had the woman who did it killed, as he did not believe it could have been cured else. Lobengula is like all natives and savages, whom you have to keep well in hand, and always before you to see that they do not do anything which they will chuckle over afterwards when they have got the best of you. I believe he is very sincere in his friendship to white men, and I daresay to his own natives. For instance, he promised to befriend us, and has never attacked Khama since '85, though he could have done so constantly. He promised to let the expedition go in, and he did so. It is difficult for a man in London

to judge him; you must judge him by his surroundings and take into consideration his good sterling points, of which he has many. He has always behaved well to the white men."

On 22nd March 1894 Charles wrote to Wardlaw Thompson again: -

I was very glad to get your letter of the 20th January. From the letters I have sent since my arrival here you will have seen how I found the station, and the people of the surrounding towns and villages. I also wrote what I had done with regard to lands for our mission work. We have to wait for the settlement of the land question and title deeds till the arrival of Mr. Duncan the Land Surveyor General. In my application for land I told Dr. Jameson that it was the intention of the Society to establish industrial schools for the natives. I will write more on this subject on the arrival of Messrs. Carnegie and Rees whom I expect next week.

Our services are very well attended. It is gratifying to see what a comparatively large number of women and girls attend now. A famous isanusi or witch doctor also attends and tells me he has given up his profession. The altered state of the country having induced the spirit that influenced him to take its departure of which he is very glad. May we soon see the Spirit of God influencing not him alone but a large number of the people as well.

For the sake of the natives I shall be glad once we have a chain of stations from Mangwe to beyond Emhlangeni. Anxious as the authorities may be to see justice done, they are sure to have men in their employ who will only be too ready to wink at the misdeeds of white men. In this district the natives have no trouble at all.

You will have seen from the papers that all doubts as to the Chief's death are now removed. The Company have sent Dawson and Reilly with wagons to take food and medicine to the natives still on the Tjangani and also to bring back some of the Amakosikazi [Queens]. Several more of the Inyati people have returned. But it has suffered more in the last fight and from fever, smallpox and hunger than any town of a similar size. The induna was very ill on the Tjangani scarcely expected to recover.

I think I mentioned some time ago that I had finished my wagon house. It is a substantial building, built into the side of the hill, of burnt brick and thatched with grass, its dimensions are 29ft x 19ft inside width large enough for two wagons.

Mrs. Helm and Cecil have gone to Grahamstown. Cecil was very ill of croup at Vryburg, the Doctor that attended him said he could do nothing more for him. I am thankful to say he recovered. Jessie is at Graaff-Reinet as teacher in the Midland Seminary. Balfour is in the office of the Gold Fields of South Africa, Cape Town. He gets £150 per annum. A good salary for a beginner. I thought I had mentioned this before.

With kindest regards, etc.

Charles received permission to go to Kimberley and there he consulted Dr. Symonds and later Dr. Wood at Cape Town. The latter took a more hopeful view of his eyes. Dr. Kitching gave him a thorough medical check-up and pronounced he had nothing organically wrong with his system but just functional disorders. Captain Heyman, who had been in charge of organizing food and relief after the war, heard that Charles was going down south. He asked if Charles would allow Mrs. Alexander, a widow, her 3 children and 2 maids to accompany them back from Vryburg as he (Captain Heyman) and Mrs. Alexander were to be married. When they set off home from Vryburg the party now consisted of the Alexander family, Mrs. Carnegie and children, and the Helms, who had been joined by Jessie. They rested at Mafeking for a few days and visited friends. Next stop was at Palapye and a visit to the Moffats before continuing to Tati. There they had dinner with Ayah Marman and her Malay husband, a Doctor. The meal was of roast turkey and vegetables, pudding and cream, a welcome change from the dried and tinned food eaten on trek. Finally they reached Hope Fountain on 7th September 1894. The Heyman's wedding took place next day and their children stayed at the mission for a time with their nurses while the Heymans settled into their new home.



Bulawayo, 1894.

In 1893, Bulawayo was described by an old pioneer as: *“a curious collection of hut, houses constructed of packing-cases, corrugated iron shanties, tents and every conceivable kind of habitation, save those of civilization. The bank... a tin building with mud floors; the Magistrate’s Court ... often impossible to see the presiding judge on account of the dust; no High Court; flies such a pest as to bring about a disease called fly-sickness; the Administrator’s sanctum ... a tent, occasionally blown over by storms; the chief dining room of the town ... a buck sail over poles.”* The character of the inhabitants can be judged by the following from a Pioneer of Salisbury at that time: *“There is a story of two bachelor friends who had formed a practice of dining alternately at each other’s huts on Saturday evenings. Once they sat late into the night discussing, no doubt some political question and parted*

company only when the supply of "Square face" ran short. Early next morning he who had been the host was roused by the arrival of his friend's boy with the following note: - "Dear Jim, I think I left my hurricane lamp at your hut last night. Please send it back by bearer. Yours, George. P.S. I am returning the cage containing your parrot."

Gradually everything started settling down. The town of Bulawayo began to take shape, stands were sold and streets laid out. Now that Lobengula was dead, the Africans began to come forward for instruction from the missionaries. Charles started a class at 6 a.m. for his eager pupils so that they would have time to work re-planting their gardens. The most promising pupils were selected for further instruction and baptism. Lobengula's queens must have proved quite disruptive when they attended the services. The custom, before hymnbooks were available, was for the missionary to sing each line and the congregation would repeat it. The queens, however, sang their own tunes and words in loud voices! In order to free Elsbeth from some of her chores Jessie taught her brother Cecil and the three eldest Carnegie children.

When Elliott resigned in 1894 and Cullen Reed took his place, it was decided that instead of his being placed at Inyati, he should open another mission. Together with Charles he set out to search for a good place and they agreed on a 24 000 acre farm, Dombadema, at the junction of the Bechuanaland Protectorate and Rhodesia. In 1895 the B.S.A. Company ceded this farm to the L.M.S., as well as 8 000 acres at Inyati and 6 000 acres at Hope Fountain. Dombadema was intended to serve an area of some 6 000 square miles that was inhabited by the Makalanga people and was previously serviced by stations at Bulilima-Mangwe and Selepeng.

Charles made time to build a small cart for a crippled African boy so that he could be pulled around Hope Fountain. He also taught Sindebele to a Seventh Day Adventist missionary who went over to Hope Fountain regularly for the lessons.

Selous, who had married in April 1893, brought his wife to settle in Bulawayo. In August he rode over to Hope Fountain with her. (Elsbeth had given Mrs. Selous banana and granadilla plants for her garden). Talk turned to dissatisfaction among the Matabele with regard to the ever-increasing confiscation of their cattle by the Charter Company. Charles was asked by Heyman if the Hope Fountain people needed help with mealies (corn), as the land was once more in the grip of drought. He also discussed the cattle question with Charles.

On 21st January 1895 Charles performed a marriage ceremony for Petrus Hendrick Viljoen, a transport rider, and Gertruida M. Myntjies. On 4th May Charles performed another marriage – this time for George F. Tolmay and Anna Maria Prinsloo. In August when Beatrice Borrow (sister of Henry Borrow, who had been killed in the Shangani Patrol) married Captain Jack Spreckley, her veil was held in place by real orange blossom from the Hope Fountain orchard.

Charles had applied for his overseas furlough during May. He was seldom free from the pain caused by neuralgia. He was taking Cod Liver Oil as he felt that that had

cured him of it in 1884. Charles thought that when they went on leave he would put their house up for rent at about £15 per month. A general deterioration in Elsbeth's health began to take place and a Dr. Farmer, who refused to take payment for his treatment, attended her. By November the Society had held a Committee meeting and Charles had told the meeting that the Doctor had advised that Elsbeth should get away as soon as possible, in spite of a slow improvement to her health.

For their furlough they took two wagons with them, as they were taking the two eldest Carnegie boys, who were to be sent to school in England. Jessie was to be in charge of one wagon with her brother and the two Carnegie boys. They left Hope Fountain on 17th December and stayed at Mangwe for Xmas with the Van Rooyens. The Helms had many friends at Mangwe as Charles had baptised all the Afrikaans babies before the establishment of a Dutch Reformed Church in Rhodesia. In the dry season the Hope Fountain cattle had been sent to the Van Rooyens as the Africans used to burn the veldt around the Hope Fountain area. After spending a happy time at Mangwe they trekked on to Tati.

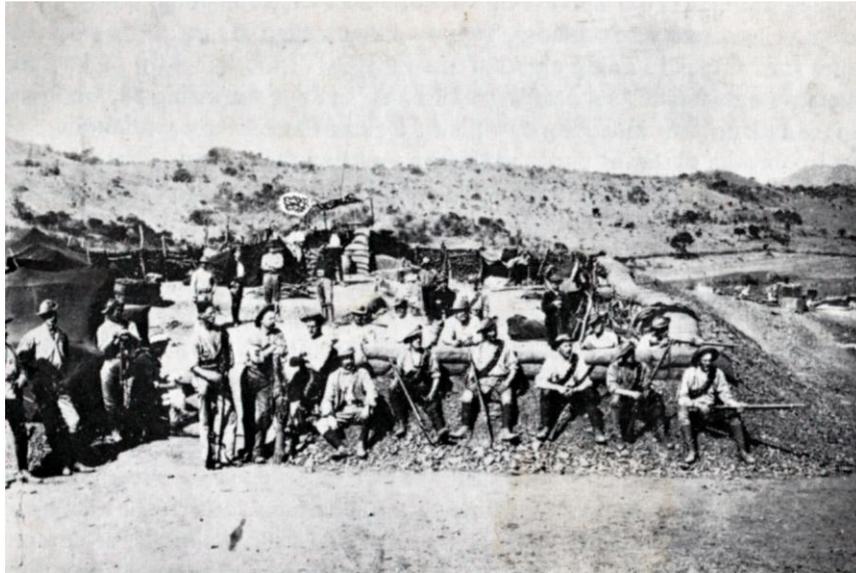
Just outside of Tati they met up with the Stuttaford's party on its way up to Matabeleland. Two of their daughters, Alice and Lilian, had gone out to collect rainwater and were missing in the veldt and a search was being carried out. The Helms decided to wait and see if they could help. The girls had gone missing on Wednesday, which was New Years Day 1896, and had been found, more than 17 miles from the wagons, on the Saturday. Lilian had been given a pair of high topped lace-up boots for Christmas and when she was found only the tops remained, hanging around her ankles. It was to the Helms' wagon that the girls were first brought when they were found. Lilian later said *"I shall never forget the kindness of Jessie Helm; how she took off what was left of our boots and stockings, extracted with loving care the thorns from our legs and feet, and then sent us on to our parents; and the soothing touch of the gentle hands of a sweet mother, and the kind comforting presence of a good father."*

The journey continued very slowly on account of Elsbeth's health and they were often forced to stop for a couple of days on their way to Kimberley. They had not left their house and asked Mr. Musson to send their wagons back to Hope Fountain with 4000 lbs. of goods to pay expenses. Jessie was to stay in the Colony while they were on furlough. She was to teach at Ladysmith. They sailed on the "Pembroke Castle" and Elsbeth's health began to improve immediately. On arrival in England they received news of the Rebellion.

13. THE REBELLION

The rebellion had started in Matabeleland when an African policeman and two others were murdered near Essexvale on the 20th March 1896. The rebellion spread, with Europeans being killed at Dawson's Store in Bulawayo and at Filabusi. Soon the death toll was up to 140 Europeans. (By the end of the rebellion the deaths totaled 451 people, as well as 188 wounded, including the Imperial troops sent to quell the unrest). Forts were built at Gwelo, Mangwe, Belingwe and Bulawayo and the European population was brought in to them. Mounted patrols were sent out to bring them in and to bury the murdered. By June the rebellion had spread to Mashonaland, led by the religious leaders Nyanda and Kagubi.

The Europeans in Matabeleland and Mashonaland in 1895 were mainly unaware of the build-up of resentment in the Matabele and Mashona people. Their king was dead and their social structure had been turned up side down.



Hope Fountain Fort, 1896.

Neville Jones, who later took over from Charles at Hope Fountain, gave the causes of the rebellion as:

1. *The incomplete subjugation of the Matabele in 1893.*
2. *The unreadiness of the Matabele to settle down peacefully.*
3. *The overbearing attitude of the native police which was deeply resented.*
4. *The conviction on the part of the natives that all the evils that had visited them, such as drought, locusts, and the rinderpest, were directly attributable to the white man.*

5. *It must also be remembered that many of the armed men in Matabeleland were with Jameson as prisoners after the abortive raid into the Transvaal.*

The Chartered Company had also imposed a penalty on the Matabele, which involved the confiscation of a certain number of cattle from each kraal every month, which hit at the core of their national pride.

Without Lobengula to hold his warriors in check, the mission houses were destroyed completely. The Europeans went into Bulawayo where a laager was formed. The Africans who had tried to protect the missions were advised to flee into the Matopo Hills, as the authorities could not protect them or take the 500 people involved into the laager. Before leaving, they placed a crippled boy in his hut with water and firewood. From this position he witnessed the looting of the two mission houses and the firing of the Helm's house. The next day the young boy set out with his crutch to walk the 8 miles into Bulawayo to give Mr. Carnegie the news. A few days later Carnegie's house met the same fate as the Helms'. Captain C.W. Halsted, with 47 men, arrived at Hope Fountain on the 23rd May and, after a three-hour fight, repulsed the rebels, and established a fort there. Conflicting accounts say that Colonel Plumer and a force of 270 men established the fort after a four-hour battle and that Plumer left Hope Fountain for the Gwaai River with a force of 400 men.



Carnegie with returning Hope Fountain converts after the Rebellion.

After the rebellion, Carnegie camped in the ruins of his home and then went into the hills, to look for his “flock”. A member of Plumer's Matabeleland Relief Force, Trooper Sykes, reported that: *“Early in the peace negotiations, Mr. Carnegie... ventured some distance into the hills for the purpose of discovering what had become*

of the converts of the mission. That he ran no small risk may be gathered from the fact that rebels whom they encountered showed evidently hostile intentions, and it was only by the exercise of the utmost sang froid and tact that he and his attendants escaped with their lives. Remaining among the rebel strongholds two or three days, he succeeded in finding his people, who gladly hailed his appearance... They finally escorted him through the rebel lines towards the base camp at Usher's.

David Carnegie wrote in the L.M.S. children's magazine, 'News from Afar' in 1898:

We left Rhodes' camp in the morning at sunrise. My old horse was very tired before we had travelled many miles. Our way led us through some magnificent scenery. Now we were passing through long grass, now in thick bush, now descending a steep gorge, then climbing a stony kopje, crossing over mighty boulders, creeping through narrow passes, going up and down, round about, threading our way as if we had been in some ancient city made by man.

Soon we came to the battlefield. The first African whom we saw fled from us like a hunted hare. I tied my handkerchief on to a stick as a sign of peace, but in spite of this and our calling to him he disappeared and we never saw him again. No doubt many from their hiding-places among the great rocks saw us as we passed along. At 12 noon I off-saddled by a little brook; the sun was hot. I felt tired and hungry. We boiled our kettle and had some refreshment.

We were in a lovely ravine. We found out afterwards several armed rebels were watching us from another hill opposite. A valley opened out in front of us, and my boy saw an African with a rifle and a belt full of cartridges go behind a stony hill on our left to watch us as we came into view. I beckoned him to approach - he stood defiant some hundred yards away. I called him again, saying "Are you afraid of us? Why don't you come? We have no guns to fight with. We have come with our mouths to talk, not with guns to fight." He could not understand seeing a white man on horseback without a gun.

The man at last conquered his fears and came near, with the gun across his shoulder. He pointed in the direction where the Hope Fountain people were and went on to tell them not to be afraid. We saw some women digging their gardens far up the valley. There were two men also in the top garden; one had two spears alongside of him and the other an old muzzle loading gun. A beautiful stream of clear water ran beside the garden.

Iris Clinton in her book "Hope Fountain Story" says: "*One of these men, after much bargaining, agreed to act as guide. When the sun was sinking they seemed still no nearer their destination. "We must delay no longer, but hurry on to where my people are." After more argument, the guide and the young African with Carnegie disappeared down the flat rock into the gorge below.*"

Carnegie continues: *In ten minutes or so four of my own school children came running up to meet me. "Father, Father," they said. "Sa gu bona, Baba," (literally,*

“We see you, Father” - the Ndebele greeting) and their wee faces though pinched with hunger lighted up into warm welcome smiles. We passed down the rock, ascended another, and found ourselves right on the top of a bare, rounded rocky hill. Soon most of my old friends gathered round me, men, women and children. I was surprised to see so many and wondered where on earth they came from, for I could see no huts. They rejoiced much at seeing me, and you may be sure that joy was mutual.

It was now getting late so we scrambled down to the bottom of the rock, and they led me away round ever so many mighty stones into their hiding places where they had been staying for many months. Here I stayed for two days explaining many things, and as a result, before I returned to the camp some five hundred had left the hills for their old homes on the strength of my word. Three of my people came as a guard back with me to the fort and during my stay two others slept outside the hut to keep watch through the night.

On returning to the camp Mr. Rhodes, Earl Grey and Sir Richard Martin complimented me on my success in being able to induce so many to leave the hills so soon. This I thought nothing of. It was only a question of doing my duty and God's grace enabled me to do it.

No sooner was the rebellion over than another trouble fell upon us, and this time it was famine. Fever is bad, war worse, but famine beats them both. All our people on their return from the hills had nothing to eat, and there were six more months to pass before the green food in the gardens would be ready. Their former crops were partly destroyed, their cattle, sheep and goats were all dead or stolen. The time for sowing was near at hand, but they had no seed to put in the ground and hardly strength enough to dig.

No one outside this country will ever know how much pain and suffering hundreds and thousands of Africans went through before the famine passed over. We had to try and save people from dying of hunger wherever we could. We gave out mealies, rice, flour and Boer meal by the handful twice a day to starving men, women and children. We cooked quinces taken from our own garden, makomani, pumpkins and gave those to them. A special dish was cooked for babies in arms; a few starving boys had a special portion cooked for them, so also with the old men and women who came to us for food.

This was one of the results of the rebellion, and but for the kindly aid of the Government hundreds and thousands more people would have perished. Ox skins, monkeys, baboons, old bones, roots, berries and wild fruit were eagerly devoured by the famishing people.

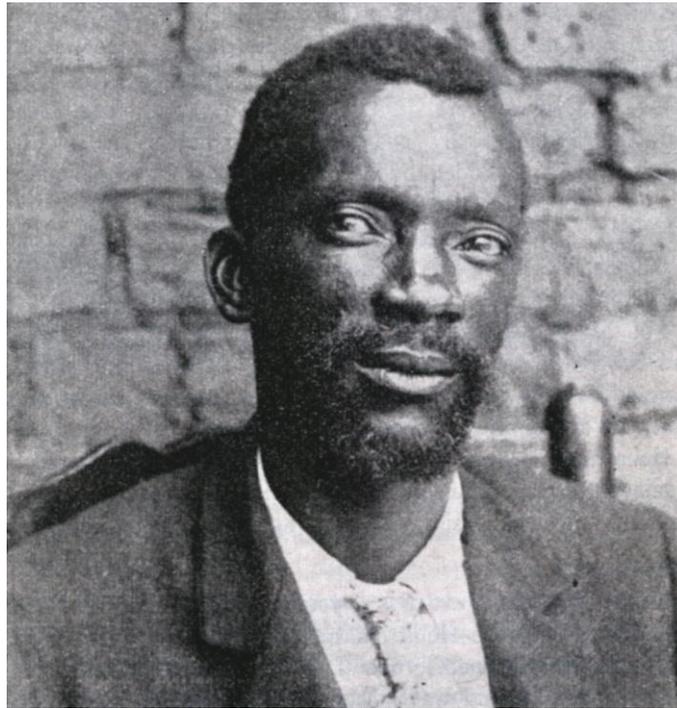
Our plan of feeding was something like this: after school regularly each day we had from eighty to a hundred children to whom we gave a feed of mealie porridge, sometimes rice and sometimes flour meal. This porridge was poured into wooden dishes round which the children sat in groups of ten and twelve on the ground and ate with their fingers. Some of them would rush at the dish and grab the food; if you did not watch there was sure to be a scramble for the last bits. Poor little things, they were so weak and hungry you could hardly blame them.

After a time the rains came, the gardens were sown, the green food became plenty, and our number of needy cases grew less and less. The women and children, too, have now returned to their homes and friends and have stopped the work of giving out food. There may be hunger in the land again, for many did not dig large enough gardens to last through the year; in the meantime, however they have plenty to eat, for which we thank God with all our hearts.

Carnegie continued alone for a year, at the end of which the Helms were on their way back.

14. THE DREAM FULFILLED

When the Helms returned from overseas in 1897, they went to Zuurbraak to stay with Charles' sister, Catharina Elizabeth, and her husband, the Reverend Johannes Josua Petrus Rossouw. The Rossouws were living in the family home, as Johannes was now the Dutch Reformed Church missionary in charge there. During June they travelled to Worcester to be present at the wedding of Charles' sister, Charlotte Maria, to Gerrit Hendrik Willem De La Bat. After returning to Zuurbraak (both with colds), they went to Riversdale and on the 26th July Charles wrote to the L.M.S. that a deputation from a church at Paarl had asked him to preach there, but he didn't think he would get sanction under the present circumstances. While in Riversdale they visited the Church which had been built with land and money donated by one of the brothers and his wife. From Riversdale they went to Barrydale to see his other brothers. They journeyed in two carts as Winnie and Jessie were with them. The journey took them two and a half hours.



Shisho Moyo

Returning to Zuurbraak, they packed their bags and set off for the journey home. The Railway line was now in the process of construction through to Bulawayo, so on the last lap of their journey to Matabeleland, Charles travelled in a railway construction train with the baggage, in order to get back to his post quickly. Elsbeth and the family followed by coach. After leaving the train, Charles went by cart and was met on the road to Hope Fountain by the schoolteacher, Shisho Moyo, the former goatherd boy, and the school children shouting out their welcome and singing hymns. Shisho had

become an evangelist/teacher in 1896, with a salary of £25 per annum. He became the first L.M.S. African Minister when he was ordained in 1912. In spite of the cart travelling at about 8 or 9 miles an hour the children raced the cart home. It must have been heartwarming for Charles, as he had turned down the offer of the church at Paarl, feeling that he could not desert Hope Fountain at this stage.



Elsbeth and Charles and the orphans.

An addition to the staff of Hope Fountain in 1896 had been the industrial missionary, George Wilkinson. He taught the Africans how to make bricks, build and do carpentry. Now there was a crying need for teachers and mission stations, so it was decided that Carnegie, who had previously travelled around doing outlying mission work, should start a mission at Centenary, a 6 000 acre holding, about 30 miles west of Hope Fountain, near Figtree. Cullen Reed was back at Dombadema taking up where he had left off during the Rebellion. Not only had Charles to supervise the mission work but he had also to deal with the settling of African tenants on the 6 000 acres, providing dams, wells, boreholes, cattle dipping facilities and enforcement of the digging as well. As Hope Fountain was also in the gold mining area, any prospector could peg out a gold claim on Church property if he held a Government permit. If any gold was marketed, the mission was allowed to claim a small royalty and also collect rental on any building erected by the miners. However, as none of the mines proved lucrative, most of the miners moved on, leaving open workings, to the dismay of the Helms.

At a special meeting at Mafeking on 26th August 1897 called to deal with elementary African education, and at which Wardlaw Thompson was present, Carnegie, Helm, Reed and Wilkinson drew up a scheme for distributing African teachers, their payment and also provision for yearly refresher courses. The teachers were to teach

the three R's and singing. Their salaries, like Shisho's, were to be £25 per annum, as well as being provided with a hut. They were to teach for nine months of the year and when their pupils were called home to help with the crops, the teachers would go on their refresher courses. It was decided, too, that Hope Fountain should run a Higher Grade Boarding school under a certified teacher from Britain.

In September Charles also went with Willoughby, who had succeeded Hepburn at Palapye, on a visit to Rawe and his people at Tati. They wanted to see if it would be feasible to appoint a missionary to work with them. He was laid low with sciatica on this trip and on arrival back home could only find ease reclining. It was difficult to find much comfort as they were living in a rough state in two huts that the Carnegies had occupied. Their furniture consisted of two small tables, empty packing cases for seats and their mattresses were made out of calico stuffed with grass. They were awaiting the arrival of their goods on the first train, which Charles said was due to arrive about 25th October. Jessie went to teach in Bulawayo in September.



The Helms' home, Hope Fountain.

The contractor's construction train reached Bulawayo on 19th October 1897. The 4th November saw the beginning of the official 8 days of festivities following the opening of the railways on that day. Government House verandah was the scene of a meeting between the Bulawayo guests and more than a hundred Matabele. Miss Rhodes was present at the Indaba, as was Charles and other ministers of religion.

Barkly had been brought forward as a future mission station for the Helms but Charles, knowing the people there were Sechuana speaking, felt he was too old to tackle another language. At the Committee meeting on 4th October 1897 the members approved the buying of a light spring wagon with a pair of salted horses for Hope Fountain. Plans for both the Helm's and Carnegie's new houses were also approved at the meeting and forwarded to headquarters in London. The extra amount of £50

over other missionary houses was voted for the Helms. The new houses to be built were to have corrugated iron roofs instead of thatch. Charles would have preferred a smaller house at this stage but it seems that he realized, in the light of the views expressed at the meeting, that his fellow missionaries wanted to make some tangible show of their deep respect and love for the Helms. So it was that when a letter saying that the L.M.S. had reconsidered his appointment to Barkly did not reach him, and he heard of it later, Charles re-affirmed that he did not want to leave Matabeleland.

Elsbeth and Jessie spent their time teaching the African girls housework, cooking and laundry work. (One over-zealous girl starched the black cashmere stockings!) They taught 3 at a time for 2 monthly periods. Classes of up to 80 girls also assembled to be taught knitting, crocheting and sewing. The only previous encounter that they had had with sewing was making animal-skin blankets with huge sail needles! Winnie was teaching at this time at Miss Austin's school in Bulawayo. Lobengula's queens still kept in contact with the mission through their messengers, Nyandu and Sakatole. Nyandu was frequently sent to Charles to replenish the queens' tobacco supply and, in return, the messengers would arrange for the slaughter, skinning and cooking of cattle for the mission's use.

Early in 1898, Wardlaw Thompson paid them a second visit and conditions were laid down for the conduct of the L.M.S. farms that were being started. The gist of which was that the Missionary in charge had the right to say who could live on the land, to eject any undesirables and to expect the help of the headman to maintain law and order. No pressure was to be brought to bear on anyone to attend Christian worship but children, except when needed at home at certain seasons, were to be sent to the Mission schools.

When Thompson left, Charles drove with him for part of his journey and was away from Hope Fountain for a couple of weeks or more. In April influenza was endemic in and around Bulawayo. Mr. Wallace, who lived on the next plot across the river from the Helms, was very ill. Elsbeth had him brought to their house to nurse but he did not recover and died on 27th April. Mr. Wilkinson also had 'flu and a Mr. Giles from the Gwelo area, assisted Charles part-time with the night nursing as well as other duties. Elsbeth was quite worn out with nursing, and, for a change, she and Winnie went to the Heymans for a few days, but just after returning she also fell ill and neuralgia began to bother her again.

About June, Jessie became engaged to Hector Lovemore whom both her parents liked very much. Elsbeth was extremely pleased with the engagement and she said, in a letter to Wardlaw Thompson that Hector was a great favourite, a steady, hard-working young man and they knew his family well. His family had settled in Bushy Park, Port Elizabeth in 1820 and was related by marriage to many of the leading families in South Africa. Hector, when aged 17, had wanted to join the Pioneer Corps. His two brothers, Charles and Harry, had joined the Corps. but had sent him back to the family, saying, "*Two fools in the family are enough*". However, he entered Rhodesia in 1893 and served in "C" Troop of the Salisbury Column during

the Matabele War where, at the Bembesi battle, he had his *“rifle smashed in my hand and was slightly wounded in the left shoulder, but was more scared than hurt”*. A Mr. Swanson, who had been with them for some time and was being nursed by Elsbeth, was heart-broken by Jessie’s engagement. When Elsbeth informed the L.M.S. of the news in September, she added that her one complaint was that she had never found her house so small now that there was an engaged couple in it! Their new house was progressing well and the out-houses were already completed. She asked the L.M.S. to send a communion service for 20 people and also a very narrow air mattress for her husband who, when he went out in the cart to outlying districts, could use it as a bed. At least 12 people went out to Hope Fountain at week-ends and Elsbeth declared that she was nearly white-haired catering for them, what with the price of meat and all the food that was required.

The young people in Bulawayo, finding time on their hands at weekends, had taken to riding out to Hope Fountain on a Saturday. During the day some of them would help Charles by teaching their particular trade or skill to the Africans. Among them were A.F.Philips, Clarkson Fletcher, Naake and Sly. Some of the B.S.A.Company men would practice their rifle shooting next to the wagon shed. In the evening everyone would meet together for a musical evening. Banjos and other musical instruments would be brought out, comic songs sung, and afterwards the visitors would camp out for the night. When the new house was completed they camped on the gauzed-in verandah. Sundays were spent round the mission and swimming in the river and the evenings ended with hymn singing. Early on the Monday morning the visitors would quietly leave for town.



Boxing Day games, Hope Fountain.

To both blacks and whites the Helms had become known as “Father” and “Mother” Helm. To the young folk of Bulawayo this tall (Charles was nearly 6’), quietly spoken man with a beard and twinkling eyes was the epitome of the father figure. He would

move among them on these weekends, black velvet smoking-cap on his head, pulling on his pipe, listening to their problems and sharing a joke. These young people made sure he was never without tobacco for his pipe and some of his favourite cigars. An example of Charles' humour was a remark he made to his son, Balfour. Elsbeth tried to persuade Balfour to shave off his beard, which he said he was reluctant to do as he'd grown it for the express purpose of stopping his lady friends from kissing him. Charles, overhearing this, said that he'd never found it any help!

Elsbeth's unfailing hospitality and kindness, especially to the sick, lonely or troubled, would often give them new life and hope. So it was that to many, Hope Fountain was their "Home" complete with Father and Mother Helm.



Elsbeth & Charles.

Wilkinson still wasn't well but the building went ahead. A new organ and clock were on the way for the school. Jessie, Winnie and Elsbeth were busy making aprons, sewing bags and pillowcases for the Church of England Bazaar to be held in September, and the two girls went to help at the Bazaar. In October and November the Helms went down south to assist Mr. McKenzie, who was ill at Hankey, and they left a native teacher in charge of Hope Fountain. Later in November they went to Inyati as Gordon Reed, son of Cullen Reed had died and Cullen Reed was sick. Charles also went to Francistown to introduce Mr. Goold to the Tati Committee Meeting. On 27th November the Helms moved into their new house which had cost more than £200. Balfour was at home to help with the move. Jessie finished teaching in December and returned to Hope Fountain.

Dr. A. Moffat was called to prescribe for Elsbeth in February 1899 as she was suffering from severe giddiness. This improved under treatment but her neuralgia flared up once more. There was a lot of sickness among the Matabele. Dr. Moffat was again called to Hope Fountain in April, but this time it was Charles who was ill. Pleurisy was diagnosed and the Doctor called every day. Jessie was over at Centenary

helping there as another Carnegie baby was expected. Elsbeth nursed Charles for seven weeks, and also Winnie who had an attack of fever. When the Carnegie baby was imminent Elsbeth moved over to Centenary and Jessie went back to Hope Fountain to see to her father. Hector Lovemore was down on a visit from Salisbury and Elsbeth noted that the engaged couple was brimful of happiness. Balfour was now working in the Mining offices in Bulawayo.



Elsbeth & Charles.

Just after Balfour Carnegie was born on 25th April, Elsbeth was called back from the Carnegies as Charles had been taken into hospital. A wagon had been borrowed from Captain Lawley to take him in and it had been a very weary journey for him. Pleurisy was diagnosed in both lungs and with complications. The Doctor had to visit him 2 or 3 times a day. Elsbeth said that when Swanson was told the news he was so upset that for once he was dumbfounded and almost wept. Winnie was sent over to the Carnegies to help with the children. Elsbeth was keeping well but was very tired. Charles began to show improvement, and, at the end of May, Elsbeth made arrangements for the Committee meeting but Charles was suddenly laid low with “white leg” and was in dreadful pain. The meeting venue was then changed to Centenary.

Elsbeth was worried about a job for Alexis but her mind was soon put to rest when Rudd obtained a post for him in London and a friend of the Helms, a Mrs. Gardener, offered him a free house. When Elsbeth wrote to the L.M.S. she expressed the opinion that they would soon be bankrupt if someone did not leave them a legacy!

Winnie arrived back from Centenary and was very ill for a while. Jessie had been alone at Hope Fountain with 9 men to look after. (Elsbeth remarked that it was a good job that Lovemore was not jealous.) Elsbeth stayed in Bulawayo while Charles was in

hospital. Jessie was hoping to be married in August but, because of her father's illness, the wedding was postponed until October. Charles eventually went home to Hope Fountain in June but was confined to bed. His general health was better and he was more patient but his legs were still swollen. Elsbeth was having terrible headaches and as Winnie had taken a post as a teacher in Bulawayo and Jessie was soon to be married, Charles wanted Erica to be brought home from school. Elsbeth wanted Erica to stay until the following year but was overruled by her husband and two daughters. In July Charles was still in bed but was more cheerful and in good temper. However, Moffat wanted to bring in another doctor to see Charles. Elsbeth wrote to Thompson that she herself was not in good health and *"if I could afford to be a lady would make a splendid invalid, but instead I have to cut out dresses, scold, praise, feed etc. pigs (over 20), do the gardening and Charles' correspondence."* To add to Elsbeth's burden, they had just adopted another half-caste girl, aged 21 months. On 14th July when she wrote again to Thompson, she said she'd had 20 people to dinner on the previous Sunday. Two of the Hepburn's sons, Tom and George, came as well as "other mothers' sons". Balfour came out every weekend, as did Swanson. She described Swanson as kind and generous but wished he was more earnest. She asked Thompson to forward £1 to Alexis as Mrs. Gardener had died and she thought he might need the money. It worried Elsbeth that they could not afford to let Alexis study longer.

By September Charles was able only to walk from room to room and was visited by Colonel Plumer, with Baden Powell, who were at Hope Fountain with 400 to 500 men. Much to the Helm's delight, Swanson became engaged. There was talk of Charles being sent down south for a holiday and that Elsbeth should accompany him. Her thoughts on the subject were contained in a letter to Thompson on 22nd September. She said she considered going with him would be a great sacrifice on her part. A separation from her husband would be a change for her!

Besides the six adopted children she already had, she was expecting three more, 2 half-caste and a motherless child of 6 years. Jessie and Winnie were against her taking more but Elsbeth felt it was her duty to do so. Jessie's wedding was once more postponed until Charles had made more progress. Jessie took some of the Hope Fountain school children to the dedication of the Centenary church in October. By December, Charles was able to walk around his fields although still suffering from pain in his legs, and to take up his correspondence again. In spite of all his problems, he wrote to Thompson on 9th December, he had never regretted his life in Matabeleland. They had been waiting to hear about Erica's homecoming before making arrangements to go down south, but now the war had broken out in South Africa and it was too late. The church was too small to hold the congregation and services were now held in the wagon shed. Balfour and Tom Hepburn brought Winnie out to spend Sundays with them. Erica was to have brought out Jessie's wedding dress, as well as bridesmaid's dresses for herself and Winnie, but now, owing to the uncertainty of the date of her return because of the war, it was decided that the wedding would go ahead. Jessie and Winnie quickly made dresses out of muslin and baked a wedding cake, as that was also to have come from England. The

Reverends Carnegie, Reed and T.H.Jones, the Presbyterian minister from Bulawayo conducted the wedding, on 1st January 1900. Charles had the easy task of giving the bride away. Over 200 Europeans and 400 Africans attended. All the food had been prepared by willing helpers at Hope Fountain. Witnesses to the marriage certificate were Winnie, Balfour, Hettie May McKenzie, Tom Brown Hepburn and Eric Douglas.

In England the “Great White Queen”, Victoria, died on the 22nd January 1901. Erica must have arrived back at the beginning of 1901, or possibly earlier, as when the Committee meeting was held at Hope Fountain in May 1901, she was photographed with the missionaries and their families. It was decided at the meeting to urge the Board of Directors to approach the foreign Bible Society with a view to printing Mr. Thomas’ translation of the whole of the New Testament. The request was made that Charles be relieved of his duties during his 1902 furlough, so that he could revise the proofs.



Hope Fountain, May 15th, 1901.

Cecil John Rhodes died at his Muizenberg cottage in the Cape on the 26th March 1902. His wish to be buried at Malindidzimu (“The View of the World”) in the Matopos Hills was carried out with all the pomp deserved by a great Statesman and Empire-builder. A special train carried his body to Bulawayo where it lay in state in the Drill Hall, whose foundation stone he had laid less than a year before. From there it was taken by gun carriage to his estate in the Matopos (now Rhodes Estate Preparatory School). On the 9th April the gun carriage made the journey to the gravesite and the burial took place. About 3000 Matabele attended the funeral and, for the first time, a white man was given the Royal Salute – “Bayete”.

During this period bricks were being made at Hope Fountain and other materials collected for the building of the new church. In 1902 building began in earnest and when the African women put in the floor of cow-dung and earth, it was ready to accommodate 500 people. When a group of travellers, the Arderne party, went out to Hope Fountain in coaches in 1904, they were most impressed both by the Church and the school buildings. Elsbeth provided them with tea and cakes before they moved to the church for a service.

The new edition of the New Testament, revised by Elliott and Charles, appeared in 1903 and that year was to see the first Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference convened in Bulawayo under the Chairmanship of Charles. The aims of the Conference were, to quote: -

“To promote Christian mission work in Southern Rhodesia; to encourage and promote co-operation amongst those involved in missionary work; to further the education and general advancement of the nation’s people; to collect statistics and papers concerning missionary work; to consider all questions bearing on religious and educational interests of the natives, and to secure, as far as possible, uniformity in dealing with native customs and affairs.”

Meetings were held annually until 1906 when the Conference became biennial because of the expense of travelling. Members of the 1903 meeting consisted of ministers and missionaries and others connected with any Protestant denomination at work in Southern Rhodesia.

The Missionaries of the L.M.S. reported that in 1903 there were 23 schools with 2 266 children on their rolls. A Minute was passed requesting help to expand and that the 1897 plan, which the Board had approved, should be fulfilled. From then on an upsurge in African weddings and baptisms took place.

Jessie’s first surviving child, Hector Von Puttkamer, was born in Bulawayo on 12th November 1903 and Jessie, who had been to England, stayed at Hope Fountain from August of that year until March 1904, when she went to Potchefstroom with her husband, on a business venture. While there, another son was born to them on 20th April 1905 and named Alexis Moodie. The business venture did not work out and Jessie returned to Hope Fountain in July 1905. She remained there until April 1907.

In 1904, Winnie went to Plumtree School and was to remain there except for short breaks, until 1920 when she transferred to Shabani School. In 1905 R.C. Williams reached Bulawayo in answer to the 1903 appeal and began a progressive educational policy in Matabeleland.

The first annual Sports at Plumtree School were held in June 1907, and an old girl of the school (which later became solely a boy’s school), Muriel Sarif, states that the Reverend and Mrs. Helm were present. Later that same year, on 14th December, Erica was married to Tom Hepburn by the Reverend David Carnegie. Balfour and his father witnessed the marriage.

In 1908 the Central School at Hope Fountain was made a Training School for Teachers. This was the first systematic attempt to train African teachers in Matabeleland. Jessie returned home again in December 1908 with her two small sons and, on May 21st 1909 at Hope Fountain, gave birth to her first daughter, Constance Mary. She left Hope Fountain in August to go with her husband to open up "C" Troop Mine near the Angwa River. Also in August, on the 11th, Erica gave birth to her first son, Eric Tom. In 1909 Charles married George Wilkinson to Constance Evelyn Austin in the church that Wilkinson had built with the aid of his apprentices, one of whom, Mabuto Gasela, had been a guide to Baden-Powell during the Rebellion.

Then, owing to financial stringency, the Industrial Mission at Hope Fountain was closed and Wilkinson moved to Centenary. The training school was also closed and teachers were sent to Tigerkloof in South Africa. R.C. Williams resigned with the closing of the school.

A great blow to the Helms was the death, during January 1910, of David Carnegie from Bright's disease, in the Bulawayo Hospital. The two families had gone through all the hard and wearisome times together and both parents and children remained great friends throughout their lives.

Highlights for the Helms were the visits of their grandchildren. Charles would make whips for his grandsons and take them swimming in the stream. In July Jessie was once more back with her family. In the following year, on 12th April, her third son, Balfour ("Bla") Helm Lovemore was born in Bulawayo. Nine days later Erica had a daughter, Alexis Patricia.

It was in this year, 1911, that Elsbeth's courage was to be tested to the limit, as she developed cancer. For two years she fought gallantly, until on Thursday 29th October 1913, she had a serious relapse and without regaining consciousness, died on Saturday morning, 1st November. Neville Jones, who had joined Charles as his assistant in 1912, conducted the funeral service on the Saturday afternoon. Jessie and Erica were at the funeral with their husbands and also Winnie and Balfour. Among the pallbearers were H.U. Moffat (son of John Smith Moffat and later Premier of Southern Rhodesia), Patrick "Ben" Fletcher and "Matabele" Wilson. The Carnegie family was well represented. Jeannie M. Boggie in her book "Experiences of Rhodesia's Pioneer Women" puts it very aptly: - *"I think the pioneer women were made of stouter stuff than we women of today. Their courage must have been immense. To think of their children being brought into this world with no doctor, no nurse, no anaesthetics – it really makes one shudder. I admire men pioneers; but I think the palm really goes to the women, who left their comfortable homes to stand by their men, to face untold hardships, physical and mental."*

Charles was not in good health and in 1914 he resigned from the mission. He went to live with his daughter Erica and family in Hillside, Bulawayo. Jessie's second daughter was born in the Sinoia District on 20th December 1914.

Charles became ill with blackwater fever and was taken to the Memorial Hospital in Bulawayo, where he died on 4th January 1915. He was buried next to Elsbeth at Hope Fountain and Neville Jones conducted the service. The hearse was met about half way from Bulawayo by a large number of Africans and many Africans and Europeans who had also attended his wife's funeral attended the church service. A paraphrase of the 23rd Psalm, which Charles had translated into Sindebele, was sung. After a brief service the coffin was taken to the cemetery and Neville Jones offered the following prayer, which quietly sums up the essence of Charles Daniel Helm: -

“Father, whose many mansions all must some day enter, we thank Thee for him, our father and our friend, who has even now heard and obeyed Thy summons and received Thy welcome. We bless Thee for the manifestation of Thy presence in this land through him who brought Thy light into a dark place, who laboured fruitfully and unflinchingly for the advancement of Thy Kingdom. We praise Thee for the fragrant memory, his gracious acts, for his Christian-like spirit, for his patience and for his wisdom and we humbly pray that we may be given the grace to live as usefully and to set forth so nobly as he did the Spirit of Christ. For all who mourn may we pray, remembering especially absent ones. Wilt Thou comfort and console them all with the certain knowledge of his living presence in Thine Eternal Kingdom.”

This prayer was followed by one by a native teacher. So ended 40 years of labour and, as “Matabele” Wilson so aptly put it in an “Old Hands” appreciation: -

“The sunny smile of Mrs. Helm and the cheering words of Mr. Helm never failed to cheer and lighten the spirits of all those who visited Hope Fountain. When Mr. and Mrs. Helm were away the sun seemed to have left the valley. Things were not the same. Rhodesians owe a great deal more to Mr. Helm than the average Rhodesian is aware of. Some day, when the story of these days is told, it will show what an important place Mr. Helm filled in those exciting and troublesome times.”

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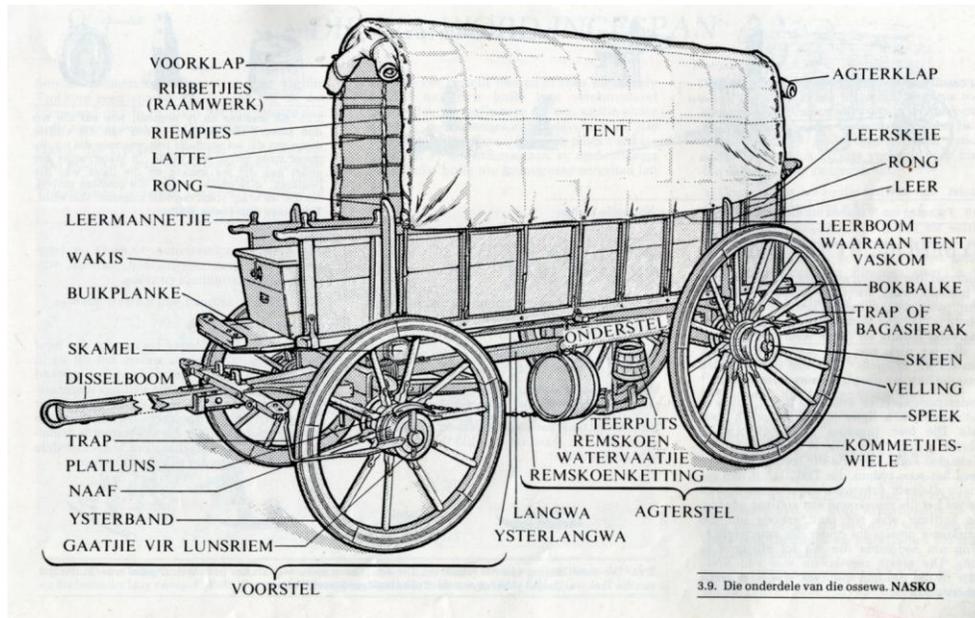


The Biblical quote in German on the tombstone translates as
 “The Eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms”.



Jessie Lovemore and Robert Tredgold at the opening of the Mangwe Pass Memorial, which was dedicated to the first Missionaries, hunters and traders who used it to enter Rhodesia.

Appendix.



A Trek Wagon, showing the Afrikaans terms for the various parts.

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

<u>Page</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Source/page/plate</u>
1	Wagons descending	Life & Works of Thomas Baines pg.126
2	Wagons ascending	Voortrekkerlewe pg.110
3	Elsbeth	Rhodesian Pioneer Society Photo
5	Charles	Rhodesian Pioneer Society Photo
7a	The Mission House, Zuurbraak	S.A. Country Life 8/1988
7b	The Church, Zuurbraak	Original Photo
12	South Africa & Rhodesia	Odhams Atlas
13	The Moffat House, Kuruman	S.A. Country Life 2/1996
16	Lobengula	The Warriors pg.33
17	Lobengula's Wives	1 st Steps in Civilizing Rhodesia pg.125
18	Inside Lobengula's hut, 1869	The Life & Works of Thomas Baines pg.156
21	The Inauguration of Lobengula	Rhodesian Epic pl.89
25	Lobengula reviews Impi, 1870	The Life & Works of Thomas Baines pg.153
26	Lobengula's House	Rhodesian Epic pl.86
28	Ndebele Warrior	The Warriors pg.48
32	Hope Fountain	Bulawayo's Changing Skyline pg.6
35	F.C. Selous	Rhodesian Epic pl.178
37	The Postal Runner	Voortrekkerlewe pg.115
40	The Great Dance	Rhodesian Epic pl.83
51	Map of Bulawayo District	Ordnance Survey
55	Tainton, Phillips, Edwards, Van Rooyen	The Diary of Major Henry Stabb pg.25

57	John Grootboom	Rhodesian Epic pl.254
72	Shippard & Party	A Flag for the Matabele pg.65
81	Lobengula's Envoys & Escorts	Zambesia pg.150
101	Charles	Occupation Souvenir 1933 pg.121
108	Maund's Camp	A Flag for the Matabele pg.65
110	Queen Victoria's Envoy	A Flag for the Matabele pg.96
118	Hope Fountain	Rhodesian Epic pl.106
121	The Pioneer Column	Rhodesian Epic pl.188
123	Lobengula's Envoys at Fort Tuli	A Flag for the Matabele pg.96
129	Map of the Second Bulawayo	Bulawayo pg.52
134	"Allan Wilson's Last Stand"	Rhodesian Epic pl.188
142	Bulawayo, 1894	Rhodesian Genesis pg.18
145	Hope Fountain Fort, 1896	Pioneer Forts pg.14
146	Carnegie after the Rebellion	1 st Steps in Civilizing Rhodesia pg.107
149	Shisho Moyo	The Hope Fountain Story pg.50
150	Elsbeth, Charles & the orphans	1 st Steps in Civilizing Rhodesia pg.90
151	Hope Fountain	Rhodesian Pioneer Society Photo
153a	Boxing Day, Hope Fountain	Rhodesian Pioneer Society Photo
153b	Elsbeth & Charles	Rhodesian Pioneer Society Photo
154	Elsbeth & Charles	1 st Steps in Civilizing Rhodesia pg.86
156	Hope Fountain, May 15 th , 1901	Rhodesian Pioneer Society Photo
159	The Helm's Tombstone	
160	Jessie Lovemore at Mangwe	These Vessels pg.33
161	Trek Wagon	Op Trek pg.55

