

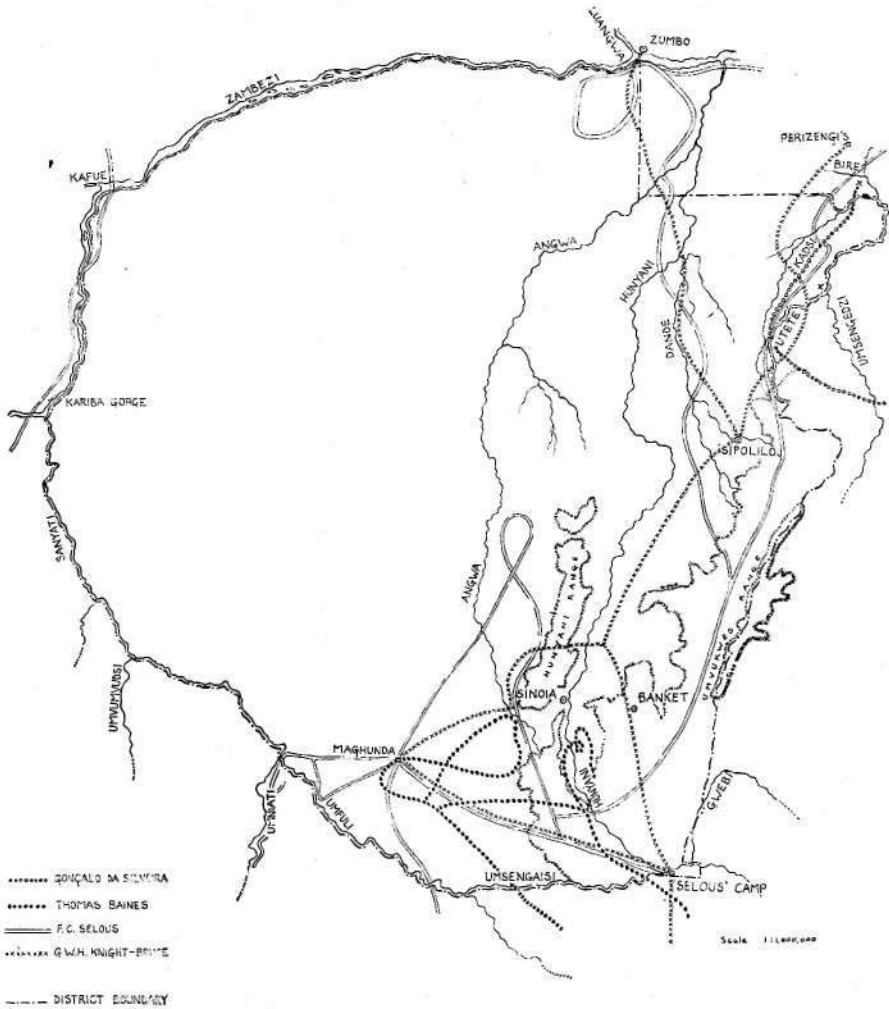
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# RHODESIANA

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**Sketch-map of pre-pioneer journeys in the Lomagundi District**  
 (prepared by R. Young, Curator of Maps, National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland).

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# The Lomagundi District

## AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

by J. A. Edwards

The text of a talk given to the Lomagundi Historical and Archaeological Society on July 30th, 1961.

The Book of Ecclesiastes has, I suppose, been over-quoted. But in reading through this talk before leaving Salisbury I couldn't help asking myself: "Is there anything [in it] whereof it may be said, See, this is new?"<sup>1</sup> The answer I got was "No". I am not here to throw fresh light on anything, but simply to recall what is already known about the history of your district. You are bound to be far more familiar with some of it than I am. In a sense, of course, I should not be here at all. It is as if a street violinist should presume to give lessons at the Paris Conservatoire. So I hope you will tell me if my fiddle is out of tune, or playing the wrong notes.

I am told that there are well-preserved bushman paintings along the foot of the Umvukwe Mountains, but I don't propose to go that far back. I shall begin with a little tribal history.<sup>2</sup> About the year 850 A.D. the people called the proto-Vakaranga left the shores of Lake Tanganyika and crossed the Zambesi. They passed through the Tonga communities living in the region of Urungwe Mountain and settled over a large area south of the Umfuli River. There they founded a state, if that is not too grand a word, called Guruswa, which stretched towards the places we now call Bulawayo and Fort Victoria. About 1440 A.D. the ruler of this kingdom, the Prince Mutota, became desperately short of salt. Having learnt from an envoy that salt was plentiful further north, in Urungwe and Sipolilo, he marched in that direction with his family and people and crushed the small, weak communities of the Tavara and Tonga, some of whom had to flee to the other side of the Zambesi. Mutota finally settled in the "Dande", between the Angwa and Umsengedsi Rivers. The Tavara, broken by the new invasion, gave to Mutota a name which you will all recognise. They called him Mwene-Mutapa, the master of ravaged lands or the master-pillager. Mutota's followers, who spoke Chikaranga, liked the word and added it to their own language as Nemitapa, which as you know is only one of its many forms. But the keen word-sense of the Tavara did not stop there. For the people who came into the Dande with Mutota, they coined the phrase Makorekore, because they swept over the land like a swarm of locusts.

Mutota established his court on the western bank of the Utete River, near a hill called Chitako-Changonya. There he built a large and solid oval stone fort, a dzimbabwe, the ruins of which can still be seen, by those who don't mind an uncomfortable journey. When the archaeologists get to work on this building, we should learn a great deal about the dating of material

from the ruins at Fort Victoria, with which the ancestors of Mutota had direct political and religious links. Mutota is buried in a shrine at the top of Chitako-Changonya. His successor Matope, seems not to have liked living in the Lomagundi district, and moved his court from the Utete to the Biri River, just on the other side of the Mozambique border. Perhaps he thought that this was a better place from which to extend his empire, which, when he died, stretched to the shores of the Indian Ocean.

A usurper called Changamire took the throne for four years, but suffered the fate of most of his kind in about 1490, when Chikuyo Chisamarengu murdered him. Chikuyo had a more favourable opinion of Lomagundi than Matope the empire-builder and came back to the ancestral home on the Utete, the old hub of the kingdom. There *he* died in about 1530. But before he died, he may have met a man of whom you all know something—the Portuguese traveller, Antonio Fernandes. Fernandes was a "degradado", an outcast if you like, who, as a punishment for some unknown crime, was put on a ship bound for Sofala on the East African coast. He could probably neither read nor write, and we should know nothing about him if it were not for a clerk called Gaspar Veloso. Veloso took down what Fernandes had to say about his two attempts—made about 1513—to discover where all the gold came from that flowed into Sofala. Now I wish I could tell you exactly where Fernandes went, but none of the people best qualified to judge seem to agree on the routes he took.<sup>3</sup> Very few of the names mentioned by Veloso fit in with the ones we use today and the most important of all, the fortress called Embire, may have been the Utete dzimbabwe or the other one which I said had been built by Matope in Portuguese East Africa. Certainly the words Biri and Embire are very similar: if they are the same, it means that Antonio saw the Monomotapa *before* he had decided to come back into Lomagundi. Anyway, you can be fairly sure that this man—the first European to visit Southern Rhodesia—did come into your district. There is some comfort in the possibility that, before very long, the work now being done<sup>4</sup> among old Portuguese records and the traditions of the African people, may give us the final answers to our questions about the Monomotapa.

The story now moves forward about forty years, to the year 1561. The ruler at this time was Nogomo Mupunzagutu. He, like Chikuyo, lived on the left bank of the Utete. In January, he met a Portuguese missionary of noble blood called Goncalo da Silveira. Silveira had come to Mozambique from Goa in 1560, full of the zeal of the Jesuits. After travelling up the Zambesi to Tete, he struck overland through the Darwin district, where the Queen of Sheba is supposed to have loaded her camels with gold, and at last got to the Monomotapa's court. Nogomo offered him cattle and gold and women, but Silveira sent them all back. He wanted only to convert the king to Christianity. And this he did. By the end of the month, Nogomo had allowed Silveira to baptise him. Then the troubles began. Mohammedan traders at the court were extremely jealous of the Jesuits, not only because they were of a different faith, but because their own influence with the Monomotapa was bound to decline if he became a Christian. They therefore began a campaign of lies against Silveira. They spread dark rumours about the bad effect of sprinkling holy

water. Nogomo, not yet free from the superstitions of his tribe, quickly revoked his new faith and, on March 16th, 1561, had Silveira strangled and thrown into a pond at the junction of the Umsengedsi and Utete Rivers.<sup>5</sup> Silveira, then, the first martyr in Rhodesian history, died in the Lomagundi district. But did he? It is only fair to say that some people believe otherwise. One of them admits that "Rhodesians must probably reconcile themselves to the fact that the first apostle of their country was actually put to death a few hundred yards inside Portuguese East Africa."<sup>6</sup> The idea behind this is, that Silveira actually visited the Monomotapa at that other dzimbabwe, between which and the one on the Utete the rulers of the Kingdom seemed to have commuted as if they were civil servants. Anyway, after Silveira's death, the Jesuits left the country and did not return until 1607.

We must remember that all this took place in the years of Portuguese naval and colonial power when insults might easily create an international "incident". A military force set sail from Lisbon about ten years later to punish the Monomotapa. Francisco Barreto led a party of soldiers up the Zambesi. He failed completely. He had plenty of arms and ammunition and his men were undoubtedly brave, but they could not fight two enemies at once. What killed Barreto and most of his troops and horses was not the assegai or the poisoned arrow, but disease. The "fly" got the horses and malaria the men. But where the sword failed, more peaceful methods succeeded. Trading posts, churches, mining settlements grew up in the Monomotapa's kingdom and finally in the early seventeenth century he gave all the gold in his dominions to the King of Portugal. What Silveira had tried and failed to do was done by the Dominicans, who converted several of Nogomo's descendants with less tragic results. You may know that in August, 1959, the Mozambique government took five Portuguese cannons from the site of Matope's court for display in Lisbon. They date from about 1630.

I must slide over the decline and fall of Monomotapa and the gradual loss of Portuguese influence in the interior. When the earliest hunters and travellers from south of the Limpopo came into Mashonaland in the 'sixties of the last century they found, not a powerful, centralized kingdom of warlike people, but a mild, industrious, disunited and more or less peaceable folk with no soldier class or military tradition. And the most eloquent epitaph on the Portuguese was a ruined house visited by Thomas Baines. The glories of the sixteenth century had long since faded. Mzilikazi, the despot of Matabeleland, may I suppose in some sense have been the Monomotapa's heir, but he discouraged white penetration into Lomagundi, for fear that hunters would sell firearms to the Mashona. Jan Viljoen, Piet Jacob and Henry Hartley came as far as the Umfuli in 1865, but they valued their hunting rights too highly to go any further. It was on this trip that Hartley saw the pits and shafts which he suspected were ancient gold workings—perhaps his "most important pioneering feat".<sup>7</sup> A couple of years later he came back with the German geologist, Carl Mauch, to confirm the discovery and the gold rush began. In 1868 a book appeared in London with the title *To Ophir Direct*, which gives a fair idea of the Old Testament visions which hypnotised the early prospectors.<sup>8</sup>

One of them was a Cape artist named Thomas Baines. He came originally from King's Lynn in Norfolk. Since boyhood he had been fascinated by Africa. For some years he trailed round the eastern Cape as a sort of war artist and perambulating portrait painter. In 1859, he went with Livingstone up the Zambesi. His task then was to make a pictorial record of the expedition, but Livingstone accused him of painting portraits of the Portuguese instead. So for this and other reasons Baines lost his job.<sup>9</sup> What he did next was, from our point of view, far more interesting. He took his paints and brushes and pencils to the Victoria Falls and for the first time gave the outside world a true idea of their magnificence.<sup>10</sup> So, when Baines came into Lomagundi in 1869, he was no footsore, bewildered, indoor man who longed to get back to his studio. He was a competent, resourceful, self-reliant and experienced traveller, a good artisan with an inventive mind, a map maker and observer. Above all, he never lost his temper. He was not very interested in gold, perhaps, but he was filled with curiosity about the world he travelled in and able to record it faithfully with brush and pen. I must admit that of all the pre-pioneers of Central Africa, he takes my fancy most. A little man, brown eyed and bearded, who got nothing whatever for his work of exploration and who died in poverty.

In 1869 he set off from Durban with two companions, R. J. Jewell and C. J. Nelson.<sup>11</sup> They all worked for the South African Goldfields Exploration Company. On their way north they picked up Henry Hartley from his home at Thorndale in the Transvaal and, having got permission to go beyond Matabeleland, crossed the Umfuli in the Hartley district in August. There they found a group of hunters—including George Wood, a Yorkshireman, who was supposed "in his time to have shot more elephants than any other of his contemporaries, English or Dutch".<sup>12</sup> On August 30th the two parties moved north ten miles beyond the Umsengaisi River and into Lomagundi. With them, by the way, was Wood's wife, the first woman married in Rhodesia. She and George had been married at Inyati on the way up. They rode north north-east, over well-wooded country to the valley of the Hunyani, which they traced up and down for some distance. While Nelson, the mineralogist, got to work under Hartley's guidance, Baines rode over to Lomagundi's village to buy grain. The village was one of a group in the maze of hills drained by the upper parts of the Wasanje River system. It was important for the pre-pioneers because food, including fresh vegetables, could be obtained there. Baines found it perched on the sides of a hill about 25 miles south-west of the present Sinoia. You know that the Mashona always built on high ground whenever they could, so as to be safe from the Matabele. True, Lomagundi was near the limits of Matabele control to the north-east, but they still held him in a sort of loose subjection, which they continued to claim even after the occupation. We shall see later what sad results came from this subjection.

Lomagundi lived, too, near the fringe of the fly country, which the hunters seldom entered. Tsetse flies were, of course, troublesome in the summer and the hunters, who thought that dangerous game could not be followed except on horseback, usually hunted in the winter. So the "fly" regulated the hunting season. George Wood, who as I have said had the courage to get



married in the wilds of Africa, was one of the earliest to hunt on foot. For both acts of folly, the older hunters no doubt thought him mad. His own method of keeping his horses free from sleeping sickness was to feed them with dead fly. Baines, on the other hand, thought it better to wash his horses with aqueous ammonium carbonate; his oxen he sprinkled with tar water.

Having, on Thursday, September 2nd, 1869, reached Lomagundi's kraal, Baines wandered about in the district, looking at the quartz reefs and groups of diggings which the old chief pointed out to him. He also had a look at the ruined Portuguese house which I mentioned earlier. During these trips he met a chief called Kanyamatimbe, who spent most of the time staring at Baines' horse, a species of animal he had never seen before. Here Baines "learned that this must be the limit of my journey, as the hills in advance were occupied by the tsetse or poisonous cattle fly".<sup>13</sup> Lest you should think that he found nothing worth painting in the Lomagundi district, I should add that, before he left, he sketched a giraffe hunt here. His first visit ended on October 2nd, 1869: the Matabele guides and servants were anxious to get home in time for the coronation of their new King Lobengula. Baines had not been able to do as much art work as he wanted to, but, as he wrote in his diary, "a man cannot serve art and mammon. . . . The greatest—I might add the only hardship of the journey, at least to me, is that of being debarred from the use of my pencil . . . but it seems as if the pursuit of gold closed the hearts of its votaries against every other art or science."<sup>14</sup> Don't think that this is at all a typical remark for Baines to make. The idea that paint and money don't mix was never more sadly true than of Baines himself, but he very seldom complained about the material interests of his companions.

After the coronation of Lobengula, Baines came back to Lomagundi. He crossed the Umsengaisi River on September 10th, 1870, and went again to the camp of his old friend George Wood. Together they inspected the gold pits which at this time the Mashona themselves were trying to work. Yet they were terrified and "dared not confess that they possessed riches of any kind lest the Matabili should plunder them".<sup>15</sup> Baines left Wood about ten days later and, on September 23rd, got back to Hartley Hill. He had been prospecting on a "gentleman's agreement" with Lobengula since April, and did not get written permission until August, 1871. He was then free to "explore and prospect and dig or mine for gold in all that country lying between the Gwailo River on the south west and the Ganyana (the Hunyani) on the south east".<sup>16</sup> But Baines did not visit the Lomagundi district again, although he had proved that the gold was there and that old mines were plentiful.

I don't want to bore you with a full list of all those who spent short periods in Lomagundi during this first rush for the gold mines. For one thing most of them wrote nothing and, if it were not for Baines himself, we should know little about them. And if I were to tally up all the game that was shot, this would soon become a sort of butchers' annual conference. One hunter, however, I'm sure you would like to hear about and that is Frederick Courtney Selous. He landed at Algoa Bay in 1871, four years before Baines' death in Durban. During his time at Rugby School, Selous won a prize, which we now have on display at the National Archives. It is called *Explorations in South-*

*West Africa*.<sup>17</sup> The author, as you know, is Thomas Baines himself. Long before he got this prize, Selous had made up his mind to be a hunter. Africa got hold of him as it continues to get hold of most of us. He first came into Lomagundi, not by the old hunter's road to Hartley Hill, but after a trek along the Zambesi from the Victoria Falls. On November 24th, 1877, he reached the mouth of the Sanyati River just at the western entrance to Kariba Gorge. He actually stood on the north bank and threw stones across. He thought that "the breadth of the Zambesi, where it runs through the narrow gorge of Kariba, in many places cannot be more than sixty yards, narrower than at any other place I had yet seen. It seems to have worn a deep channel through the hard rock, through which it rushes with a strong current, full of whirlpools and eddies".<sup>18</sup> After getting clear of the gorge, Selous crossed from the north bank on November 29th, 1877, at a little island and walked for a short distance along the opposite side. About twelve miles from the Kafue he went over to Cassoko Island, where the Portuguese had a post. The trader there seems to have been very depressed by his years on the river. "Negro diablo; Africa inferno" he said (a black man is a devil, Africa is Hell).<sup>19</sup> But he was hospitable. Christmas Day, 1877, Selous spent in Northern Rhodesia, where his stores ran out and "the only grain of comfort we had was the reflection that we were in a country never before trodden even by the wandering feet of a subject of Queen Victoria".<sup>20</sup> On his way back to the Falls, both he and his companion fell ill. They kept to the north bank until they were past Kariba. When they did cross over to the other side, they were, of course, out of our district.

By May of the next year, Selous was quite fit again and revisited Matabele country with the idea of joining a group of hunters in Mashonaland. Early in September he crossed the Umsengaisi River and camped near Lomagundi's Kraal. For several days he rode up and down the Hunyani looking for game. After a few weeks of sport, he left for the Umfuli, but came back to Lomagundi's on October 25th for corn. He noticed, like everyone else, that "in the mountains about here, extensive excavations have been made, but whether for gold or iron we could not learn".<sup>21</sup> The corn he got cost more than usual for on the return trip over the Umsengaisi, crocodiles ate three of his dogs.

Nevertheless, he was back again in 1880, for a journey into the fly country north of the Umfuli. He followed the eastern bank of the river until it became "day by day more impracticable and toilsome",<sup>22</sup> so he decided to travel along the Mchekakasungabeta Range to the Hunyani and trace its course down to the Zambesi. Again he visited Lomagundi, whom he described as "a petty Mashuna chief holding his life and property at the caprice of the Matabele chief, Lobengula".<sup>23</sup> In contrast to the dirty and slovenly people he found on the north bank of the Zambesi in 1877, Lomagundi's people seemed "very industrious, cultivating great quantities of kaffir corn, mealies, groundnuts and a few sweet potatoes; they have got any amount of vegetable food and lots of beer".<sup>24</sup> Like Baines, more than ten years before, he saw cotton being woven, Lomagundi himself, courteous as ever, offered to accompany Selous. The old chief wore "a broad-brimmed straw hat and a gaily-coloured Portuguese cloth bound round his loins and hanging to the ground all round him

like a skirt: over his left shoulder he carried a strong, 10-bore muzzle-loading rifle, a present, so he told me, from Lobengula, and in his right hand a battle-axe, made, handle and blade, entirely of native Mashuna iron".<sup>25</sup> When the chief appeared in all this finery, his people began an "infernal and monotonous tom-toming" which got on Selous' nerves. It had caused enough bad language from him in the course of six months to endanger the souls of at least fifty men. But at last they got started and went, not towards the Hunyani, which Selous had decided to put off for a while, but to the Umfuli, where they hoped to shoot hippo. On the trip, Selous found Lomagundi "a very decent old fellow, if it were not for his begging propensities".<sup>26</sup> When the hunting was over, he left Mashonaland and went back to Bulawayo.

He came yet again to Lomagundi in June, 1882, not merely to hunt, but to do what he had not done two years before: that is, to travel from the Hunyani to the Zambesi and make a map of the route. He crossed the Hunyani on August 6th, after a few weeks of shooting and came into a desolate country. "All this portion of the country", he said, "had, at no very distant date, been thickly populated, whilst large patches of thick forest had been cleared for the cultivation of maize, pogo corn, sweet potatoes, etc. Every cluster of rocks had been the site of a Mashona village, many of which had not long been deserted. But the ever-present fear of invasion by the cruel and bloodthirsty Matabele had caused the natives of this rich and fertile tract of country to desert the home of their forefathers and retreat towards the east and north. . . . The abject state of fear in which the inhabitants of this part of Africa were then living can scarcely be comprehended by the members of any society living under a powerful and settled government, and must have made their lives a misery to them".<sup>27</sup> He camped near the western end of the Umvukwe Hills at a place called Ushamba and, on the evening of August 9th, reached Chikasi's hill, where he found huts and storehouses for rice and corn, perched on the summit of a rock several hundreds of feet high. The region around the River Mutiki must, he thought, have been "the farthest point reached by a Matabele marauding expedition".<sup>28</sup> After crossing the Dande River, he followed the Kadzi and the Umsengedsi down to Chatonga on the Zambesi, between Zumbo, four days upstream, and Tete, eight days downstream. Which way should he go? The choice finally lay with "the dilapidated state of my one pair of veld-schoon",<sup>29</sup> which would never hold out for eight days. So to Zumbo he went. A depressing experience: "all the Portuguese here are mere wrecks of men—frail, yellow and fever-stricken".<sup>30</sup> But despite the tsetse fly, they kept a good many lean, long-snouted pigs. The natives, he noted, "seem to have lost all knowledge of even the most primitive processes employed by their forefathers to extract the golden grains from the soil".<sup>31</sup> The days of the Monomotapa were long past. Selous came back into Lomagundi early in September. When he reached the Rukowakuona mountains he began to feel feverish. Food and medicine were short and "the labour entailed in climbing over these excessively steep and stony hills under a burning tropical sun can hardly be exaggerated".<sup>32</sup> When he reached Shipurero (which is, of course, Sipolilo) he found that despite his serious illness, no one would make a stretcher unless paid in advance. This Selous refused to do and "after cursing them in five languages" continued

his painful walk. At last, on September 14th, he got back to his camp. He rested there for several weeks before taking the road to the south out of Lomagundi.

You might think that Selous had seen quite enough of the district after his trip from the Zambesi, but he was back again in May, 1883. This time he wanted to go across the Hunyani to the head waters of the Mazoe and from there over to the Sabi River. Having crossed the Hunyani, he found himself, as he says, "upon the high open downs in which the Hunyani and Mazoe Rivers take their rise. These open grassy downs extend over a large tract of land and, without doubt, form the finest country for European occupation in South Africa".<sup>33</sup> He is careful to add at the foot of the page that these words were "written in my diary in 1883, long before any one ever dreamed that Mashonaland would one day become a British Colony". He thought that "this in fact is a country where European children would grow up with rosy cheeks".<sup>34</sup> The strange thing, though not so strange if we remember the cause, was that it was quite empty—"an utterly uninhabited country roamed over at will by herds of elands and other antelopes".<sup>35</sup> After six weeks on the Sabi, he came back to Lomagundi where he hunted as usual and, in November, 1883, set out for the south again. His trip in March, 1885, along the eastern side of the Umvukwes to buy grain does not come into our story.

In 1887, Selous made his last visit to Lomagundi before the occupation. It was then that he found the Sinoia caves. He found too, more evidence of the harsh power of the Matabele. In 1878 he had passed through the country of Chameluga, between the Umfuli and Hunyani rivers. Chameluga for several years enjoyed immunity from Matabele attack and his people grew fairly rich and prosperous. Early in 1883, however, Lobengula ordered Chameluga to be killed while he was on his way to pay homage at Bulawayo. His people fled beyond the Mazoe River but his young wife, a Matabele girl, was captured and taken back to Matabeleland. She managed to run away and, in 1887, Selous found her living among Lomagundi's people in Mashonaland. A sad little story, but by no means unique in those years of Matabele dominance.<sup>30</sup>

Selous and his three companions, J. A. Jameson, A. C. Fountaine and F. Cooper, had a swim in the silent pool during their visit to the caves.<sup>37</sup> They asked questions about it but found that "the natives have no traditions about this most curious place". They were inclined to think that "all these excavations are the result of old gold workings and that a vein of quartz has been worked out down the tunnel. . . . The natives have now built a stockaded town (Sinoia's village) round this old working . . . and go down the tunnel to draw water at the bottom." They were doing that when I last came here four years ago and probably have been doing it since the stone age. Sinoia's kraal was at first on the Hunyani range but he moved to the caves for protection and kept grain and wood in them. Baboons and bats, too, used the caves as a ready-made home. According to E. G. Bowman, who was Native Commissioner here in 1923, the caves got the name Chirorodwiza or "pool of the Falls" when Zwangendaba came through the district with his Angoni in the 1830's.<sup>38</sup> He was, as you know, running away from Chaka and on his arrival in Lomagundi the people rushed for safety to the eaves and, in their hurry,

many of them fell over the edge and were either killed on the rocks or drowned.

"For many years the cave was unoccupied, in fact it was not until the appearance of the Matabele that any natives lived in the vicinity. Then one Chinoyi built his village there and successfully resisted all attacks of the Matabele. Chinoyi lived at the cave until the arrival of the Europeans, when he moved to Magondi's country where he now lives." You may know that in 1923, Mr. H. B. Maufe, with Mr. E. G. Howman and Mr. E. Hick, took soundings in the pool with a drum of piano wire. They found that the total vertical depth of the so-called "wonderhole" is 430 feet and of the water about 280 feet. In 1910, C. H. Howell, the Land Inspector, thought that the caves were "too small to ever be of much attraction for tourists, but are used nearly every Sunday by picnic parties from the Eldorado mine".<sup>39</sup> One wonders exactly how these picnickers spent their afternoon, because, in 1912, H. S. Keigwin said that visitors had destroyed some of the stalactites by shooting them down with rifles.<sup>40</sup>

I daresay you have noticed that my last date was 1912, as if I intended to skip over the years of the occupation and the rebellion and the settlement of your district by the pioneers. Well, I am coming to all that now, but first I should tell you something about Bishop Knight Bruce. He, you remember, became the first Bishop of Mashonaland in January, 1891. He knew your district well. In 1888, he came up here to "explore the possibilities of an Anglican mission".<sup>41</sup> On June 28th, he reached the Hunyani and camped near Selous' old camp of the previous year. With him was a Count Schweinitz who intended to hunt near Lomagundi's. The party reached his village on July 6th and on the 10th visited the Sinoia caves, which of course still had a kraal built round them. Oddly enough they were not allowed to enter the caves, although, as the Bishop enviously recalls, Selous had actually swum in them the previous year. The Bishop noted that "the Matabele have apparently not raided as far as this, except on one occasion"<sup>42</sup> although when he got further north he found that Sipolilo had moved his town eastwards to keep away from them. On July 16th, he reached Zumbo via the Rukowakuona mountains. From there he went down river to the mouth of the Umsengedsi River, up to its junction with the Kadzi, over the Utete and across to the Darwin district. He reached his wagons again via Sipolilo on August 15th and travelled on southwards out of Lomagundi. It had been a troublesome journey. Knight Bruce was constantly having to settle arguments between his carriers, who chattered for hours and made him "more and more convinced that the power of stringing words together arises from emptiness of brains".<sup>43</sup> But he had got a good idea of the country and laid a foundation of personal knowledge to help him in his work after the occupation.

By that time Lomagundi was well known. Baines and the others had described the goldfields often enough and the dry season of 1891 brought in a fair number of pioneer prospectors. The first Mining Commissioner, Louis Vincent, who, like his successors, took on the job of Justice of the Peace and Native Commissioner as well, was appointed as early as February 28th, but he died on May 7th and J. A. Spreckley came in his place.<sup>44</sup> I have said that Lomagundi, the old chief, was quite willing to show people where the

ancient diggings were and he seems to have carried on this practice after 1890. The Matabele strongly disapproved. In any case Lomagundi had begun a useful trade swapping cattle for horses and donkeys with the pioneers and appeared to be getting a little too independent. Anyway, on November 28th, 1891, two Africans came into Salisbury and told the Administrator, Dr. Jameson, that about 40 Matabele had attacked his kraal about three days before.<sup>15</sup> They took away his horses, his cattle, guns and beads and shot and stabbed the old man. The leader of the raid, called either Malete or Mattafine, was said to have cut him open and taken his heart away. On December 3rd, Major Patrick Forbes, the Salisbury magistrate, who was responsible for the district, came up to get more information. The natives told him that the Matabele asked Lomagundi "why he had taken presents from the Portuguese and English and had shown the English where to dig for gold, and also why he had given guides to take white men to the Zambesi, without obtaining leave from Lobengula, to whom the country belonged".<sup>46</sup> When Lobengula was asked to explain the raid, he simply said: "Lomagunda belongs to me", which sounds like the title of a novel. Well, since the old chief was dead, a new one had to be chosen, but the natives could not make up their minds about it and asked the B.S.A. Company to choose one for them. In July, 1892, Capt. C. F. Lendy came up here to arrange the induction. The final choice was Mazimbaguba who, as I shall later explain, turned out to be a very poor successor.

While Captain Lendy was installing the new chief, the miners were getting to work. They were prospecting along the Angwa and looking into all the old workings which they could find or which the local natives pointed out to them. Large properties were acquired by the Lomagunda Development Company, which took up the Ayrshire Mine in August, 1894, and in December persuaded the Administrator to have a look at it.<sup>48</sup> When J. A. Spreckley left his job as Mining Commissioner to take charge of C Troop of the Salisbury Column for the march into Matabeleland in 1893, W. F. Ferguson took his place and, in March, 1894, sent in some samples of slate which had been found near Sinoia.<sup>49</sup> The slate and lime deposits were then pegged out as a B.S.A. Company reserve. There is no reason to think that the Mining Commissioner deliberately hid himself—but it wasn't always easy to find out exactly where he was. In June, 1892, for example, J. A. Spreckley suggested that "as some misunderstanding seems to exist as to where the mining office is situated, do you not think it would be advisable to alter the name of the district to Sinoia district? A man left camp (he meant Salisbury) to come here the other day and asked to be taken to Lo Maghonda's kraal, thinking he was coming to the office when really he was 25 miles away".<sup>50</sup> But even if one managed to reach the office, one could not be sure of finding the Mining Commissioner in it. Spreckley was often out settling disputes here and there—in fact when he suggested changing the name of the district he had just come back from the Angwa after looking into a charge that one prospector was poaching on another's ground.

The Eldorado Mine, one of the richest ancient workings in the district, was found by Arthur Eyre, a member of the Pioneer Column. He came across it while tracking a wounded elephant.<sup>51</sup> There were old wooden buckets and

iron hoes lying about, perhaps left there by the Portuguese, who may have been working the mine as recently as the eighteenth century. The ancients had taken out many tons of ore, and even later, although it was troubled by water seepage, it remained for some time Rhodesia's chief producer. It once returned over 250 per cent in dividends to the shareholders.

In October, 1894, W. H. Clarke, the new Native Commissioner, pitched his camp on a hill near the Mdonga River, about one-and-a-half miles from the Mining Commissioner. The hill was a wise choice, for Lomagundi was a dangerously unhealthy area. A. J. Jameson, who became Mining Commissioner in July, 1895, told the Registrar of Claims that "the district cannot be called a healthy one. The mortality of mining commissioners who have been here for a time is heavy, viz., 60 per cent".<sup>52</sup> Their quarters had nothing to recommend them—they were merely pole and dagga huts, "inflammable, dirty and leaky". As for the miners themselves, one can only imagine. Until 1895 there were no stores or hotels, but by the end of that year there was a store at the Ayrshire mine and one four miles away near the post office. All food and mining materials had to be brought from Salisbury over the rough, muddy roads. While the post was carried south of Salisbury in carts or coaches, Lomagundi had to be content with native runners. So one can understand why there was "practically no permanent European population" by 1896. In April of that year there was far less than for some time past because of the check given to mining by the outbreak in Matabeleland.

The war of 1893 had, of course, been fought around Bulawayo and its only effect in Mashonaland was to take away a good many men as soldiers. But in Lomagundi I'm not sure that it didn't have other effects as well. At the end of 1893 a Trooper Stanford was killed here by a headman called Genouw and, on August 5th of the next year, a Trooper Cooper of the B.S.A. Police died in a similar way. E. I. Pocock, the Mining Commissioner at that time, said that the second murder took place in Mazimbaguba's district and the Salisbury magistrate said that "Trooper Cooper stated before he died that the chief himself had stabbed him".<sup>53</sup> Sub-Inspector H. Hopper went out from Salisbury to investigate but found that the two suspects had fled into the fly country. According to Hopper, "the natives held the idea until lately that, because the actual murderer of Stanford escaped and no punishment according to the native idea had been meted out, and the matter as far as they knew dropped, that the white man was callous as to the death of an individual Englishman".<sup>54</sup> One wonders whether there was any link between these murders and the Matabele Rebellion. Perhaps the people of Lomagundi were ripe for revolt even before 1896.

In April of that year, A. J. Jameson applied for leave to join the column going into Matabeleland from Salisbury, although he first made preparations in case there was a local rising. Most of the miners left the district and Jameson reported that "the effect of the outbreak in Matabeleland has been to put a stop to mining and prospecting to a great extent. Besides those employed at the Ayrshire mine there are not a dozen men prospecting or doing development work".<sup>55</sup> The Native Commissioner, G. H. Mynhardt, seems to have thought that local Africans were unlikely to cause trouble and told the Chief Native

Commissioner: "I don't think it necessary to keep a watch in this district for Matabeles as I don't think they will ever pass through here".<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, he did ask for some sort of protection, just in case. In April he wrote that: "It is highly necessary to have some rifles and ammunition here. I haven't a single round of ammunition in camp".<sup>57</sup>

The first casualty was a prospector named J. Docherty who, Jameson reported, had been "murdered by his boys at the Alaska Mine". The body, he was told, had been thrown down the sixty-foot shaft by the rebels, and there he found it at the end of May. Chief Sinoia handed over two natives said to be implicated in the murder. It seems that the police had been withdrawn eight months before and there was thought to be not a single trooper in the district. Salisbury was slow in acting and Jameson wrote angrily in to his superior that "if it is necessary to produce a corpse and identify it before any action in a murder case can be taken then the sooner a new penal code for this country is written the better".<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile the native population was moving out of its kraals towards the north, in preparation for a big attack on the whites. A Zambesi boy at the Ayrshire Mine warned the dozen or so miners there of what was happening. They formed a laager and, on Monday, June 22nd, at about ten in the morning, the whole party left the mine to seek shelter in Salisbury. As a matter of fact the people of Lomagundi had been advised to come in at the first signs of revolt but it was not easy in the time to tell all the prospectors scattered about on their diggings. The Ayrshire mine party was ambushed before it got to the Umvukwes by about 70 or 80 rebels and had to hide in a river until dark. When food ran out they lived on wild beans and roots. At last, on Saturday, they met a patrol coming out from Salisbury, under Captain Taylor of the Natal Troop of Volunteers and Lt. Eustace of the Salisbury Field Force, who escorted them to safety.

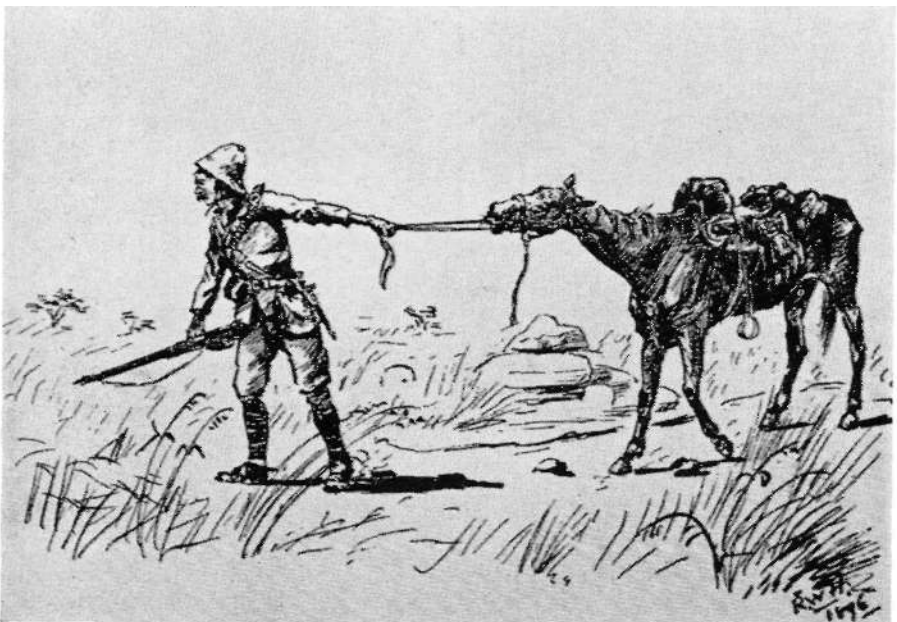
Smaller and more isolated groups were not so fortunate. Herbert Eyre, the Umvukwes farmer, was killed on the doorstep of his house on Sunday, June 21st: Trooper Arthur Young, of the Police; Mynhardt, the Native Commissioner; A. J. Jameson, and James McGowan, a prospector, were all killed at their camps. Nothing gives a better idea of the terrible suddenness of all these deaths than Jameson's letter book which we have in the Archives. There is a useful flow of letters right up to the 20th of June; then nothing until March, 1898, when the letters carry on—in someone else's handwriting. Four Australian prospectors were attacked on June 23rd and fled to the nearest store, where they found the storekeeper, Alfred Hodgson, already killed. They, too, made for Salisbury. Three of them hid themselves at the Maquadzi River while the other, Duncan, carried on alone. The three left behind got so short of food that, in the end, they had to kill and eat a dog. One of them was wounded, so it would not have been easy for them to travel fast if they went with Duncan. Finally, thinking probably that Duncan had been killed somewhere, the two uninjured men hid their companion, Cape, and set off for Salisbury. A patrol rescued Cape on June 27th. On that day two miners working in an isolated spot arrived at Lomagundi's kraal not knowing that a rebellion had broken out. They found two dead bodies there and realised what danger they were in. So they, too, tried to reach Salisbury. Although a party of rebels fired on them



at Eyre's farm in the Umvukwes, they did manage to get to safety. Further north, at Sipolilo's kraal, three travellers, two of them brothers, were killed while on their way to the Zambesi.<sup>39</sup>

It was not until October, 1896, that troops came into Lomagundi to punish the rebels. Col. Alderson brought a large force of men up to the Umvukwes. On the 20th, Arthur Eyre showed him in the distance the kraals whose inhabitants had murdered his brother. It seems that a party of rebels had pretended to Herbert that they wanted work. While he was talking about it, one of them stunned him from behind with a battle-axe or knobkerrie. Col. Alderson visited the house on the 21st. It was a comfortable, roomy building half-way up the mountains with excellent views to west, north and east. To call the surrounding country a farm was flattering rather than accurate: there was only an acre or so of cultivated ground, a good deal of grazing and plenty of wooded hills. From the steps of the house on which Eyre had been sitting when he died, he must have been able to see his entire property, and there is something touching in the thought that this young man of 28 was killed in full view of all that he had created in the Rhodesian bush. The marks of his blood were still visible. While looking about outside the house, Col. Alderson discovered Herbert Eyre's diary, in which the last entry was for June 19th, two days before his death. Despite an intensive search, however, none of the culprits was found.<sup>60</sup>

The Colonel then split his force into three parts, one of which under Captain A. J. Godley, got orders to scour the Sinoia area and the Ayrshire mine. He had 306 men altogether, including 76 native troops. There was no lack of arms and ammunition, but very few of the troopers had a decent pair



Man and horse exhausted after the Sinoia Patrol, 1896 (from Alderson, E. A. H. "With the Mounted Infantry and the Mashonaland Field Force, 1896").

of boots. Some of them had to make do with tennis shoes instead. When these ran out the unlucky ones patched up their old boots with bits of horse- or ox-hide. On October 26th, they found traces of the Lomagundi murders: two skulls, some bones and a few scraps of letters near the Sange River. The rebels had left nothing at the Mining Commissioner's camp except one or two bottles of sauce and pickles. Godley then heard that rebels were hiding in the Sinoia Caves but, when he got there on October 28th, he found them full of baboons. Nevertheless the caves were, he was told by those who knew, "far prettier than the blue grotto at Capri". The Ayrshire mine, which they reached on October 30th, had been looted and the machinery and plant damaged. But in the camp, which according to Godley was quite a large colony of well-built huts, they saw tobacco, cigarettes and tins of cocoa lying about. At the Native Commissioner's camp another party found the skulls of two Europeans, one of which was G. H. Mynhardt's. After burying the remains the patrol made its way back to Salisbury, not on horseback, for the horses were exhausted for lack of water, but on foot. On the other side of the Umvukwes they met a convoy bringing them rations and—more important—boots. They had been absent for six weeks and although the campaign had cost no less than 27 horses and 26 mules, Godley was able to claim that he and his men had gone "considerably further north than anybody else".<sup>61</sup>

When the Imperial troops left the country the police force was reorganised and a permanent post was opened up at Sinoia. There was no Mining Commissioner until March, 1898, when E. I. Pocock came to take the place of the dead Jameson. But during the previous year a new Native Commissioner—G. A. Jackson—took up where Mynhardt had left off. No development work had been done for a year and more and it was thought that the Mashona rebels had still not been absolutely quelled. "It was not considered safe for white men to work on mines or do prospecting work without an escort of police".<sup>62</sup> Malarial fever also interfered with mining, especially around the Angwa River. Practically all the old workings had been pegged and most prospectors seemed unwilling to do what was called "real" prospecting, although there were still large areas of northern Lomagundi which no one had yet seen.

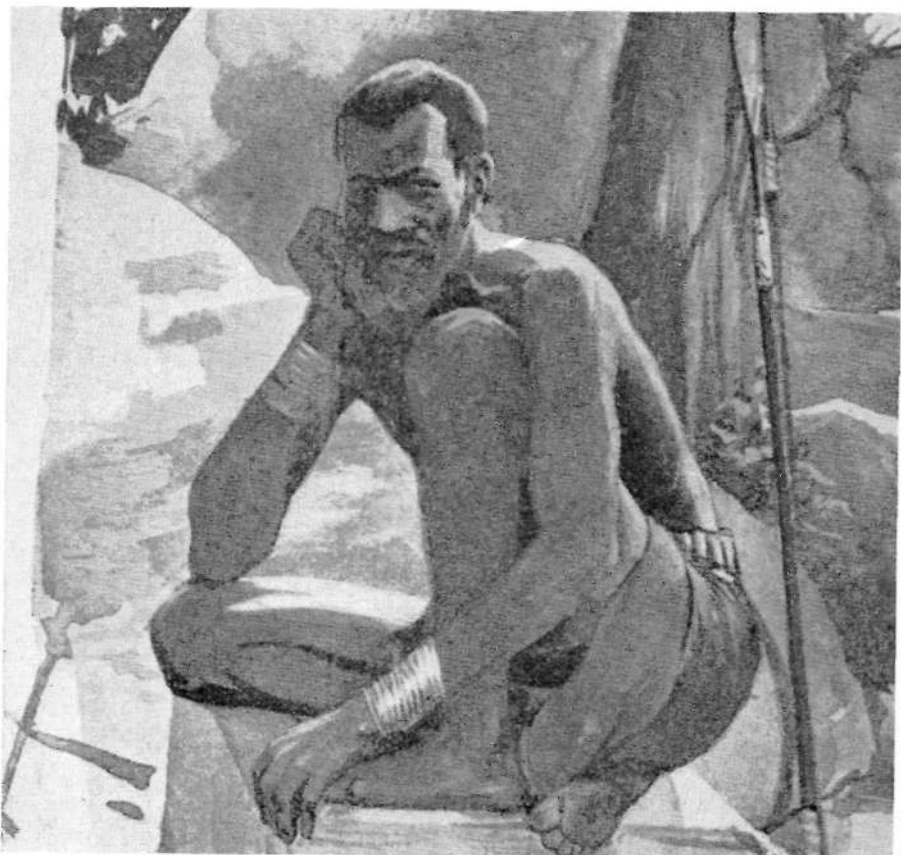
Even in 1900 the district suffered from its isolation. In the following year, however, the government passed the "Lomagundi Railway Ordinance for building a railway to any point in the Lomagundi district".<sup>63</sup> The act came about through the Ayrshire Gold Mine and Lomagunda Railway Company, which built a narrow-gauge line from Salisbury.<sup>64</sup> The consulting engineer advised a broader gauge, but his advice was not followed and, before the end of the year, Pauling and Co. had finished the first railway in the district. Five years later it was taken on to the Eldorado mine where, in the 'Banket boom' "there was such a rush as had not been seen in Rhodesia" up to that time. About 20,000 claims were pegged within a few weeks.<sup>65</sup> Telford Edwards, the railway consultant, must have smiled up his sleeve in 1913, because in that year the narrow gauge was scrapped and the broader gauge laid down. A beginning was also made in extending the line to Sinoia. This, it was thought, would "prove of great benefit to miners, farmers and residents on the northern side of the Hunyani River".<sup>66</sup>

The Angwa miners no doubt welcomed it. Pegging of alluvial claims began there about 1908,<sup>67</sup> and other types of mining were long established but there was no sort of township for the men nearby. In fact, apart from pole and dagga huts, there was no accommodation of any sort. A small detail like that was not likely to deter a persevering miner and, in fact, some very large nuggets were found there by R. G. Harding in 1915, about three or four miles south of the junction of the Ingonya and Angwa Rivers. They were so big that he had their photographs taken and sent to the London office of the B.S.A. Company.<sup>68</sup>

Transport of equipment and food was the big problem. Tsetse flies killed horses very quickly and all supplies had to be borne by carrier. A good deal of the tsetse had, however, disappeared during the rinderpest outbreak of 1896 and R. T. Coryndon reported in 1897 that "there is no fly in the neighbourhood of the Sinoia Caves, for I took horses there myself three years ago along Spreckley's Road".<sup>69</sup> In 1892, however, Dr. Jameson had lost half his bullocks at Umboe's kraal. The method later used at Umboe, of exterminating the game, had been very successful. So, in 1911, the Mining Commissioner suggested that this should be done all over the district.<sup>70</sup>

In 1900, during the South African war, the natives seemed to be under the impression that all fighting men had left Mashonaland. The native commissioner of Mazoe, E. T. Kenny, was told by a loyal messenger early in the year that they thought that "only one old white man had been left in Salisbury".<sup>71</sup> He suggested that a patrol of Sir Frederick Carrington's Imperial troops should visit the districts to destroy this impression, which was giving what Kenny called "evil-minded mondos" an ideal opportunity to work up disaffection. He thought the importance of the mondos "so great that I have no hesitation whatever in stating no matter what other influence was in vogue, could they be captured any time previous to a contemplated rebellion, the whole conspiracy would collapse".<sup>72</sup> He reported on the 21st May that "some peculiar movement is afoot among the Mashonas". The rumour was "that the Boers are driving us back everywhere and that there are very few of us left".<sup>73</sup> The "peculiar movement" came to a head on June 7th, 1900, when C. S. Munro, the Assistant Native Commissioner, Lomagundi, wrote to Salisbury to say that a headman in his district called Mavura had been shot by some of Mapondera's natives.<sup>74</sup> The wounded man came into Sinoia on a stretcher and Munro went out to investigate. With him was a patrol of 28 B.S.A. Police, 70 Mashonaland Native Police and nine messengers. Later they were joined by the 65th Company of the Imperial Yeomanry with 101 men and seven officers. This strong force attacked Mapondera's hiding place on the Dande River and destroyed its fortifications. According to Munro, "the result of the patrol on the whole was satisfactory, but it was unfortunate that Mapondera and some of his followers were not captured". The prisoners consisted of three head of cattle, 29 goats, 12 children and 13 women.<sup>75</sup> Nothing could be more dangerous. In the middle of August, Munro was reporting from Sinoia to Col. Flint that "some of the women wish to marry native police". This, I suppose, is known in military language as "infiltration". Anyway, Munro thought it a very good idea. He suggested "that each of the native police pay to the government a

fee, say £3 to £5 for each woman they marry, and this would go towards meeting the expenses of the patrol and feeding the women".<sup>76</sup> But the idea was turned down and the women had to go back to their parents' or guardians' kraals.



Mapondera (from Selous, F. C. "Travel and adventure in South East Africa").

Meanwhile, Mapondera was still at large. His followers committed several murders along the Portuguese border. The victims were usually transient visitors on their way home to the other side of the Zambesi with comparatively full pockets. By March, 1901, he had collected an army of about 600 men. Later in the year, when Captain C. H. Gilson drove him away from Fort Darwin, he appeared to be "well armed and fought gamely". Always he managed to avoid capture. A patrol which chased him in January, 1902, came back empty-handed except for two saucepans, a hairbrush, a pointer dog, a bank book, a looking-glass, a saw and a pair of wire-cutters. But at last, in October, 1903, after three years of freedom, Mapondera surrendered. He seemed "a sturdy rogue of some natural ability" but the pleasures of the bandit's life could not last for ever. He was brought into Salisbury and lodged in the gaol." Troublesome though he had been in Lomagundi, he did bring one

indirect benefit to Sipolilo. During Flint's patrol of September, 1900, a camp and B.S.A.P. post were set up there. In January of the next year C. H. Howell, the Acting Native Commissioner, managed to recover 144 guns from the district—they might otherwise have fallen into Mapondera's hands. He thought that "Sipolilo's people are entitled to the protection of the government against attacks by outlaws" and a garrison living among them was the best way to keep Mapondera away.<sup>78</sup>

Farming was slow to develop. In 1892, the Rev. I. Shimmin came up in a wagon to choose a site for a Methodist mission and, on Tuesday, December 15th, marked out and beacons the farm Hartleyton at Zwimba's, between the Umvukwes and the Hunyani. You will notice that he came up in the wettest time of the year and "the rains made the roads so heavy that we had to travel very slowly. At one part we stuck fast three times within a quarter of a mile and it took us nearly two days to get clear". He was speaking from bitter experience when he said that it was a mistake to think that a journey in a wagon is only a pleasant picnic. It seems that Selous' good opinion of the country in 1883 was echoed in 1892, for Mr. Shimmin tells us that "the representatives of the Dutch Reformed Church, when up here, reported that this was the best locality for farmers that they had seen in all Mashonaland". He visited the Sinoia caves and found that "the natives living here, having a superstitious fear of this cavern and lake, place a certain amount of food daily in one of the smaller caves in order to propitiate a spirit they call Mondoro. The baboons, no doubt, appreciate their kindness".<sup>79</sup>

Serious farming did not begin until about 1905, although I did mention that Herbert Eyre had a farm in the Umvukwes even before the Rebellion. The first farm after his to be worked on the Umvukwes was Birkdale, granted in June, 1906, to Mr. H. A. Woods. In 1907, the Barwick Estates, in 1911, the Lone Cow, in 1913 the Umvukwe Ranch (where chrome deposits were discovered) are only a few of the properties taken up round about this time. In 1906 the B.S.A. Company brought out a party of Italian farmers to create a settlement on the farms Oldlands, Kingwood and Pucklehills. They had been paid for by a Lieutenant Margherito Guidotti of Galliola, Lucca, Italy. Money was spent on homesteads, outbuildings, stock and machinery. Four hundred head of cattle, 100 mules and 40 pigs were put onto the farms. The settlers planted fruit trees, tobacco, mealies and potatoes. But, despite the fact that all of the Italians were "steady and hardworking men" the settlement was a complete failure. In May, 1908, most of the settlers left the country although one or two stayed to work for other people. The main reasons for the failure seem to have been disagreement about finance, the poisoning of the soil by mineral deposits, especially iron and magnesia, and a shortage of water.<sup>80</sup>

In 1908, perhaps to avoid disasters like the Italian colony, the Land Settlement Department suggested creating a central farm of 2,000 acres or so where settlers could gain experience before taking up their farms. The whole district seemed empty and population was the crying need. So, early in 1909, C. H. Howell inspected the Umboe flats "with a view to its being cut up into farms for settlement purposes". He suggested it might contain 25 farms of between 1,000 and 1,600 morgen.<sup>81</sup> Then the administration began to look

further afield. The Director of Land Settlement thought in 1912 that 20 square miles of northern Lomagundi might be used for the cultivation of sugar cane. The soil was supposed to be rich and alluvial and, if the railway were taken beyond Sinoia, it could provide transport for these northern areas. H. S. Keigwin, then the Native Commissioner, was asked for his opinion. He became rather lyrical about the whole idea and wrote that "the damming of the Zambesi at the Kariba Gorge where the river tears through a narrow, rock-bound channel some 30 yards wide, presents a scheme for irrigating the valley which would fire the imagination of a Wilcox".<sup>82</sup> We all know what the dam is used for now, but there you have part of the idea, put up in 1912 by the Native Commissioner for Lomagundi. An expedition to Kariba was planned for August, 1914, the first month of the first World War. C. H. Howell, Sir Charles Metcalfe, the railway expert, and two others reached the gorge on August 22nd. Here, says Howell in his diary of the trip, "we pitched camp . . . where the railway is surveyed to cross the river at the junction of the Sanyati with the Zambesi".<sup>83</sup> The London Board of the B.S.A. Company took great interest in the scheme but said that it depended entirely on "if and when circumstances permit of railway extension and development".

On September 15th, 1897, Major Hopper, the man who four years before had come to look into the deaths of the two troopers, came again with 40 police and 30 native contingent to set up Fort Lomagundi. They finished it in October but it lasted less than a year because of its poor water supply and general unhealthiness. Between March and September of 1898 a new fort was built seven miles away and called Fort Sinoia. On the Angwa yet another fort was built, but it could be lived in only during the dry season. When the rains came the garrison moved to Sinoia.<sup>84</sup> The obvious reason for all this fort-building was to prevent any recurrence of the rebellion and—if prevention was impossible—to supply places of safety for the people of the district. During the next 15 years the fort at Sinoia grew slowly into a settlement and, in 1913, the district surgeon, Dr. G. H. Peall, wrote that "the residents have been urging the proclamation of a village and the formation of a Village Management Board, with no result".<sup>85</sup> That year, however, the Sinoia township was surveyed and it got its Management Board in 1914. One of its earliest schemes was to get a piped water supply—which, said the Board, had been "most urgently needed ever since Sinoia was inhabited". Banket junction, too, was becoming bigger. Farming was increasing round the junction and the pace of settlement quickened when extra farms were laid out there.

Here I will stop. Some of you may have arrived in the district before the first World War and others will, perhaps, have fathers who came here about that time. So the later history of Lomagundi should be all in your own heads. All I have tried to do in this talk is to bring together some of the better-known events and people of an earlier period. Local history depends ultimately on the local man or woman. It can't depend on the distant curiosity of someone from the capital, whose big fault is that he doesn't know the lie of the land. It lives in the active enthusiasm of people on the spot, who take a pride in their forebears—what they did, said, ate, drank, wore, built, grew, felt. And it is quite wrong to think that small things have only a small importance. The

historian working on national history must have local detail. He must know how a policy, a line of thought, worked out in practice. Only local knowledge can give him that kind of information. The garret, the barn, the deserted shed, the old box, the papers of a pioneer family, a miner's notebook, may all yield precious clues, which I hope some of you will look for. For the story of Lomagundi is not a thread flying loose in the wind. It, and other such local stories, are the strands from which the history of this country is woven.

#### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastes*, ch. 1, v. 10.
- <sup>2</sup> For which I am indebted to Abraham, D. P. "The Monomotapa dynasty" (NADA, No. 36, 1959, p. 59-84) and "The early political history of the Kingdom of Mwene Mutapa" (paper presented at the Leverhulme history conference, University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1960).
- <sup>3</sup> See Axelson, E. *South-east Africa 1488-1530*, Longmans, Green & Co., 1940, who follows Tracey, H. *Antonio Fernandes: descobridor do Monomotapa*, Lourenco Marques, Arquivo historico de Mocambique, 1940; and Godlonton, W. A. "The journeys of Antonio Fernandes . . ." (*Proceedings of the Rhodesia scientific association*, v. 40, April, 1945, p. 71-103).
- <sup>4</sup> Particularly by D. P. Abraham.
- <sup>5</sup> Abraham, D. P. "The early political history of the kingdom of Mwene Mutapa" *op. cit.*, p. 26-27.
- <sup>6</sup> Rea, W. F. "Goncalo da Silveira" (*Rhodesiana*, No. 6, 1961, p. 29).
- <sup>7</sup> Tabler, E. C. *The Far Interior* . . . Cape Town, A. A. Balkema, 1955, p. 273.
- <sup>8</sup> "Bamangwato" (i.e. Broderick, M.). *To Ophir direct: or, the South African goldfields*. Edward Stanford, 1868.
- <sup>9</sup> See Livingstone, D. *The Zambezi Expedition . . . 1858-1863*, edited by J. P. R. Wallis. 2 v. Chatto & Windus Limited, 1956 (Oppenheimer series, No. 9).
- <sup>10</sup> A fine collection of Baines' paintings of the Victoria Falls may be seen in the National Archives.
- <sup>11</sup> For an account of their adventures see Baines, T. *The Northern Goldfields diaries . . . 1869-1872*. 3 v. Chatto & Windus, 1946. (Oppenheimer series No. 3).
- <sup>12</sup> Tabler, E. C. *op. cit.*, p. 285.
- <sup>13</sup> Baines, T. *op. cit.*, p. 141.
- <sup>14</sup> Baines, T. *op. cit.*, p. 156.
- <sup>15</sup> Baines, T. *The Gold Regions of South-Eastern Africa*. Edward Stanford, 1877, p. 42.
- <sup>16</sup> Baines, T. *The Northern Goldfields diaries . . . op. cit.*, p. 695.
- <sup>17</sup> Baines, T. *Explorations in South-West Africa* . . . Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, 1864.
- <sup>18</sup> Selous, F. C. *A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa* . . . Richard Bentley & Son, 1881, p. 293.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 411.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 412.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424.
- <sup>27</sup> Selous, F. C. *Travel and Adventure in South-East Africa*. Rowland Ward & Co. Ltd., 1893, p. 48.

- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.
- <sup>36</sup> The story is given by Selous in *Travel and Adventure in South-East Africa*, p. 113 ff.
- <sup>37</sup> "Mr. F. C. Selous' further explorations in Matabele-land" (in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, v. 10, 1888, p. 294-295).
- <sup>38</sup> See Maufe. H. B. *and others*. "The geology of the country west of Sinoia, Lomagundi district" (Southern Rhodesia. *Geological survey bulletin*, No. 9, 1923, p. 66).
- <sup>39</sup> C. H. Howell to Director, Land settlement department: 21 Aug., 1910 (L 2/2/149, National Archives).
- <sup>40</sup> L 2/2/149, National Archives.
- <sup>41</sup> See Knight-Bruce, G. W. H. *The Mashonaland Mission . . . 1888*, edited by C. E. Fripp (in *Gold and the Gospel in Mashonaland, 1888*. Chatto & Windus, 1949, p. 1-145 (Oppenheimer series, No. 4).
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- <sup>44</sup> ML 1/1/1, National Archives.
- <sup>45</sup> See CT 1/15/5, ML 2/1/1, National Archives and "The death of old Magondi" (NADA, No. 3, 1925, p. 19).
- <sup>46</sup> P. W. Forbes to L. S. Jameson: 5 Dec, 1891 (CT 1/15/5, National Archives).
- <sup>47</sup> J. W. Colenbrander to L. S. Jameson: 15 Jan., 1892 (CT 1/15/5, National Archives).
- <sup>48</sup> B.S.A. Company. *Report . . . 1892-1894*, p. 53.
- <sup>49</sup> ML 1/1/1, National Archives.
- <sup>50</sup> J. A. Spreckley to Registrar of Claims: 27 June, 1892 (ML 2/1/1, National Archives).
- <sup>51</sup> Jones. H. E. "Notes on the Eldorado Mine" (*Rhodesian mining review*, v. 1, 6 Jan., 1909, p. 13-17).
- <sup>52</sup> A. J. Jameson to Registrar of Claims: 21 March, 1896 (ML 2/1/1, National Archives).
- <sup>53</sup> C. White to L. S. Jameson: 13 Aug., 1894 (CT 1/15/6, National Archives).
- <sup>54</sup> H. Hopper to Chief Commissioner of Police: 10 Sept., 1894 (CT 1/15/6, National Archives).
- <sup>55</sup> A. J. Jameson to Registrar of Claims: 5 May, 1896 (ML 2/1/1, National Archives).
- <sup>56</sup> G. H. Mynhardt to Chief Native Commissioner: 1 May, 1896 (N 1/1/5, National Archives).
- <sup>57</sup> G. H. Mynhardt to Chief Native Commissioner: 22 April 1896 (N 1/1/5, National Archives).
- <sup>58</sup> A. J. Jameson to Registrar of Claims: 10 June, 1896 (ML 2/1/1, National Archives).
- <sup>59</sup> See Hole. H. M. "The Mashonaland Rebellion" (B.S.A. Company, *Reports on the Native Disturbances in Rhodesia, 1896-97*. p. 51-160).
- <sup>60</sup> Alderson. E. A. H. *With the Mounted Infantry and the Mashonaland Field Force, 1896*. Methuen & Co., 1898, p. 212-219.
- <sup>61</sup> For Godley's account of the patrol, see "The Sinoia and the Ayrshire mine patrol" (in Alderson, E. A. H., *With the Mounted Infantry and the Mashonaland Field Force. 1896*. Methuen & Co., 1898, p. 220-236).
- <sup>62</sup> Pocock, E. I. "Lo Maghonda district: report of claim inspector for the year ending 31st March, 1898" (in British South Africa Company. *Reports on the Administration of Rhodesia, 1897-1898*, p. 184)
- <sup>63</sup> Published 22 Nov., 1901.
- <sup>64</sup> The company was registered on 17 April, 1901, with Dr. Hans Sauer as Chairman and Henry Wilson Fox as one of the Directors. See British South Africa Company. *Information as to mining in Rhodesia*, 1902, p. 26 and A 11/2/16/6, National Archives.



- <sup>65</sup> See Molyneux, A. J. C. "Geology of the country west of Sinoia, Lomagundi district" (Southern Rhodesia. *Geological survey bulletin*, No. 6, 1919, p. 41).
- <sup>66</sup> Southern Rhodesia. *Report of the Secretary for Mines for the year 1913*, p. 2 and LB 2/2/137/31, National Archives.
- <sup>67</sup> See M 3/8/1/1, National Archives.
- <sup>68</sup> A 3/17/7 and M 3/11/1, National Archives.
- <sup>69</sup> British South Africa Company. *Report . . . 1896-1897*, p. 60 and Phaup, A. E. and Dobell, F. O. S. "Geology of the lower Umfuli gold belt . . ." (Southern Rhodesia. *Geological survey bulletin*. No. 34, 1938).
- <sup>70</sup> N 3/30/2, National Archives.
- <sup>71</sup> E. T. Kenny to Chief Native Commissioner: 1 May, 1900 (N 3/14/7, National Archives).
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>73</sup> E. T. Kenny to Chief Native Commissioner: 21 May, 1900 (N 3/14/7, National Archives).
- <sup>74</sup> C. S. Munro to Chief Native Commissioner: 7 June, 1900 (N 3/14/7, National Archives).
- <sup>75</sup> See Munro, C. S. "Report on patrol to Mapondera's stronghold": 6 Aug., 1900 (N 3/14/7, National Archives).
- <sup>76</sup> C. S. Munro to J. T. E. Flint: 15 Aug., 1900 (N 3/14/7, National Archives).
- <sup>77</sup> See "Mapondera the Mashona: a noted rebel chief" (*African Review*, v. 37, 1903, p. 172).
- <sup>78</sup> N 3/1/9, National Archives.
- <sup>79</sup> See Shimmin, I. "The Mashonaland mission: a trip to Lo Magundi's, Zwimba and Sinoia, in 1892" (*Rhodesian Methodist*, v. 35, No. 1, June, 1959. p. 15-20).
- <sup>80</sup> "The Italian Colony, Lomagundi" (National Archives).
- <sup>81</sup> L 2/2/95/19, National Archives.
- <sup>82</sup> H. S. Keigwin to Chief Native Commissioner: 5 Nov., 1912 (L 2/2/85, National Archives).
- <sup>83</sup> Howell, C. H. "Report on journey to Kariba gorge": 2 Oct., 1914 (L 2/2/85, National Archives).
- <sup>84</sup> British South Africa Company. *Report . . . 1897-1898*, p. 313-314.
- <sup>85</sup> Peall, G. H. "Report on the public health Lomagundi district, for the year ended 31st December, 1913" (H 2,4/23, National Archives).

# Early Days in Bulawayo

(1896-1900)

by H. W. Smart

During the last century, not only was it an adventure to travel to another continent, but a memorable experience even to leave British soil. I was always an admirer of Cecil John Rhodes, and it was one of my ambitions to visit the Colony named after so great a man. I took the opportunity to make arrangements to go to Africa while my mother was on a visit to Germany and too far away to interfere. She, having eight other children to worry about, didn't worry long over me. Her chief objection, when she discovered my plans, was the Matabele Rebellion, which was headline news in the papers at that period, and it was with some difficulty that I quelled her fears by pointing out that this fearsome event was taking place over 1,000 miles from Port Elizabeth, which was my intended destination. It was ironical, then, that on the same day that I arrived in Port Elizabeth I was asked to proceed to Bulawayo, an offer which I gladly accepted.

From England I travelled by the old *Grantully Castle*, a Castle Line ship before the Union and Castle lines merged. Our crossing was uneventful, except for the sighting early one morning of the ill-fated *Drummond Castle*, which struck a rock that same night while a dance was in progress, and sank with all hands but one, a Spaniard I believe, and who was said to have occupied Cabin No. 13. We knew nothing of this disaster until, when we were two or three hours outside Cape Town, a tender came out to meet us, giving the news by signal. Ships were not fitted with wireless in those days.

After Cape Town I landed at Port Elizabeth and almost immediately set out for the rail head, which was Mafeking. When boarding Zeederberg's coach there, I had with me two Gladstone bags holding my immediate requirements, having left my heavy trunk to be sent on from Port Elizabeth. I deposited these bags inadvertently with a pile of luggage at the coach station and was well on my way before it dawned on me that this was weighed luggage, travelling at the rate of 1s. 6d. per lb. so that my innocent action had saved me something around £6. I had, however, paid £22 10s. for my own coach fare.

This coach was an American imported vehicle swung on leather thongs and drawn by ten mules. Some years later not only mules but also trotting oxen were used in the same coaches, to bring Australian and Canadian troops, landed at Beira, through Marandellas, to join the forces for the relief of Mafeking. On the journey to Bulawayo, the mules were exchanged at regular intervals of 10 or 12 miles at coach stations for fresh teams, which enabled the coach to travel night and day at the same speed for the 550 miles to my destination. We did about 70 miles a day, and the journey from Mafeking to Bulawayo took eight days and nights.

My fellow companions were Capt. the Hon. Arthur Lawley of the 10th Hussars, a Mr. Henry, mine manager, and a lad called Metcalfe. Metcalfe

was the youngest telegraphist to take part in the Jameson Raid. He was taken prisoner, but released by the Boers on account of his youth. Other passengers joined the coach for only short spells. Capt. Lawley was soon afterwards knighted, and became as Sir Arthur Lawley, Administrator of Matabeleland, and was later in the House of Lords as Lord Wenlock.

The coach was in charge of a Cape Boy who handled the reins, and a Hottentot who wielded the long whip, and we were entirely dependent upon these two coloured men for our progress. At one of the night stations they evidently got hold of some Dop—"Cape Smoke" it was then called—and we soon noticed the unsteadiness of their driving, for we were trying as usual, to sleep in a sitting position. Some time after daybreak the coach came to a standstill with the boys loudly wrangling, and to our concern the quarrel became very heated, the Cape Boy rushing for the Hottentot with a knife. The Hottentot eluded the onslaught and found time to break off a heavy branch from a nearby tree and returned to the fray. Young Metcalfe was the only one of us who understood the language and therefore the seriousness of the situation, and confident of our support, ran between the outraged couple to disarm them both. For the remainder of the journey these two coloured boys were entirely submissive, and it is as well to remember that Metcalfe was only 17 years old, having been only 16 as the youngest trooper in the Jameson Raid earlier in the year. On another occasion our Cape driver used the long whip to crack at a pigeon 15 yards away, strangling it neatly with the tapering end and potting it that night for his supper.

Our only bath during the entire journey often days from Port Elizabeth was a swim in the Limpopo or Crocodile River. We took a chance for the sake of cleanliness and were fortunate in seeing no company.

At Palla we overtook the 7th Hussars who were marching against the Matabele. Among them was the Prince of Teck, whom I met later in Gwelo, when he was the Earl of Athlone and Governor of the Union.

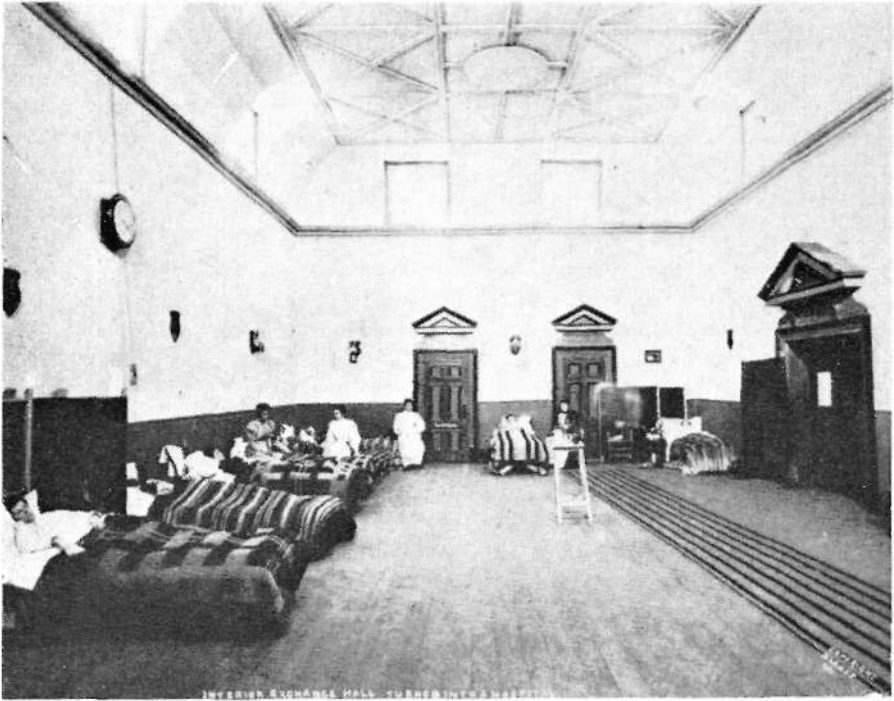
The only other incident of note was the disappearance of our mule team, when outspanned three stations before Palapwe. Rather than wait for the team to be rounded up, Metcalfe and I decided to gain on our coach by walking to the next station. But the road was several miles wide, made thus by wagons which had sought better tracks across the parched veld, so that we missed not one but two intervening coach stations and unknowingly entered upon a Marathon of 23 miles through heavy sand, the stations being only eight miles apart here. It was a gruelling trudge through intense heat and discomfort, and we were still staggering forward, Metcalfe almost carried by myself, when to my relief I encountered two white men in the semi-darkness, whom I entrusted to support my companion into Palapwe. There he was put to bed exhausted, unable to continue the journey until the following week. For my part, I threw myself down on the nearest lion skin in the dining-room of the hotel, where I remained in deep sleep until I was awakened two hours later when the coach arrived to collect me.

On the 8th morning we arrived at Zeederberg's Coach Station in Bulawayo, having been escorted through Mangwe Pass by an armed escort provided by the B.S.A.C.P.

The laager was in evidence on the Market Square. It consisted of a Hotchkiss or other gun at each of the four corners. A barbed-wire fence and, within this, coils of barbed-wire on the ground, another barbed-wire fence within which was yards of broken bottles, another fence and finally a square formation of wagons packed solid with sandbags and affording firing gaps. It looked to me a very formidable defence. On my arrival, July 6th, very few were sleeping there, much of the danger in the immediate vicinity having passed.

It was said in those days that the three curses of Rhodesia were the three Rs, *not* Reading, Riting and Rithmetic, but the Raid (Jameson), Rinderpest and the Rebellion. I might add a fourth curse, that of Spirits. Whisky seemed to have a three to one priority over other commodities in the matter of supply. As three wagon-loads of whisky came along for every one of sundries, I had to wait eight months for the remainder of my possessions. I had time to order and receive from England a camera with which to record the spectacular arrival of my trunk on the top of a transport wagon down Fife Street. These transport riders charged £5 to £5 10s. per 100 lb. from Mafeking and Gaberones, which was subsequently the rail head, and many of them who were fortunate enough to own a few teams of salted oxen made well over £1,000 profit per mensem; but it did not last long.

The Rev. David Carnegie, one of the earliest missionaries, who was engaged on building a mission house at Centenary Mission near Figtree, once asked me to pay for a single brick. Having promised, I then enquired the price of a brick and was told it would be a sovereign! Later on he made further use of my willingness, when he found a python and a nest of 30 eggs. These he wished to send home as an exhibit to the Glasgow Exhibition. He asked me to destroy the snake and preserve it for the journey. It reached me in a huge packing case, which I sent to a firm of carpenters, Dechow and Tweedale, and I followed up armed with prussic acid in one pocket and solution of strychnine in the other. Tweedale had ingeniously prepared a long pair of wooden forceps with which, when part of the packing case had been prised up, he managed to nip the snake's neck and raise it near enough to the opening to enable me to administer a fatal dose. I injected a tablespoonful of prussic acid into its mouth and quickly re-fastened the lid, which was hammered down. However, after ten minutes had elapsed, I could still hear movements within and realised, with some alarm, that prussic acid might not prove fatal to a cold-blooded creature. So the whole process had to be repeated, an unpleasant ordeal, with the result that the python was finally disposed of with strychnine. This killed the reptile, but caused rigor mortis, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we coiled it into a huge stone jar filled with methylated spirits. The jar was placed near our photographic department at Smart and Copley's. Within a couple of days putrefaction had started despite the spirit and the stench became so bad that the precious exhibit had to be buried nearly a mile outside the township. Within a week both my photographer and myself went down with enteric and, incidentally, an epidemic broke out among the B.S.A.P. I prefer to think that Carnegie's snake was not the cause, but there were so many military funerals in the ensuing weeks that many of the natives got into the habit of whistling "The Dead March, in Saul" down the street.



The Stock Exchange, Bulawayo, used as a hospital during the Rebellion.  
(From the National Archives Photographic Collection).

Athletic sports were tremendously popular in Bulawayo, and at these the older inhabitants were not only chosen as officials, but also called upon to contribute prizes. My firm presented a very fine prize once—I forget what it was—but the Prize Committee allocated it to the Official's Race, and I Won it back. It was a 100 yards handicap and they gave me a big start, so it was all very fair. That was Saturday afternoon. On the following Monday I chanced to drop into the Charter Hotel for my customary "elevenses" and was there accosted by a little man quite half a head shorter than myself, but very forthcoming. I said "No, thanks, I've just had one". "Oh, do have one with me, Mr. Smart", he insisted, "You see I won a lot of money on you on Saturday". "But you weren't such a fool as to put your money on *me*, were you?" I asked, quite shocked. And he said, "No, Mr. Smart, but you see I'm a bookie and I made a book on that race and *nobody* was such a fool as to back you. I scooped the pool."

Lord Selborne came, paying his first visit to Bulawayo, and amongst other things, to open the library. But he came in a top hat and frock coat, as did many other distinguished visitors on this same train. Bulawayo residents in the last century paid little enough heed to fashion, being usually characterised by open necks, neither coat nor tie and a corresponding lack of refinements. A senior assistant of mine, named Blewett, who was in the habit of wearing a beard, at the time of Lord Selborne's visit, shaved it off, donned top hat,

frock coat and monocle, cane and lavender gloves and sallied forth in this disguise into the most popular bar of the day. Congregated there were a number of his friends who, needless to say, failed to recognise him but took a lively interest in his movements. Leaning across the counter, with great ceremony, he asked for a whisky and soda, which was duly produced for him. While drinking, however, he laid sixpence upon the counter. "One and sixpence, Sir," corrected the barman, cocking an eye at him. "One and six," said Blewett in assumed astonishment, "Why, I only pay sixpence in London." "Well, you're not in London here, Sir", replied the barman with great emphasis, upon which Blewett laid down another shilling, swallowed his drink and departed with indignation, but not without noting that he had scored off his friends. They didn't laugh to the same tune when they identified the hoaxer.

Mr. Blewett was once unkind enough to interrupt a poker party of ours. The late Sir Leopold Moore then owned a pharmacy in Bulawayo and was holding the party on his premises. We were deeply rooted to the game when, to our annoyance, the urgent medicine bell rang. Moore excused himself but returned within a few minutes saying, "I don't know who the woman was. She said her name was Mrs. van Rooyen and I let her have an expensive bottle of perfume on credit, because I didn't want to argue with her at this time of night, but it will be all right if I win the next jackpot". He was furious when, on the following day Blewett returned the perfume to him in the name of Mrs. van Rooyen.

The local dentist was one Baron Gustav Hard of Sweden, sixteenth heir presumptive to the Swedish throne, who jokingly used to say that only a Swedish epidemic would crown him King Gustav. This man was not only a dentist and a doctor, but had written a book on cookery and was a very fine cook himself. He used to join our card parties for the sake of learning better English, though his faltering command of it gave rise to some amusing incidents, without which life would have been duller. At a dinner party in the Bulawayo suburbs he was seated beside a very pretty woman airing his English to the best of his ability and, at the same time, endeavouring to get her to have some cucumber salad. Meaning to enlarge upon the merits of the cucumber, and particularly its digestive qualities, he was heard to say, during a distinct lull in the general conversation, "Oh, *do* have some, it will not give you constipation."

I regret to say that distinguished visitors were regarded by the residents as very excellent game, and I have some first-hand examples of this sorry inclination. An exceedingly wealthy man in Cape Town named Arderne, two or three times organised a party of moneyed friends to visit the Victoria Falls and the Matopos by special train. The train ran especially for the Arderne party and was exclusively theirs. Members regarded themselves with no little conceit. A very good friend of mine, William Bridgeman, who bore a resemblance to Cecil Rhodes, and more recently acted as Rhodes in the film "The Life of Rhodes", was once standing with me at the foot of Matopos at a time when we knew that the Arderne party was present at the top for the unveiling of the Shangani Memorial. A young fellow, immaculately turned out, with a bowler hat, approached, out of breath, and said, "Have you seen my party?"

whereupon Bridgeman replied, "What party?" "The Arderne party, of course," said the young man. "The Arderne party," said Bridgeman, in surprise, "Never heard of it!"

On another occasion one of Bulawayo's early mayors, Major Walter Baxendale, who met his death in the first Great War in the German East campaign, was meeting a special train of visitors at the station. Approaching one of the passengers he said, "Can I be of any assistance to you, Sir?" "Certainly", said the tourist, "Take this trunk to a cab". "Well", said Baxendale, "I happen to be the Mayor of this town but if you will take hold of one end I will hold the other and we'll take it to my Cape cart which is waiting outside".

When Sir Arthur Lawley, whom I've mentioned before in connection with my coach journey to Rhodesia, was Administrator of Matabeleland, he entertained as his guest at Government House, Count Von Bulow of Germany. At that time McIvor, a public school man, was his aide-de-camp. On the evening arranged for his guest's departure, Sir Arthur Lawley was the principal guest at a public banquet and despatched McIvor to see the Count off at the station. Having arranged the Count's luggage and accommodation, McIvor returned to him, saluted, and reported that all was well. To his astonishment Von Bulow thanked him with Prussian eloquence and gave him a tickey! McIvor again saluted and, on the following day, went down to Basch, the jeweller, whom he commissioned to mount the proffered tickey on a gold tie-pin.

In the middle of 1897 I bought a bicycle for £40 to cycle to Gwelo to see what there was of it. About half way I came across a Cape cart with six mules, driven by a Cape Boy and carrying one passenger. He proved to be Earl Grey, the Administrator of Matabeleland and Mashonaland combined, and the grandfather of the present Lady Mary Baring. We had a long talk exchanging reports on the road ahead of us. He was smoking a cigar given him by "the King of Somabula", a white man named Fleming, who ran a store at Somabula and was said to be the heir to a fabulous fortune in England.

The Bishop of Mashonaland was Bishop Gaul. He was very much loved by the residents, and as much by the hard cases, of which there was an abundance. He stepped one day into Walker's Store and, in pursuance of his policy to introduce himself to his parishioners, held out his hand to Walker saying, "I'm the Bishop". Walker grasped the proffered hand most cordially, "And a darn good billet too", he said. "I should stick to it if I were you." I remember him at St. John's Church, in the middle of the service making a quick run and stamping on a tarantula, apparently believing in the slogan "Safety First". The Bishop did not really like the pulpit and preferred to walk up and down the aisle delivering his sermon. He was quite embarrassing to some of his congregation when he would on occasion stop at one of the pews, saying quite gently, "If you read your bible thoughtfully, thoughtfully", and would suddenly burst out in a loud voice, pointing, "*Do* you read your bible thoughtfully?" much to the consternation of his nearby audience.

Bishop Gaul was fortunately well versed in the noble art of self-defence, and once, when he was insulted by a man at a wayside hotel, he quickly divested himself of his coat, saying, "I may be the Bishop but tonight I am Bill of Dublin", and proceeded to give the offender a good trouncing. Bishop Gaul

officiated at Rhodes' funeral and read the poem specially written by Rudyard Kipling, the last verse of which is on our £5 and £1 notes:

*"The immense and brooding spirit still shall quicken and control.  
Living he was the land, and dead his soul shall be her soul"*

The only time I ever saw Kipling was when he was in adversity. I was drinking tea on the verandah of the Umgusa Estates Hotel, five miles from Bulawayo, one Sunday afternoon. Sir Arthur Lawley and Kipling were seated several tables away and were, very naturally, the centre of some interest on our part. When they rose to leave, Kipling, in a spirited moment, took a running leap over the low railing of the verandah. His style was admirable but, sad to relate, he lacked altitude and caught the top in his flight, landing heavily in a flower-bed.

Those of you who think Rhodesia an expensive part of the world to live in should look back sometimes to the prices prevalent in Bulawayo in 1896, when eggs fetched 30s. a dozen and cauliflowers sometimes as much as 30s. each. I bought a single small apple for Is. 6d., this having come up by coach. The first meal, when I got off the coach, was breakfast at the Silver Grill, costing 7s. 6d. and consisting of a very small boiled egg, two large slices of boer-meal bread and coffee with condensed milk. This coffee was a luxury after the wayside coffee of the journey, made of such cloudy water that milk was unnecessary had there been any, and it was often sipped accompanied by the odoriferous odour of decomposing rinderpest carcasses.

A very cheap place for food was the American Restaurant, with the Stars and Stripes flags fluttering, run by W. R. Paterson, who built the Palace Hotel in 1897. The meals were 2s. each. The Abercorn Hotel supplied a special Sunday meal for 5s., and the Charter Hotel a Sunday dinner, midday, for 6s. The Maxim Hotel contracted for the B.S.A.P. Officers' Mess at £20 per officer per month.

I am not able to say very much about the education which existed in these early days. The first high school in Matabeleland was commenced by Miss Sophia Decima Austin, who happened to have been a schoolmistress in my aunt's school at Cambridge about 20 years previously. She carried on the establishment during the Rebellion in a building in Fife Street, and later built a large wood and iron school, "The Bulawyo High School" in Grey Street, and had about 30 pupils, girls and little boys, as far as I can remember. Among these latter were the present Judge (Eric) Thomas, and Mr. Harry Issels, who gave one of the Pioneer talks two or three weeks ago. Among Miss Austin's teaching staff was Miss Winnie Helm, sister of Mrs. Jessie Lovemore, who also spoke here a few weeks back. I had the keys of the building when Miss Austin was on holiday and, as there was a good piano there, a very scarce luxury in those days, I used to take my musical friends round for recreation. At the end of the school term, on one occasion, Lady Lawley presented the prizes.

To revert to prices, native ox-wagon drivers received £5 a month with rations and leaders £4 with rations. Rations officially consisted of 1 lb. meal, 1 lb. meat, 1 oz. coffee, 1/2 oz. salt and 2 oz. sugar per day. I paid a boy £4 a



month to look after my own room in the town. He did nothing else, and I took my meals out. During the rebellion we paid a Zulu errand boy £5 a month. Mealies were then £5 a bag and the boy lived comfortably at the back of the premises. One day an urgent prescription came in by runner from Matabele Wilson's Store, seven miles away, and the runner waited outside while I dispensed it. When it was ready I could not find the messenger. He turned up three days afterwards, having lived in the lap of luxury with his Zulu friend at the back of the pharmacy. His need for food was so great that urgent medicine took a second place with him. Indeed, many of the hostile natives were living on leaves, their crops having been burnt by the Imperial Troops. Sometimes we could hear the guns fired by the 7th Hussars in the Matopos, 27 miles away. Our own native servants remained quite unperturbed, enjoying their rations.

Old Bulawayo consisted of irregular rows of wood and iron structures, with a very few brick buildings and, generally speaking, you could walk from one point to another as the crow flies, not knowing whether you were on the road or on somebody's private property. Bishop Gaul lost no time in erecting a reasonable place of worship for the Anglican Church, but the Wesleyans were not so fortunate, or perhaps more fortunate. They held their services in the dining-room of the Tattersalls Hotel, where they could take a meal, hear a good sermon and finish up with drinks. Later on Mr. Rhodes laid the foundation stone of the Wesleyan Church and made one of his characteristic speeches.

One of our cheapest amusements was our visit to Charlie Maddocks' auction sales, on the Market Square or the large rooms at either the Maxim or Charter Hotel, and many a laugh was raised at the clever repartee between the auctioneer and the bidders.

Another, but professional entertainer, was Mr. Rodney, who became, I believe, manager at the Empire Theatre for the African Film Trust. But in the late 90's he was called Ready Money Rodney of I.O.U. Chambers. He gave a weekly half crown popular concert at the Caledonian Hall, and on each night would impersonate a different bigwig of the town. He "took off" Mr. Herbert (latterly Sir Herbert) Taylor, the Chief Native Commissioner to perfection, with his red tie, Baden Powell hat, riding breeches and a fly whisk. After receiving, on the platform, a deputation of women petitioning against the cruelty to natives, in that they were allowed to ride bicycles with bare feet, the C.N.C. promised that in future they would all be supplied with motor cars, a vehicle which was just becoming mentioned in the papers.

The Bulawayo Musical Society gave its earliest productions at the Empire, and in "Trial by Jury" I was asked to be on the stage amongst the audience of the court to arrange a red light effect with Strontium powder, as a fitting finale before the fall of the curtain on the closing scene. Mr. C. G. Lowinger took the part of the judge. At the correct moment I ignited the powder which I had in a tin box on a cane-bottomed chair. The effect was brilliant, but the tin became red hot, fell through the chair and set fire to the floor. With great presence of mind Lowinger threw his cloak across the stage to me and I extinguished the flames before there was a stampede amongst the audience who, however, *did* beat a hasty retreat on account of the suffocating smoke.



**The Charter Hotel, Bulawayo, 1897.**  
(From the National Archives Photographic Collection.)

Among unusual and often amusing incidents are the following:

Mr. Caie's jeweller's shop, of wood and iron, was sold in 8th Avenue, to be removed to another site further north. It was carried bodily by about 40 natives, and it was quaint to see the glass face of the outside clock swaying to and fro. Down Abercorn Street the building was too tall to pass under the sagging telephone wires, and a white man had to be on the top of the shop to lift the wires to enable it to continue its journey. I took photographs of all these manoeuvres.

I remember the waterworks dam, which was to have supplied the town with water, burst its banks one night through faulty construction. This was three miles away and we all went to see it next day. But Mr. Jack Spreckley, always up to fun, had been there first, and on a prominent boulder, in everybody's view, had painted in large letters the name of the engineer whom he considered was responsible for the catastrophe.

Another incident which proved how small the world was even then was at about the first or second stopping place of the coach north of Mafeking, quite near Pitsani, which was Dr. Jim's jumping-off point for the Jameson Raid, six months previously, I stepped from the coach and approached a Bechuanaland Border Policeman, the B.B.P., and engaged him in conversation. We exchanged "lives". He proved to be H. Rangeley, who had been taught at my uncle's school at Dronfield, near Sheffield. He later walked from Pieters-

burg to Bulawayo in the rainy season, arriving with a severe dose of ague. He recovered after a few weeks and later occupied an important Government post in North West Rhodesia.

One night in the coach, sitting up and trying to get a little rest for myself, both Capt. Lawley and Mr. Henry fell fast asleep, one on either shoulder, and commenced snoring. I must have been very good natured in those days, for I put up with them until I, myself, dozed off. Next morning I told them I had felt like "Alice through the Looking Glass" with the Red Queen and the White Queen snoring on either shoulder.

When Mr. Uttley was Post Office Telephone Officer, we had a very nice and smart girl at the exchange, who would stand no nonsense from subscribers. On hearing a complaint from one of these about her, Uttley went to the exchange and remonstrated with her somewhat severely. She turned on him and said, "Oh, you go to the Devil". Uttley indignantly gave her a month's notice on the spot and left. Towards evening he repented and went up to her office and said, "Miss——, perhaps I was somewhat hasty with you this morning. You really do your work very satisfactorily and I withdraw the notice I gave you—you need not leave". "Thank you, Mr. Uttley", she replied, "Then you needn't go to the Devil".

After Rhodes had held his indabas in the Matopos and brought about peace with the Matabele at the end of 1896, I entertained two of the old rebel chiefs behind Lennon's pharmacy, Fife Street. They were Babyana and Umjohn, my object being to photograph them. Lobengula had sent Babyana and another chief, named Mshete, to England in 1889 to see whether there really was a Great White Queen, Queen Victoria. These indunas were to act as Lobengula's eyes. Well, with the assistance as interpreter of my Zulu boy, Charlie, I took photographs of them and then, I confess to my shame, I offended against the laws of the country and gave them each a stiff tot of whisky. Rubbing their tummies they were most effusive in their thanks and, according to my interpreter, they hoped I would go to heaven when I died.

A sadder event to record was the magazine explosion at the B.S.A. Police Camp. It occurred during the lunch hour in early '97, I think, a rushing wind racing through the town, shaking buildings, breaking windows, bottles falling from shelves and stones flying over houses over two miles away. A rifle had been accidentally fired, the bullet penetrating the magazine full of explosives. Practically all buildings in the immediate vicinity were levelled to the ground, one white soldier and eight or nine Cape Boys meeting their deaths.

About 50 years back, Leopold Moore started an agitation for the "Abrogation of the Charter", the Chartered Company not being very popular then. However the public meetings probably helped us to get better representation and Matabeleland and Mashonaland were each allotted two members. Eventually we elected Dr. Hans Sauer and E. St. Michael Hutchinson, the defeated candidates being C. T. Holland and Sam Lewis. Sauer and Hutchinson elected to trek to Salisbury, where this Legislative Council was held, by wagon, and, of course, Rodney composed a skit on the journey, which he sang publicly at one of his concerts, to the tune of Mandalay. It commenced with "All the way to Salisbury, flogging donkeys all the way", and he got into great disfavour

with the inhabitants of the capital by referring in his song to their town as "That mud-stained, tinned-roof city". Eventually, of course, we got full representation on the Council and finally, in the Referendum in 1922, we obtained Responsible Government. I often wonder why October 1st, the date on which Responsible Government actually commenced in 1923, is not declared a public holiday.

Another agitation, quite at the beginning of this century, was against the threatened importation of Chinese labour for the Rhodesian mines. John Kerr, Fyfe and others were prime movers, and the slogan "We won't have Chinamen" was shouted throughout the public meeting held in the Market Building, and several hot speeches were made. However, the Chinamen idea was soon dropped.

I used to play cricket in those days, very bad cricket, but the King's Club happened to be in the first league. I was wicket-keeping against the B.A.C. on their ground. George Cary, of the Customs, was bowling, and the ball caught me on the bridge of the nose, cutting it open. This was Sunday, and on Monday I had two lovely black eyes, and so frequent were the enquiries as to how I got them that I wrote a little account of the accident on a visiting card and kept it in my pocket. Mr. Justice Vintcent, afterwards Sir Joseph Vintcent, asked the usual question and received the little card. He was much amused, but during the Boer War he did not smile quite so pleasantly. I was in the Town Guard and Judge Vintcent was our O.C. Mr. A. D. Webb, father of Col. Webb of rugby fame, was second in command. Capt. Judge Vintcent was holding a kit inspection in the Suburbs and when he came to me he said, "Where is your ammunition, Smart?" "There, Sir", said I, pointing to a white paper package neatly wrapped with pink string and sealing wax. He sternly ordered me to open it and, I thought, very mildly censured me. I was quite expecting to get C.B.

I have not been able to tell you much about the organised humdrum life in Bulawayo during those early years, but I have tried to interest you with true and unexaggerated happenings, my stories giving you, I hope, an insight to the cheerful character of those early immigrants. I have kept no diary and have, during the last week, raked up the past from memory, having no reference books in the Midlands referring particularly to Bulawayo.

Before I end this talk I would like to mention once more the man without whose dreams for the future we'd probably not be here in Rhodesia today. A description of his last journey, the final one to his chosen resting-place at the bare summit of World's View, will bring my "19th Century and a bit more" to a suitable close. To be buried at World's View was his own wish, which seems to symbolise the man's tremendous vision, together with his love for the Rhodesian veld. Cecil John Rhodes died at St. James, next to Muizenberg, on March 26th, 1902, and it was about 13 days before the coffin arrived in Bulawayo. A gun carriage drawn by mules took his remains through Bulawayo, the cortege including the chief mourners, the clergy and choir, the Southern Rhodesia Volunteers, mounted and on foot, and the B.S.A.P.—the Town Guard lining the streets. He had lain in state for 24 hours in the unfinished Drill Hall and, on the next day, was taken as far as Westacre. There the coffin rested in

Rhodes' dining-room, which he himself had used on his own estate. This was a wall-less, thatched shelter on piles which was guarded throughout the night before the burial, by the Southern Rhodesia Regiment. In the morning, April 10th, the remains were conveyed to the Matopos by mules. But the gun carriage, with its heavy load (for it was a three-shelled coffin) was taken to the summit of World's View by trained oxen, which had been rehearsing the steep ascent for the previous ten days.

Col. Frank Rhodes, Arthur Montague Rhodes, Dr. Jameson, Sir James McDonald, Sir Richard Martin, I believe Miss Rhodes, and many other distinguished people were present. Over 2,000 of us from Bulawayo and other parts of Rhodesia attended the funeral, and probably an equal number of Native Indunas and Chiefs with their followers.

In conclusion I think I have succeeded in persuading you that although the Pioneer Days were of the rough and tumble variety, what hardships were there were hilarious ones—what we lacked could always be improvised. In place of organised entertainment we had our own private comedies from day to day.

# "Kambandakoto"

A STUDY OF A. S. CRIPPS, 1869-1952

by D. E. Finn

In the nave of his ruined mission church eight miles from Enkeldoorn lies the body of Arthur Shearley Cripps, poet, novelist, missionary, politician of sorts, visionary, "crank" as some have called him—but known to the Africans who tend his grave as "Kambandakoto"—"He-who-went-about-as-a-poor-man". The nickname could not be more appropriate. Already the stories about the tattered St. Francis of Maronda Mashanu who gave all he had to the poor and trekked fantastic distances on foot to minister to them, are becoming more legend than truth. It is therefore perhaps timely to delve into the facts of Cripps' life before these are lost in the memories of the dwindling number of his contemporaries.

Cripps was born of well-to-do parents in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, on June 18th, 1869. His family were not related, as has been claimed, to either Rhodesia's Lionel Cripps or Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps.<sup>1</sup> Arthur was the youngest of three children. His father was a solicitor and an Anglican. His mother was a Roman Catholic. How far this religious duality in the home affected Arthur we can only guess; but when, after Charterhouse and Trinity College, Oxford, he took his History degree then suddenly decided he wanted to become a priest, he chose Cuddesdon College and was ordained in Chichester Diocese in 1892 as an Anglican minister.

His sudden submission to a strong inner prompting of this kind is characteristic of Cripps. To understand fully the reasons for this step, however, one must note the particularly strong influence of Christian Socialism at Oxford at this time. Cripps was no mere aesthetic. Admittedly in his second year he had published a volume of poems, "Primavera", with Laurence Binyon. Stephen Phillips and Manmohan Ghose, but he also had been awarded a Blue for rowing, a half-Blue for boxing and was well-known as a three-miler—athletic successes which explain his later extraordinary feats of endurance in the Rhodesian bush. The young man who had written poetry at 15 must have been strongly influenced, however, by the great Charles Gore, a most brilliant and forceful personality, first Principal of Pusey House, Oxford, and the inspiration of the Christian Social Union. The I.L.P. and the Workers' Educational Association derived from this movement; while the controversial volume, "Lux Mundi", was a product of the Pusey House Group. There was every inducement to a visionary like Cripps to join the ardent young men eager to take Christian works to the East End of London and direct their lives by the promptings of social consciences.<sup>2</sup>

Cripps' final commitment to missionary work in Africa, however, did not come until 1900, when he had been Vicar of Ford End, Essex, for six years.

His first independent volume of poems, "Titania and Other Poems", 1900. begins serenely enough with Keatsian imitations but end with a poem containing these striking lines:

" . . . see in outward sign  
The thing worth living for in this harsh world—  
To feel our fellows' sorrows as our own;  
Achieve a Passion and attain a Cross,  
As finding there that rose-crown of our life—  
Crown full as sweet in flow'r's as sharp in thorns— -  
Love, and of loves, the greatest love of all  
That lays a life down gladly for its friends".<sup>3</sup>

William Tully,<sup>4</sup> Cripps' godson, tells in a letter what was the extraordinary cause of Cripps' final decision to dedicate himself to Africa.

"Finding him in a confiding mood one day, I asked him what it was that had made him decide to become a missionary. He told me it was the reading of a book which I knew, 'Trooper Peter Halkett of Mashonaland'.<sup>5</sup> I remember it had as a frontispiece a reproduction of a photograph of the hanging of the Chiefs and Headmen considered responsible for the Mashona Rising of 1897. It showed the condemned men hanging from the branches of a mimosa tree while the executioners stood round in various attitudes of unconcern. The



Wreningham Mission (circa. 1901).

photo still seems to exist and keeps cropping up. Apparently Mr. Cripps was profoundly affected by this book and the 'horrible frontispiece' and it made him decide to become a missionary so that he might do something to put right the wrong he believed had been done by his race to the Africans".

In January, 1901, the young poet-priest, seeking "to achieve a Passion and attain a Cross" in the name of St. Francis, arrived at Umtali for six months' training as a missionary for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

A photograph of him at this period shows him an awkward, rangy young man, whose most striking physical attributes are a pair of piercing frank eyes gazing straight at the camera and a characteristically uncompromising, almost arrogant lift of the jaw. Here is a man who never looks to left or right, whose beliefs and actions are one, whose weakness may easily be a refusal to compromise at any time for any reason. This is the passionately humanitarian intellectual, introspective and painfully shy, who found himself in 1901 priest-in-charge at Wreningham Mission, an S.P.G. district centring round a collection of pole-and-dagga huts in bare flat veld, miles from anywhere, in the middle of a primarily Afrikaans Dutch Reformed Church community. What agonies this hopelessly impractical young Englishman endured in readjusting himself to close life with an African community whose language he could not speak, and in trying to cope with the day-to-day loneliness, the mind baulks at visualising. It was then that Cripps began the endless trekking for which he later became famous—running the eight miles to Enkeldoorn to take morning Service in someone's house (there was no church then), running to another farm for the evening service 30 miles away in Umvuma, stumbling home at cock-crow:

"Mile after mile, so many a mile—  
The last mile left—I stride for home.  
Cock in yon thatch'd hut, do you hear  
The joyful tidings as I come,  
That 'Hail! Hail! Hail!' you cry so clear"?<sup>8</sup>

It was at Wreningham that Cripps built his first church—a curious piece of architecture with a round nave and two round transepts which took him 11 months to build but gave him immense satisfaction. "A real church at last", he wrote to a friend, "with a soul breathed into it, so to speak. However dimly it burns, the star of its ideal self that maybe is surely shining clear and steady in our Lord's wounded Right Hand".<sup>7</sup> The last few words curiously anticipate the name Cripps gave to his more famous church on his own mission, Maronda Mashanu, that is the Five Wounds, just as the "very rough and irregular"<sup>8</sup> design of Wreningham anticipated its style.

Nineteen-hundred and one to nineteen-hundred and ten produced a spate of books, written perhaps partially to assuage his loneliness—"The Black Christ: a dramatic poem", 1901, the Prize Poem on a Sacred Subject, Oxford University, 1902; "Magic Casements", 1905, the first of the surprisingly lively collections of tales on Africa, Cripps wrote for children; "Lyra Evangelistica, Missionary Verses of Mashonaland", 1909; "Faerylands Forlorn", African tales, 1910; "The Two of Them Together", a boys' novel, 1910; as well as the political pamphlets on the so-called Hut Tax, 1903, and numerous letters to the local newspaper on politico-social subjects. Cripps had already become a controversial figure in Mashonaland. Convinced as he was that he must fight for the cause of the Africans against what he regarded as the exploitation of



them by the white man, he alienated many of his European flock by his uncomfortable altruism and his bitter attacks on them in the Press or in local court cases involving Africans. They were shocked by this Oxford man who was unkempt and dirty and lived like an African villager, who gave all he had to the first African he met, even the coat a European friend had just given him. They could not reconcile the man who lived on sadza and gravy with the poet who corresponded with John Buchan and published books and poems, or the "political agitator" who wrote violent letters to the Press with the visionary whose fine cultured voice could transform an ordinary mission service into a revelation. They found him wildly idealistic and equally impractical—rash and intolerant—but there was a burning sincerity of purpose few could ignore.



Revd. A. S. Cripps with first converts, 1901.

In 1909 Cripps went home to see his mother who was ill. Wreningham was run in his absence by Miss Agnes Saunders and Miss Mary Prior, lady mission workers who found him very difficult to work with. On his return, with a sum of money made over to him by his mother, Cripps bought the land later known as Maronda Mashanu, to give to tenant Africans who would espouse Christianity. During the following uneasy years Cripps added to it two more farms, "Meukle Neuk" and "Money Puss", administering them simultaneously with his official work at Wreningham, obviously with a view to having his own mission one day.

The 1914-18 war took Cripps as Chaplain to the Forces in German East Africa and resulted in the volume of poems, "Lake and War", 1917, in

which he made a savage attack on racial discrimination against the Askari in such verses as "No Thoroughfare" and "African Higher Imperialism".

"Whenas by blood and sweat of theirs  
We've won this bloody war,  
We'll build more fast 'twixt us and them  
The blessed colour-bar."

On his return he built a mission church called Zuwa Rabrida (The Rising Sun) to commemorate his being missed by a bullet, and then in 1918 nearly lost his life again fighting the 'flu epidemic among the natives of his district.

He came back only to plunge into another more personal battle. Apart from his growing disagreements with the Diocese and his quarrels with his co-workers, Cripps was plagued all his life by home-sickness and nostalgia.

"Tell the tune his feet beat  
On the ground all day—  
Black-burnt ground and green grass  
Seam'd with rocks of gray—  
'England! England! England!'  
That one word they say."

In 1926 he resigned from Wreningham, sailed for England and returned to the Trinity College living at Ford End. Here he shocked the local people just as much as he had those in Mashonaland, for he proceeded to live in a room in a cottage and use some money from another prize poem to convert the Vicarage into a boys' club and home for tramps! His nephew tells how he had "horrified my grandmother (Catherine Cripps) with no luggage but a large biscuit tin tied up with string and wearing nothing but a mackintosh over his trousers, having given away the rest of his clothing to a steerage passenger".

However, just as in Africa he had longed for England, so in Essex he was driven by urgent promptings to return to Africa and serve:

"The Divine Outcast of a terrible land,  
A Black Christ with parch'd Lips and Empty Hand."<sup>10</sup>

In 1930 he was back in Mashonaland and virtually retired into seclusion at Maronda Mashanu, except for his long treks to hold services at Enkeldoorn, Umvuma and the Sabi Valley, or an occasional visit to Salisbury on foot to attend Synod as a rather equivocal member. It was at this time Cripps started a Lazaretto for African V.D. patients in his area, from which work, having little medical knowledge and less care for personal hygiene, he contracted the eye disease which later cost him his sight. He could not get the Government to move in the matter so he considered it his duty to do the work himself, latterly accepting, very reluctantly, a Government allowance.

For Cripps, however, the great work of 1930 was building his mission church at Maronda Mashanu, an ambitious structure inspired by Zimbabwe, somewhat haphazardly made of daub, pole and thatch, but possessing even in its present ruined state a haunting beauty. Set at the foot of an enormous

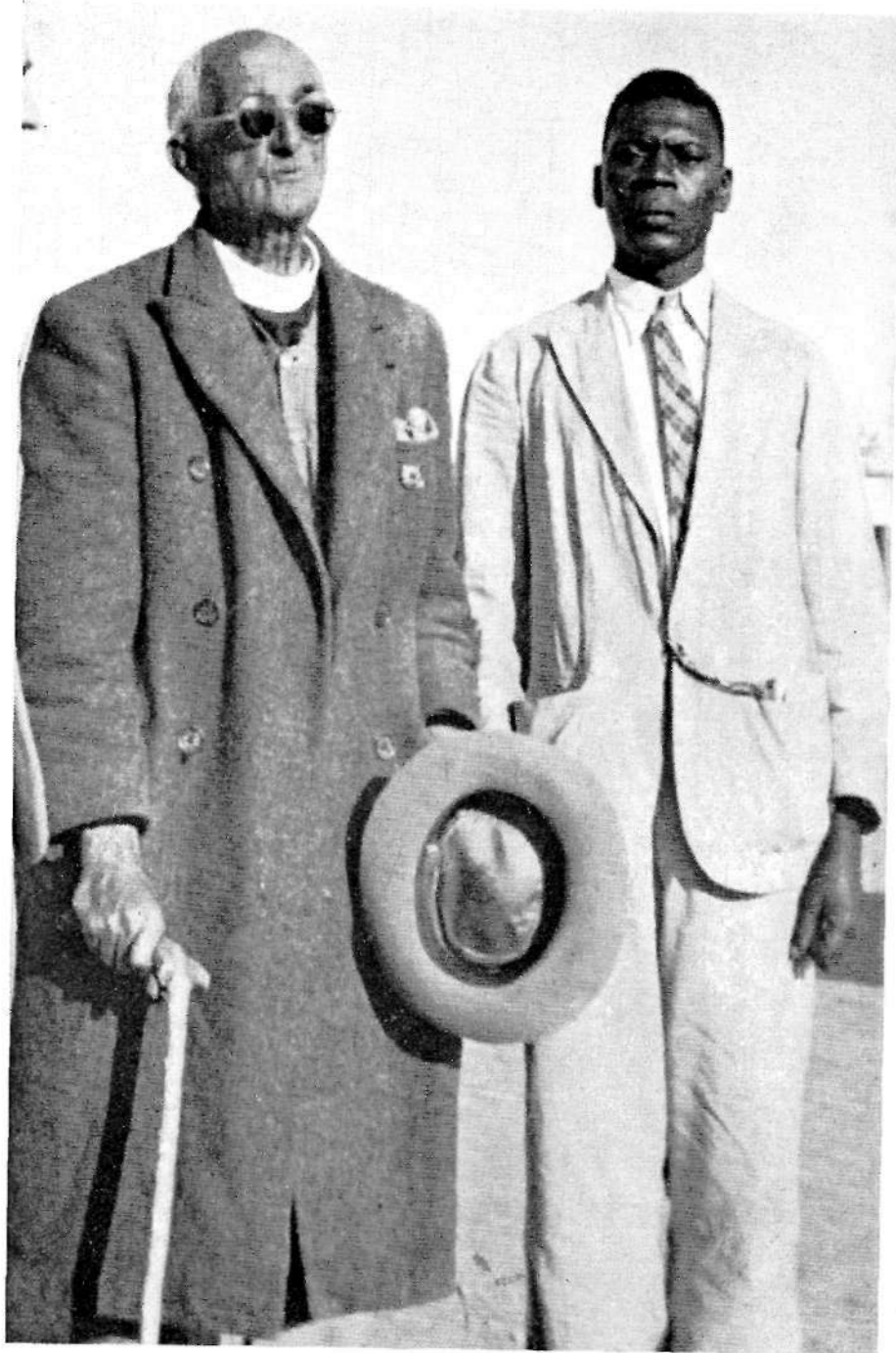
kopje and overlooking a long hillside with a river at the bottom, it was built in the form of a five-pointed star, the thatched roof being supported by five pillars, tapering in the manner of the central tower of Zimbabwe. Each apex contained a niche in which stood a saint, and below each burnt a candle. A life-sized figure of Christ with his five wounds dominated the church from above the altar. Here, people who knew of Cripps came for miles to hear him preach. Here, although he would not accept the Bishop's licence, Cripps still had his converts confirmed by the Bishop and here, one gathers, he held services that could be "High Church" or "Low Church" according to Cripps' fancy. It is to this church Cripps makes most frequent reference in his poems. Its name, after all, symbolises to what his life was dedicated.

"Now go, a veldsore in each lifted hand,  
Go with two blistered feet your altar's way,  
With pity's wounds at heart, go, praise and pray!  
Go, wounds to wounds! Why you are glad to-day—  
He, whose Five Wounds you wear, will understand."<sup>11</sup>

It was here Cripps stayed until his death in 1952. In 1938 he suffered a stroke, from which time his friends noted the first signs of a physical slowing-down. The following year, the year when the Oxford University Press delighted him by publishing a comprehensive selection of his poems called "Africa; Verses", Cripps' eyes became very inflamed and his friends begged him to see a doctor but he would not, until the pain was unbearable and the right eye had to be removed to save the other. It was too late, however, and by April, 1951, he was totally blind and his hearing began to fail.

Characteristically, Cripps refused to make any concessions to his blindness. He still shambled enormous distances, led by an African guide. He still wrote, dictating his work to the last comma to his long-suffering mission-worker colleague, Miss Olive Seth-Smith, or after her death in 1950, to his African secretary, Leonard Mamoura. He was a constant worry to his friends. He ate only when he remembered. He would jump up from a meal with friends to give his portion to the African gardener outside. He stumbled about the veld in boots repaired with hammered-out bully beef tins, and crawled back from a trek so exhausted that he fell asleep at Fuller's farm with his feet on the pillow and his head lolling over the foot of the bed. All his private income he gave away. One of the most touching stories about him is a testimony to the man's capacity to make friends of all creeds by such active Christianity. One day Cripps went into the local Indian store at Enkeldoorn to buy a khaki shirt. He had no money so he told the storekeeper he would just go over the way to the Bank to cash a cheque from his private account. The Indian knew all about his customer. He waited until the old man was shambling out of the front door then he slipped out the back, the short way to the bank. Thrusting a £5 note at the teller, he said, "Put that in old Baba Cripps' account for me. It'll break the old man's heart if he finds there's nothing in his account any more to give away".

If his friends thus conspired to hide the truth from Cripps, and even to protect him from himself, they had to do it completely unobtrusively and woe



*Rev. A. S. Cripps with African guide (circa 1950).*

betide them if they got in the way of his beliefs! An Afrikaans farmer once saw the emaciated old man walking to Salisbury, a distance of 100 miles. He stopped his car and offered Cripps a lift. Now Cripps hated cars: he had called his Bishop a "car-born vampire" for being in one of these symbols of European exploitation of Africa—but he was old and tired and, for once, he accepted—provided that, he said, the Afrikaaner would take Cripps' African guide too. Knowing Cripps, the farmer agreed but when Cripps was safely aboard, basely drove off and left the boy standing in the road. The blind priest sat in stony silence until they reached Salisbury, confirmed as he alighted that the African was not with him, then with an acid, "Well now I must go back for my boy", he set off on foot back along the road they had come.

Many are the anecdotes about this extraordinary man—how he would sit gulping down his first food for days, tea and cake, at Mrs. Schultz's, his mind tossing off thoughts on any subject like a Catherine wheel. How he once forced a visiting Church dignitary to ride a donkey with no saddle, bridle or bit and even confiscated his riding cane in case the animal was over-ridden, but fortunately did not discover a boy walking behind prodding the beast into movement with a cane! His friends remember the atrocious home-grown tobacco he smoked, the ramshackle old bed he slept on in his hut—so old that Miss Seth-Smith tried to replace it with a new one, but Cripps angrily gave that away and retrieved his old one from the rubbish heap.

Cripps died on August 1st, 1952, after a period of senility during which he turned on even his closest friends. His Africans came for miles to see him, two always remaining on duty by his hospital bed in case he needed them. A priest who visited him, however, was forced to say after suffering one piece of cantankerousness, "People say he's a saint. Well he certainly does not now seem to exhibit what I would call any sort of saintliness". Cripps was buried, however, with a ceremony worthy of a king. Noel Brettell, the poet, and the Revd. Nash have both written of the incredible funeral, with thousands of Africans welcoming the body with the loud, crying salute of a chief, the bearers taking the coffin over the river and up the hill to Maronda Mashanu to the accompaniment of a loud and impressive chorale reminiscent of Beethoven's 7th shrilled from the throats of the vast crowd lining the route. Today Cripps lies in the heart of his church encircled by the flowers in earthenware pots that his faithful Africans still put there, within hearing of the herdboys shouting down the hill on the land he gave them.

What did Cripps actually achieve? He earned a niche in "The Cambridge History of English Literature" but his poetry is too unequal in achievement for him to be regarded as a major poet. No one would claim Cripps was a great political thinker. He felt rather than thought. Like William Morris, to whose mental era Cripps belonged, his view of the ideal society was the Arcadian one of "News from Nowhere". Both looked back into the past and longed for a Theocritan pastoral society where the labourer would be worthy of his hire. It was in the name of this pastoral society that Cripps quarrelled with the Diocese and turned his back on the political and literary movements of the twentieth century. While he is rumoured to have wanted to begin a Labour Party in Rhodesia<sup>12</sup> his would have been an offshoot of Christian Socialism,

not Marxist Socialism. He ran a "Dame School", as he called it, at the mission, but believed that European education for the African was wrong because it detribalised and corrupted them. He quarrelled with the Diocese because they accepted grants from the Government-run Native Education Department, because the white clergy Europeanised their converts and discriminated against their African priests, who were more poorly paid and housed. Similarly, in poetry he knew of the existence of the "pylon poets" but read chiefly Housman and traditional sources, and wrote either in the Edwardian or the Seventeenth Century manner.

He was a very useful political gadfly. Even the Government had to make concessions to him, as the collapse of the Sabi Valley railway scheme, after he had attacked the idea of annexing the land from the Native Reserve, shows.<sup>13</sup> It is ironical, however, that a man so basically conservative should have been forced by circumstances into being regarded as a revolutionary. Politically-minded Africans will perhaps look back to Cripps, particularly among Europeans, as a martyr to their cause, yet Cripps himself would have hated to be regarded as a political figure. He fought for political and social freedoms for the Africans only as they are the exposition of basic Christian beliefs.

"O happy eyes  
Are mine that pierce the black disguise,  
And see our Lord! O woe of woe  
That I should see, that I should know  
Whom 'tis they use, that use Him so."<sup>14</sup>

Cripps acknowledged his emotional approach to racial politics. When asked why he did not enter Parliament and defend his Africans properly as a Native Representative, he replied, "I cannot stand for Parliament. I have too many complexes about the Native".

At the end of his life he was saddened by what he regarded as his failure. Each native who gave up polygamy and became a Christian was given land on his mission and cattle and goats. Yet the British South Africa Police complained that every scallywag and rascal in the neighbourhood took refuge on Cripps' farm. Cripps suspected some exploited him and saw increasing numbers wasting their money on the white man's vanities of suits, bicycles and gramophones. As he grew old Cripps forgot his successes—the large number of converts, the small body of devoted African priests he trained, who today are doing good work in Mashonaland, and remembered only his increasing inadequacy with that painful humility which was the reverse side of his pride.

"No hope to find now: God is just  
Yet forth I stride in blessed trust  
To lose myself, and wear to dust  
If to His star mine eyes hold true.  
Once more a blessed pilgrim's night—  
Christ's lanthorn star shows wise men light!  
The road athwart the hill winds white—  
On! on! to lose, if not to find!"<sup>13</sup>

In "Seen Darkly in Africa" he calls himself "of all injurious aliens chief". In "Age and Exile" he says Africa is only for the young, while the old long for England and "grass, ever Hope's own green"; but he concludes with a defiance typical of the man's courage:

"Nay, will high grace to shrunken Nature cry,  
Man's bravest bouts are fought when blood is cold.  
Yon burnish'd fury of sun's daily gold,  
Those stern blue skies, that wind to battle blown,  
Time fever-gaunt, Space giant-limbed and brown—  
Have at them one more year before you die"!

In this he *was* great; a man of outstanding courage and self-denial, of complete dedication. No one who reads the small volumes of verse can fail to recognise that, if it is not always good poetry, it is always good religion. No one who talks to the Europeans who argued with him, or the Africans who only half understood him, can fail to detect the elusive ghost of a very great man. It is fitting to leave the last assessment of him to one of his own Africans, Leonard Mamvura who, in an obituary notice to *The African News* wrote:

"Revd. A. S. Cripps, he cared not for himself but he cared to help the poor, the weak and the sick people—to whom Christ was a friend. May he Rest in Peace and Rise in Joy".

"Surely our beloved father and noble friend has outsoared the shadow of our night. He stood for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, did he not ?

"Thousands of miles he came to seek us here.  
He did himself to Africa endear,  
Africa weary, worn with want and fear.  
He brought us Hope and Love, what better could he bring"?

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This is confirmed in a letter to the writer from Cripps' nephew, Professor A. H. Armstrong, who also confirmed the spelling of "Shearley".

<sup>2</sup> For this material the writer is indebted to her co-editor on her volume on Cripps, F. W. M. Lee.

<sup>3</sup> "The Death of St. Francis".

<sup>4</sup> William Tully of Darombe Mission, Enkeldoorn, son of Cripps' life-long friends and one of the three boys to whom Cripps dedicated his schoolboy adventure novel, "The Two of Them Together, 1910".

<sup>5</sup> By Olive Schreiner, 1897.

<sup>6</sup> From "Home with Dawn" (Africa Verses, 1939, O.U.P.).

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in "The Link" editorial, Sept., 1952.

<sup>8</sup> According to Bishop Powell, who dedicated it, 1908.

<sup>9</sup> Professor A. H. Armstrong, letter to the author, Feb., 1960.

<sup>10</sup> From "Seen Darkly in Africa" (Africa: Verses).

<sup>11</sup> From "Stigmata Armoris" (Africa: Verses).

<sup>12</sup> Confirmed by a MS. poem "To the S.R. Labour Party" in the author's possession.

<sup>13</sup> "The Sabi Reserve" (pamphlet) 1921.

<sup>14</sup> From "Assumption".

<sup>15</sup> From "Twelfth Night".

## Notes on Authors

Mr. James Edwards, author of "The Lomagundi District; an historical sketch", is Research Officer at the National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in Salisbury. He is a Fellow of the Library Association and a member of the Council of the Historical Association of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. After five years as a librarian in England, he came to the Federation in 1955 to become Assistant Librarian to the Central African Archives, now the National Archives.

Mr. Harold William Smart was educated at Perse School, Cambridge. Having qualified as a pharmacist he was sent out to South Africa for health reasons. He arrived in Bulawayo and with a partner opened a crude pharmacy in the main street. Later, business operations were extended to Gwelo and Que Que, and to Beira, where a complete loss followed. Mr. Smart then consolidated his position in Gwelo. He was well-known for his social activities and his benevolence. He retired from business in 1948 and died in 1953.

Mrs. Dorothy E. Finn, a collateral descendant of the novelist Thackeray, was born in county Durham and educated there. She won the Kepier Scholarship which took her to Durham University, where she obtained a B.A. Honours degree in English. She came to Salisbury in 1955. In collaboration with Rev. F. W. M. Lee, she has edited a comprehensive collection of Cripps' poems with a critical and biographical introduction. This work is now in the hands of the publishers.