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THE MATABELE KING.

Downfall of Lobengula, the Blood-thirsty African.

General Rejoicing Over the Termination of a Barbarous and One-Sided Warfare in the Dark Continent—Reign of Terror.

The general satisfaction which has been felt throughout South Africa at the victory of the Chartered Company's forces is caused mainly by the fact that it will in all probability be so far as Matabeleland is concerned, the death blow to a system of blood-thirsty tyranny which has prevailed from the time, over sixty years ago, when the forces of Mosellicatze, the father of Lobengula, swept through the country between the Orange, Vaal, and Limpopo rivers, leaving a night-mare of desolation and death behind them, and settled in the region now known as Matabeleland. The country through this devastating army marched was, says Theale, "covered with skeletons, and there was literally no living being left behind."

From that time until the present, says the Chicago Times, the Matabeles have lived in the country from which they are now being ousted, not by their own toil, but by praying upon the timid tribes which originally inhabited the land, and which have ever since been compelled, under penalty of torture and death for the least delay or unwillingness, to support their ferocious taskmaster by periodical tributes of slaves, women, cattle, and corn. That thirty years has been for the Mashonas and Makalalas a reign of terror.

As illustrating the general practice of the Matabeles for many years past, Rev. Father Hartman, than whom, owing to his long residence in the country, few are better equipped to speak of conditions that it is the custom of an impi to approach unnoticed and unseen a Mashona kraal in the night. At the first dawn of the day the impi raises its war cry, surrounds the unfortunate kraal, and slaughters all except girls, children or those who are fit for doing some useful work on the home kraal.

Sometimes it happens that the Matabeles drive a crowd of Mashonas into one of their huts and set fire to it. This, Father Hartman states, has been going on for forty years and will not stop till the Mashonas are exterminated. Lobengula himself, with his own hands, cut off the lips, nose, ears and hands of a poor Mashona boy who was falsely accused of tasting the king's beer.

Even since the occupation of the country by the whites similar raids have been of frequent occurrence. In the early part of last year, for instance, some fugitive Makalalas came into Victoria asking for protection against a large Matabele impi which was raiding and killing at Chibi's and other kraals across the Tuli road. In May, 1892, Chenaka and Cunye, Mashona chiefs, reported that a large impi attacked their kraals, killed many of their people and taken away their cattle and goats.

In July of the same year, Lobengula had a fit of jealousy of the regents, Umhlabu and Sidhloho, and acting on the king's instructions the Imbizo regents and their families, root and branch. In August, while Capt. Chaplin was on an expedition to discover and punish the natives who had interfered with the telegraph instruments, a Matabele impi of all sides complained from the natives of raids by the Matabeles.

In October last three hundred Matabeles were raiding the Makalalas between the Nuwetati and Lundi rivers, killing men, women and children. In November Lobengula sent a large impi to punish Chibi, and about the same time a party of Matabeles arrived at Lo Magondi's kraal and asked him why he allowed the English to dig for gold without the king's leave.

After they had agreed to discuss the matter over in the morning, Lo Magondi went to his hut, but about daylight next morning his dwelling was surrounded by Matabeles, who killed him and afterwards stabbed him. They then killed his two brothers and two boys and fired into the women's hut, killing two of the chief's wives. On departing the Matabeles took away with them eighty to ninety women and all the chief's goats and sheep.

In the March of the present year a large Matabele impi came raiding down in the direction of Palapye, and some of the fugitives who escaped them reported the murder of several indunas, including Lobengula's brother, Unyande. This recital of horrors may conclude with a reference to the massacre of the Mashonas in the streets of Victoria in July last, the event which directly led to the present situation.

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GERMAN FIELD-POSTS.

Management of the Mails During the Franco-Prussian War.

Hard Work of the Officers Who Had the Mails in Charge—Some of the Querer Things That Were Sent to the Soldiers on the Field.

One of the most useful and well-managed institutions of the Prussians during the war with France was the field-post, by means of which the soldiers of the German army were able to keep up constant communication with their friends at home, receiving and dispatching letters as regularly and easily as they could in times of peace. The field-post, according to an article in Youth's Companion, was a traveling post office, or postal carriage. There were post office clerks and soldiers whose duty was to attend to and defend from the attacks of the enemy. Whenever the army marched, the field-post followed it. Never during the whole campaign was there any interruption in the course of the post, even on the days of the greatest battles the posts started at the usual fixed hours from the temporary post office, which consisted of a simple bivouac on the battlefields.

Early in the morning the letters which had arrived during the night were sorted and delivered to the several divisions of the troops who sent for them, or were dispatched to them by special express.

At dawn of day after the battle of St. Privat the post-began its work in the midst of death and wounded; immediately hundreds of soldiers hastened up to dispatch letters and post cards; that afternoon eight large sacks full of letters were sent off to Germany.

Again, after the battle of Vionville the post-officials were in full activity. Around them lay dead soldiers and horses. Footmen, porters and postillions formed a group around the hastily extemporized table. The clerks, sitting on the ground, sorted the letters which poured in in a constant stream. The wind was high, and many post cards were blown away and had to be chased and brought back. The field post gave a glimpse of busy, peaceful work amid all the horrors of war.

The field post had very little rest; whenever the signal to march sounded it had to go to new work. It was always the first to arrive and the last to depart, frequently did not leave an enemy's camp until all the other troops and guns, and had to protect itself from an attack.

It was hard and rough work for the field post officials when rain poured down, and the carriages were up to the axles in mud, and no shelter could be found, and attacks from francs tireurs threatened from the forests. They had to make marches from seven in the morning till midnight, under torrents of rain, among the forests of the Ardennes, when the carriages had to be drawn by six horses. Among the passages of the Vosges the field post carriages had to be dragged through deep snow and over slippery ice, where there was constant danger of rolling over precipices. All when at last they reached the end of their march in the middle of the night, clerks, letter carriers and postillions had often to pass the night on their letter bags in miserable cellars, packed together as in a slave ship, unless, as was frequently the case, they had to bivouac out in the rain.

The field posts were often attacked by the enemy, the letter bags robbed, and the brave soldiers and postillions who defended them left dead on the field.

The number of letters sent to the army from home far exceeded those dispatched by the soldiers. From Berlin alone three hundred thousand letters and parcels were daily sent off by the field post. The good papers often wrapped their letters in their paper or tied them with weak string, so that when many of these packets arrived at Berlin—such a little distance on their way—the covers were torn and the contents visible.

In one would be chocolate in another bread and butter, and in another a pair of stockings in which the good wishes of the mother or the betrothed were interwoven. All this the good-natured post brought into order as well as it could.

The letters and packets of the army of the Moselle alone used daily to fill seven large wagons. During the siege of Paris the largest field post depot was at Lagay, which distributed a million packets to the troops. On the eve of Christmas, 1870, nearly every German soldier in France received some parcel or letter from his home.

From July 10, 1870, to March 31, 1871, there were dispatched to and from the German army over eighty-six million letters and post cards, two million parcels, and two and a half million money orders, and more than two million newspapers.

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