

TRUE STORIES of Adventure

Scotty Smith's Republic

BY CAPT. HENRY MANSFIELD.

Sandwiched in between British Bechuanaland on the south and Bechuanaland Protectorate on the north is a pink tinted section of the map of southern Africa labeled Stellaland. The name applies to an indeterminate region inhabited by Englishmen, men of Boer extraction and blacks from all the tribes of that part of Africa. The official history of Stellaland, which consists of scattered entries in the reports of the Colonial Secretary, is for the most part a dreary summary of more or less bloody encounters between British subjects, various tribes of the Bechuana, and the Boers. There is nothing romantic about the Colonial Government reports, but the real history of Stellaland eclipses fiction.

Scotty Smith is the only man who can tell the real history of Stellaland in the way it ought to be told.

Scotty was not what you might call a conversationalist. Whiskey talked when it was in him in sufficient quantity, and sometimes if he had a cigar strong and black and rank enough, words would chase the pale blue smoke from between his thinly parted lips. Then was time for men to listen. Once started, Scotty's flow of language is immensely like the drift of the nicotine haze. This is his story as nearly word for word as I can recall it:

It started in Kimberley, and as all good things do (or used to do), it began in a kaffy—that is the way that Scotty pronounces cafe). I had met up with Bill Tyke, Leo Warning and Sam Howard. We were all a bit on our uppers. Leo and Bill were wanted in the U.S.A. where they had neglected to finish a term in the cavalry. I had been doing a little trading in the Cape in which authorities had shown a troublesome interest, and I had parted from Her Majesty's artillery under rather strained conditions. Sam was wanted for—well, never mind that, but he was wanted.

Yes, sir, we were plumb up against it. But, say, there's a providence that looks after rogues and fools—as you ought to know on one account or the other—and it began to look out for us right then and there.

Into the kaffy, rolled four of the first gentry of the land. Dressed? Say, those fellows were togged out like plush horses, but the thing that struck us most was the fact that they wore riding clothes. Through the window I could see four of the finest pieces of horseflesh south of Suez, tied to the hitching bar. Things had been getting too warm for us in Kimberley and an idea struck me. We hadn't any special plan, but we all were glad of a chance to get away. We had no money with which to buy horses, so we just naturally figured we ought to annex the four.

We did it, and rode away like mad. "It's too bad," growled Sam, "that we had to leave them fine riding clothes behind."

Sam always was some of a pessimist, but that didn't bother the rest of us. The horses under us felt mighty good and we struck for the woods. We kept on riding north and living on what we could get. At first we had no plans, except to steer for the Bechuana country where, in those days, the government didn't inquire too particularly into a man's past, and where there were good cattle to be had for the taking, if you could dodge the spears of the natives.

One day I ventured into Prieska to get some needed supplies, and it wasn't till then I began to conceive a plan we finally worked out. In Prieska, though the plan was mighty vague, I bought a little mechanical tin soldier which presented arms and grounded arms when he was wound up. I had an idea in the back of my head that some day the toy might come handy with some natives, and as it turned out, it did.

We were weeks from Kimberley when we came upon a tribe of Bechuana led by a chief called Montsio. We rode into his village just at dusk one evening and were led before him. He didn't seem particularly amicably inclined. After formal salutations he asked:

"What do my brothers purpose in their hearts?"

"Now we had heard that Montsio, a neighboring chief, had recently descended upon Montsio and driven away more than half of his cattle."

"We were sent," I said, "by the great god of the white men who loves the powerful Montsio, to protect him against Montsio, who some day intends to drive away what remains of your cattle."

Montsio was inclined to be credulous at first and we all had to submit to a greasy embrace. After that there was plenty of the liquor the chief began to get suspicious.

"Look here," he said (I am translating freely), "what you say is all very well, but how am I to know you are telling the truth?"

"Call the old men to council," I said,

"and have the greatest of your warriors present."

Montsio did so, but we knew from his manner that if we did not convince him we were in for it. When the old men were gathered in a circle, with the younger warriors in the background, I produced the little soldier from my pocket, winding it unostentatiously.

"Here," I said, "I have an image of a white warrior, in token of good faith, and to show you that I am sent to you by the Great One, I shall make the image move."

I set the mechanism on the ground and it presented arms and grounded with all the precision of a Tommy Atkins on parade. The natives were greatly impressed. There was no more skepticism and it was decided forthwith to make war upon Montsio before he had time to attack on his own account.

We fell in with this, but we insisted on sufficient time to organize some sort of a regular force.

I was to be in command of the army. Montsio readily agreed to forego that honor with the prospect of real fighting confronting him. Sam, Leo and Bill were appointed major generals and we set about preparing some sort of an army. If we whipped that beryg Montsio, I was to receive forty head of cattle and each of my generals twenty. Of course, we would pool our interests and with such a herd to start, we figured on becoming capitalists.

To uniform the staff, we requisitioned all the odds and ends of European garments we could find among the natives. Incongruous pieces of clothing which had probably been worn by wanderers who had not fared as well as we. From somewhere I produced a brilliant green coat some time worn by a Belgian officer. There was a gold braid across the front, enough of it to hand a corporal's guard, and the brass buttons shone like little suns.

My word, but it was tight. When I drew a deep breath I had to loosen it, and I never ate with it on. A few ragged devils probably told the tale of how it had come into the possession of the Bechuana, but I patched them up. White leather riding breeches furnished an excellent contrast to the green coat and a pair of cavalryman's boots gave just the proper finish.

When I was all togged up I felt like a hardware bazaar. My brass spurs jangled like the chimes of Normandy, and did more to inspire a righteous fear in the hearts of those beggars than did all the warriors of Montsio.

All that I could find in the way of headgear was a plain pith helmet which hardly lived up to the rest of my costume, but a long scarlet feather set just at the proper angle more than made up for that. My staff dressed considerable too. But though I say it myself, there was never a general who came within miles of me for elegance. I doubt if the Queen of Sheba could have put me to shame.

Leo Warning got to laughing the first day on the field when he saluted me and reported his company, and when I tried to reprimand him I got a roaring so I feared for the tight green coat. I was glad the helmet was so big it almost covered my mouth.

For more than a month we drilled and pranced and marched about a big square field and held reviews every afternoon, for old Montsio was somewhat of a stickler for ceremony. At the end of that time the army was able to wheel the corvette about the field like a company of rufes, and I have seen many a battalion at the Cape drill in worse form.

We had rifles and the natives possessed some fifteen antique muskets. I think Magellan's men dropped them off at the Cape on their way around the world, and they were probably out of date at that time. The men with firearms, outside ourselves, consisted of the artillery under command of Bill Tyke.

The light infantry carried nothing but assegais and were held in reserve, ready to jump into the fight at any point where we might be hard pressed. Sam Howard was in command of them, and I was in charge of the heavy regiment of the line which was to bear the brunt of the fighting less calculated to damage bone and muscle.

At last I told Montsio his army was ready to whip all the braves of the Dark Continent combined. It sure did look as though Montsio was doomed. Montsio had several natives killed and roasted, twala flowed freely, and from somewhere he produced a bottle of real whiskey for us generals.

When everyone was properly intoxicated the war manoeuvres began. During the night we massed on the banks of a small stream and at sunrise began to trek straight north. A band of light infantry were in the van as scouts with Sam Howard in command

The rest of the light infantry were in the rear as reserve. Behind the scouts, about an eighth of a mile, marched the heavy regiment, and directly behind them were the artillery.

I am proud of the plan I evolved and it should have worked out. When the scouts encountered the enemy they were to fall back through the lines of the heavy infantry, which was to advance slowly, crawling along the ground. The artillery was to follow closely behind the heavy regiment of the line and fire at the enemy over the backs of the men in front of them. After the cannonade the heavy infantry was to attack in force. If they were repulsed they were to drop behind the artillery, which would then be ready to fire again. The entire reserve was to be held as a last resource in case the heavy infantry and artillery were both defeated.

We wanted to take Montsio by surprise, but he seemed to know intuitively that his hereditary enemies were stirring, and he met us halfway. Suddenly there was a frightful yell in the wood ahead. The scouts had encountered Montsio's men, but instead of obeying Sam and retreating, they tackled the enemy and were gobbled up. Sam reached our lines almost torn to pieces.

The noise of the conflict was too much for the regiment of the line and they rushed into the fight. On top of that the artillery commenced firing into the mass of struggling men and shot more holes in our army than they did in the enemy.

It is a mistake to give a savage a gun; that is, any savage but a red-man. The Indian takes to the fire; arms as though they were a limb of his body.

Our only consolation was that the fire from the ancient muskets was so ineffective that few of our men were killed, and instead of reloading, the artillerymen threw them away and rushed into the battle with the assegais.

For three days we thrashed and struggled and sweated along in the jungle, and at the end of that time Montsio's army was pretty thoroughly demoralized. We made a mighty imposing retreat, though. When our men had shaken off the pursuers they were suddenly seized with a desire for discipline and insisted on marching back to Montsio's village in close formation.

Reddy and I hurried on ahead to break the news to the chief. If you have seen a mountain lion wounded in the shoulder and been through an Indian typhoon you may gather a vague idea of how the old man took on. I might have killed him on the spot, but that would have given us no chance for a getaway. The natives had made little gods of us until we got licked; then they turned us down cold. I didn't even have the properties of a bluff with them. My helmet was gone, scarlet plume and all; my boots were mud to the hips, and the white trousers were unrecognizable.

After Montsio had sprinkled venom on every leaflet of my family tree, just as you spray arsenic on a fruit tree, he informed us that we were all fakers and that unless we were outside the village within two hours we would play an important though unpleasant role at the royal feast.

We didn't consume any two hours in taking advantage of our exit cue. Seventeen minutes after the interview with Montsio we were threshing the trail ahead of us. That took him father by surprise and his warriors, having had enough of fighting, did not care to face four-bores. We trekked away into the wilderness and set up a little camp. Of course, we couldn't trade with Montsio's people, but we had our cattle and we began to make overtures to Montsio's gang. Some of his warriors were attracted by our uniforms, which we put into commission again, that they came to live with us.

Sam Howard, the pessimist, kicked because there wasn't any catty, but the rest of us got along pretty comfortably. One day some of our men brought in four of Montsio's tribe who had been hunting in the vicinity. We held a court-martial and decided to behead them. When they were reduced to a proper state of panic we offered them life if they would go to Montsio's village and return to us with twelve men, twenty head of cattle and some twala. It was a bargain, and instead of returning with twelve men they brought twenty-five.

Week by week our population swelled and we accumulated more cattle. When we had about a hundred men from the rival tribe we organized an expedition into Montsio's territory to carry away some of his women. Lord, you know what those women are like, but you can't have a republic or anything else without women, and we were fast building a real little state of our own.

Montsio went up in the air about

that and declared war on us. At least, we suspected that he meant to terminate the entire cordial when he descended on our camp, burned half of it, and killed a score of our cattle. But the pick of both tribes were with us and we went through his army like an elder son through the exchequer of a baronetcy. There were no European tactics this time. We let the men fight in their own way and they tore right into the middle of Montsio's stronghold. After the war about a quarter of his tribe came over to our side, bringing their cattle and women and children with them.

There was a big celebration, and when the natives were all drunk, under guidance of Sam, Bill and Leo, they elected me President. I didn't play Julius Caesar and make them appoint me to the position three times. I snapped it right up and appointed Sam Howard my Treasurer, General, Leo Warning Secretary of War, and Bill Tyke Postmaster General. We didn't need a post office, but it was too good a graft to overlook.

Out of some old bits of calico we patched up a flag and it flew from a pole in front of the hut. There was a picture of me on it. Leo did that. He was a sign painter once, and he made a picture of me with native pigments on the calico and a beard three months old and looked like a grizzly, though Tyke had made a pass at the natives and it lent a sort of dignity to me. Just think of it! I, Scotty Smith, known all over the Cape as a gun-runner, renegade, deserter and peer stealer—I adorned the flag of a republic.

After the raid on Montsio there was plenty of native wine for the populace and some pretty good whiskey, which we had found in old Montsio's private quarters, for the President and his cabinet.

We called the republic Stellaland. Stella, well, she was about the only good thing that ever came into my life, and I wanted the republic to be a good thing too. Stella was one of—

But that's aside from the story. One night when we were all properly intoxicated the Republic of Stellaland declared war on Montsio. Next to twala, the natives love fighting, and we had made up our mind we would lick the tribe to the south sooner or later. The night before the battle most of Montsio's warriors came over to our side, and there was nothing much left for us to fight. We drove the remnants of his tribe miles into the forest.

Then we settled down to matters of state. Bill Tyke found a native who was a wonder at painting little pictures with pigments the savages use on their bodies, and he showed him how to mark out a face which looked a great deal like mine on little strips of fibrous stuff which we cut into squares. The post office department took charge of these and when a native wanted to send a letter he exchanged a number of beads, a knife, or some other article for a square which did for a stamp. We used the beads and other things in turn to purchase cattle, which we figured we might some day be able to transport to Kimberley.

There was no reason in the world why the natives should mail the letters, but they liked the idea, and we rigged out a sort of uniform for the carrier, who took the messages scratched on pieces of bark and delivered them to their proper hands. The greater the post office business the more cattle and skins we bought, and Sam sure did make that treasury department yield results!

One night we were all sitting smoking. The guard had just lowered the flag with all the formality of the ceremony with which they used to lower the other flag—the flag I loved when I was in the artillery.

It wasn't ten minutes after that when the sound of hoofs brought us to our feet. The natives were terribly excited when a company of British regulars rode out of the woods, but we kept them well in hand. Lord, there wasn't any use in bucking up against the Queen's Own. A sick sort of feeling made me feel as though I was crumbling up as I walked forward to meet the officer at the head of the column. It was General Warren.

He was very kind and decent to me, but I realized what was afoot when he said he would stay for the night to "adjust affairs." I don't know how the Government ever dreamed of us. It's queer how things will leak out. I suppose it must have happened one time when Leo went over to Klaungs with some cattle. He may have got drunk and talked too much, or more likely it was a woman.

We, all of us, wanted to be game, and we played like men right to the finish. We gave the soldier's a royal feast and invited General Warren to witness a dance, and he could not have accepted an invitation from the President of the United States more courteously.

Have you ever seen a real Bechuana dance? Perhaps you have, but you never knew the real significance of it. No one knew the real significance of it, knowing that it is all for him. It's intoxicating when you know it's all for you—and the young women, displaying their charms, make you think it is you they're dancing for.

You laugh when I say "charms," but when you've lived for years in the wilderness, on the open roads, and among the driftwood on the beaches, you get a different standard. Things look different to you, and who can say



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you are wrong? They have charms; those wild, primitive, tiger-women. Oh, it's wonderful to be a king—for that's what I really was, though we called it a republic.

But the dance ended, just as all things do—even we, perhaps—and the fires blackened into smouldering ashes.

"Ashes of Empire," Sam Howard called them. He was a professor or something once and he had read that in a book. General Warren and I sat all night and talked, and I smoked civilized tobacco.

Next morning when the guard was about to raise the flag I stopped him. General Warren smiled weakly and examined the poor little emblem, then he handed it to me.

"Keep it," he said, "but don't run it up again. It's treason. There's only one flag flies over this land."

I'm not ashamed of it. There was a little water, salty as the sea, trickling into the corner of my mouth as I rolled up the banner and put it under my jacket.

"Now, look here, Scotty," said the general, "I notice four pretty smart horses in your corral. I don't know how you came by them, but I dare say they're none too good for a president and his cabinet. It strikes me you may have told me about them last night, but I can't for the life of me remember that part of your story."

"Scotty," he went on, after a pause, "get on those horses and ride like mad. I'd hate like hell to have to hang you."

The Optician's Tip.

"But, madam," said the optician to whom I had brought a pair of glasses from which a screw was missing, "you need not have made this long special trip. You could have fixed the glasses, temporarily, yourself, and then have waited until you were coming to town to have the new screw put in." The next time it happens simply insert an ordinary toothpick into the hole as far as it will go, turn it once or twice and cut it off. I have told this to many of my patrons and it has saved some of them a good deal of trouble. Several have found that it was a handy thing to know when on fishing trips or auto tours.—B. K.

Vegetables will keep best in a cellar that has good ventilation, and where the temperature is maintained at between thirty-five and forty degrees Fahrenheit.

Corrosion on battery terminals can be removed with a solution of soda and water. Plain washing soda is the cheapest, but baking soda will do the trick just as well. After all corrosion has been removed, it is well to grease the terminals with vaseline.

S.S. LESSON

February 14. Jesus the Good Shepherd, John 10: 1-30. Golden Text— I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.—John 10: 11.

ANALYSIS.

I. THE PARABLE, 1-6.
II. THE EXPLANATION, 7-16.
INTRODUCTION—Chapter nine described the cruel treatment given to the blind man by the Jewish authorities because he dared to proclaim his belief in Jesus. His courage ended in his expulsion from the synagogue. But trials which men endure for the sake of Jesus lead to greater blessings, and chapter ten tells of the new society into which this believer passes by receiving Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The imagery is familiar to readers of the Old Testament, for example, in the most popular of all the psalms (23) and in Isaiah 40:11.

I. THE PARABLE, 1-6.
The narrative is first given in a general and impersonal way. The conditions connected with the care of sheep are mentioned—flock, fold, shepherd, sheep, porter, peris, etc.

V. 1. Thief and robber. Jesus means the Pharisees who were false shepherds of God's flock who allowed their own selfish interest and prejudice to bind them to the claims of love and truth.

V. 3. Porter openeth.—The fold was a walled enclosure into which different flocks of sheep were brought and these paced under the protection of the night porter. In the morning the shepherd returned to lead their flocks out again.

V. 4. Sheep follow. A writer says: The shepherd depends upon the sheep to follow, and they, in turn, expect him never to leave them. They run after him if he appears to be escaping from them; and are terrified when he is out of sight or any stranger appears instead of him. He calls them from time to time to let them know that he is at hand. The sheep listen and continue grazing, but if any one else tries to produce the same peculiar cries and guttural sounds, they look around with a startled air and begin to scatter.—Century Bible.

II. THE EXPLANATION, 7-16.
Jesus sees that they do not understand him and he proceeds to state his meaning. He wishes to define the nature of the new society or fellowship into which he brings people, and taking the figure of the shepherd and sheep he represents himself as the Door and the Shepherd.

1. CHRIST THE DOOR, vs. 7-10.
V. 7. I am the door of the sheep. Not "of the fold." Jesus' interest is always personal. The door is a most important part of every home, and if it could tell all that went in and out by it, we would have the history of the household. He, who controls the door, controls the house. Jesus is the only one who can admit people into his kingdom, and the place into which he brings us is rich in blessing. He gives us salvation and pasture. He leads us "in and out."

V. 8. Thieves. Those who pretended to be the Messiah or such as led people astray by craft and falsehood. But these had no real message for the sinful and sorrowing. They could only steal away the soul from God and destroy the spiritual ideals of life. See Matt. 23:13.
V. 10. More abundantly. Christ ushers us into life that is, true life where there is no famine. He imparts life and abundance.

2. CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD, vs. 11-13.
This is a more personal term than Door. The shepherd had a direct acquaintance with each member of the flock, and this blind man is now offered the personal friendship of Jesus. "Good" does not mean moral goodness alone, but a so beauty. There is an attractiveness about Jesus which draws people to him and makes him different from all others, fairest of the sons of men.

Two further characteristics are mentioned as constituting his pastoral care.

(a) His Self-sacrificing Love, 11-13.
V. 11. Giveth his life. The hireling thinks only of himself. Christ thinks of the sheep. He came to give his life a ransom for many. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. The beauty of Christ which is definitely due to his own choice (v. 18), is the culminating proof of love.

(b) His Intimate Knowledge, 14-16.
V. 15. As the Father knoweth. Christ's knowledge of the flock is like the Father's knowledge of his son. This filial consciousness has the deepest thing in the life of Christ. To know the Father was eternal life. He is familiar with all our needs, having become one of the race subject to our temptations and therefore able to help us in all our need.

V. 16. Other sheep. This new society is universal in its extent. The exclusive synagogue out of which this blind man has been driven is exchanged for a universal Christ. Jesus is a world redeemer. His death is not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles. Jesus points forward to the great missionary enterprise of Christianity, Matt. 28:19.

Keep the Brakes Adjusted.
Brakes should be adjusted every thirty days. If they are not equalized the result will be rattle, chatter and squeak; the wheels will lose their alignment, the tread of one or more tires will soon wear, and the frame of the car will be distorted.

In the year 1800 a man could sickle one-half acre of wheat in the same time that to-day, with a tractor and two binders, he can cut forty acres.