

fensive ; secondly, to send a strong force to Natal, and either restore the situation there, or, failing that, extricate Sir George White so that his troops would be again available for the defence of the Southern portion of the Colony ; thirdly, with what was left of the army corps—no longer strong enough to invade the Free State—to relieve Kimberley ; fourthly, after settling Natal to return with such troops as could be spared and form with reinforcements from home a fresh army to carry out the original scheme of invading the Free State.

The defect in this plan was that there were not enough troops to carry it out. As we had underestimated the offensive vigour which the enemy was able to develop before the army could reach South Africa, so now we altogether miscalculated his extraordinary strength on the defensive. But it is impossible to see what else could have been done, and at any rate no one appreciated the magnitude of the difficulties more correctly than Sir Redvers Buller. He knew Northern Natal and understood the advantages