

The Bravest Deed I ever Saw

Howard Hensman's *Cecil Rhodes: a Study of a Career*.

The Matabele had risen in revolt against the Chartered Company and the increasing encroachments of the white settlers in their midst, and it had become clear that the settlers were quite unable to crush the rebellion by their own unaided efforts. Under these circumstances the Imperial Government had taken the matter up, and placed Sir Frederick Carrington in supreme command.

Sir Frederick drove the rebels back on their mountain fastnesses in the Matoppo Hills, where they offered a prolonged resistance to his efforts to force them to fight a decisive battle in the open, and so end the war. The rainy season approaching, Sir Frederick determined to withdraw his troops to winter quarters and wait until the spring for a further advance.

This determination, though tactically wise and justifiable, was financially disastrous; for the Chartered Company, who were responsible for the cost of the campaign, had already suffered from the great drain on their resources, and were now face to face with a probable addition of from four to five million pounds which would be charged upon their exchequer.

Cecil Rhodes was in a tight place, and it is not surprising that he gave the matter a "big think."

"At length," says Mr. Hensman, "he evolved the daring scheme of going into the heart of the rebel country in the gloomy recesses of the Matoppo Hills, and