

The day previous to this affair a distressing occurrence took place at Mahony's farm, a spot which has already been referred to as the scene of several fatal disasters. Here an inhabitant, named John Brown, whom the reader will remember as being with Mahony at the time of his murder, had taken up a position with a mounted patrol of 25 men, consisting, with the exception of one man, of Hottentots and persons of color. He had been selected for this duty in consequence of his accurate knowledge of the intricate fastness's which are met with in that direction ; and he had very judiciously established his quarters in a double-storied, flat-roofed building, formerly belonging to the deceased Mahony. Here they were not long before the enemy emerged from the surrounding thicket in considerable force : but soon perceiving that this post could not be carried without inevitably sustaining loss. from the muskets of the patrol, the wily natives endeavoured to accomplish by stratagem that which could not be effected by force without incurring such imminent risk.

Accordingly they signified their desire to hold a parley with the little garrison ; and after some deliberation, an Englishman named Whittaker, who had volunteered to accompany Brown on this service, agreed to venture himself amidst the throng of barbarians. With great intrepidity he, in view of his comrades, approached the savages ; who, on finding he was not the commander of the patrol, requested him to return and inform Brown that he must himself receive their communication, and that it could not be made to any other person. This unfortunate man had for many years been intimately acquainted with the Kafirs. Living on the borders of their country, and being the owner of the Kafir Clay-pits—from whence was obtained the red earth, or ochre, so much in request amongst that people—numerous opportunities had been afforded him of becoming acquainted with their true character,—of appreciating fully their duplicity, their cruelty, and their utter want of honest principle,—and yet, strange to say, he labored under so much infatuation as to resolve to risk his *life*, and trust to the tender mercies of the Barbarians before him ; and that at a moment when, flushed with success, they were reveling in the desolation they had caused and the blood they had spilled ;—sallying out, therefore, in company with Whittaker, he approached the savages, who stood ready—like the ravenous beast of the forest—to seize on their defenceless prey. Though within view of the patrol the distance was too great, and the enemy too numerous, to afford the two unfortunate men any assistance.

Hence they were seized and forced to a conspicuous height, beyond the range of the musketry at the house; and here, amidst fiendish shouts and vociferations, were both mercilessly butchered. On witnessing this horrid occurrence, two Hottentots succeeded in escaping from the back of the premises, and having gained the forest, they soon arrived at Graham's Town with the fatal intelligence. Major Lowen at the head of a de-tachment of the Rifle Corps, immediately proceeded to the scene of this tragic occurrence. Here the bodies were still found lying, covered with innumerable wounds and bruises ; the enemy had, however, moved off in the direction of the Kap River, by a route in which it was not possible for cavalry to follow them. After the murder of Brown and Whittaker the command of the patrol had devolved on a Hottentot, formerly a soldier in the Cape Corps, named Piet Lowe. This man had adopted such prudent precautions for the safety of his party, and had shewn so much determination at a most critical moment., that, on his return to town, he was promoted by the Chief of the Staff to the rank of Ensign in the newly raised levies.

Besides the position taken up at the deserted farm of Mahony by Brown, several other small posts of observation were established at the same time. At Manley's Flat, a point of communication between the Kap and Kowie kloofs, a detachment of volunteers was placed under the command of Capt. R. W. Bagot, who had sustained great loss in the immediate neighbourhood : lower down, at Waay Plaats, a second post was established under Mr. Bailie, who had suffered still more severely, having been stripped of everything—reduced from respectable circumstances to absolute poverty by the desolating ravages of the marauders. About eight miles further to the south a third post was formed at a farm called Lower Kafir's Drift, under the command of Lieut. Moultrie, 75th Regt. This chain of posts was productive of considerable benefit.; patrols from thence scoured the surrounding country, harassing the enemy, and cutting off many of their number, as well as intercepting several herds of colonial cattle on their way to the Kafir boundary.

To guard, however, against the recurrence of such fatal disasters as in the case of Brown, a military order was published containing the following passage :—

“ The Officer commanding the forces regrets to be under the necessity of animadverting on the conduct of Mr. John Brown, who was entrusted with the command of a patrol in the vicinity of the Clay Pits. Mr. Brown, with his party, were in the occupation of a defensible building on the property of the late T. Mahony ; he nevertheless thought proper to quit his post to hold a parley with the enemy ; the consequence of his indiscretion was the loss of his own life, of that of another Englishman named Whittaker, of several stands of arms, and of some ammunition, and the whole party must have fallen a sacrifice, had it not been for the good and valiant Conduct of Piet Lowe and his Hottentots in maintaining their position. To prevent a repetition of such unmilitary conduct, the officer commanding the forces peremptorily forbids any parleys or intercourse whatever with the enemy, except in pursuance of his express instructions.”