

The new Harford book has proved to be a great success with members and researchers alike. Harford experienced so many unusual events in his life and all were meticulously recorded, especially those of his military service, including the Anglo Zulu War. The following is a tiny taster of this major work.

Extract 1.

31st December 1850
Bangalore, India

On the night of this date, I came into the world, at Bangalore, Mysore, Southern India. My father was then in the 16th Hussars but transferred to the 12th Lancers later on. As a start to my career, when only about a year old, I had an attack of dysentery and being given up by the doctors, who said there was no possible hope of my recovery, one of the native servants begged to be allowed to take me to his own village, assuring my mother and father that he could get me cured. I under the circumstances was allowed to be carried off, with the result that I was restored back to my parents in good health again, but the whereabouts of the village, and what treatment had bought about the cure were, I fancy, not made the subject of much enquiry and I don't think either my mother or father ever knew.

At the age of five I was brought to England by my mother and taken to Outlands, her father Mr Scott's residence, about four miles out of Plymouth, South Devon, and here I remained to be brought up by my Grandfather and Grandmother till I was thirteen. I believe it was only two days after our arrival at Outlands that I met with a very serious accident, which should have proved fatal but for the intervention of divine mercy. It appears that I had been left in the charge of the maid who was doing up my mother's room while my mother and her mother and father went for a stroll to look round the garden. The room was on the second storey some thirty foot above the ground level, the drawing room being immediately below it and under which again was the kitchen built partly underground. There was a large bow window to my mother's room which overlooked a large part of the lawn but had no balustrade or protection of any sort on the outside, and the kitchen area, a further drop of some eight or ten feet with a well built in on one side of it was enclosed with a set of iron railings about three feet high with sharp rounded points.

The maid, it appears, opened the window by lifting up the bottom sash, the old fashioned plan of window settings in those days, and going on with her work. She omitted to watch my movements and it is presumed I must have caught sight of my mother in the garden and walked out of the window to get to her. Someone, I am unable to say who, in the room below saw what they took to be a bundle of clothes dropped from the room upstairs and on going to see what it was saw me impaled on the railings and tore off to tell uncle John who was in the breakfast room, having his breakfast. At once he rushed out and taking me off the spikes handed me over to the first maid he met in the house, to be carried upstairs to Aunt Charlotte, after which he hurried down into the garden and without saying a word about what had happened, got every one into the summer house near the shrubbery and told them to wait until he came back. As his dog cart was waiting at the door to take him to Plymouth he at once drove off post haste for a doctor. His brother, Dr Robert Scott being the nearest, living at Penlea at the top of Stoke Hill, not a ten

minute drive from Outlands. He luckily found him in and sent him off at once. Going off again as fast as possible to find Dr Square, the family doctor who lived in Plymouth, and who also luckily was at home and sent him off at once. In the meantime dear old Aunt Charlotte had done the best she could to staunch the only visible wound in my forehead but on my uncle Robert's arrival it was found that in addition to the gash in my forehead where one of the spikes had stuck right into the bone another had pierced my clothing on the left side and gone almost through my body just escaping the spleen and from which some of my internals were protruding, while a third spike had punctured my right thigh, close up to the abdomen. The wound in the side was of course the worst and led both doctors to the conclusion that any chance of recovery was impossible but with the Almighty all things are possible.

And here I am, for some reason only known to him, alive and unharmed at the age of seventy-four never having suffered in any way from the affects of the wounds. It was a matter of two years, I believe, mostly spent in bed, before I could get about again, as the muscles of my left leg became contracted and although it was feared that I should be crippled for life they eventually relaxed with the only result that the leg is slightly shorter than the other and had caused me to limp a little.

Extract 2.

Much has been written about Lonsdale's injury at Isandlwana, mostly by people who were not there or who did not know what had happened. Harford puts the record straight.

It was now nearing the 11th January, the date fixed for the troops to move across the border. Lord Chelmsford had arrived at Rorke's Drift and Lonsdale rode over to have an interview with him but received no definite orders with regard to the movements of the Contingent. However, one morning I had occasion to go to Rorke's Drift myself, to see the Adjutant-General, Major Clery. Luckily, arriving at a very early hour, and having completed my work with him, I was on the point of mounting my pony to ride back to camp, when Major Clery said, "You will have everything ready, Harford, won't you, for the General today?" "Good Heavens, Major", I said, "This is the first I've heard about his coming!" "You don't mean to say that Lonsdale never told you about it?" he replied, "He is going to inspect you at twelve o'clock. The General gave Lonsdale his orders days ago."

Well, I rode off as hard as I could go, to camp. I found Lonsdale sitting in his tent, looking over his Masonic orders and paraphernalia, and, on my breaking the news to him as quickly as I could, he said, "Good God! I forgot all about it. Shout for my pony, like a good chap." I also got a change of ponies. Kaffirs were sent out in all directions to call in the men who were drilling, many of them miles away. As soon as the ponies were ready, we jumped on, Lonsdale saying, "You take that way; I'll take this", and we went off at a gallop. We had scarcely parted company when Lonsdale's pony shied at something and threw him off. I saw the fall. He appeared to have struck his head and then, rolling over on his back, lay quite still with one of his arms projecting in the air at right angles to his body. I got off at once and ran to his assistance, only to find that he was unconscious, and rigidly stiff. I shouted for the doctor, and as soon as he had come up with some natives and a stretcher, I galloped off again to collect the men. Eventually, after a real race for it, everybody was got in; but Hamilton-Browne and Cooper were still getting their Battalions formed up on parade when the General and staff made their appearance.

I had, of course, to ride out and tell the General what had happened. So we first went to Lonsdale's tent, and finding that he

was still unconscious, orders were given for his removal to Helpmekaar hospital. It was found afterwards that he had received concussion of the brain. Through his interpreter, he expressed his pleasure at what he had seen, and gave some sound advice on matters of discipline, especially behaviour towards women and children and prisoners.

On the following day we moved to Rorke's Drift, where Major Black, of the 2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment was given temporary command until Lonsdale returned. Before crossing into Zululand, the Battalion Commanders devised an excellent plan for keeping their various companies intact, and for recognising them in the field should they become separated or lose themselves, viz: by having small flags made with the number of the Battalion, 1 or 2, and some special device for each Company painted on them. These devices represented, as nearly as possible, the soubriquets the natives had imposed upon themselves, such as the ingulube, izinkunzana and so forth. This caused great delight, and gave rise to endless chaff and amusement on all occasions. When the general advance took place, a few of our natives under a corporal named Schiess were left at Rorke's Drift as part of the garrison of the fort under Lieutenant Bromhead, of the 2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment, and Lieutenant Chard, of the Royal Engineers. Schiess was subsequently awarded the Victoria Cross for very conspicuous bravery. Some of the men of the 24th Regiment told me that he fought like a tiger, when Rorke's Drift was attacked by the Zulus and at one time, when some Zulus actually managed to clutch hold of his bayonet, he got it out of their hands and, springing over the parapet, bayoneted some six or seven of them straight away.

Extract 3.

Concerning my Funeral

“I want no flowers, or wreaths to accompany my bones.
The proper place for flowers is on their plants or shrubs, where they can be seen to advantage.
As regards, mourning, I hope the members of the family will adopt the sensible and present day method of outward show, by only wearing a band of blk (black) on the left arm.
Walking about like a lot of crows in deep blk, is in my mind absolutely idiotic and senseless and to be deprecated.”

Charles Henry Harford.