

lowing : “ Any survivors from the Isandlwana disaster are urgently requested to supply information respecting A—— B——, whose name appears among the killed. Will some of his comrades please say,—1. How and where was he ? 2. Whether he escaped from the carnage to the river, or was hemmed in with those who had no ammunition to use and were killed by the Zulus ? 3. Who saw him last, and under what circumstances ? 4. Was he recognised after death, and was he buried ? 5. Was he much mutilated, and what was the manner of his death ? ” Thus, as always, what was in the heart as the most important question of all was put off to the last.

With literature such as this nearly our sole resource, it was no wonder the time passed heavily. All day the men were in their shirt-sleeves, unloading waggons of bags of flour, biscuit, oats, and coal. Those not so engaged were digging ditches or building forts. At night was the everlasting picket, wet, cold, and perhaps dangerous. At tattoo all had to rush into laager, were it wet or fine, standing with fixed bayonets in silent array till the inspecting offi-

cer had gone round. That over, lights out, and a hard night's rest on the ground, broken at an hour before daybreak by the bugles, when a fresh array in the laager ensued. A dreary interval, cold, wet, sleepy, and dirty, till we managed a swill in a bucket in the welcome warmth of the rising sun, and breakfast off the cold lumps of stew left over from last night's dinner. After that, more waggons to off-load, and more ditches to dig. No wonder we wanted to get on, even against such terrible fellows as the Zulus. Our awakening came at last, changing everything that had been arranged, and showing us that all our work of the past month was so much labour wasted.

Conference Hill was no longer to be the base of operations : the advance was by another road ; and all the piles of stores collected there, with so much trouble and expense, were to be moved to Koppie Allein, twelve miles lower down the river. From this place the column was to cross into Zululand, and to move, by another road to the one previously selected, on Ulundi. Miles away down the river we had seen an isolated peak, sticking up just over the grass-line to the

south, which was our horizon; and the reconnoitring parties had told us this was Koppie Allein—the “Lone Koppie;” but up till now there had been no road thither, or any, save the troopers of Bettington’s Horse, that had penetrated as far. Landman’s Drift, lying closer, had supplied the new base with soldiers and stores; so that, on the last day of May, when the garrison of Conference Hill marched in, across the almost trackless veldt, it found it alive with military life,—a pleasant change indeed, after the weeks of inaction, and, of late, rainy weather, which blew our tents down, and sent us, cold and wet, to shelter under still damper bed-clothes.

The promised advance had already commenced—the 1st Brigade crossing the long-looked-at Blood river, and winding slowly across the grass-land beyond. The drift over the river bore signs of having been hurried through; the sides were steep and sloppy, and the black mud in the bottom, increasing continually, threatened to swallow up each succeeding waggon. Far on the left were the Lancers, dotted about; nearer at hand, the advancing

infantry, clearly marked by black lines drawn across the veldt. Beyond, again, the swells of grass-land, then yellow, reach up for some miles to a broken ridge of flat-topped hills, grass-grown to their summit; that on the left, "the Incenci"—both the "c's" pronounced hard; that on the right, Itelezi—later on a station from which the heliograph flashed its messages far on towards the front. Between these two hills is a neck, or saddle-back, yellow with the everlasting grass; and on this neck our first camp was pitched, succeeded by the more permanent erection, "Fort Warwick."

Nowhere was there a sign of life,—the country was quite deserted, save by the troops crossing. Wood's column was out of sight, ten miles further north, moving parallel with the Division. A dark object, some miles away, draws out many field-glasses, all anxious for the much-talked-of Impi; but it turns out to be only an over-worked ox, which has wandered so far, and now stood waiting sadly for death. Overhead the vultures soared, in horrid expectancy of their meal. In the hollow formed by the river stood groups of sentries, dark against the yellow

grass in their greatcoats. Where the camp had just rested, on the Natal side of the river, were piles of stores, in every state of disorder; ranks of waggons, packed and unpacked—the officers in charge of their contents vainly trying to pick out what was wanted amongst the universal confusion; tents in rows, stretching everywhere; ambulances lumbering about; the Lancer camp, still to be known by the lances sticking up between the picket-lines, their tiny pennons fluttering gaily, as they had fluttered a hundred times before at Aldershot; staff officers galloping wildly; mule-waggons cantering merrily down the hill towards the drift; stray horses, “knee-haltered” till their noses almost touched their legs, dodging their pursuers, and refusing all attempts to catch them. In the centre of all was a substantial laager,—a square earthen fort, strong enough, in all conscience, and provided with two huge embrasures, red, and newly made. Our present base was but the creation of yesterday.

Following the 1st Brigade, the 2d crossed the drift—all the heavier for the rain which fell abundantly during the night—and was at last in

Zululand. A party of the 24th Regiment worked manfully at the muddy drift, shouldering the waggons, and urging the unwilling oxen across, till, after several hours, all were over, and the order came for the advance. The dry grass was knee-deep; dongas scored the country everywhere; small bog-holes and marshy streams crossed the track as long as it followed the low-lying meadow-land; oxen, dead or dying, were sadly plentiful. Far in front, the leading brigade was cautiously feeling its way; then came a huge, straggling crowd of waggons, two abreast, ten abreast, drawn out for a couple of miles or more in single file,—a horrid foretaste of what was before us. But the sun shone gloriously, spirits had recovered, and the men trudged along through the grass as if the poorly-marked track across it were a turnpike-road. By the side of the column rode General Marshall, in temporary command, followed by his staff; here and there galloped in a Basuto scout, intent on something nobody could understand. The broad, well-defined road to Isandlwana was crossed, and brought up many memories; the air was full of the cracking of huge whips,—an unpleasant

noise at the best of times, soon hated for its incessant continuance, under which the weary oxen, with their hides cut and seamed, winced freely.

A marshy stream, not far from the ridge where we were eventually halted, caused a long delay, and it was not till the shades of night were falling around that the brigade climbed the hill and took up its ground for the night. In high quarters "the battle of the laagers" had been fought as was usual in those early days, every one having an opinion on the subject differing from every other, all equally effective, but quite distinct, and very perplexing to us who had to remember so many different patterns. On this first night we had three laagers; in the centre a huge affair, in which were accommodated the cavalry horses in long picket-lines, the Commissariat depot and issuing store-tents, and the oxen, the last countless as the sea-sand. On either side were two smaller laagers, one for each brigade; inside one, Lord Chelmsford and his staff—General Newdigate with his in the other. Round the outside were the tents of the regiments and the guns of the batteries; scattered about were the irregular

troops, the Native Contingent, the lines of mounted corps, hospital tents, cooking-fires—a heterogeneous mass, a good deal mixed, too much scattered, and with but little method in its disposition. Round about, farther away, could be seen the dark groups of the sentries pacing to and fro. Above us rose the grand Itelezi Hill, grey and indistinct in the increasing darkness, its side scored by a great ravine, a capital hiding-place for an enemy, and so watched accordingly. In the rear, as in front, the swells of grass-land rose interminably, alive even yet with toiling waggons, cavalry horses returning from water; the background filled in with flat-topped hills, those above Dundee, left long ago, amongst them. Soldiers in every stage of untidiness wandered about the camp in that aimless way so peculiar to the race. Natives fully armed with shields and assegais continually arrived, going they never seemed to know where. Basuto horsemen chanted their evening hymn, standing in a circle, their hats off, their hands clasped tight; close by, the General, sitting on a stone, and talking over to-morrow's doings with some half-a-dozen of his staff.

Now and then the quiet was broken in upon by a shout and the noise of many men rushing, and half the camp would appear crowding frantically after two or three figures coming towards the General's tent. They were only Zulus, either real or suspected as such, who had come across the patrols, and were brought in for examination. After each wretch followed the crowd of men, struggling and pushing, intent only on satisfying their silly and childish curiosity at any cost. Indeed, the state of stupid excitement and actual nervousness to which the men had been worked up by repeated scares and continual delays, was sad, and almost hopeless. To excite curiosity, and to take advantage of the confusion it caused, we had been told, was a common Zulu stratagem, and so had to be repressed—almost an impossibility when unreasoning panic has seized upon a camp full of beings as young and as easily led as are our present-day soldiers.

We had settled down as well as was possible amongst all these discomforts, and were sitting outside our tents before night fell and we got between the blankets, talking much, wondering

much, and anticipating everything or anything, when of a sudden arose one of those undefined rumours of ill, coming no one knew whence, no one knew how. Laughter was hushed, and men's tongues stopped as their owners wandered from tent to tent seeking out the cause. And as the news leaked out, and it was whispered about that the Prince had been killed in a kraal close by, fighting hard, it was plain on all our faces that a great calamity had happened.

A few irregulars had galloped in with ill news on their faces, and hot haste showing in their ponies' coats. Their story was soon told—one long since too well known—and not a man in camp but felt that a friend and a guest had been lost from among us. The poor young Prince, two volunteers, and their native guide gone in a few minutes close to us, yet no one near to help.

I don't think the men who returned showed much excitement; they took off their pouches and thick boots, prepared their supper, and talked all the while as if an ordinary skirmish had taken place in which one or more had gone down, perfectly fair and to be expected in such

times as these. Carey's name was not mentioned; it was then not known in the army generally that the party had been accompanied by any officer except the Prince. All that came after, and made bad worse, and regrets still more poignant. The little group of four gathered by the side of a waggon, one of those forming a side of the central laager, and told their tale by bits and fragments as they were asked questions by the half-dozen officers standing round. Little curiosity indeed was shown; stupor and unexpressed sorrow were predominant amongst all. Many expressions of sympathy for Lord Chelmsford under this new trial were heard, and freely acquiesced in. The men's tale was short enough. The party had been fired at suddenly, and had bolted, leaving behind the Prince and two of their comrades. From the men's looks and their unmilitary style altogether, little else could have been expected. They had not been sent out to fight; the same occurrence had happened to them before, and they had been withdrawn by their commander when attacked, as was perfectly right. What experience they had learned in war agreed entirely with

their own notions as civilians. Such they were, a bit of red rag round their hats, and a bandoleer of cartridges over their shoulders, the only military part of them. All else was civilian and colonial. To them princes were no better than other men, glory but an empty name, honour unknown; their day's pay, and the enjoyments—the liberal flow of “square-face” not the least of them—which it could procure, the only object they had in going the campaign. Then it became known that an English officer had been of the party, and the tone of inquiries changed; now at least we should hear a tale which we need not feel ashamed for listening to: and the feeling of relief was heightened by one coming up and saying, “Carey, poor fellow, has made a statement which is all that can be desired, except that he has laid too much blame on to his own shoulders.”

It must have been close upon seven o'clock when the party returned, and the night was falling fast around, so the body must lie where it had fallen all through it,—the rough nature of the country, only partially known as yet, utterly forbidding any midnight search. But

early next morning a squadron of the 17th Lancers rode off, accompanied by several of the staff and an ambulance.

A trooper—one of those who escaped—went as a guide; and after some eight miles along a ridge commanding wide views of the surrounding country, now all covered alike with the prevailing grass, took the party down a long and wide incline, at the bottom of which evidently flowed a river. Near this, to the right, the low hills drew together; there were several patches of mealies, dry and yellow, above the river-bed, and between them and it a small kraal. Others were scattered about pretty plentifully on the hillsides. Riding towards the kraal the Lancers were halted, and the officers rode on to a slight depression, which hid each horseman as he approached it. A shout in front, and we found a trooper standing in this hollow, which was a worn and grass-grown donga. Beside him lay a white object, stark and stiff; beyond, a little lower down, a second; and lower down still, a third—the body of the Prince, lying staring at the sky, surrounded by the poor fellows who had

died with him. It was no time for sightseeing or sentiment. The body was wrapped in a blanket, and placed reverently in the ambulance; the other two were covered up with earth, and the sad procession rode slowly back to camp.

At first it was decided to bury his body where the camp was pitched, and a party was sent out to dig a grave. But other counsels soon prevailed, and it was given out that what remained of Napoleon was to be sent home as soon as possible.

A military funeral on the spot was, however, to be given, to mark the army's respect for the dead; so on the same day, in the afternoon, the troops, formed up in a hollow square, turned out to do all that British soldiers could do in honour of the brave, dead boy. Each wing of the square was formed by the infantry—a brigade on either—their commanders, with the staff, in front. Facing the laager in which the body lay, and which was the fourth side of the square, were the Lancers, forming the base; in front of them, General Newdigate and his staff; the men on every side, in open order, resting on their arms reversed.

When all was silent and correct, the funeral emerged from the laager, headed by a detachment of artillery marching in slow time with their carbines reversed; then the gun-carriage, drawn by six black horses, on which rested the long, almost shapeless bundle which all knew too well. Over it was cast a poor tricolour flag—the best we could make out of the scanty bits of coloured calico to be obtained. As pall-bearers walked six officers of the artillery, to which corps the Prince had been attached at Woolwich; immediately in rear was the Roman Catholic chaplain; then Lord Chelmsford as chief mourner, followed by his staff.

The ground was rough with ant-heaps and holes, and the carriage jolted terribly till it was stopped opposite the Lancers—the pipers of the 21st wailing out a sad funeral-dirge. Then the priest stepped out, dressed in his fine lace surplice and quaint three-cornered hat, and in low tones read the service, bowing continually, and scattering holy water. That done, the carriage moved on round the square, the troops presented arms, and the long shapeless bundle was taken away and left under a

suitable guard till next morning, when it left, under escort, for England.

Among the spectators were many well-known faces. The correspondent of the 'Figaro,' in veritable tears: his mission over, there was no longer any interest to him in the campaign, and he went home to grieve—so he told us he would do between his tears. Forbes and Stanley were close together; Fripp sketching in a quiet corner, and Melton Prior doing the same opposite. At the most solemn moment of the service an energetic photographer rushed in and hid under his black cloth-covered camera, after the fashion of his race. The instrument he has planted in the very centre of the square, his own appearance being ultra-photographic and repellent. In his hot haste with the plate his hat fell off, and showed very long and very shiny hair—a feature more conspicuous than usual in an assemblage of which every man was cropped short. I venture to say no one loved that man that day, and all watched eagerly for the last glint of the fading sun to die out before he came back. But the glow fell kindly on the bundle under the tricolour,

and lingered, painting the lead-coloured wheels which carried it with crimson ; and so the man got his picture, and went his way contented.

Just as the body left our sight, and the men were dismissed, a rush was made in another direction—the men, let loose, scampering off pell-mell towards the novel excitement. It was only two more spies ; they might be Zulus—if our redoubted foes are poor trembling wretches, undersized and half-starved. One of them, seeing me approach with a revolver slung rather prominently round my shoulder, thought his last hour had come, and made a beseeching grab at my legs. I saw them shortly after being led away, followed by full half the camp in a disgraceful state of curious excitement, then a common and disgusting feature of our young soldiers. What became of the so-called Zulus, I never heard.

CHAPTER XI.

UGLY COUNTRY—NO TREES—OUR COLUMN OF ADVANCE—
 “NAPOLEON’S KOP”—THE FATAL DONGA—THE POSITION
 OF THE KRAAL—THE PRINCE’S DEAD COMPANIONS—A
 BURIAL SERVICE.

OUR advance was certainly very leisurely done. We were to have been treated to a dash on Ulundi, while in truth we crawled thither. On the first day we saw a short seven miles of Zululand, the second a trifle more, on the third we only managed four. The oxen and the waggons they dragged were at the bottom of this sluggishness; but then we had too many of them. People took too much. I saw a deal washing-stand on a waggon not far from Ulundi. It did not belong to the regular troops—they at least were cut down to the utmost; it was our colonial friends who found baggage a necessity: in whispers it went about that those higher in posi-

tion might have practised what they preached. Yet with however little ground covered, it was always the same to the troops,—“early to rise and late to bed;” in that, at least, there was no alteration. Once on the move beyond our first camp on the Itelezi ridge, and Natal was no longer visible; its hills, and the remembrance of home behind them, were blotted out, and the army at once plunged into a strange land. Yellow hills, interminable swells, isolated “kops,” were its prominent features. Desolation was written everywhere. A surface of dry grass, yellow with age, dotted with stony hillocks—“krantzies,” as the colony calls them. Here and there a kraal, its rounded huts like greater ant-heaps nestling together for some evil purpose. And across the whole landscape a network of dongas, deeply scored, sharp-sided, always hard and cruel—the fingers of skeleton hands sprawling everywhere, gripping the last remnants of life out of this dead land. No sign of life, no smoke, no labourers in the mealie-fields, no villagers sitting by the wayside and gazing at the great army; dead silence—absolutely nothing more.

There was no road, hardly any track even. As the head of the column moved, the men cut a track in the yellow grass, which tossed and waved waist-high. In front it spread itself to the horizon as the sea; the wind bent it hither and thither in broad ripples; elsewhere it was as pathless as the water: in rear of the column stretched a highway, broad, and trampled flat by the soldiers' feet.

In vain we looked on all sides for the "extensive forests of large trees, amongst which yellow wood and other valuable trees are abundant," promised us in our *vade mecum*, and supplied to us all by the authorities. The forests faded into unreality, as did many other nice bits of information supplied to us by an intelligent Government, until we reached the cactus-trees which line the Umvolosi, near Ulundi: in the country passed through to get so far was not a tree, or shrub a foot high, except at one spot on the Upoko river, where stood a bush of prickly and stunted mimosa-trees, now nearly all passed away under the British axe.

In the brigade which led the way the regi-

ment in front moved in column of companies, with a front of some fifty yards; then followed a battery, the guns two and two, in readiness to turn to either flank; lastly, the second infantry regiment, moving as did the first. Strangely-curved lines, three or four abreast, straggled behind, coiling down the sides of the swells, or creeping in sinuous zigzags up the opposite side. A rope well frayed trailing after us was a fair simile. Line upon line, coil after coil, tops the horizon in rear and wanders after us. These were the waggons on which our life depended in this desolate land, stretching for several miles amid a series of hills and ravines, in any of which, we were told, the enemy might be lurking.

At one place is a stream, with a block of waggons at the drift crossing it; the roadway trampled into mud, the water the consistency of pea-soup. On the bank stands Lord Chelmsford, working hard, much too hard, urging the ungainly oxen over, and endeavouring to put some little method into the obstinate drivers. And men passing looked at him with some astonishment, and asked one another, "Where is the staff?"

Then behind the waggons, in the far distance, grew into sight line upon line, mathematically straight and parallel, their component parts black against the yellow grass—an array which the glasses showed to be the Lancers leading the way for the second brigade, on that day told off as the rear-guard. More of the Lancers were on advanced duty, five miles ahead of the column, their dark forms appearing now and then as they skirmished up the distant swells. Mounted Basutos, as scouts, covered the flanks, now pushing through the long grass, or cutting across dongas like cats, as they made a dash at some distant kraal where there might be Zulus or “loot.”

A small “kop” rose out of the valley on the right, very isolated, and interesting from its associations — but of yesterday as it seemed. For it was the place where the Prince saw his first Zulus, driving them off, and ascending after the skirmish to the top. The day had been a pleasant one, and he named the little hill in fun “Napoleon’s Kop.” He could have seen from it the place where, not many days after, he fought and died.

Scattered about amongst the waving grass

were untidy patches of cultivation, utterly crooked and irregular in shape, fenced round with stones roughly heaped up. The mealies had been gathered, their stalks alone remaining; but the Kafir corn was standing, and horses disappeared in marvellously quick time in these paradises of forage, the long stalks and heavy heads hanging from their mouths when they reappeared on the far side, their masters carrying armfuls of the same for future use.

In the far distance loomed a great flat-topped mountain, half hidden in the 'morning mist. This was Inhlazatsi, the monster whose fabled horrors of bush and precipice had frightened us out of our original route. Nearer at hand is the Ingutu range, under whose shadow the Prince was killed.

On every mountain-top within sight our vedettes crept, a mounted man in front, the three others of the party following on foot, their horses led. It was indeed "feeling" for the enemy.

Then the crest of a ridge, stony in the extreme, is reached, and we look down a broad, grassy spur, perfectly open, and with a gentle

incline towards the river Ityotyozí, about two miles distant. On the right the hills draw closer, their sides dotted with kraals, amid which our mounted scouts were foraging. Mealie-patches were plentiful, and also the circles of stones in which the cattle are kept at night. Rank grass covered the face of the land, and reached well up the men's waists as they waded on towards the four lances which marked the corners of the night's laager. The infantry lying down when the river-bank was reached, disappeared in the grass; the cavalry off-saddled, and led their horses down to water. A few mounted men, and some stragglers on foot, moved away a hundred yards to the right, towards a small kraal, with its stone cattle-pen and wide circles of perfectly white grass, common in Zululand. The kraal was a very mean affair, I think with only five huts, small and weather-worn; the cattle-enclosure also mean, untidy, and somewhat low. All about, the grass was tall and rank, except towards the position the troops then rested in, the future camp, the circle of white grass spoken of being there, and not growing to any height at any time.

The kraal stood in the entrance to a valley, in which the river ran, formed by the Ingutu range on the left, and a lower and detached spur on the right partly behind the huts. Towards the river, some hundred yards from them, the ground was level, but covered with rank grass: on the right of them the slope of the hill began, gradual at first, steeper after some hundreds of yards; and on this slope were mealie-gardens dotted, extending back up the hill, but not coming very close to the kraal.

So it was seen that the collection of wretched huts which composed it was surrounded on three sides, and open only on the fourth—the side pointing to the camp, and to the way it had marched from the last one. But on riding a little nearer, we came across a donga, shallow certainly, and much worn, but still an obstacle, and so closing up the apparently open ground on the fourth side.

It was clearly not one of those cruel, perpendicular-sided dongas already described. This was old and worn; its depth might have been ten feet; its sides sloped so as to render it perfectly easy to cross at any part; close by, a side

gully ran into the main one, and made a gently sloping road into it. Grass grew down the sides and along the bottom. If a brook had run down it, any one would have seen the whole a hundred times before at home; it was wider, nothing more.

But the sight that met our eyes on that day, as we rode up to the edge, was one not seen at home, or indeed often anywhere.

In the centre stood bareheaded a group of rough, cord-coated men, with carbines across their backs, and bandoleers studded with cartridges round their chests. By their side was a clergyman in his surplice, reading the burial-service, and at their feet a few clods of earth, laid lengthways. The words of the service, strangely, suddenly heard, floated up from the donga, and away across the perfect stillness, and needed no "Amen." The rough-coated men were doing the last act of respect to their two comrades who died with the Prince, and lay hardly buried under the clods. When the service was finished and the men had gone, a sergeant of the Lancers, who had helped to place them there, lifted one up, the size of his fist,

and there lay the white face, still in death. Lower down a foot protruded, and on the other side a shoulder was partly bare. The earth was hard, and the tools to dig it only lances. After the camp was pitched, the poor fellows got decent burial. Just in sight of these poor mounds was a pile of stones laid roughly, lengthways also, pointing up the donga, to mark the spot where we found the Prince's body only yesterday. Round about the ground was trodden, with seams of darker soil; the grass and leaves were damp with blood-stains, and the stones bore splashes of the same. There were no marks of his horse near the spot; probably he was struck fatally at the edge of the donga, and falling down, knew nothing more. That the first stab was fatal, was told long afterwards by the Zulus, the man who gave it being killed at Ulundi; the others merely fell upon his dead body. There was no malice in his death; the Zulus knew that he was a great "Inkoss," whose death would please their king; and they killed him after their custom, and sent his sword to Cetewayo.

A worse death overtook the poor native guide

chosen for the task as the most trustworthy man in the Native Contingent. He must have run for a mile across the ground taken up two days afterwards by the camp, and died there fighting hard, as we found his body, where it lay, pierced with assegai-wounds, the broken weapons lying strewn about.

Some two hundred yards beyond the donga was the kraal, the huts torn and ripped. At the door of one crouched one of the old women left behind by the Zulus at many of their villages, hideous and ugly beyond words to describe. The dry skin hung like parchment from her bones, and she jabbered away, with many gesticulations, boasting, as our interpreter said, that it was her sons who killed the Prince.

“They killed your great Inkoss: they are gone now to the king’s kraal to fight you white men. What do you come here for? We don’t want you. This is Zululand. Keep to your own side!”

Lying on the floor of a hut was the Prince’s shirt, stiff with blood, and pierced with assegai-stabs. In the cattle-enclosure the natives were tapping the ground with assegais to find out

where the grain was buried. An officer was sitting on the wall sketching. A broken gourd, a hearth-brush, the embers at which the Zulus cooked their last meal, and some parched mealies, were lying about. It was hardly the place for the last of the Napoleons to die at; it was so mean, so poor, so abject in its dirt and poverty. As we marched away next morning, the smoke of that hideous kraal went up to heaven, with that of eight others round it, fired by the Basutos as their last act in that too memorable valley.

Long afterwards, reading the accounts of the occurrence in the English papers, we were much amused. One writer talked about the "river Ityotyози cutting off retreat towards the more open ground." As a matter of fact, the ground on the far side of the river was the slope of the Ingutu range, steep and studded with kraals; while to make for it was to ride straight into Zululand, and directly away from our camp. The river too, at that time of the year, was the smallest possible trickle, not an inch deep in places, winding over a broad bed of hard sand, between low and shelving banks. Another

found the grass and grain round the kraal “formed a very close growth of a fairly uniform height of six feet.” With the exception of the mealie-stalks, which were at some little distance from the huts, there was nothing anything like as high near the kraal, which was barely so high itself, being plainly visible from any point round.

“The Kafir probably rushed to cover at once, and was there surrounded,” is a sentence which threw considerable doubts on the accuracy of the remaining portion; while the number of Zulus attacking was at first put down at from forty to fifty,—a figure gradually coming down, until the last accounts place it as actually eight, and no more.

One thing has been omitted steadily from all accounts. The advancing Zulus, seeing our men in full retreat, called after them in mockery, “Ah, you English cowards, you always run away!”

Some three miles further down the river, opposite the drift which we made and crossed on our onward way, Lord Chelmsford commenced the first fort; but there it ended—the

fort was begun, a line of parapet was piled up, and a mountain of stores deposited, and that was all. It was never finished.

That afternoon Wood sent in word that his pet Impi was approaching—I am not sure that there were not two of them—and so laagering-up was the order of the day. The waggons were urged across the drift, and dragged into square on the right bank close to it with feverish haste. A battle was imminent, and so we put our best foot foremost. A message was sent to the two companies left behind on the other side, as the garrison of the contemplated fort, to rejoin at once. The commander sent back to say that the stores were lying there, and he could not leave them till waggons arrived to remove them; whereupon a peremptory order was sent back telling him to let them lie, so long as he came over with his men. He obeyed, and many waggon-loads of stores lay at any one's mercy through the night.

However, the Impi did not turn up—as indeed many had suggested when the report of its arrival came in—and we passed the night undisturbed. It would have been a blessing in-

deed if the Impi had appeared, and so put us out of suspense, really trying to all—the continual battling against an unseen foe, eternally on the *qui vive* for a battle which never came.

Lord Chelmsford has been blamed unjustly for his extreme caution during these early days, when the feeling which prompted it with him was equally shared by every officer in the camp. It is easy enough to fight an enemy in the open; but to be ever on the watch for one unknown, unseen, is a trial which few can realise until they have experience of its influence on men's spirits. Very early the next morning the cavalry turned out in search of the Impi, followed at daylight by the guns and infantry.

The air was alive with light; sunshine sat and shimmered on the white quartz-reefs which cropped out every here and there. In front, a solitary thorn-tree was a feature in the landscape, as being the first seen in Zululand; beyond were the mountains enclosing the Umvolosi river, bare and precipitous, seemingly impenetrable. The smoke of burning kraals

rose in blue columns from the valley. Groups of Basuto horsemen crowned the hills, a stray figure here and there separated from the rest, circling round the huts to which he had just set fire. A mile farther, and a fresh valley, shaped like a basin, lies in front; across this, and up its opposite slopes, streamed Wood's column. In the centre winds a new river, the Nonchoini, soon to be dominated by the Gatlings in Fort Newdigate on its banks. Along these now stretch innumerable dongas. Between them a few kraals are sending up their smoke to heaven. There are no other signs of life save these in that great valley.

But hope ran high that morning as the column was leisurely crossing the Nonchoini, a message coming from Lord Chelmsford in front to say that an action had commenced. At once faces brightened as General Newdigate, riding in front of a neat blue and white flag, hastened the brigade across the drift into position on the crest of one of the great folds which seemed ever to rise in front of us as we toiled over them. Swords were loosened and their knots unwound, revolvers examined, and

every officer coming from the front anxiously questioned. Some declared that they heard firing.

Just then a group of savage-looking fellows were brought in and halted in front of the General. There were nine of them,—four elderly men, with long grave faces, their heads topped by the black ring denoting a married man; the rest younger, some mere boys, more savage and unkempt than the first. One truculent savage had his hair tousled into little soppets, glistening with fat, and grimed with dirt. On his forehead was a recent assegai-wound. They sported as clothes a dirty brown blanket apiece, and were as forbidding and unpleasant a lot to look at as one could wish for. By their side lay a bundle of dry sheepskins, which moved spasmodically, and at length induced some one looking on to cut the bit of hide which bound them together, when out rolled an old woman, hideously bony, and at death's door from old age and starvation.

The old men proved to be ambassadors sent by Cetewayo to ask for terms; the young ones

were the servants; the old hag no one owned. These were the messengers who went to Crealock on the Tugela, and were sent on to Lord Chelmsford as the proper person with whom to treat. They looked sulky enough, and their evil looks did not grow more pleasant when a guard was marched up and rattled on their bayonets with an ugly clatter.

“What do you English want here?” they growled. “We don’t want you; go away! We want to be friends with such great people. Tell us what you want, and go away!”

The fellows were subsequently put up for the night in the laager just opposite Lord Chelmsford’s tent, and entertained royally with “scoff;” but their ill - looks remained unchanged by our hospitality. The ‘Graphic’ made an excellent sketch of one or two of the principal men, which afterwards appeared in the paper. Small groups of officers surrounded them, talking when it was possible through an interpreter; but the expression of their faces never changed—they scowled on, and looked ready for murder and bloodshed at any moment.

The idea was to show them the glory of the invading army, and then let them go to carry their tale home—a mistaken estimate of the Zulu character altogether. They scowled at us impertinently during their stay; were but little impressed by the sight of the half-grown boys who loafed round them as English warriors; got an excellent view of the interior arrangements of our laager, with the position of the General's tent to an inch; and carried off our impossible terms of peace, together with a fine fat ox as a present. It was not a bad day's work altogether. The fight in front turned out to be a skirmish between our cavalry and some thousand or more of the villagers who lived round about Ibabanango, and naturally objected to our destructive propensities. It was the day poor Frith of the 17th Lancers was shot dead off his horse, potted from the bushes on a hillside, in a place where no horse could go, the last which cavalry should attack.

However, it was done; the correspondents, as usual, being the first to return into camp with the news—after them, in a cloud of dust, the 17th and King's Dragoon Guards. They rode

along in sections, two abreast, their pennons torn and draggled, the men sitting erect, and the horses not half done up. In rear came an ambulance with Frith's body.

He was buried that evening in an old mealie-field, by the side of a brook below the camp, Lord Chelmsford and most of the officers attending. Round his grave a single rank of Lancers presented their lances as the body was lowered. Here, as elsewhere, were no volleys fired. In the dim light the uniforms were blended into one grey mass, hardly to be distinguished one from another; and the service, with "Our Father" repeated reverently by the little group of soldiers, sounded strangely solemn and peaceful after the bustle of the camp.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ALARM—OUR SCARE—FORT FUNK—FATIGUES—THE UOKO
 —A ZULU WATERING-PLACE—ZULU WEALTH—ITS DAN-
 GERS—NATIVE SPIES—CATCHWAYO—PRICES—AN UGLY
 LAND.

NIGHT fell as the funeral-party returned ; and I was lying snugly in bed—two blankets and a waterproof sheet laid out on some charming specimens of quartz—having further indulged in taking off my boots, in anticipation of a good night's rest, when ping! ping! ping! went three shots, the signal of an attack.

In an instant the drowsy camp awoke as if by magic. The Native Contingent crowded into the laager, buzzing like bees. Our own men raced each other, in a hurry to be first within welcome cover. The bugles rang out the "assembly," a weird sound ; between the pauses were heard the words of command. Flop came the

tent about my ears, and I was outside in the darkness. The air was full of the noise of hurry and bustle. Confusion put in its own voice, and was heard. From a rift in the clouds a streak of light fell on the heads of silent men in the waggons peering out, and gave promise of the rising moon. Here and there flashed a bayonet, pointing outwards. Inside the waggons was a space, ten yards across, left vacant for a roadway, and within this lay the vast crowd of oxen, tied by the head, and breathing noisily. Between them, here and there, were the horses, picketed in lines, straining nervously at their head-ropes; the men beside their horses, in readiness to mount.

At that moment came a volley far down the hill where a picket had been posted, its rattle clear and distinct in the night air. A staff officer gallops past; and in an instant the rear face is lit up with fire, taken up all along the line of waggons. Crash go the volleys everywhere, belching out flame and smoke, till the front is one thick white cloud, pierced only by the sharp and vivid flashes from the muzzles.

“Whish!” comes a bullet overhead. “Whir!”

follows another after. Crash goes a volley close by, and the face in our front is once more framed with fire. Then the big guns in the corner give out an answer, booming their bass notes high above the rest. The bullets are flying merrily overhead ; and the soldiers, young lads half of them, with a wholesome dread of the Zulus in their poor little hearts, and funk plainly written on their faces, crowd under the waggons for safety, quickly to be pulled out again by their officers in every style of undress, many with their red nightcaps still on. Out come the skulkers in droves, only to vanish again round the next waggon. The fun grows furious. Bullets sing and whiz past in flights. The smoke is stifling, and hides up everything. Half-a-dozen horses, maddened by the din, are rushing about. In the narrow pathway left round the waggons it is impossible to move freely, so crowded up is it with oxen and horses. Native soldiers squat in masses in the middle, and continually let off their guns in the air, keeping the butts firmly on the ground. Conductors blaze away into the nearest waggon-tilt. Tents lie flat, their ropes still tied to the

pegs, sure traps for the unwary. Chaos is everywhere, even in the waggons, where the men lie, firing incessantly, and paying but scant attention to the orders shouted at them.

Twenty minutes of this work, and a bugle sounds the "cease fire," and the flashes die out and leave the laager dark and silent as the night itself.

Then our General followed, and gave his censure pretty freely on the wretched scare; and shame sat on many a face at its recollection. Not a Zulu had been seen—the picket who commenced the row firing at what it thought was some "blacks," but might have been a cloud.

It was said afterwards, by the Zulus themselves, that there were 15,000 of them ready to attack, but gave it up on finding us so well prepared. The tale may be true or not, and was some small consolation to those who helped in the fun, though hardly so to the wounded men on our own side, shot by their comrades, who were picked up after the firing ceased.

From that day, the spot where the scare

happened was called, in memory of it, "Fort Funk."

Amusing sights there were. Men in every stage of undress left their tents and bolted for the waggons. I saw one of our parsons struggle out of his tent as it fell, his only dress his shirt, a bundle of clothes in one hand, his boots and revolver in the other, and make for the shelter-trench, already bristling with bayonets. Here he missed his seat on a mealie-bag, and tumbled backwards on to the broad of his back. But matters at such times are too serious for joking, and so the occurrence gained but small notice.

If ever there was a war of "fatigues," the Zulu war was that one. The constant loading and unloading of waggons; the dragging the heavy machines into laager, not unfrequently altered after finished at every camping-ground; the eternal digging and trenching in ground often solid as stone itself; the tree-felling with axes that were soft and notched, and the piling them into waggons horrent with thorns of previous loads; the coal-getting, mealie-gathering, and last, and most distasteful of all, the collec-

tion of cow-dung, to supplement our scanty supply of fuel,—all were wearisome and ever-recurring sorts of “fatigues.”

The day after our scare at Fort Funk we moved on about nine miles, and camped on the banks of the Upoko river, a spot the most picturesque yet seen. We were told that it was a favourite resort of Cetewayo's in the hot weather, owing to the trees and constant water-supply. It is, moreover, the headquarters of Sirayo, his most devoted follower, and at the same time one most hostile to the English—his sons having brought about proximately the present state of affairs by the seizure of a wretched woman in Natal territory on some pretence not admitted by the Government.

The camp was pitched on a somewhat steep slope towards the river, which was little else but a trickle over sand and stones some half-mile distant. Beyond it was the great mass of Ibabanango,—a vast assemblage of flat-topped hills, split in all directions by valleys, above which the rounded top of the central mountain lifted up, and pointed to our onward way. The base of the hills was scored by terrible-

looking dongas, stretching in every direction, deep and impassable. Their sides were somewhat thickly wooded by mimosa-bushes, kraals hid away between them. Mealie-fields were abundant. Four waggons taken at Isandlwana stood in a kraal nearly in front of us, their woodwork perfect, the paint as bright a green as the day they were lost. Near these was a patch of herbage dirtier than the ever-present grass—the field of mealies in which Frith was shot.

Everywhere were caves and holes cunningly hidden in the sides of the dongas, and amongst them our native allies were busy. Isandlwana relics were abundant. Martini cartridges ripped open to get at the powder; a new saddle and saddle-bags complete; rifles of 24th and 80th Regiments; soldiers' valises; a gunner's oil-bottle; a pair of ammunition-boots; a pearl-handled knife; a cake of soap and a sponge, the last two very puzzling to the possessors. In one of these burrows six ill-looking Kafirs were caught, and only just saved their lives, on its being proved that they were drivers in our own camp. This was an event which

showed plainly the ease with which the Zulus obtained information of our doings : the men taken, if not actual spies, were quite ready to turn their knowledge to account if captured by the enemy.

On the day of our arrival at the Upoko, a man on a white horse, put down as Sirayo himself, gathered the people of the district, the same who on the previous day had fired on our cavalry, and brought some thousands of them boldly down to the drift which led to our advancing column. On seeing them, Lord Chelmsford sent back for a couple of guns, which at once opened fire on the Zulus. The first shot fell short, and did not stop them ; at the second they hesitated ; the third dropping in the middle of them, turned the whole lot, and made them bolt to a man. The last we saw of them, they were swarming up the grassy spurs of the hill in rear of their kraals, like ants in a hurry.

The country was subsequently overhauled by the first brigade and some cavalry, and the whole nest of them cleared away. Their kraals, after being burnt, were searched for buried grain, which is stored in holes dug here and there in the cattle-

pens. The holes are neatly made, some eight feet in depth, shaped like jars, with a narrow neck, the opening just large enough to admit a boy. The inside is carefully plastered, and the mealies being poured in, the orifice is closed with a flat stone, strewn with earth and manure to escape observation; and it was one of the curious sights of the campaign to watch "Tommy Atkins" poking about gravely with his bayonet up to the hilt in cow-dung. It happened to be Trinity Sunday when this was being done. On the right, Buller's Horse were feeling their way up a valley, leaving behind them columns of smoke, the marks where kraals had been. On the left were the 17th advancing in troops across a ridge, flanked by the guns of a battery, the shells bursting against the side of the mountain in puffs of smoke; burning kraals on that side also. In front of the laager, on the slope which led to the river, beyond which the panorama was spread, were the troops of the second brigade, formed into a square for church service. Near at hand was a smaller body standing uncovered in front of a tent in which the Roman Catholic priest was praying

before a temporary altar, gay with red velvet and brass candlesticks ; while behind, again, a lesser group still was chanting a hymn—Wesleyans led by their own minister in plain clothes.

In front, fire and death ; far away, great Inhlazatsi ; nearer, and to our left, Ibabanango, its summit just showing above the level hill-tops at its base ; then the steep-sided Isipezi, and the sharp peak of Alarm Hill, from either of which Isandlwana is plainly visible : such were our surroundings on that Sunday morning.

Everywhere the same sea of dry grass, broken only by quartz-reefs and piles of boulders. A ghastly land, where life was just possible, sustained on milk and mealie-meal. Not a fruit-tree in the land save at the few missionaries' gardens. Even the banana, ever present, is not there ; wild-flowers here and there in patches ; a few birds, songless altogether ; just life, and nothing more.

The people want little more than guns, and cattle with which to purchase wives. Clothing is not wanted among people who go naked. Books are useless with a nation whose language

is unwritten. Wealth was there almost certain death. The king heard of a subject who owned a hundred cattle more than the rest. That night an Impi was at his kraal, and surrounded it. A signal was given, and the huts were fired; the wretches flying from the flames were met by the assegais of the soldiers, and stabbed to death. Not one escaped. Men, women, children, and live things, even the dogs, were killed; and the work was only finished when the silence of death was over the accursed spot. Then the warriors returned to the king with the cattle they had taken, and departed to their own kraals, only to be in turn the victims of his will. Hence arose the custom, common in Cetewayo's day, for the headman of a village every night of his life to "sleep in the grass"—in other words, to hide away from his own house at nights.

Our camp on the Upoko was the scene of fresh delay, and consequent discontent. Wood's column, supplemented by a portion of the Division, was sent back to Natal for more supplies, and streamed past on its backward road as Lord Chelmsford moved towards that

position. The two columns meeting presented a remarkable and strange appearance. Regiments, mixed up with the everlasting waggons, moved separately; natives were everywhere; in Wood's column the bands were playing lively tunes, waking up the silence, and rendering matters a little less dismal: on all sides was a vast crowd, seemingly without any approach to order; yet on arrival in camp every one settled down into the place allotted.

While this force was absent, extra precautions against attack were taken with the Division, it being naturally thought that the enemy would take advantage of the divided army. The laager was strongly trenched, and dynamite placed under the rocks which commanded it, each charge connected with a battery in the camp.

Native spies, too, were freely used. Three of them were induced to start on this somewhat ticklish service, the preparations being first a feed, when each put away some seven pounds of beef. In the evening they were ready to start, doing so with much show, and making for a spot at some distance from the

camp, where they took off what clothes they had, and hid them away in an ant-bear's hole. Then followed a coat of grease to prevent capture, and the preliminaries were completed. Usually they made for some hill, selecting a place on its summit where they can hide in tolerable safety, and from which the country to be watched can be well observed. This found, they stay there for a couple of days, descending the third night, and making for the camp with any news they have gathered. Should they fall in with the Zulus, they have been coached up in their replies—their guns came from Isandlwana, where they fought in the ranks of the Inbube or the Udududu regiment; they have the names of the officers of these off pat, with other like general information, being careful to mention those corps only which are recruited in distant parts of the country. With all their adroitness, they were apt to be assegaied now and then when detected; the great thing in their favour being that, native-like, they are the most consummate liars. So much so are they, that it was often more than doubtful whether the whole story of