

scrawled in the red earth; here and there a kraal in the middle of mealie-fields. Two thorn-trees stood out alone to relieve the monotony. Down the middle ran a small river, its water sparkling with life and freedom. Further away the valley was brought to an abrupt end by a range of mountains, rising in masses, bare, and seemingly precipitous. A fringe of forest-trees ran along their crest, showing that the southern slopes were wooded. These are the hills which look down on the Tugela, and across the plain on which Etshowe nestles, full fifty miles away.

But in all that wonderful panorama there was not a sign of life. The beaten ground about the kraals was empty; the fields were without labourers, the pasturage without cattle. Even the very dogs were gone with their absent masters.

Following the valley-line on our side, we found the granite built into a wall fifty feet high, with blocks as neatly squared as if by hand—the hands of giants. In every crevice were flame-coloured flowers, erect, and tinting the grey stone with a pale reflection of their own

glories. A troop of a dozen buck bounded out of a grassy shelf, throwing back their heads and whisking their short white tails. Below was the valley we had come by, lit up with the fire of burning kraals or the blazing grass, across which the flames licked like a great wave. The Lancers, off-saddled nearer at hand in a mealie-field, looked like coloured dots. Beyond, again, Ibabanango rose and hid any further view. The hills were dotted with yellow "everlastings," and the moist crannies by the stream nourished clusters of maidenhair ferns. A brace of wild duck floated in a pool hard by, and some half-dozen paaw rose from a recently-burnt patch and flapped away. Quail started everywhere under foot; and a species of plover, with black-and-white plumage, was temptingly tame. On another hill was an ant-bear taking his evening stroll. He was a curious creature, as large as a good-sized dog, with a round back, long snout, and thick bushy hair and tail. When we rode for him, he made off at a good pace—skipping and rolling, and flinging his nose in the air most comically. In the end he turned sharp into his hole, and we could

hear him digging furiously, and grunting, as if terribly put out at being hustled so rudely.

As we left the country, now divested of its own inhabitants, the game began to return. On our way to Ulundi we seldom saw any; now buck and paaw were quite plentiful. Wild turkeys—as they call a kind of black curlew—were not uncommon: they have a blood-red knob on their heads as large as a pigeon's egg, which probably gives them their name, and are, moreover, capital eating. In the rocks live little "rock-rabbits"—strange, grey-coated creatures, without tails, and sharp teeth—probably the conies mentioned in the Bible. Besides these were a few hares, reddish-brown, and very tiny; here and there a troop of hartebeests, and monkeys in the cliffs: so the country is not altogether desolate.

Westward, across a steep range of hills, broken into many valleys and stone-faced terraces, lies the plain about Isandlwana—the rock itself rising some ten miles away. The range we crossed ends to the north in the grand Isipezi—its precipices and crag-terraces hard and distinct in the clear atmosphere. In front is the wide

valley, sloping down gently towards the Buffalo, running unseen between steep banks. The farther side of this great plain rises to meet a low, broken ridge, which grows bolder and more mountainous towards Isandlwana, and was the cover behind which the Zulus came on that day. The whole valley, some seven miles in breadth, was carpeted with yellow grass, waving slowly to and fro as the wind stole across. Here and there a reef of rocks cropped up; a donga, sharply cut out of the prevailing tint, straggled down the centre in an endless maze of twists and turns. To all appearance, the floor of the valley is entirely level; yet on closer acquaintance you find it is made up of folds of ground large enough to conceal an army—the level bits are singularly few. Dingy patches are the mealie-fields, in which the ripe grain was still uncut: the whole place far and near appeared accursed. Even the Zulus have forsaken it; and the few ant-hills which from their size alone you know to be kraals, seem to have been long deserted. In the whole landscape there was no sign of life.

Towards the Buffalo the valley widens, though

it still retains its uniform slope and tint, which, from utter sameness, is wearisome, and the eye rests for relief on the plateau beyond, which is Natal.

In the same direction is Isandlwana, seemingly detached from the rest by some freak of nature. Black and solitary, it stands alone. Its shape, like the roof of a pent-house or lean-to, is lit up with the morning sun on this the Zulu side, and every crack and cranny is distinct.

The tramp to it through the long grass—over beds of loose stones, ant-bear holes, and dongas—was tedious; and the everlasting folds of ground which rose one after the other in front, tiring to a degree. But still, whatever were the accidents of ground we met, there was that strange landmark ever before us.

On nearing the rock, you cross a river over a drift cut in its banks for the passage of waggon. A little farther a second stream is passed, its bed made practicable with stones. Dongas across the path have been levelled, and a track made over them. The road is no longer on the pathless veldt, but is distinctly marked. It was, in fact, laid out, and the drifts cut, by the army

which lay there in January, and was to have led it onward into Zululand.

From the point where the road is met, it leads straight for the hill : on the right, full half a mile away, is an artillery-cart, hauled thus far by the Zulus, and then abandoned in the long grass. A gun-limber, marked N. 5, R.A.—the number of the 7-pounder battery we lost—stood in the middle of the road, at least a mile from the camp : one limber-box is still in its place, the other, broken open, lies a hundred yards farther on. Near this limber, in a tuft of grass just off the road, lay, full length, the body of a Zulu warrior. It was little but a skeleton ; but the skin still stretched tightly across the frame and face, while a plume of black ostrich - feathers adhered to the scalp.

After this one the bodies lay more thickly,—all in patches of rank grass six feet high. Where the men fell in groups, the grass is very thick. The Carabineers, who fell fighting bravely in a circle, with Durnford in the midst, lay a little apart. Wherever an ox or a horse had been killed, there was a patch ; and the whole field was covered with these tell-tale patches.

Leaving the gun-carriage behind, the road comes on a kraal and its mealie-garden. The kraal was destroyed, but the Kafir corn in the field round it was ripe and nodding. Close in front was the slope which lies under the rock, and the neck of land, a couple of hundred yards in length, connecting it with the conical hill which looks down on Fugitives' Drift. Both were studded with waggons, scattered about in the utmost confusion,—some empty, many loaded up—amongst the latter several containing grain; the bags had rotted, and the oats falling out, had filled the waggons with black mould, from which the green leaves were springing brightly. In many waggons the oxen had been assegaied in the yokes, and lay in two ghastly rows, eight of a side, just as they fell. The skins were perfect, while through the assegai-holes could be seen their last meal, now turned into chopped hay,—for all the world looking as if they had been stuffed.

Horses lay like the oxen, stabbed at their picket-lines; some knee-haltered,—killed as they hobbled away, their necks still tied to their fore-leg. By the side of some lay the black grooms,

mere skeletons,—the bit of red rag round their skulls showing which side they were on. The soldiers had nearly all been buried by their own regiment, which asked to pay this last act of respect to its own dead. The ground was too hard to dig graves in it: the bodies were laid in a donga, and the sides thrown in to cover them. What bodies there were had their clothes on, stripped only, in cases, of the red coats. The horrid picture that appeared, in which the bodies were shown lying almost naked, with an assegai sticking out of each, is an utter fabrication.

On one side was the line of cooking-places, —the ashes lying in heaps, the firewood piled alongside. In the centre of the camp were mealie fields and kraals, since destroyed. On the left, as you faced the hill, were the round places on which stood the officers' tents. These had been cut off all round the bottom, and the top removed; but the circle remained strewed with cheque-books, army-lists, ledgers, and heaps of papers. In one stood a camp-bed, in another White's campaigning-bag; boots lay everywhere; brushes were very plentiful; camp-

chairs, a pair of cricketing-pads, a Prayer-book, lay about, mixed up with ammunition-boxes and ox-hide shields. These ammunition-boxes lay everywhere, far and near, all empty,—the tin-case ripped open, as if the Zulus, in their eagerness for the contents, had rushed off out of the *mêlée*, and hastily broken them open. Opposite the officers' tents were the men's, cut down, as were the former,—littered with bayonet-scabbards, thick boots, pocket-ledgers, pipe-clay boxes, and all the small trifles which a soldier possesses.

The band-tent was strewn with music; and on one side lay the half of a large brass instrument, sadly battered. The hospital was easily distinguished,—each medicine-chest, with its red cross, being tossed about, burst open, and the contents scattered round.

All amongst this *débris* were waggons, dead drivers, oxen, horses, and heaps of litter blown by the wind; and most unmistakable of all, the clumps of tall grass, bright yellow, each hiding its own dead. Grain in patches was springing near the horse-lines, green and beautiful; beyond, the waving sea of yellow,—never still—always the same.

The position chosen for the camp is worth noting, as it has been foolishly spoken against as one of the primary causes which led to our defeat there.

Standing among the *débris* of the tents, facing Zululand, and with our backs against the rock, we see on the left, about a mile distant, the range of hills on which the Zulus deployed for the attack when first seen. A ridge, steep towards the rear, connects this range with the rock; itself some 400 yards long, and perhaps half as much in height, if so much—only to be climbed with difficulty at one point. Behind us on the right is the neck which connects the rock with a round hill on the extreme right of the camp, and close to it. This neck is only 100 yards across, and looks down on the road which leads to Rorke's Drift; the ascent to it is perfectly bare, open, and very steep. In front the ground slopes away into Zululand in a gradual slope, quite open and unprovided with cover. It was fifteen miles in this direction, among the hills which enclose the valley, that Lord Chelmsford and the greater part of the army spent the day.

On the extreme right, the Buffalo, running

between banks almost perpendicular, closed the way.

Thus, had the troops held the neck with a slight force supported by an intrenchment, an enemy would have found the front of the camp alone open to an attack—their advance, moreover, having to climb a sloping glacis, perfectly open on all sides, and specially adapted to artillery or musketry fire. No better position need have been wished for had only precautions been taken against an attack from the rear; indeed those left behind by Lord Chelmsford were in rare spirits at seeing the Zulus coming on, thinking it the height of good-luck to be in for such a “good thing” while more than half of them were away. And it was only when the “right horn” of the attack showed over the neck and took them in flank and rear that the English felt otherwise. Five minutes after this terrible “horn” came up and the cries had ceased, there was not a white man alive at Isandlwana.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CAMPAIGN OVER—IT BEGINS AGAIN—A ZULU RACE-MEETING—DABLÉ AMANZÉ—A CROSS-COUNTRY RIDE—FORT EVELYN—KWAMAGWASA—GRAVE OF SCOTT-DOUGLAS—A BEAUTIFUL SCENE—OUR HOSTAGES—GOOD-LOOKING ZULUS—A REVOLVER EXAMINED—SEMI-TROPICAL SCENERY—AN UNWILLING GUIDE.

Now no sooner had Ulundi been fought than every one who was able to get away did so. It was quite evident that the Zulu war was over. The new arrivals with Sir Garnet were somewhere down country hoping for a fight, could one be got up; but it could not be done. The Zulus to a man said they had had enough; we were the "best men;" we had licked them fairly, so now we might go away. And go away we did. Forbes led the way; the rest of the correspondents followed fast. The flying column was broken up; and the 13th, after three years "on

the veldt," was off home. Wood and Buller, clever fellows, followed. Lord Chelmsford and his staff were bound seaward. Stores, piled high in the roadside forts, were loaded and sent back whence they came. Our old friends the Native Contingent—Searle's Anabomvas, the Swazies with their feather-plumes, and Shepstone's Basutos, invaluable as scouts—pass down to be disbanded; and we did not lose these old friends without some feeling of sadness. Weary nights had we spent on picket alongside one another; miles had we trudged round their sentries behind an Induna, who, with a blanket only as his uniform, brushed over the stones and wringing grass. Morning after morning, when we were shivering in the shelter-trench round the laager, have we watched the curious procession of their companies, each headed by a man with a small calico flag—each native rolled up into a shapeless bundle, his legs sticking out of one end, his sheaf of assegais out of the other. Time after time had we watched the nimble Basutos canter out at early dawn, to scour the country, and light our way by the blaze of burning kraals. We knew all their watchwords—

“Koss,” “Queen,” “Number nine”—and had called out in fun to them a hundred times, “Halloa, Johnnie !” They were all Johnnie to the soldiers, and the soldiers all Johnnies to them. Even the Zulus had picked up the term, and called out as they came on at Kambula, “Don’t run away, Johnnie ; we want to speak to you.” Buller’s followers, too, went fast, and we missed their rough and ready faces ; their velveteen uniforms, belted with the invariable bandoleer of cartridges ; and their shaggy little ponies, seemingly never used up, always ready for a gallop.

Then we got up a race-meeting at the Upoko, where was General Newdigate and his rapidly melting division—the card including “The Assegai Stakes,” “The Intombie or Maiden Cup,” “The Slow Barney Handicap,” and “The Ketchwayo Consolation Welter.” Twenty-five Basutos, I remember, started for one race, and tumbled off nearly to a man at the first fence.

Never did a body of men feel more inclined to join in the cry, “The king is dead !—long live the king !” than did we. A month or more previously we had set our faces towards home after Ulundi. The Zulu army had been defeated,

its organisation broken, Cetewayo a fugitive. Nothing more for the victors but to march away to civilisation, to be *fêted* on their success. When lo! up starts a fresh general, and inaugurates a fresh campaign. There would be fighting yet. Cetewayo had bolted, but might reorganise a fresh army. His last stronghold, Amanzé Kanzé, remained untaken. His best lieutenant, Dablé Amanzé, had swaggered into the coast column more like a conqueror than a beaten nigger chief, and had demanded clothes. They gave him an ulster, and he demanded drink. They gave him a glass of "square-face," which he drank, and asked for more. They said it was a teetotal camp, and could give no more; on which the chief in his ulster threw down seven sovereigns, part of his Isandlwana gains, and told them that would pay for it. A few antiquated German guns, some blunderbusses, and half-a-dozen old sporting-guns, either burst or broken, had been given up, and nothing else. So the war must begin again.

Things being thus rather at a stand-still, I took the opportunity to ride to Etshowe through the country not yet visited lying between Kwa-

magwasa and the Umlatoosi, across which it was hoped a road existed. It was a long ride, nearly 160 miles there and back, and but scant accommodation on the way, but the outfit was not extensive.

A blanket was folded under the saddle, another with the greatcoat rolled up, was strapped on behind. A feed of corn was hitched on one side; three squares of soup, a box of sardines, a flask of rum, and a toothbrush on the other: and this must last nine days. Board and lodging, on the ground, could be counted on at our posts: were there none, I had the veldt, good honest grass, with a few bushes for a fire, and, it was to be hoped, a fine sky.

The first part of my road was that traversed by the army in its advance to Ulundi. What grass there had been left by our cattle was burnt by the acre. Dead oxen lay about in ghastly attitudes, some preserved by the air just as they had fallen, others a heap of half-picked bones. Hungry dogs slunk away into the nearest donga, and vultures were perching on the rocks over the site of the camping-grounds.

The track was worn and polished across the grass by the traffic; wheel-tracks were everywhere, crossing and recrossing, straggling apart over the level bits, and drawing close together at the hills and defiles.

Every few miles came a patch, blacker and more untidy than the surrounding hills, marking the camps we occupied going or coming back. The shelter-trench was still round them, the corners marked by the epaulments thrown up by the artillery. Scattered about were glittering things, shining with dazzling brightness, for many a mile. They were the tin biscuit-cases, long since emptied, and left behind. My first night was spent at Fort Evelyn, our last post towards the front. The thing most striking about the Fort to a stranger was its ditch, which had come upon so many huge boulders in its course round the parapet as to be but a ditch by courtesy.

A large dog and a small mouse spent the night with me. The former was a monster with two expressionless wall-eyes and a benevolent face. The first time he came in, his nose got between my legs as I was turning in, and

nearly capsized me. The second attempt landed him on my rugs in comfortable slumber. The third found him creeping through a place in the tent where the peg was wanting. The rest of the night he devoted to attempts at forcing an entrance at various points. In the intervals the mouse visited every part of the interior, and showed its satisfaction generally by a most indefatigable scratching.

Starting with the post next morning, a party of half-a-dozen irregulars leading ponies with the bags—for the road beyond the fort was not safe for single travellers—I bade adieu to my night's companions, and climbed the long ridge which leads to Entonjaneni. Clouds hung about the mountains, and hid out much that was ugly. Every here and there we passed the black and dismal camp-grounds. What view there was, was monotonous and depressing. There was no life, save a few lung-sick oxen left behind to die, and the sneaking curs. No trees, no bushes, no water. Nothing but dead grass, worn and polished by ten thousand feet.

Half-way we met a party from the post ahead, and having transferred the bags, rode on again,

turning off the beaten track before long, and following a ridge which led due south to Kwamagwasa.

After riding along this new track for some time, the fog lifted, and a fresh country lay about. The hills are more rounded, the valleys deeper and narrower, the soil less arid, black and peaty where the streams cut through it, while dongas were almost entirely wanting.

Patches of bright indian-red clothed the hillsides ; grass was springing fresh and green beside the red ; the old familiar brown had vanished, to be replaced by a sheet of colour spread everywhere. Sunshine alone was wanting ; colours in a fog are apt to become a little washy.

My escort were four Volunteer Horse, rough-looking men at first sight, in cord suits of a warm brown faced with scarlet, mounted on little ponies that somehow or other managed to scramble along at a fine pace. On closer acquaintance the troopers proved to be gentlemen, unshaved, not unlikely unwashed too ; was I not all but the same ? There was an ex-captain of the line, a young draughtsman

from an engineer's office, and a couple of medical students from Trinity College. All had come out for the fun of the thing; some had been promised commissions, others nothing; all had in the end to be content with berths in the Volunteer Horse, to be dressed in brown cords, and to carry the mails.

In the gullies small clumps of vegetation showed up as we went along—wild plantains, tree-ferns, and broad-leaved bushes, on which the eye dwelt with delight after the treeless waste we had left. On the sky-line in front, some dark forest-trees were prominent objects in the view, and marked the place where Kwamagwasa stood.

Before the war, Kwamagwasa was a mission-station; and as the trees round it grew more distinct, and the fog was left behind to cling to the bleak uplands of Entonjaneni, it soon became apparent that the missionaries had hit upon a chosen spot.

Round about, the land, smoothed of all creases, rolled itself into endless hills and valleys; nowhere was there a level bit. The road coiled endlessly along the crest of a ridge, rising and de-

scending again for ever. Streams began to show in the hollows, betrayed as often by the bright foliage which hid them as by the sparkle of their water. Tree-ferns grew more luxuriantly, leading on to the dark trees in front, with which the line of a new watershed was fringed.

In the foreground were the blue-gum trees sheltering the mission-houses and church; to the left of these were the tents of the troops stationed there, dotting the slope of a conical hill; between the two points were two spurs, well wooded, containing a valley which ran away for miles, ever growing broader, to the distant hills. On a hill close by, the signallers were flashing messages to Fort Evelyn, the answering flash looking like Venus tethered to a hill-top. A small enclosure had been made on the top of an adjacent hill, and was known as Fort Robertson, after the missionary who lived opposite. Now his church was pulled down, his house was in ruins, and he himself lived in a waggon near Etshowe.

These ruins stand in the middle of a garden full of handsome shrubs; walks, shaded by blue-gums, lead to outlying houses perched

romantically wherever a view was to be seen ; fruit-trees grew luxuriantly ; a patent plough lay in the corner of what was once the stable.

The buildings were of brick, those used in the church being better finished than the rest. At the end of the schoolhouse was a tablet, still in its place, telling that it was built in 1874 by Bishop Wilkinson. In the centre of the garden hung the church-bell, untouched by the Zulus, though hardly so much respected by our own men, who carried it off, and were not a little surprised when they were made to restore it. Sheets of corrugated iron strewed the ground. A patch, on which grew a crop of Cape gooseberries, was in one corner, and were found to make most excellent jam. Everywhere were charming peeps of hill and valley. Forest-trees grew everywhere near about. Kraals were plentiful : in many, Zulus had ventured to live once more, as the smoke curling upwards told. Herds of Zulu cattle, an unwonted sight, dotted the hills. Everything told of returning peace.

Birds fluttered among the trees, twittering as much of a song as a Zulu bird is capable of.

Flocks of scarlet-billed Avadavats flew about, dressed in the speckled brown coats which have given them the name of nutmeg-birds; thrushes, and Indian bulbuls with the bunch of yellow feathers under their tails; a sun-bird, like a gay humming-bird, gorgeous in green and golden ruffles. Spotted shrikes were plentiful, and quaker-coated doves cooed incessantly in the undergrowth.

Noticeable among the shrubs was the poinsettia, with its scarlet leaves; weeping-willows, then leafless; and above all, a tree whose leaves and branches were plated with frosted silver. The foliage grew like plumes, two feet or more high, shaped like the feathers in our hussars' busbies. It was of the pine species, and its cones, of a bright silver-grey, clung to the sides of the plumes. Some, riper than others, had opened, and between each of the scales was a puff of eider-down. The beauty of the tree proved its destruction, as the soldiers each carried away a bit in token of remembrance.

A sadder reminiscence are two rough wooden crosses which mark the graves of Lieutenant Scott-Douglas and Corporal W. Cotter, the last

a trooper of the 17th Lancers. Scott-Douglas, who was little more than a boy, was employed in signalling, and losing his way in the fog, on his way to the column, wandered thus far with his orderly. Ulundi had not then been fought, and the pair were caught by the Zulus and assegaid close to the spot where they now lie buried. Their graves are on a spur of the hill which stands out from the ridge on which Fort Robertson was built; around them are vast uplands waving high with grass; above are two trees, quaintly-shaped aloes, the only trees in that direction for many miles. Not a sound disturbs their rest; no foot is likely to come that way; silent and sad are the crosses over the soldier lad and his dead comrade. His death was one of our most sad episodes, and he was mourned by many.

All round Kwamagwasa the Zulus had come back in considerable numbers, bringing with them their women and cattle; indeed it was doubtful if many had not remained the whole time.

The method we adopted with them was to let them know that if they came into the fort and

gave up their arms, passes guaranteeing their safety would be issued to them, and they would be allowed to go back to their kraals, which were to be subject to visits now and again to ascertain how they were conducting themselves, and that no more than the stipulated number allowed to return were living in the kraal; and with this system they appeared to be quite contented.

Their independence was capital, and almost laughable. Not one would sell us anything except at most exorbitant prices. They said out, without the smallest hesitation, "What more do you English want? You have beaten us fairly—we own that you are better at fighting than we are—so now go away!" As to compensation sought for by us, we might as well have asked for the moon. Like boys at a public school, they had had a fight to see who was the "best man:" that decided, nothing was left but to be the greatest friends, and be off. A Zulu offered to sell me an old cock, fearfully scraggy, in exchange for a pickaxe; while another refused a shilling for a bracelet made of a few common shells.

The regular road from Kwamagwasa to Natal bends due east, in order to descend the mountainous plateau to the valley of the Umlatoosi at St Paul's, the only point practicable for wag-gons. From that station it descends, crosses the river, and winds west again to Etshowe, some forty miles distant.

The trees round this latter place were plainly visible from Kwamagwasa, in a direct line due south; and it was this line which I had to follow. So, with an escort of half-a-dozen of my former Irregular friends, I bade farewell to the pretty Mission and its most hospitable garrison, and rode off, trusting to return on the third day.

At first we rode to a kraal a few miles on our way to obtain a guide, which, after some difficulty, we succeeded in. Then the head-man of the village was told to prepare with a friend to return to the fort, and to remain there as hostages for our safety. Anything happening to us was to be visited on the pair. That business settled after a tremendous wrangle, in which every old woman of the kraal took an animated part, we wished good-bye to those

going back, and turning our own ponies' heads down a small precipice, over which our guide led at a trot, made for a distant mountain-range.

In front of our party trotted the Zulu guide, a fine strapping fellow, wearing an under-vest, probably taken at Isandlwana, and a black-and-white "moucha." On either side of him rode a trooper with his carbine unslung. The sun shone brightly; the grass was soft and green under our ponies' feet; the streams ran away with a tinkle, reminding us of home: all gave promise of a pleasant day.

Very broken was the country,—endless hill, endless dale, all grass-clad: cruel hills, which we had to climb; delightfully picturesque dingles, holding tree-ferns in profusion, which we went down into. On many of the spurs kraals were perched, surrounded by herds of black-and-white cattle, goats, and a few sheep. In all were Zulus. Some seemed content to watch us from a distance, others started at a run to catch us up.

One stalwart fellow came up after a run of good two miles as little out of breath as if he had only stepped across the road. On asking him what he wanted, he replied—

“Only to look at you. When my king comes this way, I run out to look at him, or he kills me: so I come out to look at you.” And look he did, every tooth in his jaws shining like ivory.

The people we met had a more pleasing expression, with far less of the cruel cunning in their faces, than those farther north. All were fat and flourishing. The horrors of war evidently had not penetrated to this out-of-the-way place.

All wore the “moucha” only—a kilt before and behind, made of black-and-white goatskin—and carried a snuffbox in a hole drilled through the lobe of one ear. Most of those who came to stare were lads of twenty or thereabouts; the married men, known by the ring round the head, were much more dignified, and squatted in groups round the kraals. At these were always black, merry urchins, staring timidly from a distance, and gaunt Kafir dogs, who looked upon us as enemies, and followed us barking and snarling most furiously.

I can liken the broken character of the country to nothing better than a stiff sheet

of brown paper which has been rolled into a ball and then spread out again. The sheet thus treated would be a reproduction in miniature of the general features about us, except that the creases should run, not any way at all, but in a certain order.

The principal spurs sprang from the main ridge behind us, always sloping downwards and towards the same direction. From these spread other spurs, smaller and at right angles; while these, again, had their own little spurs standing out in exactly the same manner. Down one of these secondary spurs our path lay—always descending towards an elevated valley which lay across the foot of this jumble of hill and dale, itself topped again on the farther side by a range of mountains. The Zulu name for this range is Langwé, and from its crest you look down on the valley of the Umlatoosi, over which we had to go.

The track, invisible to us, wound over endless knolls, and across valleys with concave sides, very steep. Kraals were perched on elevated points; herds of cattle fed in the bottoms. The valleys towards the west held

good-sized streams; patches of emerald on their banks told of water-meadows and rich pasture. Above these oases the mountains were rugged, and their sides seamed with water-courses. Black spots beyond, again, are forest-trees—an earnest of more to come. Everywhere else the grass threw its smooth colour over all. The mountain-top was decked out with flowers, amongst them bosses of heather with scarlet bells, double the size of our home varieties.

Another valley, across which we wind over a neck left obligingly for wayfarers, and we climb a second ridge. Far in front, on the very crest, we see a nick in the hill-top, evidently our road; and for this point the natives of the country appeared to be making also. Everywhere we saw bands of them hurrying along the ridges which led to the nick. Even in rear were more coming on in Indian file, at a run, as if afraid they might be late. I counted fifty at one time thus converging.

Our own road led along the slope of a spur which ever edged upwards: on one side a nasty fall, a lot of bush and high grass above. None of the visitors had arms, as far as we could see;

so there was little cause for alarm. The men quietly unslung their carbines, while I undid the flap of my pistol, in case of necessity.

At length we came out on to a pleasant turf slope just under the crest of the main range; and on this we found our friends, some fifty or sixty Zulus, squatted in a circle. Not a gun or an assegai was to be seen. So we jumped off and loosened our girths, keeping together, and near the horses, while we went up to the Zulus and commenced a chat.

Among the whole was only one "ring-man" or chief—the rest were pleasant-looking youths, full of smiles and curiosity. Several sat with their arms round each other's necks; all were quite naked, except the "moucha" of black-and-white skin. It was just such a scene as the books on South African travel have given us by scores; but it was none the less interesting, now that we saw it in life and sunshine. Most of the youths admitted to have fought at Ulundi; many had been present at Kambula or Etshowe.

When I asked them if they wanted to go on, with the war, they shook their heads and said,

grinning broadly, "No, no; you kill too many of us. It isn't fair."

Another added, "You put iron all round your laager, and our bullets struck and fell back. I saw them fall."

"Well, do you want peace?" I went on.

"Yes; of course," burst out half-a-dozen in chorus. "You have beaten us,—that is quite right; now go away!"

On being asked why they did not give up their guns if they wanted peace, they declared that they had none, and that the Zulus fought at Ulundi with sticks only. I excited interest with my pistol, which I pulled out to amuse them; and when I opened the chamber and let the six bullets fall into my hand, telling them that I could kill as many Zulus as there were bullets, they took it as a capital joke, and laughed till they woke the echoes.

We persuaded them with difficulty to give us a fresh guide, and then started off for the little nick, now close to us. As we expected, a charming and extensive panorama lay below. At our feet lay the valley of the Umlatoosi, with the river flowing in the centre. Our feet rested on

the softest turf; immediately below, the mountain-side fell down, rugged and stone-strewn, dotted with clumps of mimosa, aloes, and cactus. The grass, in patches, was so high that it reached over our heads as we rode through. On the pass we had left perched the Zulus in a well-grouped picture. Beyond the river was a belt of bush thicker than on our side, which reached up to a table-land covered with yellow grass, and stretching for miles, till it ended in a low range of hills, dotted with clumps of trees, park-like in their arrangement, amongst which was our goal, Etshowe. The path, utterly stony, led down at an angle which would have puzzled most horses, and made our own sure-footed little beasts stop frequently to gather up their legs. The descent could not have been less than 2500 feet, and grew steeper the nearer we got to the bottom.

Arrived at last, safe and sound, we came upon a kraal, its head-man fearfully wrinkled, surrounded by a dozen younger fellows, who good-naturedly volunteered to show us the way to the ford across the river, not a hundred yards distant.

Here on an open spit of sand we "off-saddled," to give the horses a roll and a feed, while we lit a fire and boiled some coffee. Every movement was watched intently by the Zulus, who squatted near in a circle. A present of tobacco was highly relished, and they went into a tin of Chicago beef with a will. Sardines they spat out with a wry face; and one hulking fellow, with a splendid set of ivories, got rid of a biscuit in the long grass when he thought we were not looking, saying, when detected, that his teeth were not strong enough for that kind of bread. Tea they did not like; but then it was made of a preparation compressed into cakes with milk and sugar, and proved a most nasty imposition.

The valley we lunched in was narrow, shut in with hills and bush. In the middle the river, some twenty yards broad, and only as many inches in depth, rattled over a bed of large pebbles, between a fringe of reeds. It was a lonely spot to sit in, almost alone with a party of savages who owned to have been present at the cutting of our troops' throats not a fortnight previously.

They told us they had seen a white man on this same road once before, when a trader came up, his goods carried on men's heads.

"That was before the fights," one went on. "You English are brave people: you fight us, and beat us—and then you come along the road here by yourselves: you are not afraid, and we like you for it."

It was past one o'clock, and as yet we were but half-way, so we splashed across the river, bidding our Zulu friends good-bye, and soon were lost in the thick bush which covered the opposite bank.

At once we were transported into a new country. Semi-tropical vegetation was all around,—orchids clung to the trees, and let down their roots in dangling ropes; cacti and euphorbias, strangely branched, flung their weird arms across the sky. The ground was choked with undergrowth. Aloes stood stiffly, holding aloft flowers, like flames, coloured scarlet, yellow, and orange. Wild citrons hung on the branches in clusters. Grasses, taller than the trees, stood up sturdily in places, as if to bend was not in their nature; everywhere the flat-

topped mimosa-bushes, like big umbrellas, were scattered broadcast.

Through this wilderness the path led, over boulders piled into steps, under branches stuck over with prickles, until it reached the plateau some two miles from the river, and gave us breathing space.

Mile after mile we toiled through a sea of grass—the low hills dotted with forest-trees, to which we were bound, seeming to be as far off as ever. In front still trotted the two guides,—the lad last obtained lithe and active as a deer; the man lounging back at times to beg off, with signs that he was tired, and wanted to go home—all to no use.

Again the scene changed, and the plateau shrouded in long grass gave place to a plain-like valley, its bright surface one great meadow, mapped out with streams and their fringe of reeds, which went about from one clump of forest-trees to another. Herds of pretty Zulu cattle, not unlike Alderneys, were feeding about. Kraals surrounded by a stout stockade of branches, began to be plentiful; now and then a partridge or a “corân” got up under foot.

The valley was circular, perhaps ten miles across, entirely closed in by low hills, fringed in places with big trees. On the banks of one of the streams, we came upon a young Zulu girl bathing, who, directly she saw us, hastily tucked a bit of blue rag round her waist, and fled like a deer to her kraal, leaving her water-gourds on the ground. These our youngest Zulu guide picked up, taking them with him up to the kraal in which she had disappeared, and himself disappearing in turn with a mighty gallant air. The small attention was evidently pleasing to the maiden ; for when we got him out again, he stepped very high, smiling grandly, and showing us a handful of some queer eatables which she had given him.

All this time evening was growing apace, and no camp was to be seen. Mile upon mile we went, our horses stumbling along in the grass, too weary to look out for the ant-bear holes, till we pretty well gave up the search, and looked about for a convenient spot to camp out in.

But the guides kept on, and always pointed ahead, so we left it to them : as long as it was

light enough to see the track, we would follow—darkness alone should bring us to a stand-still.

The last glimmer of daylight was dying out over the western hills, when the lads gave a shout and pointed to a tiny light twinkling in the distance, and a row of tents standing near, white and just visible against the sky.

Needless to say we kicked our horses into the feeblest of canters, and went for the welcome sight.

Darker and darker grew the night, the ground got more broken, the road dipping all at once into a hollow, with dark patches of water-weeds coming up to meet us. Just then we came on a kraal with its groups sitting outside the huts. There was nothing for it but to single out one of the most talkative, separate him from the rest, and take him *nolens volens* to show the road. In vain he dodged right and left; we were too quick for him. He flung up his arms, and cried out that the road was as straight as a die—all to no use. He took to taunting us, shouting back, "I shall come back again, for I know my way." "All right, old fellow; very glad to hear you say so,"

was all the answer he got. Still onwards he was urged in front of our stumbling horses ; now crossing a sedge-grown stream on beds of reeds, which squelched under foot ; again crawling up banks slippery with moisture and recent cattle-tracks ; over stretches of veldt, or through dark clumps of trees, till all of a sudden the fires of a camp burnt up in front, and we heard the welcome sound of the picket as the men challenged us. A bit more, and we were received by a group of dark forms drawn up, with bayonets fixed, who, in answer to our question, " Whose camp's this ? " said in the well-known tones of old Ireland.—

" The camp of the 88th Connaught Rangers, sir ! "

Our long, tedious ride was over.

CHAPTER XVI.

ETSHOWE—THE BEST ROAD IN ZULULAND—ST PAUL'S—THE SEARCH AFTER CETEWAYO—BAKER RUSSELL—UNPLEASANT VISITORS—OLD SOLDIERS—FORTS CAMBRIDGE AND GEORGE—A SOUTH AFRICAN DRIFT—THE ZULUS SURRENDER—MAHANANA—MISSIONARIES—A ZULU'S ACCOUNT OF ULUNDI—ZULU ETIQUETTE.

THE Umlalazi, which we had struck, winds between banks turfed with the greenest sward, and brilliant with wild-flowers; now hiding itself in tall reeds or under clumps of magnificent trees; again lying in a silent pool under a rock-terrace verdant with ferns.

Some three miles south was the fort of Etshowe. Its approach is across meadow-land, fairly level, and dotted with groups of trees.

The fort consists of a strong earthen parapet and deeply-cut ditch, enclosing the church and mission station. One end is ornamented with

a row of blue-gum trees. Everything else the Zulus had destroyed. The church was pulled down; the houses had been wrecked and burnt; and the parapet, wherever possible, defaced. In the centre of the fort was a railing surrounding a couple of crosses,—one in stone to the memory of a missionary's wife killed by a fall from a waggon; the other in wood over a private in "The Buffs" killed in action.

Outside was the cemetery, enclosed by a neat palisade, and containing about thirty more graves. Beside the fort ran a stream—once shaded by forest-trees, now cut down—the water still lying in pools made by the garrison for bathing. Farther away was the signal-hill from whence messages were flashed across the Tugela by means of the most primitive heliograph. In front of all lay the sea, on that day looking leaden and uninviting. Still it was the sea, and on it lay our road home; so we gazed at it with pleasure, and longed for the day when we should see it closer still.

Wooden musket-racks stood mouldering along the parapet; blindages of cord hung across the embrasures; galleries which had led into the

ditch were falling in; the drawbridge at the main entrance creaked and shook as we went across; while four waggons stood deserted in front. Beyond all, the wire entanglements hung from their posts like cobwebs; everything was decaying or destroyed.

On my return to camp I heard a voice which called out, "Pat, fetch me a drink of water."

"Is it out of the basin, sir, I'm to take it?" asked Pat, with a brogue; "because it looks as if some one had washed in it—and it's a bit soiled!"

The road which leads past Etshowe towards the interior was as broad as a turnpike-road in England, by far the best in Zululand. Soon after leaving Etshowe it crosses the wooded hills which enclose the southern side of the Umlatoosi valley, and runs along their crest for some distance parallel to the river. The valley, here ten miles in width, was covered with white grass, dotted with tree-clumps or patches of forest. Kraals were perched about in abundance.

To the north of the valley rises a solid wall of mountains, bold, naked, and seemingly impassable. On the very top and away to the

right, we could just make out the tents of the Flying Column round St Paul's; but how we were to climb up to them was a puzzle.

On the banks of the river, over which a party of sappers was constructing a foot-bridge, a conductor had just killed a boa-constrictor which measured fourteen feet, and was hideous in proportion. In his palmy days Cetewayo used to preserve the game in this valley as an inducement to white men visiting him to go on farther. Buffalo were plentiful, and several had been shot by officers from St Paul's; while the spoor of eland and koodoo were abundant on the river-bank.

As we rode along I saw the grass by the way-side tossing as if some wild animal was moving about, and going into the place, found that it was caused by an ox in the last extremity of pain. From its back the skin had been torn in a large oval, evidently by the natives, who wanted it for a shield, and did not care to wait till life was extinct. A shot from my revolver put an end to its misery. After crossing the valley we wound under the high cliff on which the tents were pitched. Against its

face clung ferns and climbing-plants; below were forest-trees thickly planted and matted together with creepers. Then we turned a corner and commenced the ascent, made just practicable and no more by the Engineers. However, waggons did go up and down; so it must be better than it looked, or oxen in Africa must be most wonderful climbers.

From the top the valley looked like a whitey-brown sea, across which the shadows were playing. Everywhere trees were dotted, now singly, now in groups. Towards the east the valley widened out to meet a grey haze hiding everything—that haze was the Indian Ocean.

On my return to the Division on the Upoko, I found it in every stage of disintegration. The sick had been taken down to Ladysmith under escort of one of the corps. Another had joined the column which was to return to Ulundi, there to dictate peace to our late enemies; while a flying force under Baker Russell was got together to explore and subjugate the northern part of the land. The component parts of this last column came from all about. From St Paul's came the Irregulars, the *débris* of

Buller's cavalry; from Kwamagwasa came two companies of the 94th, the rest of the regiment having already gone on to recommence the old familiar game of fort-building. From Conference Hill came the King's Dragoons, with some Native Contingent brought back, grumbling terribly, from any place where they could be picked up.

We now had to suffer from the excessive liveliness of our new brooms—a disadvantage which must occur after a change of generals, such as we now underwent.

To us ragged ones, whose clothes were greasy and threadbare by four months' exposure, rain-spotted, mud-splashed, and crumpled into ill-looking folds by continual sleeping inside them, appeared many gaily-dressed young men, beautiful in staff dress, hung round with every appliance slung to straps like the wheel-harness of our artillery horses, well shaved, scented, with white cuffs and collars. The apparition accosts us jauntily, and introduces itself as So-and-so, sent on to show us how to do what had been previously left undone; and it soon was plain that the Zulu war had just begun.

The toil, the march, the dragging of waggons, the incessant watchfulness, the long days and sleepless nights; the pickets, when dew or rain wetted you through hours of darkness till dawn crystallised the drops into frost; the bullets which whistled; the silent faces, upturned, hurried into a grave,—these were things which might have happened, but were really of little consequence, now the war had commenced in earnest. This disposition had been made, the other had been arranged, everything would soon be put to rights, and the war so happily inaugurated would soon be brought to a successful termination.

The old oxen which have dragged us for many a mile to the tune of the lash are yoked to again, and set off drowsily to the well-known music; the gaily-appointed new-comers ride ahead on their brand-new chargers, and survey the country with all the interest so novel a sight produces, all the time wondering why the soldiers in rear don't keep up a little better, or omit to strike up a song. There is nothing takes the singing out of a man so much as a dusty road he knows by heart, and a pair of boots with the soles dropping out.

But if our spirits were low, our clothes were lower.

“Don’t you say ‘sir’ to an officer in your regiment when he addresses you?” I said to a man of the “King’s” who was answering my questions somewhat curtly in the camp.

“Beg your pardon, sir, but I did not know you were an officer,” said the man, saluting; and when I looked down on myself I felt the man had the best of it.

Wideawakes with broad brims were much patronised, and were not calculated to add to a military appearance. In the matter of trousers the men displayed the utmost ingenuity. Patches of sheepskin, of bullock-hide, of leather, gunny-bag, the oilcloth lining of bales, nothing came amiss. We used to laugh at the Volunteers; but they had bought suits of new “cords” at the “winkler’s” waggon, and were to us as is the Park lounge to the street Arab.

Constantly sleeping in the suit worn during the day had called up a host of unwelcome strangers. One young officer appeared in a piebald costume, the result of boiling his whole kit to exterminate them.

“Don’t come too close,” said another, as I made for his bed, the only seat available; “I’ve got ringworm!”

“Oh,” I answered, “I thought you meant the other thing.”

“Well, it isn’t; but I’ve had them too,” was the reply.

Another, to whom previously the name of the insect had been unknown, was seen to approach his servant holding his tunic at arm’s-length, when the following dialogue ensued:—

“Oh yes, sir, it’s one of they things the men has.”

“What do they do to you; do they bite you?”

“No, sir; they terrifies you.”

“What on earth do you mean?”

“Why, sir; they walks up and down you, and terrifies you, till you scratch them off, sir.”

Yet in all except this matter of dress our soldiers were twice the men they had been before Ulundi.

I remember some of them came to me previous to that time with a complaint that they had been served out with flour instead of bread

or biscuit, and wishing to know what they were to do with it, as at present it was quite useless to them, from their inability to cook. I explained that bread was made from flour, and that the sooner they set to work to make some, the sooner their breakfasts would be ready. My answer was not thought satisfactory, and for a day or two the flour was thrown away. Then the sharper fellows heated ant-hills, and laying the tin lid of a biscuit-box on the top, managed to bake some excellent scones. Others followed; and from that time the issue of flour was hailed with delight, owing to the various ways of cooking it.

Strolling round the cooking-places, I found, later on, a small town had sprung up; the men had copied the Zulus in making a few sticks into a kraal, which, thatched with dry grass, made a most comfortable snuggerly. At the door began the "broad-arrow" cooking-trench, terminating in a chimney made of old biscuit-boxes, from which the smoke escaped merrily; the cooks, fine fellows with beards, squatting inside the kraal, smoking their pipes and watching the dinners cooking outside, themselves

independent of the weather. A few months on, a campaign had taught these bits of experience to men who just previously at Aldershot had found it impossible to cook their potatoes in their skins, though provided with an excellent kitchen-range; "the weather was too frosty."

Everything now was fish in their net. As I walked along a river after a chance wild duck, a couple of soldiers ran up to me with the news that there was "a nice owl in the bushes there, sir." The "nice owl" I presently shot and presented to them; as they said, on departing with the poor bird, "It will be so good in to-morrow's stew!"

The new column under Baker Russell was to rendezvous at Fort Cambridge, a post lately made by the 94th some fifteen miles north of our old road, and a mile or two west of Intabankulu, a noted Zulu stronghold, as yet quite undisturbed. Between it and Fort Cambridge ran the White Umvolosi, crossed lower down by the army before Ulundi. Baker Russell himself was tall and soldier-like, a favourite with every one, and the coveted possessor of a Canadian coat of beaver-skin, admirably suited