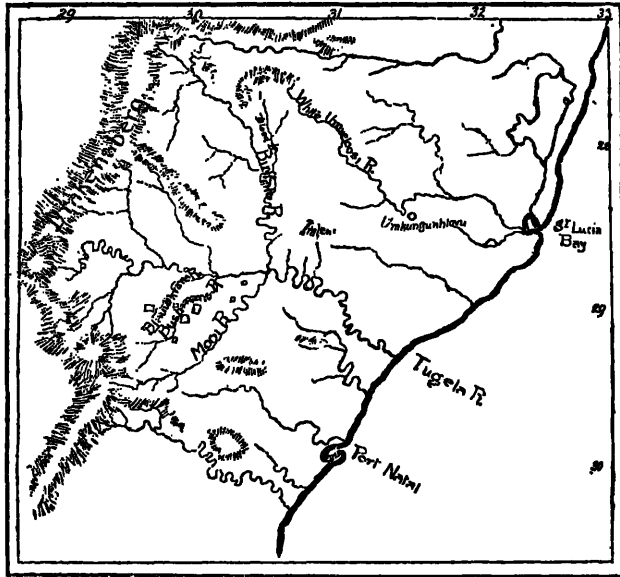


on 11th February,* surprised a small encampment of the Emigrants between the Mooi and Bushman's Rivers. Some of the waggons here stood a little to the south-east of the present village of Weenen, and others were further east still, on the banks of the Mooi River. All



Sketch-Map to illustrate the Narrative of the Massacres of 11th February, 1838. Laagers of Emigrant Farmers on Mooi, Bushman's, and Blauwkrans Rivers, with the Position of Umkunguhlova and of Italen.

The Massacre of
11th February.

these were surrounded in the early dawn, when the occupants were still asleep, by thousands of Zulu warriors, who, shouting their fierce battle-cry, rushed on the doomed people and butchered men, women, and children, without mercy, before they could make even an

* 17th, According to Theal.

attempt to defend themselves. Two or three lads were the only individuals who escaped. They fled to one of the other encampments on the Bushman's River, where preparations for defence were then quickly made. Large numbers of the Zulus went further up the Tugela to attack the Emigrant encampments on that stream and on the Blauwkrans River, while other attacking columns, thousands strong, threw themselves on the small laagers on the Bushman's River.

* * * * *

Sunrise on the Mooi, Bushman's, and Tugela Rivers Sunrise on the Mooi River. illumines a gruesome charnel-house of slaughter on the fury-swept veld. The flames from the burning waggons of the encampments light up the lineaments of the dead:—grey-haired men and young lads, their faces cold and blue, their bodies mutilated and ripped open by the sharp cutting edge of the assegai; women, with children at their breasts, lying in pools of clotted blood, their long hair dishevelled, their stony eyes turned towards heaven; and young girls and little children with their features disfigured, and their skulls broken by the murderers. There is no one left alive to weep for them.

As the sunlight bursts over the landscape, musket shots — the loud, reverberating roar of the heavy elephant guns—are heard higher up the Tugela. It is another death struggle. About four miles from where Colenso is now, at a spot that has since been named Moordkraal, the Bezuidenhouts are being attacked in Moordkraal. their encampment. One or two of them have barely time to fire a few shots and bring down the foremost

Zulus, when they are overwhelmed by hundreds of the enemy; and here, also, not one, except a young lad, escapes. He, the only survivor, finds his way to the laager of the Rensburgs on the Bushman River.

Blauwkrans. Soon another camp, that of the Prinsloos and Bothas, on the Blauwkrans River, is overwhelmed by the rush of thousands of Zulus. Pouring over the ridge of hills, between which and the stream this camp is situated, the savages swarm down on the hapless people. At daybreak, when one of the other camps was attacked, the reports of musket shots had been heard at this laager; but it was thought that Retief and the other delegates, who were then expected from Zululand, had returned and were announcing their arrival by firing off their guns. Now the cause of the firing is explained. In attempting to fight their way through to Maritz's laager on the Bushman's River, the Prinsloos, Bothas, Botmas,* and all with them, are surrounded, and another massacre ensues. Twenty women, who have tried to conceal themselves on one of the waggons, are all stabbed to death by the Zulu assegais. A small relief column from Doornkop, Retief's laager, fight their way through to the spot, and find every man, woman, and child, in Prinsloo's encampment dead, with the exception of a boy named Rousseau, and two young girls—Johanna Catharina van der Merwe, with twenty-six, and Margaretha Catharina Prinsloo with twenty-two assegai wounds. These children are found lying among the dead, and are the only people rescued by the relievers.

* Hofstede, p. 40.

All the small camps along the Mooi River and on the Blauwkrans River, as well as the encampment on the Tugela, have been taken by the Zulus. Lurid flames and thick clouds of smoke mark the places where the carnage has been greatest. On the Bushman's Bushman's River. River, a stream which flows north-eastward into the Tugela between the Mooi and the Blauwkrans Rivers, a fierce battle is in progress. On the left bank of that stream, the small laager of the Van den Bergs is soon overpowered by the enemy, and its handful of defenders all killed. The encampment of the Loggenbergs, on the right hand bank of the river, shares the same fate. But the Rensburgs—eighteen men only—stand their ground and beat off the Zulus. Soon after daybreak their camp had been aroused by the young fugitive, Daniel Bezuidenhout. He brought the tidings of the massacre of all his people in their encampment on the Tugela. "To arms!" was the cry. "The Zulus will soon be here." Instantly preparations for defence were made. Soon the warriors came with a rush. But they were met with such a withering volley, and such a well-sustained fire is kept up by the defenders, that at ten o'clock in the The Fight at Van Rensburg's Laager. forenoon the Van Rensburgs still hold their position, close to a small *koppie* on the river bank, well protected on one side by a steep precipice. Now, however, their ammunition begins to fail. All hope seems gone. Death seems near. But three horsemen are seen coming across the plain. Marthinus Oosthuizen, Jacob Naude, and Abraham de Beer ride up, coming to their assistance from the laager of Maritz, five miles off. When Oosthuizen learns that they are short of

Marthinus
Oosthuizen's
Ride.

ammunition, he puts spurs to his horse; shoots down more than one Zulu who attempts to stop him; makes his way to a waggon some distance off on the plain; and brings back the powder and the bullets which are required, charging through a line of Zulus on his return, and escaping without injury. Then the defenders, encouraged by this bold exploit, open a terrific fire on the enemy. The attacking columns hesitate, waver, break, and are pursued over the veld by the handful of brave men.

Battle on the
Bushman's
River.

Still the smoke clouds roll across the plain, from the burning camps in the distance. Incessant heavy musketry firing resounds, further away, on the right bank of the Bushman's River. Maritz and his companions are making a brave stand for life. At their camp, they are surrounded by large numbers of the enemy. The waggons have been drawn up in the laager formation; for the defenders have been warned of the impending onslaught at early dawn. Thirty-three men have taken their posts inside that square, and, when Tambusa's fierce warriors form their circle round the camp and hurl their storming masses against its sides, the elephant guns belch forth their fatal thunders; large eight-ounce bullets and tremendous charges of slug-shot plough through the Zulu ranks; and hundreds of the best soldiers in the Zulu army go down. Still the attacking line presses onward. When the front ranks have fallen or given way, those following them seize the dead bodies of their companions, and hold them up to act as shields against the bullets of the Farmers, rushing onward all the time to the laager. Dragging at the

Determined
Zulu Onslaught.

wheels of the waggons and seizing the chains that lash the vehicles together, creeping underneath the shafts and stabbing at the legs and feet of the Emigrants, the Kaffirs make frantic efforts to force the position. But the thirty-three men inside the square stand firm, and pour more death-dealing volleys into the dense black masses around them. Loading and firing proceeds rapidly ; for nearly every man has one or more spare guns, and the women and girls are moulding bullets, and are helping to load the muskets for their husbands and fathers.

Brave Defence
of Maritz's
Laager.

Now the scorching hot February sun is high overhead. The smouldering fires of the encampments which were destroyed by the enemy in the early morning have nearly burnt out. The steamy mists hanging over the hilltops seem to mix with the black clouds of smoke. Occasionally, the echoing volleys of the elephant guns ^{Noon.} are heard on the distant plain, where other laagers are engaged in the death struggle, and where small bodies of Africander horsemen are galloping about, firing on the Zulus, and attempting to reinforce and to assist the small encampments which are still holding out. Mere handfuls of men perform prodigies of valour. We have already seen Oosthuizen, Naude, and De Beer saving the laager of the Van Rensburgs. Now Sarel Cilliers, the Huguenot Ironside, who in his journal has left us some account of his exploits on that memorable day, appears on the scene, and also Malan and Joubert, of the Doornkop laager, who had come with Retief from the Winterberg. Their relatives and friends had been slain with the Commandant, and stand among the cold

Cilliers, Malan,
and Joubert.

sentinels of death on the Chlooma Amaboota ; and now, they themselves are on the battlefield. The heroism of despair, the enthusiasm of the sacred cause for which they are fighting, the battle fury of avengers, make these men disregard danger and death, and emulate the valour of their brave ancestors the Huguenots. They see around them the innocent victims of the fierce barbarians' savagery. The slaughtered infants, the mutilated women, all the horrible sights of that dreadful day, nerve their arms and strengthen their sinews against the foe. Sarel Cilliers tells us how he, with five others, rode to the relief of the small laager of Gert Barends, on the Bushman's River. This camp had been defectively constructed for defence, the waggons being arranged in the form of a semi-circle. The attacking force of Zulus are on the point of turning the position by a flank movement, when Cilliers and his five men ride up to the relief of the handful of burghers defending it. As is his wont on such occasions, the doughty Puritan Commandant addresses to his men one of those battle orations to which he is partial, speeches characterised by pious sentiments, Spartan brevity, and soldier-like vigour. "Brethren," he exclaims, after having carefully examined the priming of his elephant *roer*, "hold God in view ; let no hair on your heads be afraid ; and follow me." Then, putting spurs to their horses, they charge down on the astonished Zulus, pouring in on them such a well-directed fire from the saddle that the enemy's ranks are disorganised. They are chased into the stream by the combined force now under Cilliers and Barends.

To the Rescue.

Exploits of
Cilliers' Patrol.

Large numbers of them are shot down, and a good many are drowned in the river. Having saved the small encampment of Barends from destruction, Sarel Cilliers and his five companions ride further up the stream. Reinforced by twelve other Farmers, they fall on a strong body of Zulus at the base of a mountain, and drive them out of the stronghold. After having occupied the hill, they discover some horses which the enemy had captured earlier in the day from Gert Barends' laager. Cilliers and his men recapture the horses, and, sending them on to the laager for riders, they thus obtain more reinforcements, and attack the Zulus with the object of retaking some cattle which the impi had also driven over the mountain. Eleven Zulus fall to the first volley which Cilliers and his men pour in on them. A fierce engagement follows. The Zulus lose large numbers of their best warriors, and, at last, give way, retiring into a cave in the side of the mountain. Cilliers' horsemen ride on in the direction in which the cattle have been driven off by the Zulus. But now they encounter more of the enemy, and soon discover that they are in the vicinity of another laager which is surrounded by the Zulus. It is the spot where the Rensburgs are making their brave stand, and another terrific encounter follows. The Zulus, taken by surprise on finding themselves attacked in the rear, fall back, fighting stubbornly, and attempting, every now and then, to surround the detachment under Cilliers. But at last they give way on all sides, and are chased, and pursued for some distance on the level plain, losing large numbers. Once more a cave in the mountain

side affords them shelter from the fury of the avengers.

Meanwhile, at Maritz's laager on the river, the fight has slackened somewhat. The enemy have become discouraged by severe losses, and the attacking columns are falling back in disorder, disinclined again to face the heavy fire of the defenders. So Maritz and his men ride out into the open and pursue the Zulus. His wife and daughter have assisted bravely in the defence of the laager. Since early morning, when the Zulus first attacked the camp, these brave ladies have loaded his guns or handed his ammunition to him. Now the enemy retire in all directions from the laager.

Renewed Zulu
Assault on
Maritz's Laager.

But soon fresh columns of Zulus appear on the Bushman's River, and attack the camp. The battle has lasted nearly an entire day. The enemy have lost heavily; but they come in such large numbers that it seems impossible to overawe them and beat them back. Once more they hurl themselves in dense masses on the devoted thirty-three men. Again the elephant guns thunder forth, and break huge gaps in the line of the savages. But their best Indunas inspire the foemen with fresh courage to make another attempt. With dismay, the besieged notice that they are running short of ammunition. Now a three-pounder, which the Emigrants have kept in reserve, is trained on the densest mass of the assaulting columns, and fired—almost as a last resource. Three of the chief leaders of the attack are killed. At the same time, a deadly fire of slugs and bullets is mowing down the rank and file

Repulse of the
Attacking
Columns.

of Tambusa's regiments, now dispirited, broken, and disheartened by their losses and by the fall of their three captains. The Zulu soldiers can do no more. Once more they fall back in disorder, and abandon the field to the Emigrants.

Thus passes the 11th of February, 1838. That dread-^{Evening.}ful day draws to a close. The din of battle, the loud rumbling reports of the elephant guns, and the fierce shouts of the Zulu warriors, have ceased. The conflagrations at the captured encampments are extinguished. The smoke clouds still hang over the river banks. The giant mountains of the Drakensberg tower aloft in the evening sky.

When the lost ones are counted, it is found that 120 men, 56 women, and 185 children, have been slain by the Zulus. The name of Weenen commemorates ^{Weenen for the} the sad fate of these martyrs of Natal. ^{Lost Ones.}

* * * * *

After the Emigrants had ascertained the full extent of the disasters which had overtaken them, a general meeting was convened to decide what was to be done. One or two—their names have been forgotten—proposed that they should all return to the Colony and abandon Natal, as the settlement of the country was now associated with too many difficulties and dangers. When the women heard what had been suggested by ^{Brave} these waverers, they resolved that it was the duty of ^{Africaner} all to remain in order to avenge those who had fallen. ^{Women.} And then there was no more hesitation. It was unanimously decided to continue the struggle against Dingaan, and to punish him for the atrocities which

he had committed. An appeal for help was made to the Emigrants still on the western side of the Drakensbergen, and also letters were at once despatched to the Cape Colony, asking for assistance, and giving an account of recent events and of the terrible plight in which the new settlement of Natal now found itself.

The first reinforcements came from the Klip River district of Natal (then part of Zululand), where there were other encampments—to which the Zulu attack had not penetrated—and from the passes of the Drakensberg, from which small parties of new arrivals were just then emerging into the uplands of the higher terraces. Soon the glad tidings came that Commandants Potgieter and Uys, the conquerors of Umsiligaas, were advancing by forced marches across the mountains to the assistance of their countrymen.

Potgieter and
Uys to the
Rescue.

The English settlers at Port Natal, also, nobly offered to assist in the campaign that was now to be commenced. One of the leading men at Durban in those days was Alexander Biggar, a merchant and general trader, whose son, George, had fallen fighting on the side of the Emigrants in the great Zulu incursion.

Alexander and
Robert Biggar.

Mr. Biggar was one of those who had given his cordial support to Retief. He had believed in that great leader, and he mourned his loss almost as much as any of the Afrianders. His son Robert was nominated commander of the expedition which was to advance into Zululand from the Port, while the Farmer leaders and their commando were to cross the Tugela higher up.

In a previous part of this narrative, reference has been made to the disagreements and differences that arose between Potgieter and Maritz. Beginning at the time of the first Matabele campaign, those contentions had been accentuated at a later date, and although Retief had at first succeeded in again uniting the two factions, it was well known among the Emigrants that no real peace had been established. But now, in face of the common enemy and the danger which threatened all, the parties were united in action. Their leader set them the example. Although, through the death of Retief, the command should have devolved on Maritz, he, frankly recognising the generous impulses which prompted Potgieter and Uys to come to Natal and assist their countrymen, and remembering the claims of the former to priority in rank through seniority in the field, offered no opposition to the demand of the powerful Potgieter faction that their chief should have supreme command in the new campaign. It was agreed among the leaders that Maritz should take command of the laagers remaining in Natal. It was possible that these might be again attacked by the enemy while the invading column marched into Zululand. The Zulu Chiefs were already known to be in favour of flanking movements in their tactics. The command which devolved on Maritz was, therefore, a very important one. In case of any mishap to the advancing forces, his camp would be the base on which they could fall back. His was the reserve army.

Dissensions
Forgotten.

The invading force itself was composed of two

separate columns, those of Potgieter and Uys. Each leader commanded his own followers. This arrangement had worked so well in the Marico campaign against Umsiligaas, that it was not thought advisable to depart from it. The total number of men under Potgieter and Uys amounted to three hundred and forty-seven.*

On the 6th of April, the expedition under Uys and Potgieter crossed the Tugela and moved north-eastward towards Umkungunhlovu. During the first five days of the march no enemy was encountered. On 11th April they reached the Insusi valley and the Italeni or Little Itala mountain. The detachment under Uys had entered a narrow defile lying between two ranges of hills, where the *Rwigte Spruit* flows through a cleft in the rocks. Potgieter's commando was somewhat further back. No Zulus had been seen, and it was supposed to be impossible for a large force of the enemy to be in concealment at the spot. But the supposition was a fatal error, as was soon to be made manifest. When a body of Zulu warriors suddenly appeared at the far end of the ravine, for a moment faced the advancing horsemen, and then retired precipitately in the direction of Dingaan's *stad*, Uys, rising in his stirrups, and pointing in the direction of the retreating

* Theal : "History of South Africa." Cachet puts the number at four or five hundred at the very most.

"Take the fact of their being mounted and armed with muskets into consideration, and this expedition must still remain one of the most daring events on record, considering that Dingaan could bring into the field at least a hundred times their number of warriors trained to despise death in battle, disciplined to move in concert, and armed with the deadly stabbing assegai. The loss of their horses at any moment must have been fatal to the Commando." THEAL : "History of South Africa."

foe, called out to his burghers: "Comrades, the soldiers of the murderer are there. Let us fall on them." Then the whole column pressed forward at the charge; but, in an instant, as if by magic, the hills on both sides were covered with the black lines of an immense Zulu army, which appeared to have leaped out of the very ground. The troop at once faced round towards the entrance to the defile, but their retreat was already cut off. Large masses of Zulu warriors blocked the way. Further back still, a powerful body had thrown themselves in the line of Potgieter's advance, and, by brandishing their shields and beating on the hard ox-hides, made such a din that some of the horses of the rear division became frightened, and could not be made to face the enemy. Meanwhile, Pieter Uys ordered his men to reserve their fire until they were close on the Zulus, then to fire a continuous volley into them, and to charge through the gap thus made in their ranks at the point of entrance into the defile. This manoeuvre was successful. The Zulus gave way before the well-directed fire of the Farmers. As the enemy's ranks were cleft asunder by the volley, the commando, abandoning their spare horses and ammunition stores, dashed through the entrance to the defile and escaped; at least, the main body did. Uys himself, followed by about twenty others, among whom was his son, Dirk Cornelis Uys, a lad of about fourteen years of age, went to the assistance of a wounded comrade in another part of the field, and then attempted to make a detour and rejoin their companions. Riding across country with large numbers of the enemy

Battle of the
Italemi.

gathering at all points around them, they suddenly found themselves in front of a steep precipice, on a rocky *koppie* or hill from which the river could be seen. Armed Zulus sprang at them from every side ; large numbers leaped from the very base of the hill, almost from under their horses' feet. In the wild *mêlée* that ensued at this spot, seven of the twenty Africanders were killed. Uys, with the others, had been firing as rapidly as he could load. But now the flint on his gun did not seem to be as sharp as it should be, and he drew rein for a moment to quickly put an edge on it. Just then a Zulu warrior emerged from behind a rock and struck his assegai into the veteran's side. The Zulu was quickly shot down by one of Uys' men. The Commandant drew the weapon out of his own side. He was in great suffering, and the loss of blood was tremendous ; but even at that moment his brave, unselfish soul thought only of those around him. Sinking and mortally wounded as he was, he lifted one of the others, whose horse had been killed, on to his own saddle ; and then, looking around him and seeing hundreds of foemen close in on the survivors of his little troop, he mustered all the strength he could command, and called in a loud, clear voice, which all could hear : " Fight your way out, men ; I must die."

Death of Pieter
and Dirk
Cornelis Uys.

It was his last command. As he sank to the ground, his son, charging with the others, heard him and saw him fall. In that instant, the brave boy, leaping from his horse, was by his dying father's side. The fierce black warriors made a rush towards them. Three fell before young Dirk Uys' unerring aim. Then father

and son went down before the assegais, and all was over. The others who fell at the battle of the Italeni were Josef Kruger, Frans Labuschagne, David Malan, Jan Malan, Jacobus Malan, Louis Nel, Pieter Nel, and Theunis Nel.

Potgieter now decided to fall back on the Tugela. Discouraged and deeply grieved by the loss of their own leader, many of the followers of Uys criticised his fellow commandant's conduct rather severely, and blamed Potgieter for not coming to their assistance when the Zulus were pressing them hard. Both the nature of the ground and the great strength of the enemy, however, had made a forward movement difficult, if not impossible. By making a detour, Potgieter could possibly have executed a flank attack; but caution rather than boldness was characteristic of the tactics of this old Commandant. Anxiety for the safety of his men and grave apprehension of a more serious disaster than the forces had already suffered, which, under the circumstances, would have been fatal to the cause of the Emigrants, made him decide as he did. Potgieter had always been averse to the idea of settlement in Natal. He was now more than ever convinced of the correctness of his views on the subject. Out of sympathy for his countrymen he had come forward to help; but, so far, he had done nothing more than ascertain the strength of the enemy. Now he decided to return to his followers and to his own sphere of work north of the Vaal. He was convinced that the difficulties in the way of a settlement in Natal were too great to be overcome. There is no doubt whatever that his with-

Retreat of
Potgieter.

Abandonment
of Natal by the
Potgieter
Faction.

drawal at this critical time in their history was a great loss to the Emigrants. They had already suffered so much, and the dangers of their situation were so evident, that many became seriously discouraged when Potgieter and his men re-crossed the mountains and left Natal. Not only the common cause, but the prestige and influence of Potgieter and his own faction, suffered by this step of the leader's. Many who were formerly not of his party had felt their hearts drawn to him when he came to their assistance in their hour of distress and sorrow. Had he chosen to remain, had he fought on with them, had he ultimately led them to victory, it is quite possible that all the different parties of the Emigrants might have united and looked upon him as their Chief. But Potgieter was not an ambitious man, and amalgamation was not his *forte*. He relied on his own followers alone, and was contented with what he had. In retiring to his own people beyond Drakensberg he showed himself the chief of a clan, not the leader of a Nation. Still, the conqueror of the Matabele, as much as any of the other pioneer captains, helped to build up the Republic in South Africa.

While the commandoes under Potgieter and Uys had been invading Zululand, the English settlers were organising their expedition against Dingaan. The Kaffir followers of John Cane and Henry Ogle had started at the beginning of the month, and, after four days' march, had captured a Zulu kraal, where a large number of cattle—seven or eight thousand in all—were taken from the enemy. A quarrel arose as to the division of the spoil, and Ogle and Cane's Kaffirs

argued the matter out—with sticks—to such an extent that the expedition could proceed no further. All discipline was gone, and the leaders had to take their men back to Natal. Next, Robert Biggar took the command of some seventeen Englishmen, twenty Hottentots, and about fifteen hundred Kaffirs, three or four hundred of whom had guns. A little south of the Tugela a Zulu force was encountered, which, after a short skirmish, retreated north of the river. The Natal army followed, and found itself drawn into an ambush on 17th April, 1838. The fatal circle of foemen which soon closed around them numbered some seven thousand. A fiercely contested battle followed. The Zulu army made three attacks, and were beaten back with great loss on each occasion. Strongly reinforced, Dingaan's warriors again pressed forward, and, falling on the centre, which was the weakest part of the defending force, penetrated the ranks, and cut the main body in two. Each half was now surrounded by separate circles of Zulu warriors. One division of the Natal force, in attempting to retreat across the Tugela, suffered heavily, and was driven back. Three or four Englishmen, three hundred Kaffirs, and a few Hottentots, managed, however, to escape and to get to the other side of the stream. And then the remaining force, again entirely surrounded by the Zulus, stood at bay, while charge after charge was made upon them by the enemy. The carnage was frightful. The Englishmen, as well as their Kaffir allies, fought like lions, and it is supposed that some three thousand Zulus were slain

Death of Robert
Biggar and his
Brave
Followers.

before the fight was over. Thirteen White men, viz.: Robert Biggar, Henry Batts, C. Blanckenberg, William Bottomley, John Cane, Thomas Carden, John Campbell, Thomas Campbell, Richard Lovedale, Robert Russell, John Stubbs, Richard Wood, and William Wood, were killed, and with them fell about one thousand Natal Kaffirs. Dingaan's army marched on to Port Natal. The residents there took refuge on a vessel called the *Comet*, which was in the Bay at the time. The Zulu impi occupied Durban for nine days, killed every animal and destroyed all property there, and then went back to Dingaan's kraal.

Capture of
Durban by
Dingaan's Army.

Reinforcements
and New
Encampments.

After Potgieter left the encampments of the Emigrants in the basin of the Tugela and on its tributaries, Carel Pieter Landman, with a party of pioneers, advanced southwestward to the Umlaas River, where they established a laager. Commandant Landman had shortly before brought a trek of thirty families across the mountains into Natal. He and his followers had come from the Olifants Hoek, in the Uitenhage District of Cape Colony. Another party occupied a position near where Pietermaritzburg is now built; and a third body took their station at Uys Doorns, eight miles further south. The largest encampments, however, remained on the Bushman's River and on the Tugela. During the months of June, July, and August, 1838, Dingaan's armies were constantly threatening the northern laagers, where a permanent guard had to be maintained in order to prevent their being surprised by the enemy. The Kaffir scouts were conveying accurate information as

to all the movements of the Emigrants to Umkunguhlovu, and the armies of the Chief were continually on the move to take advantage of any weakness or any unguarded position. There were then in Natal about six hundred and fifty White inhabitants capable of bearing arms, and, with them, about three thousand two hundred women and children. The number of widows and orphans was large relatively to the rest of the population. There was much poverty, for the Zulu armies had carried off all the cattle and live stock at the time of the great massacre. There was no opportunity for attending to the cultivation of the soil, and the cattle that were left could not always be sent to suitable grazing-grounds when the enemy's marauding bands were hovering about.

Poverty and
Distress.

Besides Landman's trek, other parties were arriving from the Cape Colony to reinforce their countrymen. In the month of May, Fieldcornet Gideon Joubert, of Colesberg, arrived in Natal on a mission from the Cape Town Government officials. He came to make an attempt to induce the wanderers to return to their former homes in the Colony. The British Government began to realise what a loss their settlement was sustaining by the emigration of large numbers of its most industrious and most experienced Colonists; and though it had set its face strongly against help being given to the hardy pioneers when they called on their fellow-countrymen to come to their assistance in founding a new State; though it had issued proclamations forbidding further emigration, and threatened penalties to all in the Colony who should lend their aid by

British Mission

joining the Emigrants: it now, strangely enough, expressed itself as extremely solicitous for the welfare of the survivors of the massacre. But the Cape Government was not successful in preventing more Colonists from joining the Northern movement. Large numbers were again on the way to the passes of the Drakensberg. The disasters and the hardships which the Natal community had suffered aroused so much sympathy in the Cape Colony, that nothing could stem the tide of emigration. The tragic fate of Retief and his companions, the cruel massacres of the Blauwkrans and the Bushman's River, the heroic death of Uys and his son, were soul-stirring incidents of an eventful year. The spirit of nationality was aroused throughout the length and breadth of South Africa. Those who had, until now, hesitated to throw in their lot with the bold spirits who had risked their all in the wilderness, held back no longer. The voice of duty—not to a foreign Crown, but to the soil of Africa, and to the faithful and the brave who had already given their lives for liberty—called northwards. The cold silent sentinels stood on the hill Chlooma Amaboota, waiting, guarding the sacred document—beckoning; and on many a lonely farm near the hills around Slachtersnek, the women, clasping their children to their breasts, took the old family Bibles, and the men, grasping their guns, looked for the last time at the mountains, before leaving their homes for the unknown and terrible North.

Loyalty to the
Soil of Africa.

From all the eastern districts of the Colony long lines of waggons were on the way, carrying entire

families, who went to join their countrymen in Natal.

Fieldcornet Gideon Joubert failed to induce any of the Emigrants to listen to the representations of the British Government and to return to the Colony. A small and unimportant section, consisting of a few individuals only, were in favour of abandoning the enterprise of the new settlement. But, as on a former occasion, the women would not hear of any such representations. It was the duty, they said, of all to remain and inflict punishment on Dingaan for his cruelties; and the soil in which the innocent victims of the massacres lay buried must not be abandoned, however great the difficulties and dangers now encompassing the settlement. J. N. Boshoff (Clerk to the Magistrate of Graaff Reinet), who had accompanied Mr. Joubert on his mission, was so impressed by what he saw and heard, that he determined to join the Pioneers, and he afterwards attained to a responsible and a leading position among them. In the month of May, Carel Landman occupied the settlement at the Port of Natal in the name of the Association of South African Emigrants. He appointed Alexander Biggar as Landdrost of the place. Mr. Biggar's sons, George and Robert, had both been killed by the Zulus. The former had fallen at the Bushman's River, the latter in command of the army of Natal, in the battle of the 17th April, on the Tugela. L. Badenhorst, and subsequently F. Roos, were next appointed to the Landdrostship of Durban; for Alexander Biggar was despondent on account of the loss of his sons and

all his property, and did not care to take the office.

Proclamation by
the British
Government.

In July, the British Governor at Cape Town issued a proclamation in which he announced that the Emigrants were still British subjects, and that he would, at a later date, take possession of Natal by means of a military force. In the same document he called on all the Emigrants then in Natal to return to Cape Colony, and promised them a careful consideration of all, and redress of well-founded, grievances. This was indeed a strange Government edict. As to the first-mentioned assertion—that the Emigrants were still British subjects—it seemed quite unwarrantable. After leaving the Colony, the pioneers had not gone into territory where England had authority, or to which England laid claim. The northern frontiers of Cape Colony did not then even reach all the way along the Orange River; and, as to Natal, the British Government had refused to sanction annexation on 10th November, 1834 (in answer to representations from Cape Town merchants urging that course), and again, in reply to Sir Benjamin D'Urban, by a despatch from Lord Glenelg, dated 29th March, 1836, in which it was stated that "his Majesty's Government is deeply persuaded of the inexpediency of engaging in any scheme of colonisation, or of acquiring any further enlargement of territory in Southern Africa." (*See* pp. 207, vol. i.; and 5, vol. ii.)

All the territories into which the Emigrants went were therefore, clearly, outside the British Empire. And, as, when they left the British part of South Africa, these men had announced their intention of establish-

ing a Government and a settlement of their own, it becomes difficult to see what right the English Governors had still to consider them British subjects. The Attorney-General, Mr. Oliphant—the highest law officer of the British Crown in South Africa—when appealed to in the matter, had said: “But the class of persons under consideration evidently mean to seek their fortunes in another land, and to consider themselves no longer British subjects. Would it, therefore, be prudent or just, even if it were possible, to prevent persons discontented with their condition trying to better themselves in whatever part of the world they please? The same sort of removal takes place every day from Great Britain to the United States. Is there any effectual means of arresting persons determined to run away, short of shooting them as they pass the boundary line? I apprehend not; and if so, the remedy is worse than the disease. The Government, therefore, if I am correct in my conclusions, is, and must ever remain, without the power of effectually preventing the evil—if evil it be.” (*See pp. 268—269, vol. i.*)

This was clear enough. But the British Government evidently meant to go beyond the boundary line, and Major-General Napier’s proclamation of July, 1838, was the prelude to the shooting which was to begin in 1842. The promise of redress of grievances came rather late in the day, considering that so many of those who had had the greatest cause of complaint against the British Government were now—dead. And it was, after all,—only a promise. The chief grievance which the Emigrants had against the English authorities

was that the right to an independent existence was denied the new Settlement.

Assault on
Laager at
Bushman's
River.

In August, 1838, Dingaan's army was once more south of the Tugela. A furious onslaught was made on the laager on Bushman's River. There were here a large number of women and children, and the Zulu Chief's ever active and vigilant scouts had taken reports of the weak defensive position, and of the unpreparedness for attack at this encampment, to Umkungunhlovu. Maritz was ill at the time, and the laager stood under command of Joachim Prinsloo and Jacobus Potgieter. Besides the women and children, there was a large number of wounded in the camp, and the force which could be mustered to resist the assault was a small one. Early in the morning of 13th August the battle commenced. Anna Elizabeth Steenekamp, a niece of Pieter Retief's, has left a narrative of the encounter (published in the Dutch magazine, *Elpis*, in 1860). "The Kaffir hordes, thousands upon thousands, stretched as far as the eye could reach. It was terrible to see. I cannot describe their numbers; for one would think that all Heathendom had assembled to destroy us."

The battle lasted for two days. The Zulus made repeated attempts to take the camp by assault; but, during both days, they clung persistently to their usual tactics of forming their columns in a circle before rushing onwards; and the defenders, having by this time acquired considerable skill in the best methods of fighting Dingaan's regiments, directed their fire almost entirely at the front extremities of the wings which were thrown out from the Zulu centre to form the

circle. Before each onslaught, as the main body of the centre and reserve columns sat down on the plain opposite the laager, the horns or wings, which were thrown forward to encircle the camp, sustained such a concentrated fire, that large numbers of those in front (at the points of the wings) were shot down. Knowing that the centre square would not move before the circle had been completed by the tips of the horns uniting, when the ring of black warriors would rush to the assault, the Farmers made it their main endeavour to shatter the extremities of the circling columns, to "shoot away the tips of the horns," as they termed it. So well did they succeed, that the wings of the Zulu battle-formation were continually thrown into disorder and confusion by the enormous losses which they sustained. The three-pounder cannon, also, again did good service. It was fired, occasionally, into the densest parts of the Zulu columns when they made their most determined onslaughts. At last, after two days' constant fighting, and after having lost very heavily, the enemy became discouraged and gave up the attempt. Only one of the defenders, a Farmer named Vlotman, lost his life in the fight. A large number of cattle, however, was again captured by the Zulus. In order to attempt to recover them, the Farmers sallied forth from the camp, and pursued the retiring army. Only some of those who engaged in this pursuit of the enemy were on horseback, for there were not horses left to mount all. Exhausted with two days' hard fighting, tired out from ^{A Sortie} want of sleep, the hardy citizen-soldiers yet managed

to keep up such a spirited chase, that more of the Zulus were shot, and a good many of them driven into the river, where they were drowned. But the Zulu forces were too numerous to permit of the cattle being retaken, and the small body of Farmers had to return to their laager without succeeding in their main object.

Foundation of
Potchefstroom.

Potgieter and his party, after leaving Natal and re-crossing the mountains, had proceeded to the Sand River. Afterwards they crossed the Vaal, and established themselves on its tributary the Mooi. Here, in November, 1838, they founded the town of Potchefstroom (Potgieter-Chef-Stroom)—the first township built in the Transvaal. The Potgieter party had then (until September, 1840) a Government separate and distinct from that of the main body of the Emigrants, who were shaping out their own career in Natal and Zululand. Potchefstroom was the capital of the country which embraced not only the Transvaal, acquired by conquest from the Matabele, but also the north-western half of the present Orange Free State, purchased by Potgieter from the Barolong Chief Makwana. The eastern and south-eastern part of the country which is now the Free State Republic, came then more under the sphere of influence of the Natal leaders.

The Winter of
1838 in Natal.

The winter of 1838 was a time of great distress and suffering—one of the darkest periods in the history of the emigration. The cattle had been nearly all carried off by the Zulus. The wounded had suffered much from exposure and want, and from the absence of medical comforts and treatment. Sickness, in the form

of fever—caused by the constant exposure to great hardships and fatigue, along with the deficiency of good, wholesome food, and, in many cases, by the drinking of impure water—had broken out in several of the laagers. Maritz himself was seriously ill, and his life was soon despaired of. With some of the camps full of widows and orphans; with the wounded men in want of hospital accommodation; with poverty and sickness adding to their sufferings; with the enemy always upon them; two of their trusted leaders, Retief and Uys, dead, and another, Maritz, dying; Potgieter not with them to help in their day of greatest distress; the English Government threatening them with annexation:—it seemed as if their struggle was hopeless.

*In Much
Suffering and
Misery.*

But their hearts did not fail. They believed in the justice of their cause. They heeded neither the promises nor the threats of the British Government proclamations. They had appealed to their countrymen to come to their assistance. They knew that that appeal would not be in vain. The way was far. Roads there were next to none in those days. But the voices from Slachtersnek mountain, and from the Chlooma Amaboota in Zululand, were loud; and onwards—nearer, over the plains of the Orange River and through the passes of the Drakensbergen—came those who had heard the mandate and the call—the mandate of the martyred fathers: the call of the murdered sons.

The Voices.

Carel Landman was now acting temporarily as Commandant in place of Maritz. He and those who came with him from Olifants Hoek had brought a valuable accession of strength to the ranks of the Emigrants, and

To the Rescue.

more aid was on the way. Stores and medicines were sent by sympathisers in the Cape Colony; and, in November, Andries Pretorius arrived in Natal, bringing with him some influential burghers of the district of Graaff Reinet. He had previously, shortly before Retief went to Zululand, made a visit to the settlement, in order to ascertain for himself the condition of the country. He now returned to throw in his lot with that of his countrymen.

Andries
Pretorius.

Andries Willem Jacobus Pretorius, Fieldcornet in one of the divisions of Graaff Reinet district, traced his descent from Johannes Pretorius, first Secretary to the Orphan Chamber in Cape Town at the time of its establishment (in 1674). In the Cape Town archives, Johannes Pretorius is subsequently mentioned as one of the most notable burghers in 1691, under the Government of Simon van der Stell. He was the son of a clergyman at Goeree, in the South of Holland, had been a student at Leiden University, and, afterwards, Secretary to the Council of the Government of the Mauritius. In 1691, he is mentioned in the archives as having a wife and children. The Dutch author, Pieter de Neyn, in his "Lusthof der Huwelijken," published at Amsterdam in 1697, states that the wife of Johannes Pretorius had, when a young girl, with the help of one or two other ladies, saved the life of a little Hottentot child. The narrative is also contained in the archives in the Library at Cape Town.

It was in 1668, when Commander Jacob van Borghorst was Governor. Near the fort of Good Hope, which was then the only white settlement in South Africa, a party

of Hottentots were burying a woman of the tribe—who had died, leaving a little infant. According to the barbarous custom of the nation, they were about to inter the living baby with its dead mother. The ladies begged and prayed so hard for the life of the little child, that the savages spared it. It was taken to the Castle, and adopted by the Colonists. One of the women who interceded for the little savage, and saved it from a cruel death, was she who afterwards married Johannes Pretorius. From her, therefore, the founder of the South African Republic was descended. The sons and grandsons of Johannes Pretorius became ranch-owners on the frontiers in the early days of the Cape Settlement.

The Frontiersmen of Graaff Reinet district were always noted for their sturdy spirit of independence. It was in this district that Andries Pretorius was born and brought up. There were then very few opportunities in the outlying country regions for the children of the Colonists to acquire any but the most elementary education. The country being very thinly populated, the farms and cattle-ranches were situated at immense distances apart. Towns and villages were few, and of small size. The literature of the people consisted of the illustrated family Bibles and a few standard historical works. But although their education was necessarily neglected, owing to the circumstances of the country and the time in which they lived, the Frontier Farmers of those days were neither narrow-minded nor behind the age in their views as to politics and government. It has been said that Andries Pretorius

represented the Seventeenth rather than the Nineteenth century.* The accomplished English writer who makes this statement has, by his work and his researches, done more than any man living to make known to the world the history of the dominion of the White race in South Africa, and his estimate of the character of Pretorius is more impartial than that of most authors of British nationality. It will be well, however, while here taking note of this estimate, as coming from an authority on South African History, to leave for a later page, when we have before us his career as warrior and statesman, and when his life's work can be reviewed, the consideration of the personality of the great Frontiersman.

Born near Graaff Reinet in November, 1798, he was just forty years of age when he settled in Natal. He was then a man of considerable wealth and influence. Like most South Africans who lived on the frontiers, he had acquired considerable experience of Kaffir warfare in the then recent hostilities with the Amakosas in the Cape Colony. His reputation as a military leader was already favourably known among the Emigrants. His brothers Bart and Louw Pretorius, who came with him, were also well-known as skilful commandants. Carel Landman, who now had the command of the Emigrants in place of Maritz, as well as Joachim Prinsloo, Jacobus Potgieter, and other leaders, recognised in Andries Pretorius the man who was wanted to lead the people.

* "His knowledge and his opinions, as well as his virtues and his failings, were those of the seventeenth, not of the nineteenth, century."—THEAL: "South Africa," vol. iv. p. 149.

On the 15th of October, Gerrit Maritz, after suffering much pain with great fortitude and patient resignation, had breathed his last in the laager on Bushman's River. Barely two years had passed since he first came among them in their camps near Thaba 'N Chu. In that relatively short space of time, however, by his skill and valour in the campaign against the Matabele; by his loyal support, first, of Pieter Retief, and, afterwards, of Potgieter and Uys as Commandants in Natal; by his constant and faithful services; by his patient sufferings and death: he had so endeared his memory to the Emigrants, that they and their descendants have enshrined it in the beautiful capital of Natal, which bears his honoured name coupled with that of the other martyr-hero who also gave his life for the young Republic. By his death-bed his sorrow-stricken companions and friends, bearing in affectionate remembrance his great services to his countrymen, and his self-denying devotion to their cause, had wept disconsolate tears of grief. Despair had almost over-mastered the stoutest hearts in their dark hour of distress and affliction.

But a brighter day was dawning.

PART III
THE REPUBLIC OF NATAL

CHAPTER XX

THE MARCH OF THE AVENGERS

THE WIN-COMMANDO

Andries Pretorius appointed Commandant-General—The Muster on the Tugela—Reconnoitring—Numbers, Armament, and Commissariat of the Force—Religious Observances—The Leaders—Precautions—Line of March—Strategy of Pretorius—The Diary of the Secretary to the Krygsraad—March up the Tugela—Pretorius speaks to his Army—Crossing the Tugela—The Vow—Crossing the Buffalo—Scouting and Skirmishing—Setting Zulu Prisoners Free—Message to Dingaan—Advance up the Bloed River—Skirmish of 14th December—Further Advance up the River—Enemy in Front—Laager Formed—The Night Patrol—Circle of Light—Dingaan's Whirlwind—Battle of Bloed River—Tambusa's Assault—Salela Joins—Charge of Bart Pretorius on Flank of Assaulting Columns—Horsemen Driven back on Laager—Second Charge of Bart Pretorius on Zulu Flank repulsed—North and East Faces of Square cleared by Volunteers under Sarel Cilliers—Third Charge of Horsemen under Bart Pretorius—Assaulting Column Cleft in Two—Artillery Fire and Charge of Andries Pretorius—Pursuit of Zulus—Salela's Impi Driven into the River: Great Slaughter—Andries Pretorius Wounded—March to Umkungunhlovu—Dingaan's Stad in Flames—The Cold Sentinels on the Chlooma Amaboota—Horse Patrol on the White Umveloosi—Hans de Lange saves the Column—Battle of the Plain of the White Umveloosi—Burning Kaffir Kraals—The Return March—Fight near New Year's Spruit—Capture of Zulu Cattle—Close of the Campaign—The Dark Clouds Dispersed.

ON the 28th of November, 1838, at a meeting attended by delegates from all the different encampments, Andries Pretorius was appointed Commandant-General, and preparations were at once commenced for resuming the campaign against Dingaan.

Muster on the
Tugela.

Numbers,
Armament, and
Commissariat of
the Force.

This expedition, known in their history as the *Win-commando*, formed a turning point in the career of the Emigrants in Natal. At the beginning of December a camp was formed on the banks of the Tugela, which was then in flood. Reconnoitring parties, under Commandant Stephanus Erasmus, were despatched up the river. But rain and mist often obscured the view, and the night patrols had to exercise great caution to avoid falling into ambuscades. The commando assembled under Pretorius at the point of rendezvous, and Carel Landman was moving upwards from the Umlazi with another detachment. When the entire force had concentrated, it was found to number four hundred and seven white men and fifty-nine coloured servants, waggon-drivers, and herdsmen. The column carried its stores and ammunition in fifty-seven waggons drawn by oxen, and was fairly well provided with horses. These had been sent in considerable numbers from beyond the mountains and from the Cape Colony. The Farmers were well armed, with elephant guns; and a good supply of bullets and *loopers* (slugs) had been cast in the various encampments and sent on with the stores. The commando also took three small pieces of ordnance—a small brass cannon, which belonged to Andries Pretorius, and two three-pounders which had already seen service in the defence of the laager on the Bushman's River. One of them was at a much later date (at the time of the War of Independence in 1880-81) known as *ou Grietjie*, and used with effect against the British camp at Potchefstroom by the Free State artillerist Pelser.

The provisions taken by the expedition consisted mainly of camp biscuits, *biltong* (sun-dried antelopes' meat or beef), coffee, and tobacco. Fresh meat had to be procured by capturing cattle from the enemy. Subsisting on this simple fare, the pioneers of 1838 broke the power of Dingaan, and fought their way to dominion in Natal and in Zululand.

The march was commenced on the 3rd of December. Firmly believing in the justice of their cause, and confident that Providence would assist them in their struggle to avenge the death of the unfortunate victims of the great massacre, the Voortrekker warriors were sincere and fervent in their religious devotions. Many of their leaders set them that example of unfeigned piety which strengthened and encouraged them in the fray. Religious observances were never omitted at the evening encampments. There was much fervent praying, and the psalms and hymns of the Dutch Reformed Church service were frequently sung at these meetings. There was no hypocrisy in all this. It was the unanimous opinion of all the Emigrants that the campaign could not be successful without the help of Heaven. Religious Observances.

The principal officers of the expeditionary force were The Leaders. Andries Pretorius, Commandant-General; Carel Pieter Landman, second Commandant; Pieter Daniel Jacobs (second member of the Krygsraad or War Council), whose brother Jan (familiarly known to his associates as Jan Hermanus) also served in this commando, and afterwards distinguished himself in the hostilities against the British in Natal and at Boomplaats; Gerrit Jacobus

Potgieter ; Johannes de Lange (nicknamed Hans Dons) ; Stephanus Erasmus ; Bart Pretorius, who commanded a detachment at the battle of Blood River ; and Alexander Biggar, who led a contingent of Natal natives, and was killed at the battle of the White Umveloosi.

Precautions.

Line of March.

Approaching the upper waters of the Tugela, where, in the vicinity of the Drakensberg range, the river was more easily fordable (for the Lower Tugela could not be crossed at that season of the year), the little army moved cautiously onward, constantly keeping scouts well in advance. At the encampments the waggons were invariably drawn up in laager formation, and numerous patrols were posted at some distance outside the camp to guard against surprise by the enemy. The route now followed by the commando was different from that which had been taken by the flying columns under Potgieter and Uys in the early part of the year. They had crossed the Tugela much lower down the stream, and then made a direct advance to the north-east, moving almost in a straight line on Umkungunhlovu. Pretorius, after crossing the Umzinyati or Buffalo River, pushed northwards in the fork of country lying between the Buffalo and the stream now known as the Blood River. His object was to choose his own battle-ground and to be near a river. Had he not been attacked on the Blood River, he would have made his way to the head waters of the White Umveloosi, and then moved down along the banks of that stream to the Zulu capital. By following this course he would always be near a river, and could so place his laager as to have it protected on at least one side by the

stream. Natal itself was well guarded from a Zulu invasion by the swollen torrent of the Tugela, and Pretorius knew that, while the burghers were advancing into Zululand, the armies of Dingaan would not attempt an invasion by way of the Upper Tugela.

J. G. Bantjes, the Secretary to the Krygsraad, kept Diary of the Secretary. a diary of the expedition.

On Monday, 3rd December, the united columns of March up the Tugela. Pretorius and Landman moved up the Tugela. The advance was continued on the 4th (Tuesday). Commandant Hans de Lange, with three experienced scouts, was reconnoitring in advance. On the 5th, two letters reached the Emigrant encampment from Cape Colony. One was from Christiaan Hatting, and the other from the Rev. G. W. A. van der Lingen of the Paarl. Pretorius read to the assembled commando his replies to the letters, and then delivered a short address to the burghers.

He pointed out to them the necessity of union and Pretorius speaks to his Army. concord, discipline, and obedience to their officers, in order to ensure victory. He did not conceal from them the disparity in numbers between their own force and that of the enemy; and yet his words impressed them favourably, and inspired them with confidence. "Fellow countrymen," he said, "rely on your God, the Lord of Hosts. He can, and will help you. In that faith you will find your strength. The shades of your murdered relatives and friends, hovering around your path, will bless you in your heroic undertaking." And now, still standing on the gun-carriage from which he had spoken, he called up the other Commandants

and then the Fieldcornets, addressing each one of them separately. His words were hearty and cheerful; but his bearing was characterised by earnestness and seriousness, as befitted the occasion. He spoke of the cause, the issue at stake, and the great responsibility devolving on himself and on each of his fellow-officers. The lives of women and children, the safety of the entire community in Natal, depended on them. They were to set an example to their men. Resolute action was wanted against the savage enemy; valour on the battlefield, but mercy to the helpless and the weak; no women and children on the side of the enemy were to be harmed. "No soldier born under the light of the gospel," said Pretorius, "may wage war against helpless women and children."

At night, Commandant Hans de Lange returned to camp with his scouts. They brought with them a Kaffir over six feet in height, whom they had taken prisoner in a skirmish with the enemy in which De Lange himself had slain three Zulus. They had also captured fourteen cattle and eleven sheep, which they drove into the laager. According to Commandant De Lange's report, the column was close to a large Zulu kraal—that of the chief Tobe. Early on the morning of the 6th of December (Thursday), Pretorius, leaving a guard of about twenty men in the laager, made a dash on this kraal with between three hundred and eighty and three hundred and ninety men on horseback. The place was, however, found deserted by the enemy. On the 7th the Tugela was crossed, and Commandant Jacobus Uys joined the commando

Danskraal, a few miles north-east of the present town of Ladysmith, was reached on the same day. It was resolved that the entire army should take a vow to God, that, if He granted them victory, they would build a Church and set aside a thanksgiving day to commemorate the event. Cilliers says in his Diary that Andries Pretorius first spoke to him about this solemn vow, and asked him at Danskraal to address the commando on the subject. This he did. It was then decided to advance at once on Umkungunhlovu, and the first part of the line of march was nearly as the road now goes from Ladysmith to Dundee. On the 8th, the Sundays River was crossed, near where now the farm of Roodepoort is, and on the same day the march was continued to near the Platberg on the Blyde River. Here the night halt was made, and the next day (Sunday) the little army remained in camp. The grass was found in very good condition, and horses and men rested and refreshed themselves by the river side.

On that Sunday morning, Andries Pretorius called Commandant Landman and the aged P. Joubert, with Sarel Cilliers, to his tent, in order to take their opinion on the subject of the ceremonies to be observed in connection with the ratifying and confirmation of the solemn vow to God. Religious services were then performed in three tents set apart for the purpose. Early on Monday morning the march was resumed. On that day (the 10th), and also on the 11th, numerous smoke signals were observed on the hills. As the grass along the line of march was very thick, the veld was

Crossing the
Buffalo.

set on fire, so that boulders and ravines could be seen more easily from a distance and ambuscades might be readily detected. On the 11th, the Buffalo River was crossed at the ford now called Landman's Drift. As soon as the column was well through the river, Zulu smoke signals were noticed on all the hills in front.

Scouting.

An encampment was, therefore, formed, and scouts were sent out in all directions to ascertain the nature of the country, and the whereabouts of strong bodies of the enemy.

Account of the
March to the
Blood River.

One of the patrols came into collision with a small party of Zulus at some distance from the camp, and a skirmish ensued. Nine Zulus fell. There were no casualties on the side of the burghers. On the same day, Mr. Parker, an Englishman from Durban, who had come with Alexander Biggar to take part in the expedition, killed a Zulu spy who rushed at him from a thick clump of grass. On the 12th December another Kaffir spy was shot by one of the scouts, and Parker, who was out reconnoitring with a party of Natal Kaffirs, came upon a small Zulu kraal, where they captured some women and children and one man. As the prisoners were being brought into camp, the Zulu warrior made a rush at Parker, and pulled him from his horse. Falling on the Englishman's double-barrel gun, the Zulu, attempting to get possession of the weapon, was severely wounded in the arm and shoulders, and died soon after.

Setting
Prisoners Free.

Pretorius set the women and children at liberty as soon as they were brought into camp. He gave them a white flag with his name on it. He instructed

them to have this flag sent on to Dingaan, their Chief, and also a message to the effect that the Emigrants had come to wage war against the Zulu King; but that, should he desire it, they were still prepared to come to terms of peace with him, on condition of his at once delivering up the guns, horses, and other property, which his armies had taken from the Farmers' encampments and at Umkungunhlovu at the time of the massacre. The messengers were to state, also, that the choice of peace or war now rested with the Chief of Zululand, and that, in case he chose war, Pretorius and his followers were ready to continue hostilities for ten years, if necessary. The white flag, Pretorius said, would be a sacred emblem of peace. They, the women themselves, or even a warrior of their nation, could return with it and bring a message back, for they would not be injured by the Emigrants; and, whatever might be the issue of the war, no women or children would be harmed by the white people.

The Zulu women were loud in their praises of Pretorius. "Dingaan," they said, "never forgives even defenceless women or innocent children. He often kills them for pastime." (Hofstede: "Geschiedenis van den Oranje Vrijstaat" p. 47.)

The little invading army now cautiously continued its onward march. On the 13th there was another skirmish, and three Zulu warriors were killed by a patrol. A body of the enemy, with a large number of cattle, was observed on a neighbouring mountain. Three more Zulus were shot in a skirmish close to this hill. Very early on the morning of the 14th,

Message to
Dingaan.

▲ Skirmish.

one hundred and twenty men advanced on horseback and attacked the Kaffirs, who fled after losing about eight in killed. The advance was continued up the right bank of that tributary of the Buffalo which is now called the Blood River.

On Saturday, the 15th of December, in the forenoon, the commando was pushing onwards, with the scouts well in advance as usual. To the left was the mountain Gelato, now called Vechtkop—a high hill with a steep summit—and some distance in the rear were some other high mountain ridges. The river was to the right of the column. In front stretched a plain for a considerable distance, its level expanse broken only in one or two places, where there were small *koppies*. But further on in front, to the left, the country became mountainous. Here the enemy were found in strong force by the scouts, whose report was at once sent in.

Enemy in Front.

The exact number of the Zulus could not be ascertained; but the column was immediately brought to a halt, and Pretorius ordered the waggons to be drawn up in laager formation at a spot where there was a deep reach or pool of the river, and, at right angles to this, facing the camp on the north side, a dry *donga* or ravine with a very steep bank (more than fourteen feet high) towards the laager.

Laager Formed.

Situation of the Battlefield.

The encampment was thus well protected, there being only two open sides on which the Zulu attack could be made. That fiery evangelist, Sarel Cilliers, was in favour of at once attacking the Zulus on the mountain. But Pretorius would not hear of this.

The Impetuous Ironside.

Further reports had come into the camp. The enemy could be distinctly seen by the patrol. There was a steep path leading up the mountain, and large numbers of Zulus were observed in two wide and steep ravines on either side of the path. The Zulu force which had at first been seen was intended to act as a snare. The larger body was lying in ambush in the ravines. Cilliers requested Pretorius to allow him—with fifty men—to advance on the enemy, engage them in battle, and then fall back on the plain, where the main commando was to come to his assistance. The Chief-Commandant was, however, firm in refusing his sanction to all the Ironside's plans of battle. It was now late in the afternoon—too late, Pretorius said, to attempt anything against the enemy. The next day would be time enough. Then Cilliers could go. Sarel Cilliers himself tells us all this in his quaintly-worded *Diary*. The next day was Sunday. Pretorius had chosen his own battle-ground, where he knew the enemy would attack him in the night or early in the morning. Cilliers says he felt vexed, but frankly admits that Pretorius was quite right.

Pretorius
restrains him.

Strong wooden gates, fastened by firm iron bolts and rivets, were now used to close the spaces between the wheels of the waggons, and also the openings between the different waggons, so that the enemy would not be able to creep into the laager when they made their assault. A small night patrol was stationed on a koppie some little distance from the camp, to keep an eye on the Zulus, and, when it became dark, several lanterns, attached to long bamboo whip-sticks, were

The Circle of
Light.

lit and hung up over the laager. The weird appearance created by this circle of lights, as seen from a distance, worked on the superstitious fears of the Zulus, who believed that the white invaders had secured some powerful magic. At daybreak, however, the patrols fell back on the camp and gave the alarm.

Immediately after, the onslaught commenced. The impi were commanded by Tambusa and Salela, and numbered altogether, according to a rough estimate, some ten or twelve thousand men. While Salela's division took up a position facing the camp on the other side of the river, that under command of Tambusa massed its attacking columns on the plain to the north-west of the laager. Large numbers were observed, in the grey dawn, creeping out of inequalities and depressions in the ground. Then their general struck some resounding blows on his hard ox-hide shield, while his deep bass voice thundered forth the commands for a general assault.

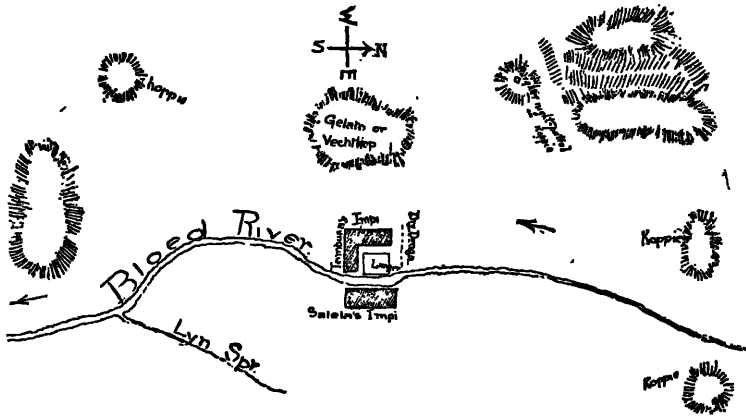
Dingaan's
Whirlwind.

Once more Dingaan's whirlwind burst on the Emigrants struggling for life.

Tambusa's
Assault.

A furious rush was made on the two open sides of the square by large numbers of the enemy, representing five of the Zulu King's best regiments. They fell back after considerable losses; but again came up to attack, bravely facing the very heavy fire which was poured in on them. Four times the assault was repeated, and on each occasion the Zulus had to fall back after severe loss. On the other side of the river, immediately opposite the camp, Salela's impi had sat down, watching the fight which was in progress.

Pretorius ordered a herald to ask them why they were sitting still. "What are you doing?" was the next question. "I have come here to fight. Why don't you attack me?" When no answer was returned, and while the battle was still raging on the two other faces of the square, the Commandant directed one of his cannon at the dense mass of Zulu warriors sitting on the river bank, and fired. At the first shot, they



Sketch Plan of the Bloed River Battlefield.

sprang to their feet. When the second gun was fired, they uttered a furious roar and at once commenced crossing the stream higher up, to join in the battle. *Salela Joins.* "The more of them there are around us," said Pretorius, when Commandant Jan Jacobs remonstrated with him for bringing down on them this additional force of the enemy, "the greater execution will our bullets do amongst them, and the sooner will the battle be over. Besides, I wish to avoid being attacked by them, afterwards, when our ammunition is exhausted."

Narrative of
J. H. Visser.

For a full hour after that, fierce onslaughts were made on the camp by the united Zulu impis. "Then they closed around us," says one of the old Voortrekker Commandants. "We could not run out our artillery. For a full hour, we had to fire and load our muskets as fast as we could. We fired chiefly slug shot. Although nearly every one of us had two or three guns, the barrels had then become hot with constant firing." (Oral narrative of Commandant J. H. Visser).

Stampede of
Cattle.

To add to the danger of the defenders, some of the oxen, which had on the previous evening been brought inside the laager so that they should not fall into the hands of the Zulus, became so frightened by the incessant din and tumult of the assault that they dashed madly against one of the lines of waggons, attempting to break through and escape to the veld. Had they done so, the Zulu army would certainly have succeeded in rushing in by the opening made. But the danger was soon averted by the capture of the stampeded cattle inside the encampment.

First Charge of
Bart Pretorius.

Once again the Zulu captains were heard urging their men forward to the charge; but the attacking columns had met with such a warm reception that, although they kept up the fight very pluckily, the fury of their onslaughts began to abate somewhat. Bart Pretorius, at the head of a body of horsemen, was now ordered to charge and try to cut the Zulu army in two. Galloping forward from one face of the square, and firing huge charges of slugs from the saddle into the densest masses of the enemy, the horsemen attempted to work their way round the flank of the

Zulu columns, attack them from the outside, and then break through them while the laager would be pouring in heavy volleys from the other side. By this bold manœuvre, Bart Pretorius endeavoured to put the entire Zulu force between two fires. For a time he and his men succeeded, by means of their destructive volleys of *loopers* and by their skilful horsemanship, in pressing back the black masses before them, and in gradually working their way round one flank of the attacking columns; but the Zulus closed in again, and the horsemen, in their turn, had to fall back. A second charge was more sustained; and the enemy lost heavily, and yielded more than at first. But, once more, the warriors pressed forward and closed up their ranks.

Meanwhile, some Zulus, who had crept round to that side of the square facing the river, lay down on the water's edge, covering themselves with their ox-hide shields; but a destructive musketry fire swept them off, and many were drowned in the river. At the same time a considerable number of the enemy had crept into the dry donga on the north side of the square. The high steep bank facing the camp prevented them getting out on that side, and rushing the laager, as they had intended. They were attacked by Sarel Cilliers and eighty volunteers, who went outside the laager and fired on them from the edge of the steep bank. The Kaffirs made a rush to escape from the *shoot*. As they clambered up the opposite bank, they received several volleys from all the north side of the square. Their losses at this place alone amounted to about four hundred.

Second Charge
of Horse.

North and East
Faces of Square
Cleared by
Volunteers.