

Jeqe was delighted to hear how these ornaments were to be obtained for he had had no idea where to get them. He told the boy that they would start on the morrow.

When Jeqe reached home he asked the women to cook him some porridge. He said he was going down to the sea, where the Usutu turns northwards. Next morning, with food for the journey, the three friends, Jeqe, the boy and the dog, started off to find the shells. They reached the place in the afternoon and were lucky to find beer in a near-by kraal. After a few mouthfuls they hastened on to the spot where the shells were to be found. They worked hard all that afternoon and filled the baskets they had brought with the coveted treasures. The shells were both large and small and of various colours. Towards evening they returned to the kraal where they had been given beer. They had finished the porridge at the river, but the headman produced a pot of beer and after a good drink, they lay down and slept.

When they reached home next day Jeqe asked the girls of the kraal to make him two nice shell necklaces. The girls consented and set to work with a will. They made the necklaces and when Jeqe saw the finished work his delight knew no bounds.

He told the boy to go at once and tell Zaki's sisters that the necklaces were ready. They replied that they would meet where they drew water at the river-side. On that day Jeqe asked two girls of Ndlovu's kraal to come down to the river with him, the boy and the dog. He had no fear because they all knew at Ndlovu's kraal that he was Zaki's accepted lover. One of the girls carried the ornaments in a basket. When they reached the spot they sat down on the bank in the shade of a tree.

Soon Zaki appeared, with four of her girl companions. The oldest of the girls from Ndlovu's kraal then said, "Sit down, girls, and let us have a chat."

"Then Jeqe said, "Well, girls, I have brought you your ornaments. Qamile has them in her basket."

Qamile opened her basket and showed the treasures to the other girls. And how delighted they were to receive those lovely shells! "Who," they asked, "had the kind thought of making the necklaces!"

"It was we," said Qamile, "who made them, with our sisters, after these three had come back." And she pointed to Jeqe, the

boy, and the dog. "They had gathered them on the banks of the Usutu"

Zaki's sisters then told her to get up and express their gratitude. Zaki rose up and stood before Jeqe, he sprang to his feet and they clasped hands. Jeqe then kissed Zaki's hand and her sisters began to sing :

"We are Tonga girls of Soshangane,
The people of Soxaka
We gladly Welcome you, young Sir,
We people of Soxaka."

They danced and sang with great delight and enthusiasm, and then, while the others rested, the tall and graceful Zaki sang alone the song of the Soxaka, as she came slowly forward, her head and feet gently marking the rhythm.

Then the Ndhlovu girls joined the others and both parties sang :

"We are Tonga girls of Soshangane."

At last one of the girls ran back to the kraal and soon returned with a calabash full of beer, a treat they all thoroughly enjoyed. In the afternoon the girls went home, leaving Jeqe, Zaki and the dog to themselves. At sunset Jeqe and Zaki parted and returned to their kraals.

Next morning Jeqe told the boy to ask Zaki to come down to the meeting place, and there they met soon afterwards.

"You know, Zaki," said Jeqe, I fled from my country to escape being buried in the King's grave. Otherwise I should never have known the glory of your love ; and now I have been blessed by these wonderful days : But now we must plan how to get the *lobola* cattle. I did not sleep a wink last night for thinking of it : and this is now my plan. You and your sisters must ask for leave to cut rushes on the banks of the Usutu. I shall come and gather shells and you will make them into necklaces for me. I shall take them over the mountains into Swaziland, where I can get a sheep for two necklaces. I shall exchange the sheep for cattle to be your bride-price."

Zaki was delighted with the plan and the next day Zaki and her sister, Jeqe and the dog, set out for the Usutu river. When they reached the river bank they set to work with a will and every evening returned to sleep in a kraal near by. Zaki, overcome by the sweet power of love, composed this song :

“ Sweet is the memory
 Of those happy days,
 When we were gathering shells Jeqe
 On the banks of the Usutu.
 When we were gathering shells, Jeqe
 On that lovely river-bank
 On the banks of the Usutu.”

This song was composed by Zaki to celebrate their mutual love for one another and whenever Jeqe heard her sing it he was overcome with emotion. He forgot the shells and could only gaze at his lovely girl.

Far away in the royal kraal, the King's son, who was courting Zaki, discovered that she had accepted the Zulu stranger, and he swore to have his revenge. To his father he said nothing, for he feared he might thwart his plan. He summoned a band of five young men and told them to join him, fully armed, on the road that led to the sea. They slept in a kraal not far from the one where Jeqe, Zaki and her sister were staying.

That evening the head-man killed a red calf for the chief's son, who told him to have it ready for him on the following day, when he would return from the Usutu river. The next morning when the sun was high in the heavens they spied the three companions. Jeqe and Zaki were gathering shells, while her sister was cutting rushes. Suddenly Zaki exclaimed, “ I feel a cold shiver down my back. I think a wild beast is lurking near. Pick up your spears, Jeqe. I have two big stones here and will stand by you.”

Before she had finished speaking and while Jeqe was collecting his two spears, his stick and little dancing shield that was just large enough to protect his hand, the enemy was upon them. They rushed at Jeqe, shouting “ What are you doing with these girls ? ”

Zaki sprang forward and said, “ You must question me. It was I who asked him to accompany us here.”

“ Stand back ! ” they cried. “ Our business is not with you.” And they pushed her aside. Meanwhile her sister had fled as fast as her legs could carry her to the neighbouring kraal. Zaki stood firm, but the young men pushed her away and made for Jeqe.

Meanwhile Jeqe had seized his great war spear and at his side stood his dog, quivering with excitement. Suddenly one of Ndlebende's men hurled his assagai. At the same moment the dog sprang at him and Jeqe leaped to one side and the spear buried itself in the sand. The dog, by tearing at the man's skin dress, brought him to the ground. Jeqe stabbed him and cried aloud, "With my father's spear I have slain him, I, Jeqe, the Lion-hearted!"

The old lust of battle was strong within him. The others now pressed close round him. One stabbed him in the wrist and his spear fell to the ground. Jeqe was now helpless but Zaki rushed up and struck his opponent on the head with a huge stone and he fell senseless at her feet. The dog now leaped upon the prostrate body and tore his very life out. The dog then attacked the chief's son, Jeqe's rival. It sprang upon him from behind and buried its teeth in his neck and brought him to the ground. Another man rushed forward and stabbed the dog in the leg and grazed the young Chief's neck, as he lay upon the ground. Then another attacked and drove this spear right through the dog's body.

Meanwhile, Jeqe was defending himself as well as he could but with little strength; for the sinew in his wrist had been severed. Only Zaki still continued to struggle. She stood in front of Jeqe and endeavoured to shield him from the spears of his foes. She herself was unhurt, for the young chief had strictly forbidden his men to touch her. However, as she faced the enemy in front, another sprang at her from the side and dragged her away by main force. All now rushed upon Jeqe and hurled him to the ground. Leaving him bleeding and senseless, they hastened to the assistance of the young chief who had fainted from loss of blood. They carried him down to the river where they bathed his wounds and applied herbs to stop the flow of blood.

Meanwhile, Jeqe, still unconscious, and the dead men were lying in a heap. The survivors picked up the bodies of their comrades and carried them to the kraal where Jeqe, Zaki and her sister had been sleeping. Zaki continued to struggle till they bound her hands and feet. They made a reed stretcher and carried her on it, while she cried aloud, "You have killed my beloved, kill me too, and bury me with him!" But they showed

no pity and if it had depended on them, they would have stabbed her and avenged their comrade she had killed with the stone. But they knew that if they killed Zaki they would get into great trouble.

The King's son was treated with great care. He was given medicine to drink and his wounds, where the dog had bitten him, were bandaged. They made him lie down and next morning he had recovered. The dead men were buried, but Jeqe and the dog were left on the battle field. But the spear which they thought had killed him had not pierced a vital spot : it had struck a rib and glanced aside, only grazing the lung.

All that night Jeqe lay unconscious, but in the cold morning air he revived, but he had not the strength to stand up. His leg was badly swollen and his thirst intolerable. Though he suffered torture, he was able to roll his body down to a pool of water : But he knew he must not drink, for the smell of blood from his wounds would surely attract the crocodiles and he had left his spear where it had fallen in the fight. However, he was able to scratch a hole in the sand and from this he obtained a few drops of water to relieve his thirst.

And now he began to think of Zaki. His eyes filled with tears as he whispered, " I shall die here all alone in the bush and never see my Zaki again." His heart was filled with melancholy till at last, exhausted by suffering, he fell asleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was on this very day that Sitela, the queen of the Tonga doctors and diviners, left her island in the sea to teach her students the properties of roots and herbs that were to be found only on the mainland. Her little boat was now close to where Jeqe was lying, but before it reached the shore her pupils saw supernatural power emanating from Sitela. Her face was flushed. She moaned in agony: "We have a duty to perform," she exclaimed, "row swiftly, for there is some one in distress: the spirits bid me hasten to his aid. Siqongwane, give me my divining crystal, whereby I see the invisible."

She gazed into the magic glass and said, "I see a youth lying on the shore. He seems to be wounded, for I see blood, and there is his dog lying dead. A dreadful thing has happened. Row to the southern end of that strip of sand."

The rowers did as they were told and presently they could discern a young man lying prone upon the shore. The prow of the little boat grounded just beneath the point where Jeqe was lying. The rowers jumped out and fastened the boat to a sharpened stake which they had driven into the sand. Then Sitela landed. She approached and saw that the youth was not yet dead. She set to work upon him, stretching and relaxing his muscles. Consciousness returned to Jeqe, and he struggled to rise, but Sitela held him down.

"Spare my life," cried Jeqe, and let me be."

Then one could see by the movements of her lips that there were beings with whom Sitela was speaking.

"Awake! Awake!" she cried, and at once Jeqe sat up.

Then Sitela said to her attendants, "Fill that calabash with water and bring it here." She gave Jeqe a long draught and left him with the two rowers while she went into the bush to seek herbs with her students.

As he sat by the little boat, Jeqe rapidly regained his strength and told the rowers the story of the fight of the previous day. "They escaped," he maintained, because they wounded me in the hand at the beginning of the contest: Otherwise I swear by Tshaka I would have killed them all. What they did to my girl

I know not. If they have not killed her they will never keep her. When I recover my strength I shall take her back by force. They think I am dead. They do not know that I have risen again, like the Dangabane plant. What a delight it was—that first fight! I thought I was back again in Zululand, and the joy of battle rose in my heart: just when I was sure that they were at my mercy, the wound in my hand disabled me.”

In the afternoon Sitela returned with her four students. When they were yet some distance away, Jeqe asked who they were. The rowers answered, “Did you not see who it was who saved your life? It is she who is coming now, our Queen Sitela, the ruler of the island of diviners, she to whom all secrets are disclosed.”

When Sitela came up, she said, “Take that man and put him in the boat. The shadows are lengthening.”

With great care they lifted Jeqe and placed him in the boat. They pulled up the post to which the boat was fastened and threw it in with the rope, and then rowed back to the island. Jeqe was silent and amazed to see how a female was honoured and obeyed by her male attendants.

They now entered a lagoon where hippos wallowed and crocodiles barked on the sandy shore. They were surrounded by a forest of reeds and the water became brackish. They were now rowing along a narrow path through the reeds that seemed to have been cut especially for the boat. They rowed on till sunset and Jeqe had now no idea where he was.

When it was quite dark Jeqe saw a light burning where there seemed to be a little bay, and one could hear, coming across the water, cries of welcome for Sitela, who answered, “All is well, my children!”

The rowers threw out the post, those on the land drove it into the ground and fastened the boat's rope to it. Then Sitela went ashore. Her people knelt before her and cried, “Welcome back, our Queen and Mother, to whom the secrets of nature are revealed.”

Sitela now ordered Jeqe to be carried to the hut of Ngqelebani, who would heal his wounds and restore him to health. The attendants lifted Jeqe from the boat and carried him to the entrance to Ngqelebani's cave. Presently an old man appeared,

to whom they told the story of the rescue of Jeqe and how that Sitela had commanded that he be brought to him for treatment.

Ngqelebani was an emaciated old man. The skin of his lips was as stiff as dry ox-hide ; his shoulders were bent. He lived alone. His food, already cooked, was brought to him by young boys. His duty was to look after watersprites, werwolves and other animals and to combat witchcraft.

When Jeqe entered the cave he noticed an evil odour, quite intolerable to his senses. "Take me out!" he cried, "I can endure no longer." But the attendants refused and ordered him to go straight on. When they reached an opening in the rock a fresh breeze was blowing, and in a little courtyard the ground was strewn with the skins of all the animals which were to be found in that part of the country. Here they laid Jeqe down upon a heap of skins, while a young boy kindled a fire. Soon afterwards two other boys brought some thin gruel, which he swallowed thankfully, for he had taken no food that day. The boys then swept out the yard, rolled out rush mats and carried in a beautifully carved stool.

When all was ready, Sitela entered, followed by male and female attendants, who cried, "Hail, Princess!" Sitela sat down upon the stool. Ngqelebani came forward and cried, "Hail Princess!"

Jeqe could see how great was her honour in the land. "And now," said Sitela, "you must tell us whence you came."

Then Jeqe related the story of his birth, and how he came to Tshaka's court, and the King's death ; his escape from Zululand his coming to Tongaland ; his love for Zaki and how it led to the quarrel with the people of Ndlebende.

Sitela took her magic crystal that revealed to her all things that she wished to see. Presently she announced, "They have not slain your beloved ; she is at home. But to-morrow she will seek an opportunity to discover whether you are dead or still in the land of the living."

"Oh, my Princess," exclaimed Jeqe, "if that be so, send me back to-morrow, that I may see her."

"Oh no!" replied Sitela, "you have come to our Island Home and you will leave it only when you have learnt all the lore of the land. In one way I can help you : I shall send messengers to find her and tell her that you are still alive and in

good hands, where your wounds will be healed." This comforted Jeqe.

"I have brought you here," said Sitela, "to be healed by Ngqelebani. When you have recovered you will learn the wisdom of the medicine man and bring health to all who suffer. Fear nothing; no harm will reach you here. Ngqelebani will see to that. There are many caverns in the island, filled with strange animals that you have never seen. They tell me that when you were passing through the cave of the evil spirits you could not endure the smell, and wished to escape. Those evil spirits have indeed a dreadful smell, and even when the demon has been driven out, the odour is nauseating. When we have taught you what we know, you will drive out the evil spirits that bring madness to mankind and restore sanity to sufferers. I shall give you a magic crystal to help you in your work. But to learn our wisdom takes time. There is much to be seen in our island. Sleep now in peace. To-morrow Ngqelebani will give you medicine."

As Sitela departed, all rose to their feet and cried, "Farewell, Princess!"

Before retiring to rest, Sitela ordered two rowers to take the boat and seek for Zaki, and tell her that Jeqe was alive, that he was being cared for on the island, that she was to return home and wait with patience—maybe for years.

Jeqe did not sleep a wink that night. He was kept awake by the howling of animals that came in herds to be fed by Ngqelebani. He hid in a corner, fearing for his life, waiting wide-eyed till dawn appeared.

Early next morning the rowers took out the boat and returned to the spot where they had found Jeqe the previous day. There was no one to be seen, but the dog had been eaten either by hyaenas or crocodiles. They remained till mid-day.

Then suddenly, when they were thinking of rowing back, they saw a young girl approaching slowly, and as if searching for something. They called to her to come up. Startled by the cry, the girl stopped and thought of flight, but they called out again, "Come up! We have news of your lover." Encouraged by these words she approached. They told her that Jeqe had been found upon the shore, almost dead, that he had been saved by the great island doctor, that she should have no fear, for he



ZAKI AT THE RIVER BANK

would be healed and taught the art of medicine. He would then leave the island and they would meet again. "Yesterday," they said, "we saw the body of your dog lying on the sand, but to-day it had disappeared; it must have been eaten by wild animals."

"Have you really seen him?" asked Zaki.

They gave her a clear description of her lover: she was satisfied, and went home with joy in her heart and the hope that she would see her beloved once again. Before departing, Zaki unfastened her necklace and told them to give it to Jeqe with her love.

Meanwhile, on the island Jeqe was being treated by Ngqelebani. He was made to lie down at the side of a pot filled with bark and herbs of many kinds. The pot was set upon three large stones and a fire kindled beneath. When the water boiled he covered Jeqe with two skins and the steam from the hot water brought out a great sweat. He then bathed him in the boiling water in which the herbs had been soaking. He had put in a spray of the *cimamililo* plant to prevent the steaming water from scorching his skin. He then rubbed him down with a dry cloth and bound his wounds with the skin of a monitor lizard.

New strength came to Jeqe and presently two young boys appeared with two dishes of gruel, one for Ngqelebani and one for Jeqe. Before they had finished eating, the boys returned with a pot of beer. Then they brought food for the animals. Ngqelebani blew his whistle and strange creatures rushed in, some in the shape of human dwarfs walking on two feet. Great was the commotion and Jeqe, with fear in his heart, crept back into his corner. Ngqelebani called to the animals and herded them according to their kind. To the dwarfs he gave beer dregs: to the watersprites he gave porridge. Then there arose a fearful din of howling and squealing as the younger animals were bitten and scratched by the older ones. When they had devoured their food, Ngqelebani blew his whistle and the animals returned to their lairs. Jeqe was amazed. He could not understand how or why all these animals were there. When they had all rushed off, Jeqe crept up to Ngqelebani and asked him what was the reason for the presence of all the animals he had seen.

"Do you not know," answered Ngqelebani, "that this is the home of medicine, where men study the science? Every year one or two come to learn the profound wisdom of Sitela. All the chief diviners and healers have studied here. When you have recovered your strength you will begin to study."

The old man now gave Jeqe a long staff which helped him to totter about in the little courtyard. As the result of wise treatment, he soon recovered and Ngqelebani announced that his patient was cured. Sitela then desired him to be brought before her. So Jeqe left the cave with Ngqelebani and found himself in a country of great beauty, with fields of maize reaching down the hillside to a stream of clear water. At the foot of the hill Sitela's hut could be seen, where she dwelt with a number of boys and girls in her service.

When they were near Sitela's hut, they saw a young girl running out to meet them.

"The Princess," she announced, has no time to-day to see Jeqe. You had better bring him to-morrow. To-day you must show him all our work upon the island."

So Ngqelebani and Jeqe turned back, and as they made their way to the top of a small hill, Jeqe noticed what seemed to be a fire in the distance. "What is that?" he asked. "It is a forge," answered Ngqelebani, "where iron is smelted from the rock. A little further away is another forge where the metal is beaten into shape; and over there is yet a third forge, where brass rings and ornaments are made to be worn on arm and ankle.

"That is most interesting," said Jeqe, "for I have heard that in our country iron is found in the Nkandla forest. When we went raiding near Qudeni, they showed us a mountain where iron was smelted for spears and hoes. But I did not know how it is done."

"You will see to-day," said his companion, "how we smelt iron in this country, but what your methods are I do not know."

As they approached the furnace they could see the flames leaping high. Some men were carrying broken rock to the furnace while others were bringing charcoal to feed the flames. Others again were separating and collecting the dross for reheating and pounding. Jeqe thought he had never seen such skill in his own country. They passed on to the second and

third forges, where the smiths were shaping spears and hoes. Jeqe longed to remain and watch the work but Ngqelebani hurried him away, for it was time to feed the animals.

On the way back Jeqe looked enviously at the huts that looked so tidy and comfortable, far from the cave filled with animals and their evil smell. But the word of the Princess had to be obeyed : he returned to the cave, with sorrow in his heart : the thought of living in the midst of all those dreadful animals was hateful to him.

The appointed day came on which Jeqe was to visit the Princess in her hut. After breakfast Ngqelebani fed his animals and they left the cave to go to the royal hut. Sitela saw them when they were still far off, for she was outside her hut, teaching four men to throw the bones.

Her hut was quite out of the common. It had a wash of white clay, and the door was different from any other door he had ever seen : it was high, and made of reeds, and she too was not dressed as he had seen her at their first meeting. She wore a cloak of soft catskin ; her hair was hanging loose ; her face was beautiful, except for her eyes, which were too piercing ; they seemed to see right through a man.

Ngqelebani approached and said, "Hail, Princess !" and Jeqe greeted with the same words. As Sitela was sitting with her back to the door, teaching her four pupils, she turned and called to a young boy attendant to bring a goat-skin for the visitors. Then she went back to her work without taking further notice. She filled both her hands with the bones, scattered them in front of her pupils and bade them read their meaning ; but the task was too difficult. So she explained how when one bone lay in a certain position it had a definite meaning, and the significance of the relative positions they assumed.

As Jeqe watched the lesson he wondered whether he, a poor stupid Zulu, would ever be able to learn even the names of all those bones ! "But why," thought he, "should I bother about all this, for who would take the trouble to teach me !"

When Sitela had finished the lesson she asked Ngqelebani whether all her animals were well. "They are well," said Ngqelebani. "And how," she asked, "are you getting on with the Zulu lad ?" "We are good friends," he replied. She then turned to Jeqe. "Are you happy with us ?" she enquired.

"Yes, truly," he replied. "And do you like Ngqelebani's animals?" she asked. "No," said Jeqe, "I have not yet learned to like them." "Well," she replied, "you will soon be good friends. They are my soldiers. No nation on earth could come here and take my land. I would attack with them and you would see how they would fight."

As she spoke her face softened, her smile exposed a row of beautiful white teeth. On her ankles she wore copper rings; as she arose and arranged her cloak he saw her belt adorned with large copper beads. She then entered her hut, but returned presently carrying a clay pot, three little horns of the blue buck and a long reed. She threw down the horns and said, "Stand up, my children!" And the little horns stood up on end. Jeqe examined them carefully. They stood close together, the ends stopped up with glue to keep the power of the medicine safe within. They hopped up on to the reed and moved about on it. Sitela then put the reed back into the pot.

Jeqe was amazed to see this display of magical power and he noticed that the lips of the Princess were moving, for she was addressing the horns; suddenly one of them sprang up and fastened itself to her cheek. Sitela tried to brush it off with her hand and addressed it angrily, but without effect, for the horn still clung to her cheek: she spoke to it again and the horn fell back into the pot with the others.

Sitela then turned to Jeqe. "You must learn," she said, "to be a doctor. To-morrow Ngqelebani will bring you here to join my pupils and you will begin to learn."

The next day he left the cave and went to live with the learners. His first task was to learn the names and properties of the various roots and barks used in medicine and how to mix poisons with the fat of animals and rock powders.

Accompanied by Sitela and the other learners he frequently went on expeditions to seek for herbs and other medicines used for the cure of dysentery and for the doctoring of women whose children died at birth. Though Jeqe was the last comer, by the end of the first year he had surpassed all the others in learning. One day he approached Sitela and said, "I am lonely for my mother: could you look into the magic crystal and tell me whether my people at home are all well?"

Sitela took her crystal and said, "Stand there in front of me and think of your dear ones!"

Jeqe did as he was told.

"I see," said she, "two huts on a river bank. I see your mother in the foreground. Your father is standing behind her. The kraal is filled with cattle. I can see, too, your brothers and sisters. All are well at home."

Jeqe's heart was filled with joy.

One day at the beginning of the second year, he awoke before dawn and went down to bathe in the river. Now, at this hour the Princess was wont to take a steam bath. On the way down, Jeqe noticed a fire burning near a bush and a large number of animals, both large and small, surrounding a naked woman dripping with perspiration. The woman was exercising her body by straining and relaxing the limbs. Snakes, lizards and other reptiles were twined about her arms and neck. Trembling and amazed, Jeqe crept closer. The animals were leaping and rushing forwards and backwards, in wild excitement. As the light grew stronger, Jeqe could see clearly and only then did he realise that it was Sitela, the Princess.

Fearing that she might have seen him, he lay flat upon the ground and the Princess proceeded on her way to bathe in the river.

Jeqe now went to hide in the bush and after a long wait he saw the Princess returning. She went to the spot where she had had her steam bath, draped herself in her cloak and returned to her home.

For five days after this the Princess refrained from teaching, and no man was allowed near her hut. She was attended only by maid-servants. Jeqe now understood how she obtained her power, but his lips were sealed. He feared that if he were to mention what he had seen, it might reach Sitela's ears and he would surely die.

By the end of the second year Jeqe and one other, pupil had learnt all that Sitela could teach them of the art of healing. A great festival was held on the day of the final ceremonies. Sitela gave Jeqe a magic crystal, sewn into a bag of lizard skin and warned him that he must never open the bag except when exorcising evil spirits, or in order to become invisible when passing through danger.

"Go in peace," said the Princess to her departing pupils, "with the medicines and the knowledge I have given you. Heal the sick, and beware of witchcraft. Once you begin to dabble in that evil art your power for healing will weaken, your power to divine the future, will disappear. I shall follow your careers. All that you do will be clearly shown in my crystal. If you make a bad use of the medicines I have given you, all your learning will be brought to naught."

Then she looked hard at Jeqe and said, "Your Beloved is waiting for you. Make no attempt to seize her by force. Cross over the Ubombo mountains into Swaziland, where your services will be needed. After one month you will earn five head of cattle, for dysentery is raging west of the Ubombo, in the land of the Swazis. To-night you will sleep at Ndhlovu's kraal. Send a messenger to tell your beloved where to meet you. She will accompany you for some distance and then return to her home."

So Jeqe and his companion sailed away from the island, each carrying a sack of medicines. On reaching the mainland they separated: his companion going northward to his home in Tongaland. Jeqe hastened to Ndhlovu's kraal, where the people were amazed to see him.

"We thought you were dead," they said. "The followers of the chief's son came back and said they had killed you. The prince himself was eager to marry Zaki, but she refused."

Then Jeqe told his own story, how that he had been rescued by the Island Princess, and had learnt the art of medicine. The people were delighted to hear this, for they had been troubled by the visits of a witch's baboon and wondered if Jeqe could drive the animal away.

"If it comes," he replied, "I will capture it with my medicine and kill it before I leave." He drove in two wooden pegs and then sent a messenger to tell Zaki to come and meet him at a certain place on the northward road.

Early the next morning a young girl saw the baboon climbing into the store hut: she cried out and frightened the baboon away. Jeqe blamed the girl for crying out; she should have summoned him quietly and he would have caught the baboon. "However," said he, "it will never set foot again in this kraal; it would even attack its master if he tried to force it to come here."

Jeqe did not remain in Ndhlovu's kraal. He left that morning and met Zaki on the road. Great was the joy of Zaki, she seemed to be walking on air now that after so long an absence her lover had come back to her. In the meantime Zaki had grown into a tall girl with a well developed figure, but her parents were disgusted with her because she refused to marry the young prince and give them an assured position in the royal kraal. This was a great grief to Zaki, but what could she do? She loved Jeqe and her love was the source of all her joy. And so on that day she seemed intoxicated with delight. And to Jeqe, too it seemed a dream. He could not believe that his beloved had really come back to him. But their meeting was all too short and Zaki could not understand how Jeqe could leave her almost before they had time to see one another.

"I must hasten, my darling, to cross the mountains into Swaziland, where I hear the people are dying of dysentery. I must go, for I have studied this disease with special care. I shall certainly succeed and will soon have all the cattle I need for the bride-price. Before the year is out I shall take you from your father. I have told Ndhlovu that as soon as I own one beast I will send a messenger to him, and he will go to your father and with that beast he will ask for your hand. You see the sun is already high in the heavens: you had better go now, that you may reach home before sunset, for the land is swarming with wild beasts."

But Zaki persisted. She said she did not wish to go home: she wanted only to stay with Jeqe. Her family could come to fetch the cattle in Swaziland.

But Jeqe replied "The Princess, who taught me all I know, made me swear that I would not steal you from your parents. I want our marriage to be an honourable one, that all men may say I am as good a husband to you as the chief's son could have been. I promise you I shall send word to you before long; perhaps I shall be able to come and visit you. To reach my destination I shall sleep but once upon the road. To-day I shall sleep on the foot-hills and to-morrow I cross the mountains into Swaziland."

With a great grief in her heart Zaki turned to go home, but she followed Jeqe with her eyes till at last he disappeared into the bush. Then giving way to her sorrow, she sat down in the shade

of a tree and sobbed as if her heart would break. However, she soon dried her eyes and took a brighter view of things. She felt sure that Jeqe would soon return to claim her and she began to sing the song they had composed together when they were gathering shells on the banks of the Usutu.

Before she had gone far she fell in with some young men from her home kraal who had been courting in the kraals at the foot of the mountain. As she walked along in their company she told them the whole story of Jeqe, as she had heard it from his own lips ; how that he had learned to be a doctor on the island, but had now left it, fully qualified.

In the late afternoon they reached home. Meanwhile, Jeqe continued his journey. After some hours he came upon some kraals where they were all having their food. He was offered beer and rested for a few minutes. As he was passing through a wide stretch of country where there were no kraals, he suddenly found himself right in front of two great lions, a male and female. They were tearing at the carcass of a fat koodoo. Jeqe gave a sharp cry and the beasts slunk away, for they had eaten their fill. He then ran up and cut off some meat with his spear. He slung it over his shoulder and continued his journey. Before it was quite dark he entered a village with a mixed population of Swazis and Tongas. He had meat with him and was a welcome guest. Some young boys cooked the meat for him.

It was here that he received definite news of the terrible epidemic in the district of Mtsingana. Some villages, he was told, had been wiped out entirely. "We dare not set foot," they said, "in that district, and you will be a fool if you go up there. We give the country a wide berth and go north to Goba before turning westwards."

"Have you no doctors?" asked Jeqe. "If you people are afraid to go and tend the sick, I am going there now, for I could never call myself a doctor if I were afraid of sickness."

Next morning the rising sun found him already on the road : He climbed the Ubombo range just to the north of the Usutu River. When he reached the top of the pass he noticed that there was no sign of traffic on the road. In the first village he came to there was not a soul alive, though cattle were grazing all around. He continued northwards and came to a village where he was glad to hear the sound of human voices : he went to the

top of the kraal and greeted the occupants. They came out and gazed at him with curiosity, for it was a long time since any traveller had dared to come that way. In answer to questions, Jeqe said that he had come up from the low country, from the land of Ndhlebende ; but that he was a Zulu by birth. " I came to Tongaland when quite a young boy, and have studied medicine. I hear you are suffering from an epidemic of dysentery ; I have made a special study of this disease and the various methods of treatment."

" What do you say ? " they cried. " Can you really cure us ? We who have been deserted by doctors—not to mention ordinary people. No one now travels along the roads that pass through this district. You are indeed a brave man. In all these houses you will find corpses. Men and women are buried every day and the smell of death is everywhere. Do you see that heifer outside the fence ? If you can cure us, consider that your first fee."

" I accept," said Jeqe, " and now I want a young boy to help me prepare my medicines."

They gave him a strong young man whom he told to fetch a beer pot, to clean it, fill it with water and put it on the fire. Jeqe then opened his medicine bag and took out some reddish bark, ground it down and poured the powder into an empty horn. He went out into the veld and dug up certain fever medicines and pulled off the bark of a wild fruit tree. This he ground down and mixed with the powder that was already in his horn. Accompanied by his servant he went to a distant ravine and came back with many more herbs which he put into the pot to boil.

When the mixture had been boiling for a considerable time, he took it off the fire. He then ground down some more herbs and poured them into another pot filled with water ; from this pot he gave a dose to everyone, whether they were sick or healthy. When the medicine that had been boiling on the fire had cooled down sufficiently, he gave a dose to the twelve patients under his care. He gave them all an enema and another strong dose of medicine.

All that night Jeqe attended to his patients without a wink of sleep. There was one girl who was not expected to survive the night. She was covered with sores, but his medicine prevented them from spreading. He gave her draughts from herbs and

roots. During the night her appetite returned and she was able to take a little gruel. She then fell into a gentle sleep.

When the sun rose next morning, Jeqe was able to take a short rest. The headman of the kraal woke early and found that his daughter, whom he had expected to bury that day, was able to whisper quietly. The others were distinctly better and had passed a tolerable night. In their dire distress all sanitary arrangements had been neglected and the smell in the huts was terrible. Jeqe and his attendant cleaned and swept the huts out thoroughly. They sprinkled the floors with cleansing medicine and destroyed the swarms of flies, great blue-bottles and other insects that persecuted the patients.

Jeqe and his attendant then descended into the low thorn country along the road by which they had come, for he had seen there many herbs that could not be found at the higher altitude. They stripped off bark and dug for roots and returned with a great armful of medicines. These were ground down and boiled and given to the sick. After seven days a large number of his patients had recovered entirely. Those who had been very ill were much better. Before he had performed the final cleansing ceremony he was called away to other villages, where he worked by day and night. Here, too, he was most successful, nearly all his patients recovered and only a few died.

At the first village he was given five beasts, including the preliminary gift of a heifer. At the second two beasts, and before the month was completed he had acquired twenty head of cattle. The headman of the district sent messengers to the royal kraal to tell of the wonderful success of the doctor from Tongaland. With five head of cattle and two young men to help him on the road, Jeqe returned to Ndlhovu's kraal. As soon as he arrived he said to Ndhlovu, "Go to Zaki's home and say that I have come to claim her as my bride. Here are four beasts for the bride-price; the fifth will be slaughtered on our wedding day."

But Ndhlovu refused. "You cannot," he said, "have your wedding here. It would certainly lead to trouble. You must give her father all the cattle. Take your wife and go. Remember that the chief's son is still very sore about this girl that you have taken." Jeqe realised the truth of these words.

Ndlhovu brought the cattle to Zaki's father and after three days she packed up her possessions in four mats and hastened to join her lover. So Jeqe and Zaki were married, and together they returned to Swaziland.

But Zaki's father was not satisfied, and told Jeqe he must come back with two more head of cattle, and Jeqe said, "If you send some young boys with us, they can bring them back."

"I will send them," said the old man, "after three months. By that time I shall know whether the sickness has disappeared entirely."

Soon after the return of Jeqe and his bride to Swaziland, word came from the royal kraal to say that the king wished to see the doctor who had cured his people. Jeqe waited for six days and then made his way to the Court of the king, leaving Zaki behind in the village of Dhlamini. As he was now a famous doctor, he had two boys to carry his equipment. On his arrival at the royal Court, he first gave a display of his magical powers, performing all the wonders he had learned on the island. He then treated the king and his children and rose to a position of high favour at the Court.

He now asked the King to send for Zaki, and when she arrived the king built him a kraal and gave him two hand-maidens who had accompanied a bride but lately married into the royal household. This is a Swazi custom. Young girls accompany the daughter of a great chief when she leaves her home to be married. They remain with the bride as her servants; the husband can either make them his wives, if he so desires, or can give them away to others and receive cattle for them.

And so Jeqe in his new home had three wives. The power of his medicine was irresistible and he became the King's chief doctor. His fame spread even to the court of Dingane, the Zulu King. He was not now known by the name of Jeqe, or by his clan name, Butelezi. He had taken the name of Mshayikazi Mcunu and under that name his fame had spread. He told Zaki that she must never under any circumstances refer to him as Butelezi.

One day the chief induna came to instruct Jeqe in his new duties. "Our King," said he, "is aware that you are an expert doctor in case of sickness, but it is well that you should also know the customs of our people. You are here to guard the King's

health and you must never use your medicines upon the common people. There are certain huts here to which the people are not admitted. Though you are a doctor, you must not dare to enter them unless expressly ordered to do so by the King. There is a small place fenced off at the top of the cattle kraal where none may enter except the young sons of the King. To all others it is death. It is here that the King bathes when he is preparing for the *Incwala* festival. He enters the enclosure at nightfall with his medicine man, who "doctors" him in secret.

Other doctors fill him with the lust for battle which is passed on to the warriors when they meet the enemy in war. Then there are the sorcerers with the power to fly by night. All these doctors strengthen the King that he may become the bulwark of the nation.

There is another important doctor who produces the medicine by which the King rules the sky. For here in Swaziland the King is the rain-maker. When the land is stricken with drought all the other nations come hither to beg for rain. The name of this medicine is called *sihlati*. No other man but the king alone may use this medicine. It is brought from afar by special messengers when the King is about to bring the rain. It is stirred briskly and when the froth of it rises up and overflows, the King addresses the spirits and prays for rain. You know that here in Swaziland we have a King and a Queen-Mother, and both are rain-makers. Storm rain, that comes with thunder, is made by the King. The soft rain that falls continuously is made by the Queen-Mother. The Queen-Mother is expected to give birth to one male child and thereafter know no man. Both the mother and the child will have royal authority. The Queen-Mother has the title "Great Elephant," but is not greeted with the royal salute *Bayede*. If her son dies, the Queen-Mother takes over the government of the country, supported by a council of chiefs and indunas.

"Now your duties are to tend all cases of sickness in the royal kraal and to strengthen the King that he be not assailed from the evil power of witchcraft; therefore you must know all the customs of our country and our life here in the royal kraal."

The great *Incwala* festival is a strong bond of unity and brings together the whole Swazi nation. It takes place at the beginning of the summer when the early maize is ripe. The prelimi-

nary festival is called "The Defiance of the King." Special doctors supply the medicines with which the King defies his enemies. He rises at dawn and squirts the medicine at the rising sun and in the evening he squirts at the sunset. He then dances with his warriors in the cattle kraal. On the day of the great Festival, all the warriors have assembled and the King eats the gourd that grows only at the foot of the Ubombo mountains. This gourd does not soften when cooked by common people. It only becomes soft when cooked by the King, after having been treated by the doctors. Meanwhile, the warriors are engaged in dancing. In their huts is the savour of meat. The King slaughters many cattle and women and girls bring the food to their men-folk.

On one of the seven days of the Festival a black bull is killed by the warriors : it is caught and beaten to death with their fists. The flesh is roasted in the cattle kraal, the bones are carefully collected and burnt, and when the smoke rises high, all the people rejoice. They give thanks to their King and wish him and the country all success.

And now the Court praisers march up and down in the cattle kraal, praising the King :—

" A cunning warrior, he bides his time,
 A seeming harmless bird, with feeble wings
 He soars above all others.
 Our King Sobuza, greatest of his line,
 With spying eyes he spies out all the land,
 The crafty one who sees the coming storm
 He grips his prey and from his gripping claws
 The red blood drips."

The chiefs and the most famous of the warriors are then praised and every heart is filled with a thrill of joy.

There is another festival called the *Umcowasho*. Girls from all parts of the country are summoned to gather reeds to make hut screens in the royal kraal. They also weed the King's lands and dance in all their finery.

Court etiquette is strictly observed when the King grants an audience. The visitor is first brought up to the chief induna who asks him to state his business. If the matter is worthy of the King's attention, he is conducted to the royal presence and is granted an audience.

Into the apartments of the King's wives no grown man is allowed to enter, but only young boys. And sometimes young girls of twelve or thirteen years are employed to draw water and cook for the royal ladies.

The King has his own special cook. His wives are never allowed to cook for him. The King never drinks cold water. It must first be boiled and he drinks it while it is still hot.

The chief induna then pointed to a distant mountain. "That mountain," he said, "has many strong positions. No nation in the world could drive the Swazis out of them. When the country is attacked, large quantities of supplies are brought there. Some medicines that belonged to former kings are kept there." Then pointing to another mountain, the induna continued. "Over there are forges where iron is smelted and hoes are made, and lower down copper is worked and ornaments are made from it. And those magic weights are made there by which the King is given power to weigh down his enemies. And you will never win the confidence of the Swazis unless you procure those weights from the iron workers."

"A young bride may not take sour milk in her husband's home till he has offered it to her himself. The bridegroom points out the beast which is to be hers and offers her sour milk. She takes it in her two hands, and he says, 'To-day you may eat sour milk in our home; there is the beast with which I give it to you. That beast is now yours. When your son marries, it will be part of his *lobola*.'"

"With regard to sour milk," said Jeqe, "our customs are the same. But tell me what happens when the King dies?"

"That is an important question," replied the induna, "and I shall tell you what we do.

"When the King dies, the body is prepared for the grave by headmen and indunas. It is then placed on a bier of reeds and wicker-work and carried into the great hut. Ten black oxen and one black goat are supplied by the chief men in the land. Ten women are chosen from the King's wives and also the Court cook. The King's pots and dishes and finery are all collected and in the dead of night the procession of mourners leaves the royal kraal. The corpse is carried by members of the King's age group who relieve each other at intervals. The grave is in a

natural cave on the top of a high mountain where all the Kings of Swaziland are buried. Lit by torches, the pall-bearers enter the cave and place the King's corpse in his last resting place. Then the ten black oxen and the black goat are brought in and slaughtered. Then his wives and the court cook are sacrificed and sent to attend their king in the under-world.

"Then the voice of the court praiser is heard: he sings the praises of the departed kings of Swaziland, and now he cries,

" 'We send to you another king of illustrious fame, and here are the cattle that we have sacrificed to you, the guardian spirits of our native land.' The mourners then leave the grave. They bathe in the river and return to their homes at day-break."

"What is the period of mourning," asked Jeqe, "for the King's wives?"

"They mourn," replied the Induna. "for three years. They gather grass to make head-bands and they wear grass girdles round the breasts and loins and conceal whatever beauty they possess. At the end of the third year the whole family is collected, beer is brewed, cattle are slaughtered and a great feast is held, for the period of mourning is over. The King's widows are then married to the brothers of the late King. Sometimes, however, they themselves choose their second husbands: but all the children are considered to belong to the dead King and are the King's legacy."

CHAPTER X.

Now when Dingane heard of the fame of the Swazi doctor of the Mcunu clan, he sent word to Sobuza, the Swazi king, requesting him to send this doctor to cure a sickness that had broken out in his family. His children and favourite wife were dangerously ill. Sobuza agreed and Jeqe started on his journey escorted by two young boys and an old man from the Swazi court.

When Jeqe reached Zululand he wore a long beard, while his hair, falling loose in plaits, covered his face completely so that those who had known him in his youth should not be able to recognise him. On arriving at the King's court he at once disappeared into the hut that had been assigned to him. He did not dare to join the gathering of men for fear he might be betrayed. The first thing he did was to treat the King and after showing his wondrous power he was feared and respected by all. The people said that no such doctor had ever been seen in Zululand. He was permitted to enter the women's quarters and he cured the King's children. For this he received a fee of thirty head of cattle. One day he obtained permission to go to the coast to gather shell-fish for medicine : He left behind the old man and one of the young boys who came with him from Swaziland, and started off with the other boy : but his real purpose was to visit his parents. On reaching his old home he pretended to be a stranger, asking for news. On the following day he revealed himself to his father. He said he might tell the news to his mother, but that no one else must know.

Tears of joy poured from his mother's eyes. "I am well content," she cried, "for I have seen my child whom I had never expected to see again."

When all three were sitting at the top of the kraal, Jeqe began his story from the day of Tshaka's death and his escape from the country. Now that he had brushed back his hair from his forehead, they could see him clearly and there was no doubt in their minds, for the family resemblance was striking. His parents warned him not to remain for any length of time in

Zululand, for he would be betrayed by someone and Dingane would kill him.

"I have no desire to remain in Zululand," replied Jeqe, "I am here only because I wished to see you. I have finished my work in the royal kraal. Moreover, I cannot endure the new customs that now prevail, and the indiscriminate slaughter of the people. But I beseech you now to rescue my aged mother, and send her to me in Swaziland, where I can promise her a happy home. You may take a month over the journey, for you must go by easy stages—the slower the better. But you must think of an excuse to explain your going, for you are now old. I shall return to the Royal Kraal and will stay there for a few weeks. Then I will take my cattle and return to Swaziland."

His father then began to describe the conditions under which they lived in Zululand. "Life," he said, "is not worth living. We long for Tshaka to come back, even though he troubled us with ceaseless warfare; but Dingane has destroyed the country by cold-blooded murder. He has killed all the sons of his father Senzangakona, Gubuzela, uMhlangano, Matambo, Macapashiye, Mpansi, Ntsikalende and Mbulali. UMpande is the only one left alive and that is because he shammed madness. Whenever he saw Dingane he would roll about in the dust, search for bones, smell them and throw them away. So Dingane was advised not to kill the poor fool and he spared his life.

But in truth Mpande was no fool and gradually those who had tired of Dingane and hated his cruelties began to gather round the younger brother. The disaffected continued to pour in and before long Mpande was at the head of a large section of the Zulu people. Then the King said to Ndlela, his chief induna, "You told me that Mpande was foolish and that I must not kill him; but you see how he has stolen my people, and he has a family of sons, too, Cetshwayo, Hamu and Ziwedu."

Dingane now sought an opportunity to destroy Mpande. He chose a herd of young cattle, all of one colour, and told Ngcangwana and Matunjana to present them to Mpande, so that when his brother should come to return thanks he would be able to kill him; he would bring his sons too and they also would be destroyed.

Now on the day that the messengers left the royal kraal with the cattle for Mpande, Ndlela, the chief induna, whispered these

words into Ngcangwana's ears : " When you bid Mpande farewell, take your snuff-spoon from behind your ear, as if about to smoke, put it down somewhere and depart. When you have proceeded some distance on the homeward journey, tell your companion that you have forgotten your spoon and return alone. Seek out Mpande and tell him quietly to cross the Tugela river, for Dingane has determined to destroy him."

Ngcangwana and Matunjana brought the cattle to Mpande and said, " Here is a present from your brother, the King." Then all the women ran out and cried for joy, welcoming the coming of the cattle. Mpande now invited the messengers into his hut and slaughtered for them a red and white ox of the famous Mbelebeleni herd. This was the herd that had caused such grief to Dingane because his mother had given them to Mpande and not to him.

Now Ngcangwana remembered the words of Ndlela, and when he and his companion had proceeded some distance on the way home, he returned alone to recover his snuff-spoon. He found an opportunity to speak with Mpande in secret and warned him of Dingane's murderous plan. So Mpande gathered his people together and fled across the Tugela, as is recorded in his praise song :

" The Red Ant that refused the poison,
The Red Ant, the son of Ndaba,
The tempted son of Ndaba,
Tempted by Ngcangwana and Matunjana,
They tempted him with a herd of cattle,
King Mpande the son of Mjokwana, the son of Ndaba."

A quarrel now arose between the indunas of Dingane's army. Ndlela, the chief induna, quarrelled with Nzobo, the next in power. Nzobo was ruthless and had no pity for the people, but Ndlela was merciful.

When Mpande had fled the country he conspired with the Boers to destroy Dingane. The Boers told Mpande he must point out his heir ; he pointed to his son, Cetshawayo. The Boers then took an ox-yoke and pressing it beneath the boy's ear, cut their mark upon him. This, my son, is the present situation in this country."

As Jeqe listened to the story of all that had happened since he left Zululand, he felt he could never leave his home again and

when his father had ended his tale he climbed to the top of the hill across the river where the village girls used to fetch water in his childhood days. He sat down and let his eyes wander over the hills and woods where he used to herd his father's cattle : he remembered the boys with whom he used to fence with sticks and the steep slope on which they played the *insema* game when they rolled the Euphorbia root down the hill and flung their sticks at it. And he remembered how in those happy childhood days he climbed up wild fruit-trees and set snares for birds, and how he and his companions would dig up roots and eat them among the cattle. And there in the distance was that great forest where they went in hunting parties : and he remembered the words of their hunting song :

“ He struck down the game
With a great stone.
He struck down the game
With a great stone.”

Ntonga was the leader of the party and sometimes they sang this song in derision—after an unsuccessful day :

“ Our spears are bright and sharp,
Sharpened in our homes ;
But where are the buck ?
Where have you hidden them away ?
Where did you sleep last night ? ”

And again—

“ Come out, ye hunters,
Come hunt for the buck.
You are stronger than oxen,
Come hunt for the buck.
The buck has fallen,
Laid low by our spears ;
Come out, ye hunters,
Come hunt for the buck.”

“ Oh, those happy days ! ” thought Jeqe, “ never to return. And there all down that valley I was chased by old Sofocá, for I had allowed my cattle to feed in his lands. Oh well, my lad,” he said to himself, “ up you get, for it is time to go.”

When Jeqe returned to Dingane's royal kraal it was crowded with doctors and diviners, summoned by Dingane, who wished

to test Jeqe and see if he could throw the bones as well as the Zulu experts and to see whether he equalled the Zulu diviners in magical power. As Jeqe entered his hut at the top of the kraal he was surprised to hear the doctors sneezing, yawning, moaning and groaning, as is their custom before exercising their powers. A messenger soon brought word from Dingane to say that he was glad Jeqe had returned, because it was his wish to match him with the doctors and diviners of Zululand on the morrow.

Next morning before dawn one could hear that the doctors were busily engaged. The *Ubulawu* medicine was foaming in pots ; they themselves were groaning and moaning and the whole kraal was astir. Jeqe took his bag of bones, scattered them on the floor and examined them carefully. He picked them up, spat medicine on them, called them by their names and flung them down again. A smile of confidence spread over his face. " If I do not conquer them," he thought, " Sitela has taught me nothing." Then he replaced the bones in his bag.

Now during the night Dingane had given his feather plumes to an attendant and told him to bury them in the cattle kraal near the upper entrance.

When the sun was high in the heavens the King entered the cattle kraal and all the people assembled. Dingane ordered his chief induna to summon the doctors. They entered the cattle kraal and the King produced a great pot of beer and each doctor and diviner drank from his own mug. Jeqe was there too, with nothing but his bag of bones.

Then Dingane stood up and said, " I have summoned you, doctors and diviners, because a famous medicine man, both a healer and a diviner, has come from Swaziland. His fame had reached me and I sent for him to come and care for my children. First, I wish to match him against the diviners, and secondly, against the healers. I have hidden something inside this kraal I will give five head of cattle to the diviner who brings it to me."

The doctors sprang to their feet ; they danced and groaned. Jeqe sat still and said nothing. The doctors entered the kraal and hunted everywhere, but found nothing. Jeqe examined the manure near where he was sitting and threw his bones ; he examined their positions carefully and smiled. He picked them up, spoke to them, and threw them down again. Then he said, " I have found what the King has hidden. Summon all the

doctors, that I may show them they are but children compared to me."

The King summoned them and Jeqe called his young attendant. "Go," he said, "and dig in the manure over there. You will find the feather head-dress of the King. Bring it here."

And sure enough, the boy found the head-dress buried beneath the manure and brought it to Jeqe, who placed it at the King's feet.

Then the King said, "You have indeed defeated all the diviners of Zululand. He then turned to these men. "I will spare your lives, though you deserve to die. Your lives have been one long deception, for you know nothing. Go home at once."

Filled with shame, the diviners left the cattle kraal, collected their belongings and disappeared. D'ngane then turned to the herbalists and said, "I will now test your magical powers."

Jeqe got up and fetched his medicine bag. He took out some roots and a small skin. The doctors tried various tricks, but could perform nothing of any importance. And then Jeqe's turn came. "Sirs," he said, "I want some milk in a small pot." They brought the milk and Jeqe turned to the company.

"You all see this white milk: I shall put in it just one hair of this fox-skin and the milk will turn red." And in truth, as soon as the fox's hair touched the milk, it turned blood-red. The King cried out, "That is indeed a miracle."

Then Jeqe said, "You see these two dry stalks. I can make them walk." He took a pot full of water, breathed into the stalks and lo and behold, the dry stalks began to hop about on the surface of the water!

Dingane then turned to Jeqe. "You are the victor, friend from Swaziland! Take your cattle."

Then he turned to his chief induna. "Go to the women's quarters, seek out the most beautiful of the hand-maidens and bring her here. I wish to make a present of her to this famous doctor." All the company thanked for Jeqe.

That afternoon Dingane summoned Jeqe and said, "I want you to leave Swaziland and come and live with me. I will make you my chief doctor and build you a fine house."

"I am filled with gratitude," replied Jeqe, "but I must first return with the cattle and the hand maiden you have so gra-

ciously given me, so that my family will readily agree to come to Zululand when they see the proofs of your generosity."

The King raised no objection but said he would give him two attendants to escort him on the road.

Far away, at Jeqe's home, his aged father and mother were preparing to leave for Swaziland. Jeqe had told them that on the road they must call themselves by the name that he had assumed in Swaziland. But before they had gone far, his mother, who was not accustomed to long journeys, began to suffer from her feet, and it was necessary to remain for some considerable time in a village by the roadside till her feet recovered. So Jeqe and his party arrived in Swaziland before his parents.

Great was the rejoicing when Jeqe came home with all his cattle. He was received by Zaki and the other women with shrill cries of joy. At that time Zaki's eldest son was old enough to be a herd boy, and he ran round and round as he gazed with delight at the new addition to his father's herd.

The two Zulus who had been sent by Dingane to accompany Jeqe rested for some days and then went on to pay their respects to the Swazi King. The day before they left Jeqe killed a goat, to provide them with meat for the road.

Twelve days after Jeqe's return his father and mother arrived. He had already told his family that his parents would come. When they arrived, the sprouted corn was already steeped in readiness for the coming feast. The day they arrived they were presented with a fat goat. They were amazed at the size of Jeqe's family and wondered how he had obtained the cattle for the bride-price. He told them of the fee he had received for curing the victims of the epidemic and of the present given him by the Swazi King. The women folk were busily engaged making beer for the party, while Jeqe himself tended his mother; hot fomentations soon reduced the swelling in her feet and limbs.

Jeqe then went to the royal kraal and told the King of his visit to Dingane, who wished to keep him in Zululand: he said he had agreed to this, but only in order that he might leave Zululand without difficulty. He also informed the King that he had invited his parents to come and see his family and that he intended to give a feast in their honour. The King was delighted that Jeqe had chosen to stay with him and not with Dingane.

He pointed out a red bull as a gift to Jeqe's father and promised to send two of the royal princes to grace the feast. Jeqe was overjoyed to hear this and he also gave thanks for the bull.

When the appointed day arrived the beer pots overflowed in Jeqe's kraal. Early that morning many cattle died for the son of Sikunyana. Jeqe slaughtered three oxen and the King's bull, and the young bride whom Dingane had given him slaughtered a black and white calf. When the sun was high the royal princes arrived, escorted by a company of warriors. The whole kraal was filled with the savour of cooked meat, and singing had begun in some of the huts. The princes were shown to a hut for themselves and their attendants, and an ox was slaughtered in their honour. Beer and meat were plentiful and tongues were loosened.

Presently one of the company who knew the true story of Jeqe's adventures began to sing his praises and mentioned his narrow escape from death at Tshaka's funeral. This was overheard by one of Dingane's men who had returned from the royal kraal. He kept his peace, but noted the features of Jeqe and his father. He was sure they were Zulus, and the story of the King's body-servant who had fled from Zululand when threatened with death and burial in Tshaka's grave was well known to him. However, the singing and dancing continued, the beer flowed and no one thought of danger. Sikunyana and his wife were delighted to see how their son was honoured throughout the land.

When the feast was over, the Zulus who had escorted Jeqe said good-bye. They had brought three skins from Dingane as a present for the Swazi King. Two were leopard skins and one a honey-eater. On their departure from the royal kraal the Swazi King had given them five buck skins, five wild-cat skins, and two cheetah skins, as a mark of respect to the Zulu King.

Dingane was indeed delighted when he saw this tribute from Swaziland, and when the skins were being spread out before him he asked, "What kind of a country is Swaziland and what did you see there?" They had much to say of the feast that Jeqe had given in honour of his parents from Zululand and they repeated what they had heard about him having been at one time a body-servant of Tshaka. On hearing this, the King pricked up his ears.

“Go,” he said, and summon Sikunyana of the Butelezi clan, and if he cannot be found, bring hither his eldest son.”

The men hastened to Sikunyana's home, but as there was no sign of him, they came back with his eldest son. Dingane asked him where his father was. He replied that his father and mother had gone to visit a daughter who had married north of the Imfolozi River.

“Before they departed,” enquired Dingane, “did anyone come to visit them in your home?”

“Yes, a young man did come, who said he was from Swaziland, but I never saw him. I only heard about him. He stayed but a short time and when he had gone, my father and mother also went away. That is all I know, and they have not yet returned.”

The King then ordered him to go with two other men to his sister's house and enquire whether Sikunyana and his wife had arrived. They were to return at once with this information. After some days they returned with the news that Jeqe's parents had arrived and remained for three days. They had then left, saying that they were going to Swaziland. So Dingane understood that it was indeed Jeqe who had disguised himself while he was in the royal kraal.

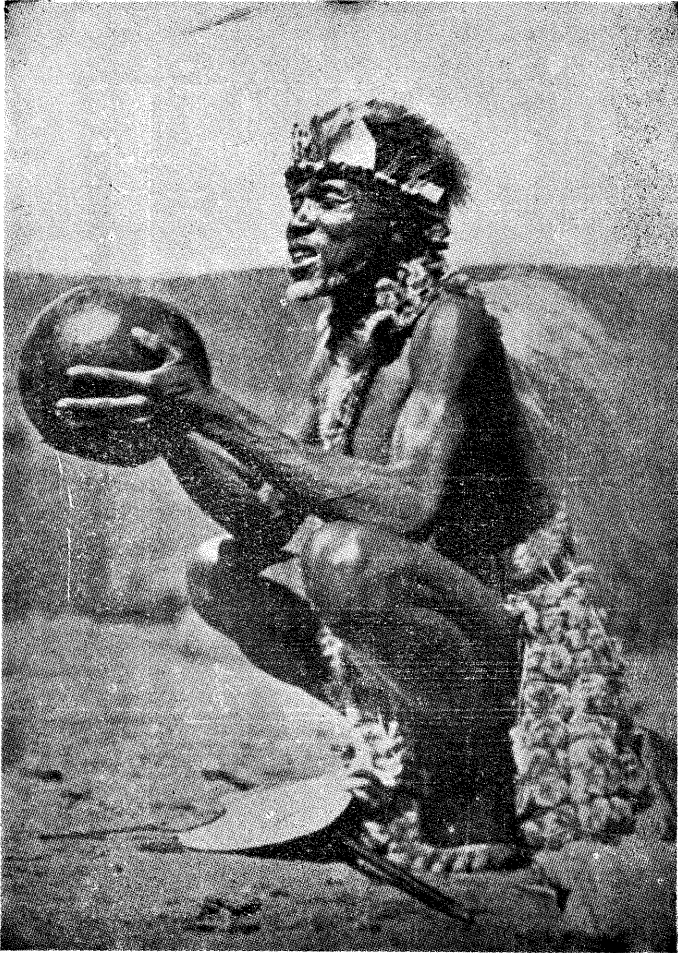
“So that was why,” he exclaimed, “he always kept his face covered. I felt his evil influence upon me. I was never at ease when sitting near him. He put the spirit of Tshaka upon me.”

The King summoned the people and told them that the doctor who had been tending the royal children was Jeqe, the son of Sikunyana, of the Butelezi clan. “He returned after years of exile and came to our royal kraal, with the evil influence of the late King within him.”

“His coming was disastrous,” said Dingane. “I know not whether we shall in future be strong to conquer our enemies. How shall we purify ourselves from the spell he has cast upon us? I would have your views on this question, my warriors.”

Then the captain of the army replied, “It would be well, Sire, to send messengers to the Swazi King, and tell him to send hither this Jeqe, and his father, Sikunyana: as they are your Majesty's subjects he will not dare to refuse.”

The words of the captain of the army prevailed and five men were chosen to be sent to the Swazi King with the demand that



JEQE LIVED TO A GOOD OLD AGE

Sikunyana and his son, Jeqe, the well-known doctor, be sent back to Zululand.

When the messengers arrived the King summoned Jeqe and told him of the demand of the Zulu King. But Jeqe refused to return to Zululand. "And if you, Sire," he pleaded, "have no further need of my services, let me go forth as a wanderer. To return to Dingane would mean instant death. And what would become of my father and mother. ? They would die on the day I died. Dingane would slay them for not having informed him when I declared myself to them."

To which the King replied, "You must indeed remain with me, for you have in your care all the medicine that protects the sovereignty of the land. If you were to return to Zululand Dingane would surely use your powers to conquer this land."

On hearing these words from the King's own lips, Jeqe returned to his home with joy in his heart. The King summoned Dingane's messengers and said, "Tell your royal master that I will never let Butelezi leave this land. He is my chief doctor and his father is now my subject."

The messengers brought this answer back to Dingane and as a result a fierce war broke out between the two countries. Hostilities continued till Jeqe's eldest son, the child of Zaki, was able to play his part in them.

After many years Jeqe's father and mother died in Swaziland, and were buried by their son and his children. The war with Zululand continued and Dingane, pierced by a Swazi spear, joined the thousands who had fallen in this feud.

Jeqe lived to a good old age and won great fame as doctor to the royal household. At his death he left a numerous progeny and many herds of cattle. His eldest son, too, became a doctor and though he never attained to his father's pre-eminence, his profound knowledge of medicine made him respected throughout the land.

Jeqe's children always remembered with pride that though the Zulus conquered all the neighbouring tribes, they never conquered the Swazis. This was due to the power of the medicines with which their father had strengthened the army in his lifetime

Even to this day the name of Jeqe is remembered in Swaziland and members of the Butelezi clan are still to be found in the land.

Zaki, too, lived to a great age, the mother of six children. She often sang her children to sleep with that old song she had made on the river-bank when her heart was filled with glowing love :

“ Sweet is the memory
Of those happy days,
When we were gathering shells, Jeqe
On the banks of the Usutu ;
When we were gathering shells, Jeqe
On that lovely river-bank,
On the banks of the Usutu.

FINIS



JEQE THE BODYSERVANT OF KING TSHAKA