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moment too soon. We must remember that many of the settlers were peasants and mechanics who had never seen bloodshed, and knew nothing of Kafir warfare, except from the dreadful stories of torture and massacre they had heard. They were now going about with pale faces, loaded with guns, pistols, and swords. They had thrown up barricades in all directions; they had appointed a "committee of safety," and "such was the consternation, an alarm, in the dark especially, would have set one-half of the people shooting the other."

Smith found that he had a regular force of 700 soldiers, besides 850 armed civilians, and that 200 burghers of Graaff Reinet and the 72nd regiment were approaching. He determined to take the offensive and strike at the heart of the enemy's country.

But first of all he had to restore confidence. He summoned a meeting. It was attended by a number of leading settlers, and when the colonel asked them the cause of some delay in executing his orders, one of them stood up and began to enter into argument and discussion. "I exclaimed," says Smith, "in a voice of thunder, 'I am not sent here to argue, but to command. You are now under martial law, and the first gentleman, I care not who he may be, who does not promptly and implicitly obey my command, he shall not even dare to give an opinion; I shall try him by court-martial and punish him in five minutes.'"

This was enough. The colonists recognised a leader. "Men moved like men, and felt that their safety consisted in energetic obedience." The barricades were thrown down, the forces organised, communication reopened with Port Elizabeth, a raid was made upon one of the chief kraals of the enemy, seven missionaries with their families were rescued from the very heart of Kafirland, where they had waited trembling for the moment when their throats were to be cut; and the Kafirs in alarm began to fall back on their own country.

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Then Sir Benjamin d'Urban arrived with reinforcements, and assumed the command, Smith from that time acting as chief of his staff. In this capacity he organised two corps of Hottentots who did splendid work, and also a corps of Guides, the pick of the settlers, under that great colonist, Charles Southey, then a young man.

With his light force of Hottentots and Guides, Smith raided the enemy in every direction, striking like lightning here, there, and everywhere, and marching incredible distances. The Kafirs were bewildered, and fled after a brief resistance, while their cattle and those they had plundered were carried back in triumph. Then the Governor determined to attack the great chief Hintza, who, despite the fact that he owed his life and position to the British Government, was at the back of the hostilities.

At first this truculent savage treated the Governor's messages with contempt; but Smith made several tremendous marches, captured 14,000 cattle, principally the property of the colonists, and burnt the chief's kraal. This brought Hintza to reason, and with fifty followers he came in to make peace. The conditions were the restitution of the cattle stolen, and redress for all grievances. Hintza agreed and peace was declared.

But the wily Kafir was only trying to gain time. He pretended to send messengers to collect the cattle; but no cattle arrived. Then he offered to go and get them himself; but Smith knew better than to let him out of his sight. He even tried to murder the colonel by means of an assassin; but the attempt was foiled. So, at last, he asked his captor to go with him and take troops, while he, himself, would collect the cattle.

Harry Smith agreed, though the Governor was against it, knowing very well that Hintza was playing false. But before the Colonel started he made Hintza the following little speech :—

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“Hintza, you have lived with me now nine days; you call yourself my son, and you say you are sensible of my kindness. Now I am responsible to my King and to my Governor for your safe custody. Clearly understand that you have requested that the troops under my command should accompany you to enable you to fulfil the treaty of peace you have entered into. You voluntarily placed yourself in our hands as a hostage; you are however to look upon me as having full power over you, and if you attempt to escape you will assuredly be shot. I consider my nation at peace with yours, and I shall not molest your subjects provided they are peaceable. When they bring the cattle according to your command, I shall select the bullocks and return the cows and calves to them.”

To all this Hintza consented, and so they rode away. The chief, who carried his assegais, was mounted on a fine horse, and George Southey and fifteen men of the Guides were his guard. Thus they went for two days; but on the third Hintza got his chance. It was on the farther bank of the river Xabecca. The bank was steep and thickly wooded. Suddenly Hintza made a dash; but he got entangled in the thicket and had to stop. Smith drew his pistol; but the chief smiled so ingenuously that the other began to regret his suspicions.

And so they went to the top of the ridge, ahead of the troops. At the summit the colonel turned round to watch his soldiers come up, and seizing the chance, like a flash Hintza burst from his guard and was away again. He was two hundred yards distant before Smith realised what had taken place, and then the colonel clapped spurs to his horse in pursuit.

Hintza was riding one of Somerset's best horses; but Smith was on an animal of the finest English blood. At first the chief kept his distance; but blood tells in a long race, and the colonel gradually drew closer to the fugitive. On they galloped. They had now gone nearly a

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mile. In front was a Kafir village ; on the right was the bed of the river full of Kafirs waiting to receive their chief. But Smith drew in between Hintza and the river bank, and closing with him, struck at him with the butt-end of his pistol. It flew out of his hand, Hintza, meanwhile, jobbing at him furiously with an assegai.

And then, says Colonel Smith, " I was now rapidly approaching the Kafir huts, and the blood of my horse gave me great advantage over Hintza. I tried to seize his bridle-reins, but he parried my attempt with his assegai. I prayed him to stop, but he was in a state of frenzy. At this point of desperation, a whisper came into my ear, ' Pull him off his horse ! ' I shall not, nor ever could, forget the peculiarity of this whisper. No time was to be lost. I immediately rode so close to him that his assegai was comparatively harmless, and seizing him by the collar of his karosse (or tiger-skin cloak), I found I could shake him in his seat. I made a desperate effort by urging my horse to pass him, and I hurled him to the ground."

Smith had lost control over his horse and was now borne towards the village, expecting every moment to have a hundred assegais thrown at him ; but, fortunately, the Kafirs had fled into the river. With both hands the rider hauled his beast's head round and drove him into a hut. This stopped him for a moment, and then back the horse went towards the chief.

George Southey was by this time within gunshot, and Hintza was running for the thicket on the bank.

" Fire, fire at him ! " shouted the colonel.

Southey fired, and the chief fell.

He was on his legs again in a moment and gained the bush, Southey after him. The young guide lost him for a time in the thicket ; but as Southey was climbing up a cliff in his search an assegai whirled past his head. Turning round he found himself face to face with a Kafir who was raising another assegai to stab

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him. Southey was so close that he had to recoil to bring up his gun. He fired and Hintza fell.

Smith laid the body, reverently covered, in the village, and then began to consider his position. He was surrounded by thousands of savages thirsting for revenge. Safety lay in speed, and Smith acted like lightning. He made a rapid march, captured three thousand cattle, then rescued a thousand Fingos who were in danger of being massacred, and by extraordinary skill kept the savages at bay all the time. They tried night attacks, but he drove them back. "In all my previous service," he says, "I was never placed in a position requiring more cool determination and skill, and as one viewed the handful of my people compared with the thousands of brawny savages all round us, screeching their war-cry, calling to their cattle, and indicating by gesticulations the pleasure they would have in cutting our throats, the scene was animating to a degree."

But Smith came out of it safely with the loss only of Major White, who had rashly exposed himself, and six men. He had marched in seven days 218 miles, through terrible country in the face of hordes of Kafirs, and he had brought into safety 3000 cattle and 1000 fugitives. At last the war came to an end: the Kafirs, after their first triumphant invasion, had only struck one successful blow, the massacre of Bailie and his detachment of Hottentots. The details of that tragic fight no one will ever know; but it was no doubt similar to the massacre of Wilson and his party long afterwards by the Matabele. Certain it is that Bailie and his twenty-eight brave Hottentots fought till their last shot was spent, and then fell pierced through by assegais.

Hintza's son Kreli was made chief in his father's place, and the country between the Kei and the Keiskamma was annexed under the name of the Province of Adelaide, with its capital at King William's Town,

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and fifteen thousand Fingos, rescued from the tender mercies of the Kafirs, were settled upon it. Smith was given command of the Frontier Province, and charge of a hundred thousand barbarians. He was just the man for the work. He was frank and honest and just. He talked to the natives in parables and in a sign language which they could understand. To show his power he blew up an ox-wagon; to confound the rain-makers he threw a glass of water on the ground and asked them to put it in the glass again. He adopted some of the native customs and laws, and organised a force of native police and native newsmongers, who ran through the land with his daily court circular. His system seemed to work well; but how it would have fared in the long run will ever be matter of dispute, for it was brought to an untimely end.

It happened in this way. A party in England and South Africa, composed of good people, and politicians, missionaries, friends of the slaves, and a sprinkling of that peculiar class which thinks its own countrymen must always be wrong, had been agitating for some time about the oppression of the black man. They were sometimes excellent people but usually they did not take a very broad view of things. They heard that black men were often beaten and occasionally killed, and therefore they thought that all white men in the colony were cruel tyrants and all black men were oppressed innocents. It was just as if a Chinaman were to read about the wife-beating and drunkenness which goes on in English slums, and argue therefrom that Englishmen as a rule were Bluebeards and sots. That there were cases of cruelty and murder and robbery in the colony I have clearly shown. Any historian who says there were none is simply flying in the face of the evidence. When two peoples like the Kafirs and the European settlers are fighting for a piece of land which, strictly speaking, belongs to

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neither, it stands to reason that there will be some heads broken. So it is all through history: when the Normans were fighting the Saxons for England, or when the Australians were edging out the black fellows, or the New Zealand settlers were fighting the Maoris, or when the American colonists were fighting the Red Indians. So it is all through Nature: when the brown rat is fighting the black rat, for example. It is a law in life that the more advanced race shall dispossess the less advanced.

In this case, then, there was a pressure of the white man on the black just as a big man elbows a small man in a crowd. The black man resented it and ran his knife into the white man's ribs, and then there was trouble. It was all inevitable, as the people at home would have known if they had read their histories, and they should have tried to soften the process and prevent friction as much as possible, always remembering that, after all, the white man was their brother and a reasoning being, while the black man was a savage who did not usually reason at all. Instead of doing this, the party I have spoken of called the white settlers a pack of murderers and robbers, and held that the Kafir was always right. Even when the missionaries who lived among the Kafirs ventured to tell the truth about them, their friends at home were angry and began to insinuate that these missionaries were in league with the settlers.

Now Lord Glenelg, who was Secretary of the Colonies, was one of this party, and he got it into his head that the black man could do no wrong and the white man no right—at least in South Africa. He was thus in a very peculiar position. His predecessor had placed five thousand of the King's subjects in a place in which they were almost bound to come to blows with the Kafir. Lord Glenelg was thus in a measure responsible for their safety. Yet when the Kafirs invaded the settlement, murdered about forty of the settlers, and

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burned nearly all their farms, Lord Glenelg only told the Englishmen that it served them right, and would not even allow them to hit back. It was just as if a lawyer who was also a temperance advocate should try to ruin a brewery of which he was a trustee because he thought beer was bad for people.

Lord Glenelg wrote to Sir Benjamin d'Urban that "the Kafirs had ample justification of the late war," and the claim of sovereignty over the new province bounded by the Keiskamma and the Kei must be renounced. The killing of Hintza was described as a cruel murder; Sir Benjamin d'Urban's whole policy was condemned as wicked, and Colonel Harry Smith was superseded.

Even if all that Lord Glenelg believed were true, it would still have been the height of impolicy to upset everything in this bull-in-a-china-shop manner. As it was, it filled the British settlers with boiling indignation, it disgusted the Boers, and it made the Kafirs more truculent than ever. Poor Sir Benjamin d'Urban felt most of his prestige gone; Harry Smith had to clear himself of what almost amounted to a charge of murder, for which Southey was actually tried; and a Lieutenant-Governor was placed at the frontier to carry out a policy that was exactly the opposite of everything the Governor had done. The result was inevitable. Sir Benjamin, despite his courtesy and patience and desire to work with Lord Glenelg and his new lieutenant for the good of the country, found the situation impossible. He was dismissed, and Sir George Napier sent out in his stead.

Fortunately for the country, the man Lord Glenelg had chosen to succeed Smith knew a great deal more of the real situation than did Lord Glenelg. This was our old friend Captain Andries Stockenström, the son of the Landdrost who had been murdered at Slachter's Nek and the magistrate who had helped so energetically to suppress the Slachter's Nek Rebellion and who had afterwards been Commissioner-General of the Frontier.

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His virtues and his faults are well known. He was a strong man and a just; but he was also an autocrat, impatient of control and sharp of temper and of tongue. He knew that there were occasional and serious acts of injustice against the Kafir; but he also knew that the Kafir was a dangerous and treacherous savage, with a nasty little habit of assegaiing unoffending people and running off with their cattle. He had often himself been out on commando and helped to shoot Kafirs in many a raid after stolen cattle. He had done things at which the good Lord Glenelg would have turned white and trembled. But he had had a quarrel with Colonel Somerset in which he was very likely right and the colonel wrong. He had thrown up his work and gone to Europe, and there told his story to such good purpose that Lord Glenelg had made him Lieutenant-Governor instead of Colonel Smith.

Stockenstrom was a hard hitter and a good fighter; but he found he had enough to do when he got out to South Africa. True, Sir Benjamin d'Urban received him kindly and courteously, and Harry Smith helped him like a comrade in arms. But the Eastern Province settlers looked upon him as a traitor to their cause. They had been called robbers and murderers, and Stockenstrom was hand-in-glove with their accusers. Then the Boers had grown alarmed with the progress of events and were more bent than ever upon trekking out of the country, while the Kafirs and Fingos were robbing one another and the settlers.

Still Stockenstrom went doggedly to work; restored as well as he could the old order of things, withdrew most of the new military posts, and generally adopted what has been called Lord Glenelg's system, though some of its provisions would have set that nobleman's hair on end. Stockenstrom found that the colonists were afraid to defend even their own cattle, so cowed were they by the accusations of the pro-native party

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and the Government's protection of the Kafir. He therefore framed an ordinance which allowed colonists to shoot armed marauders ; in fact, he made private war legal—a law which the friend of the black man might call the legalisation of murder. Still, it was the only way. It was the custom of the border, and all the human institutions in the world could not prevent the practice or suggest any other plan.

Now a great deal has been said about the change from the d'Urban system to the Glenelg system. As a matter of fact neither of these statesmen had created anything that could be called a system. The one had not time ; the other never got full obedience. Nor did it matter. The situation was there and no system could change it. The white man was face to face with the black ; both wanted land and cattle and both were armed in a great, new, wild country. Therefore they fought. And they fought for years and years—sometimes in small parties and sometimes in big. Sometimes the white men were put to flight and sometimes the black. Sometimes there was a massacre on the one side and sometimes on the other. Sometimes the military acted alone, sometimes in co-operation with the burghers and the British settlers. There were a hundred stirring fights that might be mentioned, enough to fill a dozen books. There was the military disaster at Burn's Hill. There was Stockenstrom's Raid on the Amatola. There was the Glencoe massacre at the village of Auckland, where the veterans of the 91st had settled with their wives and children. On Christmas Day of 1850 the Kafirs came into the village and asked for food and shelter. The good people gave them some of the Christmas dinner, and while in the very act of sharing it, the savages rose and killed nearly every man in the village. There, and at two other military villages, nearly fifty settlers were murdered by treachery. Some of the boys escaped by dressing as girls, for the

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Kafirs often spared the women, though they were sometimes speared also. There was the great fight of the Boomah Pass where Smith, then Sir Harry Smith and Governor of the colony, fought his way through a narrow gorge with the loss of fifty men killed and wounded. In such wild scenes the Eastern Province was welded together, and in such desperate struggles the settler became a strong frontiersman, quick and self-reliant, ready with axe as with rifle, and rising buoyant above every misfortune.

But we must hurry on to the great disaster which for ever broke the strength of the Kafir nations. It is one of the most astonishing stories in all history, the story of a great people committing suicide in one tremendous act of self-destruction. It happened when England was fighting Russia in the Crimea, when rumours of the war were filtering through to the Kafir chiefs and were causing them to think that the time had arrived to shake off the yoke of the white man, though how much the movement was a conspiracy among the chiefs and how much the result of superstition will never be known.

Sir George Cathcart after the terrible wars of a few years before had driven the Kafirs out of the Amatola Mountains into the country between the Keiskamma and the Kei. When their cattle lowed they would say, "Listen how our cattle yearn for the mountain-grass of the Amatola."

Kreli, the great chief, had a soothsayer of renown called Mhlakaza, and Mhlakaza's daughter Mongquase was held to have the gift of prophecy. She told the Galekas that she had converse with the chiefs and heroes of old time, Ndlambe, Hintza, Mdushane, Gaika and Eno, who were resolved to save the people from their evil fate. They would rise from the dead and would be joined by the Russians (who were also black men) and together they would drive the white men into

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the sea. But as a pledge of their belief, the Kafir people must destroy all their cattle and all their grain, and the land must not be tilled. Then glorious herds of wide-horned oxen would arise from the earth; the grain pits would be refilled to the brim; the arms and cattle of the white men would fall to the Kafir; the dead would live again, and the living would put on immortality. Then the pastures of the Amatola would be regained and all would live happily for ever and ever.

The word went forth through the tribes, and marvels were seen that showed the word must be true. Strange warriors, who could be no other than Russians, appeared at nightfall; the horns of beautiful oxen were spied peeping through the rushes of the swampy pools; the lowing of cattle was heard rising from subterranean caverns; the heroes of old time were seen on foot and on horseback marching in endless legions across the waves of the Indian Ocean.

Then the cattle-slaying began. There were great feasts and rejoicings; but the cattle fell faster and faster, until there were too many to eat. The dogs could not eat them, nor the jackals, nor the hyænas, nor the vultures that gathered in clouds. The evil savour of thousands of decaying carcasses filled the air, mingling with the smoke of the burning grain. Never had there been such a destruction; no less than two hundred thousand cattle were killed to fulfil the words of the prophet.

Mr. Charles Brownlee, who was the Gaika Commissioner, has told us how he fought this movement. It was a terrible struggle between one white man and a host of chiefs and witch-doctors. He rode day after day through the length and breadth of his territory, warning, exhorting, scolding, and entreating. To all their stories of future happenings he would reply, "*Napakade! Napakade!*" ("Never! Never!") so that his name was changed among the natives, and ever after he was known as Napakade.

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The chief of the Gaikas, Sandile, was a weak and wavering man. For a time Brownlee restrained him, and he only killed a few cattle; the commissioner kept the chief's kraal close to his house; but at last the other chiefs and witch-doctors sent Sandile such terrible messages that he fled to his old kraal and slew his cattle. Brownlee went after him, and argued with him and with his evil counsellors. They told him not to trouble them. "It is not for you I feel," he replied, "but for the helpless women and children who in a few days will be starving." Then Brownlee sat down on the ground and wept, for he felt he had lost the battle. And the cattle-killers cried, "Lo, he weeps, he sees the destruction of the white man is at hand."

But Brownlee did not altogether fail, for some of the chiefs took his advice and refused to kill their cattle. Thus families were divided, brother against brother, father against son. The whole Kafir people were split into two parties, the Amagogotya, who wanted to keep their cattle, and the Tambas, who wanted to kill them. The Tambas, not content with killing their own cattle, tried to slaughter those of the other party, and broils and bloodshed were the result. The whole of Kafirland was in an uproar; but the Tambas being the stronger, there was a great migration of the Amagogotya into the colony. They came in crowds, all carrying sacks of grain upon their heads—even the little children had their bundles—and they drove their flocks and herds in front of them.

At last came the great day when there was to be darkness, thunder, rain and a mighty wind, and the white men were to be turned into frogs and mice and swept into the sea. The Kafirs decked themselves out in their paint and beads and copper rings and confidently waited for the miracles. But none came. The sun rose in a cloudless sky, and made his journey just as usual. The heavens did not rush to meet the earth as the

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prophetess had said they would. Nature went on its old way, the sun sank, and the serene moon came out, heedless of the white eyes that watched her for the portents of doom.

And then a great sound of lamentation went up from all Kafirland. There was no food ; no cattle came out of the earth ; no grain appeared in the pits. Every day the people went to the kraals and granaries to look, and every day they were faced with the same emptiness. Some of them at last fell into their grain-pits and died ; others wandered into the bush to search for roots, and fell through weakness to rise no more.

And now a throng of starving people began to cross the border. They came in thousands, old and young, from the feeble, withered crone to the child who could barely walk. The sick arose from their beds and tottered after them. The roads were strewn with corpses. The colonists along the border did what they could to help. Sir George Grey, who was then Governor, provided food at various places. Brownlee, who had bought a great store of corn for almost nothing when the natives were throwing it away, now opened his granaries and saved countless lives. But in spite of all that could be done, at least twenty-five thousand Kafirs perished from starvation.

Thus the power of the Kafir nations was broken ; great tracts of their land were left desolate and were taken up by colonial farmers.

Twenty years after another war took place ; Kreli and Sandile together made their last fight with the white man. They were beaten and Sandile was killed. And nowadays the Kafir is a peaceful farmer ; tilling his land with a plough bought at the store, or travelling to Cape Town or Kimberley in a third-class carriage to work at the docks or in the mines. There is peace between white man and black after wars that covered three-quarters of a century.

CHAPTER XXII

THE GREAT TREK

AND now we must go back again to the time of Glenelg and Sir Benjamin d'Urban in order to give an account of how the other states of South Africa came into being. For over three centuries the story of South Africa has been the story of the Portuguese on the east coast and of the British and Dutch in Cape Colony. Looking through the records and the old books of travel we find occasional expeditions north of the Orange, and there are also little independent settlements, chiefly of English adventurers or shipwrecked sailors on the coast of Natal, but that is all. The real history of European settlement in Natal and north of the Orange dates from the second quarter of last century.

There has been a great deal of ink spilt over the causes of the emigrations into the wilderness known as the Great Trek. By some the trekking Boers have been described as heroes, who left everything they valued for the sake of freedom from injustice and oppression; by others they are described as themselves tyrants who fled because they were not allowed to enslave and murder the black races. It is at least safe to say that neither view is right.¹

¹ "I might indeed have soothed Retief and his associates with the promise that the slaves should not be free; that the 50th Ordinance should be repealed; that Kaffraria should be divided among the Colonists, the missionaries hanged, and the blacks extirpated. I should most likely have been overwhelmed with

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The causes, like most human motives, were mixed. The chief, no doubt, was land-hunger. The colonists were multiplying rapidly, and each of them required a farm of at least five thousand acres—usually more. They found a solid Kafir wall blocking their way to the east, with a wedge of British settlers making things still tighter. Then there was the protection given by the British magistrates to Hottentot servants, as we have seen in the case of the Slachter's Nek rebellion. There was also the protection of the Kafirs and their raids upon the farmers. There was the commando system. There was Glenelg's folly. There was the liberation of the slaves. There was the abolition of the Heemraden. There were faults of local government. There were also wild stories: the Boers were to be turned into Roman Catholics, they were to be made to serve in English regiments and ships of war. There was the desire to be free of it all; to be on the open veld where there was no one to worry or interfere. There were a hundred and one reasons.

And so with the people who went. Some were good and some were bad. Some were fugitives from justice like Trieckard. Some were wild caterans of the same breed as the Bezuidenhouts, up to any mischief; and some were very decent, respectable, God-fearing burghers, who only wanted pasture and peace and freedom from interference.

So they trekked, in small parties and in great, some with a few wagons, some with hundreds, and great herds of cattle that covered the whole landscape. They went north, over the Orange River to the west of Basutoland, ever north until they reached the Vaal, and some went north of that, far north almost to the Limpopo. Hundreds of miles they travelled, with their flocks and herds,

flattering addresses in return, but emigration would not have been checked for all that."—Despatch of Captain Stockenstrom to Sir Benjamin d'Urban (Grahams-town, May 25, 1837).

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like Arabs or the Israelites of old, going only a few miles a day and staying long where there was good grass. It was a pleasant life, with their wealth about them, their great gipsy wagons to live in, the blue sky above them, and the rolling veld on every side.

One party of about fifty under Jan van Rensburg got into the Zoutpansberg, and nothing certain was ever heard of them again, though it is believed that they were murdered by the natives. Another party under Triecharde—a brave pioneer—actually descended from the Zoutpansberg down the steep mountain terraces that fringe the great central plateau to the sea at Lourenço Marques, their object being to open communication with a port. Only a few escaped from the fever-stricken swamps of the low country to tell their story.¹

Wave after wave of the emigrant farmers swept north. Game was plentiful, grass was good, but of natives there were strangely few. The country was under the sway of a branch of the Zulu nation, one of the most destructive powers the earth has ever known, comparable only to the Mongol hordes that swept over Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages. The farmers who had spread over the veld in fancied security soon came in contact with this terrible power. Many were murdered and a large part of their cattle stolen before they could defend themselves. And then began such a war as had never before been seen in Africa. The Boers were few, the Matabele many. Moselekatse, the great chief, had, after the custom of his people, organised all his fighting men into regiments of a thousand or so strong. They were magnificent fighters, strong, athletic, brave. With their long oxhide shields and heavy iron-headed assegais, they charged in close order

¹ Those who would like to know something of the kind of country these pioneers went through, and the hardships they must have suffered, should read Sir Percy Fitzpatrick's fascinating book, *Jock of the Bushveld*.

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like a Roman phalanx, and hitherto they had swept down all their enemies like grass.

But the Boers had three advantages: their guns, their horses, and their wagons. When they met the Matebele in the open, they rode up to within range, fired a volley, and rode away again to reload, and then repeated their tactics. The savages yelled and hurled their spears, but never could get near the enemy, and were as helpless as a flock of sheep. On the other hand, if they attacked a Boer encampment, they found the wagons lashed together in a circle with branches of thorny mimosa twisted through the wheels. As they charged the Boers fired at them from their wagons, every shot taking effect in the dense masses, while the women loaded the empty guns behind their husbands. Even if the warriors reached the wagons, it was only to be shot down while making a vain attempt to break through, and their only chance of doing mischief was to throw their assegais blindly into the centre of the circle. Thus Moselekatse, the great chief of the Matabele, and his captains, were defeated in several battles, and at last fled, never stopping until he reached the country north of the Limpopo, henceforward called Matabeleland. The Boers were left in possession of a vast country which their enemies had swept almost bare of inhabitants.

CHAPTER XXIII

NATAL AND THE ZULUS

NATAL, as we know, was given its name by Vasco da Gama from the fact that his ships passed its shores on Christmas day. But from that day on for over three hundred years the only white men who landed on its soil were an occasional slave-trader or ivory-hunter, or sailors driven thither by the dreadful circumstance of shipwreck. We have many pitiful tales of such castaways forcing a path through the swamps or over the mountains to Delagoa Bay, some even making for the Cape, and usually perishing from hunger or thirst or by the savagery of the natives. There was, to take only one case, the wreck of the *Stavenisse* in 1687, when the crew might have died of starvation were it not that several English sailors, wrecked some time before, came to their aid with beads by means of which they purchased food from the natives. How some of them made a vessel and sailed to Table Bay is like a chapter of *Robinson Crusoe*. "John Kingston, the Englishman, made a saw out of the ring of the 'luijk.' We made one trip to the wreck, and picked whatever would serve our purposes; we found three anchors among the rocks, or thrown up on the beach, among them our best bower, with the piece of the cable to which the ship had ridden. We broke the shank in two; one part served for an anvil; the rest, with the arms

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and ring, were beaten into nails and bolts." Many sailors were murdered owing to the belief of the natives that (as Henry Fynn tells us) "white men were not human beings, but a production of the sea, which they traversed in large shells, coming near the shore in stormy weather, their food being the tusks of elephants which they would take from the beach if laid there for them, and placing beads in their room which they obtained from the bottom of the sea."

But the English are an adventurous race, and nowhere has their daring spirit been better shown than in the early history of Natal. The fate of Dr. Cowan and Lieutenant Donovan, who perished in an attempt to cross Natal into Portuguese territory, did not deter others. The ivory trade was the great temptation, and in 1823 a company was formed in Cape Town for the purpose of developing it. Thus began a precarious settlement of British adventurers on the spot where the town of Durban now stands. They were brave men—some of them might be called great men. The story of the hardships and dangers through which they passed, their shipwrecks at sea and their battles on land, would take a volume to itself. Even this brief account, from which by far the greater part of their doings must be omitted, will serve to show the extraordinary and perilous enterprises which formed the routine of their daily lives.

The chief among them were James Saunders King and Francis George Farewell, who had both been naval officers; the Fynn family—four in all, a father and three sons—of whom two afterwards became famous in Kafirland; Nathaniel Isaacs, an English Jew related to the Solomon family of St. Helena and then of Cape Town, who has written a fascinating account of his adventures; Captain Allen Gardiner of the Royal Navy, the missionary who afterwards died in Patagonia; John Cane, Thomas Holstead, and George

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Biggar. There were others; but these are perhaps the best known.

What these men did between them passes belief. They built a ship; they became chiefs of tribes; they led native armies; they held their own against the Zulus; they led embassies to the Cape from Chaka; they obtained charters from Dingaan; they were doctors, elephant-hunters, soldiers, diplomatists; they petitioned to be made a colony with a Governor and a House of Representatives; they became protectors of broken tribes; they built houses and founded the town of Durban which they called after the Governor of the Cape. They were, in short, men of their hands who could rise to the height of any adventure.

When they entered Natal, they found one of the most extraordinary despotisms that has ever arisen in Africa. Chaka was the great chief of the Zulus. He had built up a nation of warriors, and made himself supreme over vast territories. The male part of the population was divided into veterans, younger soldiers, and *amabutu*, lads who had not served in war. These were distinguished by the colour of their long shields of oxhide, white, black, and red, and the higher orders wore black rings of reeds, bound with sinews and varnished with black beeswax, which were sewn upon their heads. Isaacs saw together seventeen regiments of warriors with black shields, and twelve regiments with white shields, which, he calculated, amounted to thirty thousand men in all; and Chaka assured him that this force was not half the army. They were armed with only one heavy stabbing assegai, to lose which was death, and their method of attack, devised by Chaka himself, who discarded the throwing assegais, was to charge in dense masses covered by their great shields and thrust when they got to close quarters. Thus they devastated the whole of the south-eastern corner of Africa, leaving the country almost bare of inhabitants.

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Fynn, who went with Chaka on one of his campaigns, describes the destruction of the Endwandwe tribe. They had collected all their cattle and their women and children on a rocky height and sat round them waiting for the Zulus to attack. Chaka's forces marched slowly and with much caution in regiments, each regiment divided into companies, till within twenty yards of the enemy, when they made a halt. After hissing and exchanging challenges, "both parties, with a tumultuous yell, clashed together, and continued stabbing each other for about three minutes, when both fell back a few paces. Seeing their losses about equal, both armies raised a cry, and this was followed by another rush, and they continued closely engaged about twice as long as in the first onset, when both parties again drew off. But the enemy's loss had now been the most severe. This urged the Zulus to a final charge. The shrieks became terrific. The remnant of the enemy's army sought shelter in an adjoining wood, out of which they were soon driven. Then began a slaughter of the women and children. They were all put to death. . . The battle, from the commencement to the close, did not last more than an hour and a half. The number of the hostile tribe, including women and children, could not have been less than forty thousand. The number of cattle taken was estimated at sixty thousand."

After a fight like this all the "cowards" were put to death. Every regiment had to sacrifice some, or its leaders would have been accused of protecting their men. If a regiment were defeated it was massacred *en masse*.

But the slaughter did not end in the field. Every day Chaka made a sign and a dozen or so of his courtiers or wives were dragged to the hill of execution and beaten to death. Once, it is said, the crying of a child annoyed him, and he slew not only the child itself but all the other innocents, amounting to fifteen or twenty, among whom it took refuge. On another occasion he

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murdered all the old men, saying that "they were of no use as they could not fight." Isaacs gives an account of how on one day he killed one hundred and seventy girls and boys. "He began by taking out several fine lads and ordering their own brothers to twist their necks, their bodies were afterwards dragged away and beaten with sticks until life was extinct. After this refined act of monstrous cruelty, the remainder of the victims in the kraal were indiscriminately butchered." If a father shed tears as he was killing his son, he was killed too, for moral disobedience. On one day Chaka killed nine of his wives because they made remarks which displeased him. The Hill of Execution was white with the bones of his victims, and great troops of jackals and wolves always waited round the place for the food they knew was sure to come.

But the greatest massacre of all was when Chaka's mother died. Fynn, who was an eye-witness, describes the scene in a passage of appalling horror. The Zulus were in a panic to be the first to show their grief, for they knew that a general slaughter was sure to follow, and those would be chosen who had the least appearance of sorrow. They tore from their bodies every description of ornament, and the fifteen thousand people in the kraal set up the most dismal and horrid yells. Those who could not force natural tears from their eyes took snuff copiously. Chaka, himself, who was something of an actor, stood for twenty minutes in full war attire, pensively shedding tears which dropped upon his shield. The people of the neighbouring kraals came pouring in to join the deafening chorus. The mourning went on in growing vigour all through the night, each striving to outdo his neighbour. By morning there were fully sixty thousand people in the town. Forty oxen were slaughtered to the spirits; but no one was allowed to touch meat, and the weaker began to give way to hunger and fatigue. Then at ten o'clock the war song

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began, and every one spurred himself to renewed efforts. All who gave in were cut down. Those who ran to the water to drink were speared as they went. Those who could no longer force tears from their eyes paid the penalty of death. Never was the simulated emotion of the courtier more valuable to those who could practise it. The river was choked with corpses. The ground ran with blood. By three o'clock no less than seven thousand had fallen as a sacrifice to the grief of this pious son; and it was only at ten the next morning that Chaka relented and allowed those who remained alive to rest and refresh themselves. These are only a few of many of Chaka's massacres, in which, it is estimated, at least a million of people were slaughtered.

The tyrant came to an evil end. Two of his brothers, Dingaan and Umhlangana, conspired against his life. They got one of his servants to hold his attention while the other conspirators, stealing up behind him, stabbed him with assegais which they had concealed under their cloaks. Chaka rose and attempted to throw off his kaross. He saw his brothers among the assassins, "What have I done to you, children of my father?" he cried, and with the words he fell at their feet.

Dingaan, whose first act was to kill his brother Umhlangana, was as detestable a monster as Chaka. But he had more guile, and his methods were more treacherous. When he decided on the massacre of a regiment, he would send the executioners by stealth. They would go into the village by twos and threes and mix in a friendly way with the people. Then at a given signal the general slaughter would begin. Captain Gardiner, who stayed with the monarch for some time, gives a good description of this hero. He wore a blue dungaree cloak, relieved by a white border and devices at the back, which, although tarnished, became his height and portly figure. He was inordinately vain, and when he went abroad his people shouted—

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Arise, vulture!

Thou art the bird that eateth other birds.

He dressed his women, ninety in number, in elaborate parti-coloured uniforms of beads, and used to dance with them by the hour, all singing songs of his own composition. He himself was the most active of the band, though his figure "bore the nearest resemblance to Falstaff of any I could recollect." Now and then he would turn to Captain Gardiner and say: "Are we not a jolly people?" To show how jolly he was he would straightway order the death of several of his subjects.

This was the man whom the emigrant Boers had to deal with when they came trekking down the mountains with their wagons into Natal. Piet Retief, a colonist who had got into trouble with Stockenstrom and the Colonial Government, was the leader of the party. He was delighted with the country between the Tugela and the Bushman's River, which the Zulu atrocities had left almost bare of inhabitants, and the little party of British settlers received him with enthusiasm. "The arrival of Mr. Retief and a party of emigrants," says one of them, "was hailed by us as a matter of no small moment. The conviction that we shall, for the future, be permitted to live in peace, and be freed from the constant though idle threats of Dingaan, has infused a lively spirit amongst us." They presented Retief with an address signed by all the residents, a form of courtesy they were much addicted to, and helped him with their knowledge of the language and the country.

Retief bearded the lion in his den, and Dingaan, full of guile, promised him a grant of land if he would recover some stolen cattle from the Chief Sikonyela. This Retief and his friends accomplished, treating Sikonyela, who had been kind to them, rather shabbily. Then Retief returned with the cattle and some sixty men on a state visit to the great kraal, expecting to get a charter of the land he desired.

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Now at this time there were at Dingaan's kraal the Rev. F. Owen, of the Church Missionary Society, who had succeeded Captain Gardiner, with his wife Mrs. Owen, his sister, Miss Owen, and a Welsh servant girl, and also William Wood, who was acting as interpreter to Dingaan.¹

The journals of the two eye-witnesses make painful reading. Owen had himself been warned by Gardiner that Dingaan was plotting to murder all the white people in Natal; his presence in the kraal was bravery almost amounting to madness. On the 2nd of February (1838) he notes that Dingaan asked him to write a letter of invitation to the settlers, and adds, "The Dutch will be too wise to expose themselves in this manner."

The Dutch were not too wise. The very next morning "when we were at family prayer," the sound of shots was heard and sixty Boers came riding into town with Sikonyela's cattle, firing their guns in salute, making their horses caracole and rushing at one another in sham charges. The Zulus in their turn showed their skill in a great dance of warriors. Dingaan seemed to be in the best of humours. The farmers were thrown wholly off their guard. They left their arms and horses in the custody of their servants (the Hottentot "after-riders" who usually carried their long guns) under two milk trees which grew outside the principal entrance to the town, a circular kraal strongly hedged with bushes. William Wood, the young son of a British settler, scented mischief, although he could not be sure. He watched his opportunity to warn the farmers to be on their guard, and as they strolled past him he whispered his suspicions. But the Dutchmen

¹ In some of the Boer narratives it is said that Dingaan was prompted to the massacre by the missionary or by one of the settlers, who told him they were deserters from their king and ought to be treated as such. The atrocity of this libel prevents belief; but it is clearly disproved by Mr. Wood's and Mr. Owen's journals, as well as by the fact that Halstead and Biggar, two of the English settlers, were among those massacred.

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only smiled and said, "We are sure the king's heart is right with us, and there is no cause for fear."

This was on the morning of the third day, and shortly afterwards Dingaan, who had been whispering with his captains, came out of his hut and seated himself in front in his arm-chair. He ordered out two of his regiments, one composed of veterans with rings on their heads and bearing white shields, the other consisting of young men with black shields. The king formed the two regiments in a great circle, with his two principal captains, Tambuza and Inhlela, on his right and left hands, and then invited Retief and his friends to come and bid him farewell.

Just about this time our good missionary was sitting in the shade of his wagon, near his huts, which were outside the kraal and just opposite the hill of execution, when one of Dingaan's messengers came and told him not to be frightened as the king was going to kill the Boers. Imagine his consternation. What was he to do? He felt it was his duty to warn the Boers, but he knew that a step in their direction meant certain death. He was standing, with his wife and sister and Wood, torn this way and that by the dreadful dilemma, when one of the party cried. "There, they are killing the Boers now!" It was too late.

Retief walked confidently into the doomed circle, a wallet on his back holding the royal charter, and sat by the king, the rest of the farmers and their servants sitting a little way off but also in the circle.

Dingaan was gracious. The farmers, he said, must come and settle in the land he had given them: it was his desire. He then wished them a safe journey, and before they started, he said, they must drink some of his Kafir beer. The beer was brought in and the troops were ordered to amuse the farmers by a song and dance.

Then all of a sudden Dingaan cried:

"Seize them!"

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The circle closed in upon the sitting men with a rush.

“We are done for!” cried Halstead in English, and then added in Zulu to the men he was struggling with: “Let me speak to the king!”

The king heard him but waved away the group with his hand. In despair Halstead drew his knife, ripped up one Zulu and cut another’s throat before he was overpowered and dragged away.

One of the Boers also killed his man; but in a few moments the struggle was over. Each man was held by as many Zulus as could get at him, a dozen or so to each man, and they were dragged out with their feet trailing on the ground.

All this time Dingaan was sitting on his throne with his hand stretched out, screaming: “Bulala amatakati! Bulala amatakati!” (“Kill the wizards! Kill the wizards!”)

And so the farmers were dragged to the hill of execution which faced the spot on which the little missionary party stood, frozen to the ground by horror. Mr. Owen laid himself on the ground. Young Wood kept standing and saw it all. There was a great multitude on the hill, beating out the brains of the farmers with knobkerries. Retief was forced to watch the slaughter of his friends, and then he himself was killed with accompanying barbarities so atrocious that I leave them undescribed.

So died the brave Piet Retief and his fellow-pioneers.

Then Dingaan and his indunas held a council, and shortly after a great army marched out of the town to attack the camps of the Boers. The farmers were scattered hunting, and when the ten thousand warriors burst upon the little scattered groups of wagons, there were only a few men to guard the women and children. It was a night attack, and the people were taken completely by surprise. The Zulus darted everywhere

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in countless numbers, slaying without mercy. Forty Dutchmen and one Englishman, fifty-six Dutchwomen and one hundred and eighty-five of their children, besides two hundred and fifty of their Hottentot and half-breed servants were killed. To this day the place is called Wieneu, which in our language means weeping or lamentation.

We have various accounts of this massacre, and they describe atrocities too abominable to be set down in print. An "affectionate mother and grandmother," Mrs. Steenkamp, who wrote a journal for the benefit of her descendants, said the sight was "unbearable for flesh and blood to behold." In one wagon were found fifty dead, and blood flowed from the seam of the tentsail down to the lowest.

Daniel Bezuidenhout, afterwards a burgher of the Orange Free State, was in one of the camps, and in his old age wrote down the story:—They were attacked in the night, and Bezuidenhout, awakened by the whirr of the assegais and the barking of the dogs, ran towards the wagons to get his gun. With his hands, in the semi-darkness, he broke through three lines of Kafirs, but found more and more. Then he heard his father cry, "O God!" and he knew from the sound that the old man was choking with blood; he had been struck in the gullet. Another burgher fired three shots and killed three Zulus, and then he too cried "O Lord!" and fell. Bezuidenhout fled. One assegai stabbed him "on the knot of the left shoulder through the breast and along the ribs." A second struck the bone of his left thigh, "so that the point of the blade was bent, as I found afterwards when I drew it out." A third struck him above the left knee, a fourth above the left ankle "through the sinews under the calf." Then he got among the cattle and so escaped. With other refugees he sought shelter in a defended camp, and beat off Dingaan's regiments in a three days' fight.

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And now the burghers braced themselves for revenge. A commando set out under Maritz, Potgieter, and Uys, but the three leaders were jealous of one another; and though some of them fought bravely, others hung back—or so at least one of the narrators says. There was desperate fighting, and part of the force was almost destroyed in a narrow pass. But they fought their way through with desperate valour. Here Piet Uys fell, and when his son, who was riding near, looked back he saw him surrounded by the Zulus. The brave little fellow, for he was only a boy of twelve, turned his horse and charged. In a moment he was surrounded by the savages. He shot two and then fell beside his father.

At this very time the English of Port Natal were determined on avenging the deaths of Halstead and Biggar. They brought together a force of seventeen Englishmen, as many Hottentots, and about fifteen hundred Zulus who had fled from Dingaan's rule. The Englishmen were their chiefs, and they hated Dingaan with a deadly hatred. Mr. Hewitson, a missionary, met part of this army on its way towards the enemy: "On the way," he says in his journal, "I fell in with a strange set of warriors. About four hundred Zulus came bellowing a war-song. It sounded exactly like the noise of angry bulls. No one could mistake its meaning; its tone was that of gloomy revenge. The words in English were: 'The wild beast has driven us from our homes, but we will catch him!' They were headed by a white man, who had an old straw hat on, with an ostrich feather stuck in it. He had on his shoulder an elephant gun covered with a panther's skin, and walked quite at ease at the head of his party, who went on with this dismal song, except that occasionally they all whistled the Zulu charge. They had flags flying, on one of which was written, 'Izin kumbi' (or the locust); on another 'For justice we fight'

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They did not fatigue themselves with jumping or shouting, but the monotonous howl could be heard for at least two miles. In front they drove the cattle for slaughter; in rear the degraded wives carried Indian corn, pumpkins, etc., all of which passed so quickly by me that it seemed like a frightful dream."

A vivid glimpse—is it not?—of these appalling wars of extermination.

The Durban commando was at first successful, capturing several thousand cattle. But in a subsequent expedition Panda, Dingaan's brother, cunningly drew the little army on until he had lured it over the Tugela and into a deadly trap, and after a most desperate fight in which whole regiments of Zulus were mown down, the whole of the Port Natal army, except four Englishmen and five hundred Zulus, was destroyed, and the victorious Zulu army sweeping into Durban left the place in ruins.

Fortunately there was a brig in the harbour, and the settlers got aboard in time. Young Wood tells how the Zulus called on them from the shore to land, and how the settlers laughed at them from their boat. The refugee Zulus were not so fortunate; but many of the invaders fell before their guns. "When we landed," says Wood, "we found that some of our Zulus had shot numbers of the enemy. Two we found lying dead, dressed in my mother's gowns, with full sleeves, and in stockings without shoes." Imagine it—the two brawny savages lying stiff, in their early Victorian gowns (period 1838) with the blood flowing over the bombazine, and their feet sticking out starkly in white cotton stockings! Red Riding Hood's wolf in grandmother's nightcap was nothing to this!

But the Boers were gathering strength for another blow. This time the great Andries Willem Jacobus Pretorius was commandant, and he had an army not far short of five hundred burghers with horses, wagons,

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and small cannon. Pretorius was a fine leader. He kept good watch and fair discipline, and he was a merciful man, as his despatches and edicts show. With psalm and hymn and "sermons about Joshua," the huge cavalcade marched along towards Dingaan's kraal, the dreadful Umkungunhlovu.

Bantjes, the commandant's secretary, has given us a graphic account of the expedition. On Sunday, the 16th December 1838—Dingaan's Day, as it was ever afterwards called—the camp was formed on the bank of a river, which being still and steep of side gave complete protection on one flank, while a deep little ravine guarded the other. At dawn the Zulu army advanced upon the two open sides of the camp. Bantjes says it was a terrible and yet beautiful sight—thirty-six regiments in close order, nine or ten thousand fighting Zulus, with their plumes and long shields and great spears. Then the firing began with muskets and big guns. The wagons were fastened together with long ladders, and skins of oxen were stretched over the wheels. At the back of each wagon there were little heaps of gunpowder and bullets, and when the Zulu regiments had charged to within ten paces of the camp, the Boers had scarcely time to throw a handful of powder into the gun, and then slip a bullet down the barrel, without a moment even to drive it home with a ramrod. "Of that fight," says Bezuidenhout, "nothing remains in my memory except shouting and tumult and lamentation, and a sea of black faces; and a dense smoke that rose straight as a plumb-line upwards from the ground."

Thus the battle raged for two hours, and then Pretorius opened the laager and sallied out with his men on horseback, leaving only a few men in the camp. It was a daring and magnificently conceived piece of tactics—one of the most brilliant things ever done in native warfare. The Zulus, taken between two fires, wavered and fled. The Boers galloped among them. The

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commandant, at close quarters with one Zulu and finding his horse unmanageable, jumped to the ground to shoot his opponent. His gun missed fire. The Zulu stabbed and stabbed, Pretorius fencing with his musket. Then the two closed; the commandant took a thrust through his left hand and held the Zulu down with his right, until a burgher came up and drawing the spear from Pretorius's hand killed the Kafir with it.

The Zulus were now in full flight. The ravine was chock-full of them, and here the Boers made dreadful havoc. Others fled in the open, and the Boers rode along on either side of a great band of 2000 of them, shooting them as they went and skilfully herding them towards the river. "They lay on the ground," says Karl Celliers, "like a fine crop of pumpkins." Those who remained rushed into the river and lay under water "with their noses out like hippopotamuses." The Boers went along the bank shooting them till the stream looked like a pool of blood, so that it is called the Blood River to this day.

Then Pretorius marched to the king's kraal, which was found deserted and burnt; and the bones of Retief and his men were reverently buried. Dingaan had fled from the wrath of the white man.

It would take too long to follow the action of this tremendous war. The end came when Panda fled from Dingaan with nearly half the Zulu nation. The Boers had the wisdom to take Panda's side. In parallel lines they swept over the country to meet their common enemy. Dingaan, now desperate, chose to fight, endeavouring at the same time to detach the Boers by offering them all that they wanted. Pretorius very rightly shot the ambassadors.¹ Then the two great

¹ The commandant has been blamed for this by Dr. Theal, following in the footsteps of the French eye-witness, A. Delegorgue (*Voyage dans l'Afrique australe*). But Dingaan by the murder of Retief had forfeited all claim to the rights of war. Tambuza, the chief ambassador, was one of his most notorious creatures (cf. Gardiner's account of this ruffian) while his subordinate Kombazana

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Zulu armies met, and a tremendous conflict ensued. Thousands fell, whole regiments were killed to a man; but at last Dingaan's forces broke and fled, and all that was left of the white man's allies shouted a song of victory over the stricken field.

Dingaan fell into the hands of Sapusa the Swazi, and was there killed. The manner of his death is told by Bezuidenhout, though whether it is true or not I cannot say: "On the first day (according to the statement of the Kafirs), Sapusa pricked Dingaan with sharp assegais, no more than skin-deep, from the sole of his foot to the top of his head. The second day he had him bitten by dogs. On the third day Sapusa said to Dingaan: 'Dingaan, are you still the rain-maker? Are you still the greatest of living men? See the sun is rising: you shall not see him set!' Saying this he took an assegai and bored his eyes out. This was related to me by one of Sapusa's Kafirs who was present. When the sun set Dingaan was dead, for he had neither food nor water for three days. Such was the end of Dingaan."

was very likely almost as bad. They were treacherous murderers, making a last desperate bid for victory, and richly deserved their fate. That they died bravely need not be said of Dingaan's indunas. If Pretorius had spared them, he would have brought upon himself the suspicion of his allies.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE FAMILY QUARREL

AND now we come to the saddest part of our history—the wars between Boer and Briton. We have seen how, in the old days, Dutch and English fought for the trade of the East, and how at last England won and took possession of the halfway house to India, its frontier fortress, as the Dutch used to call the Cape. It was not only won in battle and confirmed by treaty but it was paid for in money, and so England, with a just title, entered upon that task which had so long baffled the East India Company, the government of the country. We have already seen how governor after governor took up the work of the van der Stels, to give the land peace and prosperity, to give security to the white settler, and at the same time to give justice and protection to the native. And here, just as with the van der Stels, was the great stumbling-block. The best of the settlers, men like Sir Richard Southey, the Cloetes, Sir Andries Stockenstrom, took the side of the Government, that the native should be given justice and that slavery should be abolished, but the Frontier Boer, who for generations had looked upon the black man as his enemy or his slave, and upon the native's cattle as his legitimate booty, took mortal offence at the attitude of Government; and rather than submit to it, trekked beyond the frontier.

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No one, who has read the old records, will say that the one was altogether right and the other altogether wrong. In some cases, as with regard to the Kafir tribes on the eastern frontier, the home Government forced the local Government into an attitude of hostility towards the settler, at the very time that the settler, bleeding with assegai wounds, was watching his homestead blazing to the sky. When the Boers trekked, Lord Glenelg showed no sympathy with their grievances nor consideration for their safety. He did not content himself with sending a Commissioner after them to liberate their slaves, or warning them not to attack the tribes with which Government was at peace. He took the side of the Zulus, whom he regarded as innocent and oppressed people, and while he refused to protect the farmers he prevented them from getting ammunition through Port Natal.

The balance of right was on the Government side, and that is as much as ever can be said in a human quarrel. For the Boers destroyed and enslaved, murdered and robbed the natives, whether they were peaceful or hostile, as we shall soon see. But we must not forget that we are here face to face with one of the old elemental wars: the black and the white were fighting for Africa; any truce in such a quarrel was difficult. It was like the war between the Spaniard and the Mexican, the American pioneer and the Red Indian. In all cases the white man has been condemned by those who sit peacefully on the land their forefathers won in the same way a thousand years or more ago.

But blundering often, and unreasonable often, still, on the whole, the English Governors were right, just as William Adriaan van der Stel was right. The Boers, who refused to work, were exterminating labour without mercy. Not only did they break the power of the warlike tribes but they destroyed the peaceful and

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inoffensive peoples like the Bechuanas, and the broken clans of the west. Thus from the lowest point of view, the point of view of mere profit, the Boers were wrong. They were like a poacher who dynamites a fish-pond without any thought of the future; or an elephant-hunter who shoots all the female elephants and never thinks where to-morrow's ivory is to come from. The British ideal has been in the long run a better one. We need labour for mines, and railways, docks, farms, and plantations. Therefore we give the native peace and justice, and a share of the land which is surely big enough for all. But at the same time we must be master of the black people. No good British Governor or British settler has ever preached equality: that has been left to the old ladies at home.

But let us return to the early days of Natal, for it was here that the quarrel burst forth into flame. Lord Glenelg, it need not be said, was an anti-Imperialist, and when the Boers moved beyond the frontier, he refused to extend it. Instead, he cackled in helpless wrath like a hen with ducklings that have taken to the water. The British settlers who were at Port Natal petitioned in vain to be made a British colony. But stories of Boer raids upon native tribes between them and the Eastern Province, tribes who were in peaceful relations with the Colonial Government, at last forced the hand of the Colonial Office, and Lord Stanley gave his reluctant consent to an occupation of Port Natal. It was to be an occupation without responsibility, or with as little responsibility as possible. The immediate cause of the occupation was a raid on a Kafir chief, Neapai, on a pretext that he had stolen some cattle, the slaughter of a large number of natives, and the enslavement of many others.

So in March 1842 Captain Smith and a detachment of the 27th Regiment marched from the eastern frontier into Natal. It was a long way—some four

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hundred miles, the rain came down in torrents, the rivers were flooded, and there were no roads, so that it took six weeks to get to Durban. On the way he was met by Boer deputies who tried in vain to stop him in the name of the republic which they had set up. Smith only replied that they were British subjects on British territory, as indeed they were, and that he would only treat with them if they admitted as much. So the negotiations went on, the Boers getting more and more insolent, until at last they swooped down upon Smith's cattle and rode away with nearly all of them. Thus Smith, who had tried his best to make the farmers listen to reason, was forced to attack them.

And here we have the first of many British disasters. Smith's plan was to attack the Boer camp at Congella, a place three miles along the shore from his own position. It was a night attack, and Smith, with over a hundred men and two guns, marched through the mangrove swamp along the shore, hoping to surprise the farmers. But the soldiers were clad in bright scarlet, it was a brilliant moonlight night, and one of the gun carriages creaked so that it could be heard half a mile away. Moreover, the Boers were on the alert, and made their dispositions accordingly. They stationed their sharpshooters behind the trees, and as the redcoats came blundering along, opened a sudden fire upon them. Every shot took effect. The heavy elephant guns of the Boers carrying much farther than the British muskets, the redcoats, who were besides quite ignorant of the enemy's position, were helpless. The gun teams were shot at, the limbers were upset by the wounded oxen, everything was confusion. Moreover, a boat which carried a howitzer and was meant to co-operate with the troops could not be brought near enough for action. The attack, in short, was a complete failure. Poor Smith got back to camp without his guns, and with a loss of seventeen killed, thirty-one wounded, and three

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missing. Then the Boers made a surprise attack upon the position at the Point, and captured about thirty soldiers and residents, as well as the bulk of the provisions. They had now surrounded the camp, and being more than two to one, they kept it closely beleaguered. They had three cannon captured from the English, from which they opened a heavy cannonade. They threw forward trenches and they kept up a musket fire day and night. But Smith was not easily daunted. He dug deep trenches, killed the horses, dried the flesh in the sun, and put his men on half allowance. In the meantime the Boers had allowed the women-folk to take refuge on board the *Mazeppa*, a ship which was lying in Durban harbour at the time. The conduct of the enemy was indeed a curious mixture of humanity and savagery. They were often kind to the wounded, and yet Delegorgue, the French naturalist, tells us they applied to him for the arsenic and corrosive sublimate with which he prepared his specimens, in order to poison the well from which the soldiers drew their water.

In these dire straits a brave frontiersman, Dick King, who knew the wild country like the palm of his hand, came to the rescue. He offered to take the news of the siege to the colony, a perilous business, for six hundred miles of savage territory lay between the port of Natal and Grahamstown. He was given two horses, and at night he swam them across the bay to the Bluff. Once he was pursued by the Boers; once he was almost shot by Kafirs who took him for a Boer; but with the skill of a hunter he threaded his way from mission station to mission station, from kraal to kraal, the fact that he was an Englishman disarming the natives. It was a greater ride even than Harry Smith's, for King had no guide and no relays of horses, and was in a savage country; but he came safely through, taking only nine days to the journey, and reinforcements were promptly despatched.

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In the meantime Smith and his men were in dire straits. Nearly all the provisions were gone, and the water—though Delegorgue had excused himself from giving the poison—was bad. They lived on six ounces of evil-smelling horseflesh and four ounces of biscuit-dust a day, and the crows which fell to their guns were their only luxury. Their trenches were hampered with wounded. But they held doggedly on, and once they rushed the Boer trenches and bayoneted some of the enemy.

But after a month of this wretched life, when the brave little garrison was almost at extremities, a signal of salvation appeared in the sky. "A rocket," says Delegorgue, "loaded with sparks of hope, rose straight up—immense, majestic—at the same time that a powerful discharge of cannon resounded." Two English ships had arrived, the frigate *Southampton*, and a coaster called the *Conch*, loaded with soldiers. The Boers fled like rabbits. The garrison was saved.

And then began wearisome negotiations. The Boers had retired on their town of Pietermaritzburg, and there reinforcements swarmed in from the other side of the Drakensberg. Cloete, the Governor's Commissioner, a member of one of the best Dutch families of the Cape, did all in his power to bring them to reason and to win their allegiance to the Crown. But the farmers were buoyed up with hopes of foreign intervention. The crowned heads of Europe—even the Emperor of China—had been petitioned. A Dutch supercargo, Smellekamp by name, had been sent as envoy to the King of Holland with despatches in the soles of his boots. Holland, they firmly believed, was one of the strongest powers in Europe and was sure to come to their aid. Any one who expressed a doubt or who favoured the English was bullied and threatened with death.

But the help did not come: the King of Holland

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scornfully repudiated all connection with the rebels; and the only troops to arrive in Natal were British reinforcements. In the long run, therefore, the Volksraad, as the Boer Council was called, submitted with an ill grace, and the people as well as the country were formally taken under the protection of the British Government.

Thus Natal became an English colony. But most of the Boers, who could not stomach English notions as to the rights of natives, trekked again, and did not rest until they had crossed the Drakensberg, and their wagons, after passing through its steep and tortuous defiles, opened out like a fan upon the great plains of the high veld.

But let us now turn for a little to events north of the Orange and south of the Vaal. Here we find for a long time a state of politics of such intricate anarchy that it would be waste of time to try to disentangle them. The British Government had allowed Moshesh, the chief of the Basutos, certain treaty rights, and he had formed a great nation of the broken tribes left by Moselekatse, and established himself in the mountain country round the head waters of the Orange. Then west of him was a Griqua clan, commanded by a half-breed called Adam Kok. The Griquas were themselves half-breeds, the children of the Dutch farmers and their Hottentot servants, and these people had gradually formed a clan system of their own. West of them again was another half-breed clan under Waterboer. Besides these there were tribes of Bushmen and Bechuanas scattered here and there over the vast regions west and north, and there were several distinct parties of emigrant farmers, some, under men like Oberholster, friendly to the British Government, and others under irreconcilables like Mocke, a mischief-maker who had already given trouble in Natal, hostile to colonial rule. All these tribes and clans and

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sections were more or less inimical the one to the other, and the Colonial Government, sadly hampered by missionary influences, Kafir wars and Colonial Office interference, followed a timid and spasmodic policy, if policy it could be called.

But then came our old friend Harry Smith, now Sir Harry and Governor of the Colony, with a great career as a soldier behind him, and somewhat advanced in years, but with fire and energy unabated. With his arrival all was changed. He told the farmers that he meant to take over the country from the Orange to the Vaal; he tried to reconcile Pretorius, who had fought against Captain Smith and had recently been direly insulted by Sir Harry's predecessor, who had refused to see the fine old Boer warrior when he came to Cape Town to present some grievances. Sir Harry also set Adam Kok in his right place and reconciled Moshesh to the change. All this he did with the zeal and fine dramatic fury peculiar to his nature. He wept over the Boers and threatened to hang Adam Kok and almost embraced Moshesh.

But there was a section of Boers who were determined not to submit to British rule, and when Sir Harry recrossed the Orange the disaffected sent north for Pretorius and marched on Bloemfontein. Major Warden, who had only a small force, was compelled to capitulate and retired to Colesberg. Sir Harry was in Cape Town when he heard the news. That very day he put a reward of £1000 on the head of the rebel commandant and began to collect a force. He was soon over the Orange with a fine little army of some seven hundred men, and marched along the road to Bloemfontein where the Boers were waiting for him with a force of about the same strength.

Boomplatz is one of the most interesting engagements ever fought in South Africa. It is typical of Boer ideas of tactics, and it also shows the right way

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of defeating them. If General Buller had studied the battle of Boomplatz, he need never have been beaten at the Tugela. The Boers, as usual, chose a magnificent position. On the right hand the road was lined by a range of steep and rocky kopjes, which also crossed the road in front and met another range parallel to the road on the left. Thus a force which entered this *cul de sac* was open to attack from equally strong positions on three sides. Beyond the range in front was a river, behind that again another range with a narrow pass through which the road wound. Then there was another stream, and beyond still another range of kopjes through which the road passed by a narrow nek. Thus the Boers were perfectly placed for attack and retreat, and they had still further strengthened their position by breastworks of boulders along their first line of defence.

Fortunately, the British were on the look-out, and the movements of a herd of springbok betrayed the Boer position. Smith sent out skirmishers with the strictest orders not to fire unless they were fired upon, for he was slow to believe that the farmers would attack one who had always been their friend and was labouring to benefit them. A shower of bullets, wounding him on the shin and laying three of his men dead on the ground, undeceived him; and under a hot fire he acted with the grasp and promptitude which distinguishes a born soldier. The wagons in the rear were formed into laager, the two companies of the 91st Regiment were put in charge of the two field-guns which were used to open a path through the Boer centre. This central position the two companies of the 45th attacked while at the same time the two companies of the Rifle Brigade advanced in a line of skirmishers upon the Boer left, and the remainder of the little army, two troops of the Cape Mounted Rifles, were used to meet the Boer right, which made a dash over a little open

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plain to capture the wagons and strike at the British rear. Thus Smith had launched the whole of his force except the reserve which guarded the guns in a simultaneous attack upon the whole of the Boer position, and the enemy was unable to concentrate to meet any one of the attacks as they did on the Tugela. The result was that after a very sharp skirmish the farmers were driven in headlong rout from one position to another and scattered to the four winds. If only Smith had possessed a few more cavalry he would have given them the punishing they deserved. As it was, he thoroughly defeated them and inflicted a loss which may be estimated at midway between nine and forty-nine.¹ The British lost eight men killed and thirty-nine wounded, and they had eight officers wounded, one of them, poor Captain Murray, mortally.

After the battle two of the rebels who had fought were captured. One was a deserter from the 45th, another a Boer named Dreyer. Both were tried by court-martial and shot at Bloemfontein. It is characteristic that the Boers, who were British-born subjects, and without provocation had endeavoured to surprise and destroy Smith and his little army, should regard the shooting of Dreyer as a grievance. As a matter of fact the British have always shown themselves extraordinarily lenient on such occasions. But all the Boers were not rebels. Some of them had entered the field on the British side and successfully defended their laager against Pretorius. Sir Harry was received with acclamation, and after imposing a lenient punishment on the rebels returned into the colony with flying colours.

But troubles were coming upon the brave Governor thick and fast. The great Kafir war of 1851, to which I have already referred, burst over the colony. The Hottentot auxiliaries, whose loyalty had been under-

¹ Smith states "on strict inquiry" that forty-nine bodies were seen on the field; the Boers who always falsified such things, put the number of killed at nine

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mined by intrigue, joined the blacks. The majority of the Boers refused to go out on commando. Earl Grey had persuaded the Governor to send home a large part of his troops, and for a long time Sir Harry, after garrisoning his outposts, had only some eight hundred men available to meet tens of thousands of athletic savages in a wild and trackless country twice the size of Great Britain and Ireland. With the most wonderful skill and energy he met the position. He was here, there, and everywhere. The war began at the end of 1850, and by August 1851 the 73rd Regiment had marched 2838 miles. It was, taken as a whole, one of the most extraordinary defences ever made. Yet Earl Grey, the Colonial Minister, a civilian half his age, in an insulting despatch found Sir Harry wanting in energy and judgment and recalled him, just as the Kafirs were on the point of being utterly defeated. It was some consolation to Smith that his Commander-in-chief, the Great Duke of Wellington, against whose opinion Smith had been recalled, said in the most emphatic and public way, that he "entirely approved of all his operations."

Thus Smith, like Baird and d'Urban, was rewarded by a grateful Government. But the mischief did not end here. The sovereignty across the Orange was revoked against the wishes of a large party of Boers, and what was rapidly becoming a prosperous British colony was turned into a hostile republic.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FAMILY QUARREL—*continued*

Now let us turn to the course of events north of the Vaal. Here the wildest and most bitter of the emigrant farmers had settled, and they were joined by criminals of all nations who found in the Transvaal an Alsatia where they were secure from pursuit by the minions of the law. The farmers spread themselves in all directions, thinning out over the vast plains and mountain valleys until they had covered an area as large as France, with a population of only a few thousand. Behind them the Boers left Natal, Zululand and Swaziland; on the east was Portuguese Africa; on the north the Limpopo bounded their horizon; on the west the Bechuana tribes lay between them and the Kalihari. They had thus a country rich in nearly everything that man could desire. Its western portion was a high plateau, six thousand feet above sea-level in parts, with a glorious climate, cool and dry, and magnificent grazing for their cattle and sheep. Gold and coal were underfoot in abundance; and the English digger was gradually penetrating the mountains on the east. The plateau fell in great terraces westward to the bushveld, much lower and therefore much hotter, and thickly populated by native tribes who preferred the low country to the cold climate of the plateau. These natives of the west were a very different people from the

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Zulus. Unwarlike in their habits, they cultivated their mealies and grazed their cattle with the occasional excitement of a tribal raid. Numerous as they were they were not a formidable enemy to the Boer invaders who took their pasture, their cattle, and their children, much in the same manner as the tribes of Israel used the Canaanites.

We have seen how after Sir Harry Smith left the Cape, the British Government abandoned the loyal farmers and the natives north of the Orange to their fate. It was a policy of scuttle, and in the same way British sovereignty over the Transvaal was formally renounced two years after by the Sand River Convention, which gave the country up to the Boers on the almost sole condition that there was to be no slavery.

But this condition the Boers had no intention of keeping. On the contrary, they legalised a system of thinly disguised slavery of perhaps the worst form ever invented by man, for the apprenticeship system was a direct incitement to fraud and murder. Under this law Boers could keep Kafirs in their service without payment of wages until they were twenty-five years old. These young slaves were called apprentices. They were either bought from the Kafirs or taken in a raid. If they were bought, it only meant that they were raided second-hand, for very few Kafirs would sell their own children. But the common method was to get up a quarrel on any pretext, shoot the men and women and take away the children and cattle. It was seldom that they were either liberated or paid when they came of age for nobody knew their age and they could appeal to no one. They were openly bought and sold: the entries of sale have been copied from the Landdrost's registers.

That this system should exist in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was of course a blot on the scutcheon of Great Britain, and not only missionaries like

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Livingstone,¹ but the English diggers and the British colonists and officials denounced it. But there were other reasons for interference. The Boers were divided among themselves, and one commando was sometimes in actual warfare with another. These divisions, and the extent of country they covered, so weakened their power that even the less warlike of the native tribes began to pluck up heart and attack them. Moreover the Zulus, who had again gathered great strength under Cetewayo, as bloodthirsty a tyrant as Dingaan himself, were eager to wipe out old scores. The most powerful of the Bechuana were also determined to revenge themselves; and the Swazis were almost as hostile.

The direct cause of this native outbreak was the attack on Sekukuni, a Bapedi chief, who occupied a mountain stronghold to the north-east of the Transvaal. The Boers attacked the country with some Swazi allies; but allowed the allies to do the fighting in the same way as they had used Panda to fight Dingaan. There was enormous slaughter; but Sekukuni took up a strong position in the mountains and defeated the Boer commando. This was the most ignominious defeat ever suffered by white men in Africa. Burgers, the President, in vain tried to stop the rout. The burghers turned tail, and fled, and the news went humming round the black circle of the Transvaal that the white man had been defeated by the despised Bapedi.

And now Cetewayo determined to strike. He collected a great army and would have marched upon the disunited and helpless Boers, had not Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the Native Secretary of Natal, a man who was almost worshipped by the natives, used his enormous influence to restrain them. The Boers were in a desperate state. They had been compelled to engage mercenaries to fight Sekukuni; they were almost

¹ Livingstone's mission station was wrecked by the Boers and all his school children carried into slavery.

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bankrupt; they were refusing to obey their President or to pay their taxes, and they were being driven off their farms by native invaders. The position was not only dangerous to the Boers; it was dangerous to the rest of South Africa, and against its will the British Government was compelled to interfere. The Boers themselves were sick of the position, and when Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed the country on the 12th of April 1877, not a musket was fired to prevent him. Indeed, a large number of Boers, headed by Paul Kruger, who had been intriguing against the President, welcomed the change.

The British Government, wisely guided by Lord Carnarvon, stepped in in the nick of time. Parliament voted £100,000 to meet the most pressing liabilities of the new colony. Sekukuni, who had become arrogant owing to his success against the Boers, and was raiding friendly natives, was checked and punished by British troops, and when Cetewayo refused to obey Sir Bartle Frere's orders to disband his standing army and atone for the outrages he had committed, he was attacked by Lord Chelmsford.

The Zulu war began with the British disaster at Isandhlwana. This was a hill against the rocky sides of which was placed the headquarters camp, a good enough position if Chelmsford's orders had been obeyed, and the wagons formed in laager after the Boer fashion. But this was not done, and the defence of the camp fell on a force of 1600 men, of whom half were Zulu friendlies. They were unexpectedly attacked by an army of 20,000 Zulus. Many of the warriors were now armed with guns, so that they were even more formidable than in the old days of Chaka and Dingaan, and they bore down on the camp, regiment upon regiment, like the waves of the sea. The English troops, part of the 24th Regiment, made a fine defence, mowing down the Zulus as they came on; but the native

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contingent gave way under the weight of the attack, and thus left the British defence open on its flank and rear. The Zulus swarmed in with their stabbing assegais before the soldiers had time to fix bayonets, and in a moment all was lost. The camp was one seething mass of Zulus and soldiers stabbing and firing. Then the whites broke and fled, with the savages after them over the rough broken country towards the Buffalo River. Here the fugitives were caught in a trap; many were drowned, many assegaied, and only a few got over the torrent, but among them Melville and Coghill with the colours of their regiment. It was a terrible day, not only for the 24th, but for their gallant comrades the colonial troops. Twenty-six imperial and twenty-four colonial officers fell, with 600 non-commissioned officers and men.

At Rorke's Drift, on the Buffalo River, a little force consisting of one company of the 24th under Lieutenant Bromhead and Lieutenant Chard of the Engineers, guarded the ford and the stores and hospital. When they heard of the disaster in front they barricaded the place with walls of mealie bags and biscuit tins, and waited for the attack they knew must come. And they had not long to wait. Four thousand Zulus surrounded the little post and a desperate fight began. The savages broke into the hospital, where they were met with the bayonet, and in doorways and passages black men and white fought hand-to-hand. The place went up in flames, but not before most of the sick had been carried to an inner position, where the soldiers threw back charge after charge all through the night. In the morning the enemy drew off beaten, leaving 370 of their dead round the post.

The stirring events of this great war would occupy a volume. There was the disaster at Intombi Drift, where a convoy was wiped out owing to the carelessness of those in charge. There was the death of the