

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE PROMISED LAND

Pieter Jacobs and Jacobus Uys—Preparations for Expedition against Umsiligaas—Quarrel between Potgieter and Uys—Retief's Mission to Natal—The British Emigrants at the Bay—Request for Annexation—Refusal—Cape of Good Hope Punishment Bill—British Government, although Refusing to annex Natal, claims Magisterial Jurisdiction—Emigrants move Eastward—Retief at the Drakensberg—In the Passes—Among the Summits of the Range—Peaks and Craggs—First View of Natal—A Sea of Hills—The Solitudes—Towards the Upper Tugela—Natalian Flora and Fauna—View of the Sea from Mount Inchanga—The Africander Balboa—National Aspirations—Pieter Retief Welcomed at Durban—Co-operation of English Settlers to Establish the Republic.

ALREADY before Retief's arrival several small parties of Emigrants, besides the main bodies or treks under Potgieter and Maritz, had come from the Colony (chiefly, one may say almost entirely, from the Eastern districts), and settled in and around Winburg. Now larger numbers were on the way. Pieter Jacobs and the men of Beaufort district with him had arrived; and the patriarch Jacobus Uys with his sons and daughters; their respective wives and husbands; their children and grandchildren—all the members of the several families together numbering over a hundred. This clan came from the Uitenhage district. The old man was then

Pieter Jacobs.  
Jacobus Uys.

about seventy years of age. His son, Pieter Lafras Uys, had distinguished himself in the Kaffir war; and when the old father, with all his relatives, passed through Grahamstown, the British settlers there presented him with a large family Bible as a mark of their esteem and respect.

This old veteran and his party, all members of one large family, were in themselves a powerful host. On nearly every battlefield in the history of the Republic one or more of the name of Uys have signalised themselves by brilliant deeds of gallantry and valour, and not a few of them have given their lives for their country's cause. It is a name of which South Africa may well be proud.

A missionary teacher called Erasmus Smit was, in 1837, appointed chaplain. For, so far, not a single minister of the Dutch Reformed Church had come forward to throw in his lot with the Emigrants, and to perform religious services for them.

Preparations  
for Expedition  
against  
Umsiligaas.

Retief, in the name of the Emigrant Farmers, now sent word to Umsiligaas, the Matabele King, that, on condition of his restoring everything which had been taken by his Impis, peace would be granted to him; but that, if he did not comply with this demand, hostilities would be resumed against him. No reply was received to this communication. The Commandant-General had in the meantime visited the friendly Chiefs, Moroko, Tawane, Sikonyella, and Moshesh, and concluded alliances with them. When the second expedition against Umsiligaas was being organised, Tawane, Moroko, and Sikonyella offered their services and active

co-operation in the campaign. But large numbers of Emigrants from the Colony were then reinforcing those already north of the Orange river; and Retief thought it would be their best policy to fight out unassisted by Native allies the quarrel with the Matabele. He therefore declined the proffered help of the Chiefs. As there was some talk of a probable attack on the Emigrants by the Griquas of Waterboer and Adam Kok, the expedition against Umsiligaas was postponed for a time. Unfortunately, the quarrel between Potgieter and Maritz was revived, about September, 1836. Retief was unable to succeed, as he had done before, as peace-maker. On the contrary, things went from bad to worse. Not only did Potgieter and his followers declare their intention of separating from the main body of the Emigrants and setting up a Government of their own in the territory which they had purchased from Makwana; but Uys and his relatives, taking offence at some rather injudicious restrictions of the movements of smaller sections of Emigrants away from the main trek, also announced their resolve to separate and settle somewhere east of the Drakensberg range, in the territory of what is now the Colony of Natal. Retief himself was in favour of the entire body of Emigrants settling in Natal; but before definitely deciding on this, he resolved to make a journey of exploration in person, and to obtain a cession of territory from the Zulu King, Dingaan.

Quarrel between  
Potgieter and  
Maritz.

Retief's Mission  
to Natal.

All the country between the Tugela and Umzimvubu had been previously overrun and conquered by those tribes which fled from Chaka's armies, and the

Zulus were now looked upon as holding dominion over the soil by right of conquest. The former inhabitants who had not been killed or reduced to vassalage by the invaders had been driven over the Drakensberg into the countries now known as the Transvaal, Orange Free State, and Basutoland; and also towards the south into Pondoland and Kaffirland. According to Theal, all Natal did not then contain more than 5000 Natives. These owned the supremacy of Dingaan, and were the remnants of the tribes which formerly possessed the land. Retief, knowing that, according to Native law and custom, the country belonged to the conquerors, even although they might have had no moral right to it; being anxious to avoid hostilities and anything that might even look like illegal occupation of territory; and considering his own life and safety as nothing where what he deemed great issues to his country and his people were at stake: formed the daring resolve of visiting the Zulu monarch in his own stronghold.

The number of European inhabitants at that time in the country between the Drakensbergen and the sea, and between the Tugela and Umzimvubu mouths, was about thirty. They were English and Cape Town adventurers, and were located, for at least three months every year, a little further inland than the present town of Durban. They were nearly all elephant hunters and traders, and many of them were Chiefs ruling over small kraals of Kaffirs, and acknowledging the supremacy of Dingaan, to whom they paid tribute (in the form of substantial presents of money). Captain Gardiner, formerly of the British Navy, had settled at

the Bay in 1835. Previous to that year the houses were mere wigwams, hidden in the bush. Only one house was built on the European model; but the walls were of mud, and the roof was of reeds. In June, 1835, a public meeting had been convened, and it had been resolved to lay out a town where Durban is now built, and to call it after Sir Benjamin D'Urban, who was then Governor at Cape Town. As has been mentioned on a preceding page, a petition was then signed and sent to the Governor for transmission to the Home Government. It asked for the establishment of a British Colony, with a Governor and Council—appointed by the Crown—to rule over the inhabitants through the medium of a Legislative Assembly selected by themselves. This petition was forwarded by Sir Benjamin D'Urban on the 4th of December, 1835 (THEAL). Earl Glenelg, then Colonial Secretary, replied on the 29th of March, 1836, that "his Majesty's Government was deeply persuaded of the inexpediency of engaging in any scheme of colonisation, or of acquiring any further enlargement of territory in Southern Africa."

The British  
Emigrants  
at the Bay.

Request for  
Annexation.

In January, 1834, a meeting had been held in the Commercial Exchange Buildings at Cape Town, where resolutions were passed to request the British Government to annex Natal. The petition conveying this request was also rejected by the Home Government, on the ground of the expense that would be involved in any scheme of further extension of the British dominions in South Africa.

The British Government had, therefore, definitely refused to have anything to do with the new settle-

Refusal on the Part of the Home Government.

ment, when, in June, 1837, Captain Gardiner, who had been on a visit to England, again returned to the country, bringing with him some other missionaries, and establishing himself at Berea, a mission station which he had previously founded. He had gained Dingaan's favour by taking back to the Chief's residence four miserable Zulu fugitives, who had sought refuge with the English settlers on the Bay. These poor wretches were, by order of the King, when the missionary Captain took them back to him, starved to death.

Cape of Good Hope Punishment Bill.

In 1836, Earl Glenelg's administration had passed through the British Houses of Parliament an Act known as the Cape of Good Hope Punishment Bill. This measure enacted that all British subjects committing any crime in any part of the Dark Continent south of latitude 25° rendered themselves liable to be brought up for punishment in the Courts of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope. The Government of the Cape could grant commissions to suitable persons to arrest and bring to trial any of his Majesty's faithful subjects who had rendered themselves liable to punishment by committing crimes south of the 25th parallel of latitude. At the same time, the Act distinctly stipulated that the King's Government refused all responsibility of administrative rule over any territory beyond the actual Colonial border, and that the provisions of the Bill were not to be construed as meaning any extension of the Empire beyond what were then the frontiers.

British Government, Although it Refuses to assume Governmental Responsibility, claims Magisterial Jurisdiction.

The missionary ex-Royal-Navy Captain, who had

propitiated Dingaan by delivering up to Zulu justice the four fugitives alluded to, seems to have been considered by the British authorities a suitable magistrate under the provisions of the Cape of Good Hope Punishment Bill, and received a commission to act as such at Durban. The English settlers of those days, however, refused to acknowledge his authority, arguing that, as their petition for incorporation with the British Empire had been refused, they must look upon themselves as beyond the jurisdiction of that Empire. As they did not share its benefits, said those hardy pioneers, they would have none of its Royal-Navy missionary justice.

It was in the beginning of October, 1837, when Retief, accompanied by Marthinus Oosthuizen, Abraham C. Greyling, B. Liebenberg, and two others, started from Thaba 'N Chu, and rode across the plain to the east. Their mission was to cross the Drakensbergen, visit the Bay of Natal, and from there proceed to the head kraal of the Zulu Chief to negotiate with him for a cession of territory. Large numbers of the Emigrants were already on their way towards the mountain passes. They had been trekking slowly with their waggons and cattle; but their progress was stopped, as they had reached a region where very extensive grass fires had destroyed all vegetation—so that they now found all the "*vlaktes*" in front of them scorched and black, without a blade of grass left for their oxen and sheep. They had, therefore, to await the advent of the early summer rains before they could again pass on towards the east.

Emigrants  
move Eastward.

Retief at the  
Drakensberg.

Retief and the horsemen with him rapidly traversed the burnt-up plains where the fire had been raging, and, as most of that country lies between five and six thousand feet above the level of the sea, they soon found themselves riding into the first of those mountain passes by which they were ascending and crossing the range of gigantic mountains which lay between them and the land of Natal. On either side of their course, huge rocky heights towered to the skies; and, as their path wound up the slopes and led them further into the centre of the range, the wild grandeur of the scenery around them presented a striking contrast to the dull monotony of the level plains across which they had recently travelled. Rugged and scarred by the thunderstorms and torrents of ages, here with little rills of water—tiny streamlets only, for it was the dry season—trickling down their steep faces; there with dry and arid slopes of rock, bleak and bare of all vegetation; yonder, again, with heaths and grass lining their mighty crags: those silent sentinels that had watched the dusky legions of Chaka and of Ma 'Ntatisi marching past, frowned down on the half dozen bold pioneers—the first White men who had invaded their majestic solitudes, and who were now, guided by Destiny, advancing into that unknown land to the East. As the travellers ascended to still higher regions, they saw huge cloud banks floating around some of the loftiest summits of the range, while others reared their topmost peaks, even beyond the clouds, into the blue African sky. And then extensive ravines and “*kloofs*” could be seen,

Among the  
Summits of the  
Range.



stretching downward towards the east. In the deepest of these glens, forests of trees fringed the mountain stream, and bright-coloured heather and other flowers covered the slopes of some of the rocks. Here and there, high up the precipitous cliffs, the brown coney The Lonely Peaks and Crag. were sunning themselves in the October sunshine. The deep stillness in the mountains was broken only by the occasional shrill, piping cry of the little rock rabbits when the shadow of an eagle's wing, from high overhead, flitted across the face of the rocks; by the clatter of stones falling into the depths below, after having been set rolling by the horses' hoofs; or by the subdued sound—wafted upwards by the breeze—of water running down the face of the steep rocks in the ravines.

When emerging from the last pass, the travellers saw, First View of Natal. towards the south, an endless succession of mountains and mountain tops—the continuation of the Drakensberg in that direction. Straight before them, to the east, were rounded and irregular-shaped hills, covered and obscured from view by a hazy mist, but all diminishing in height with distance. It was the land which Pieter and Jacobus Uys had explored further east, and where now White men dwelt on the seashore; it was Natal—the Land of Promise to the Emigrants. Standing in that wild mountain pass, with their faces to the east, Retief and his companions looked upon the vast expanse of country gradually sloping downward A Sloping Sea of Hills. towards the distant Indian Ocean—a succession of hills, the nearer ones of which lay radiant in African sunshine, while those more distant were obscured and only

dimly visible in the cloud of vapour which hung over them. Under the veil of mist lay the banks of the Tugela and Buffalo rivers, of the Blauwkrans and the Mooi, and of the Bushman's, where the town of Weenen was to arise to commemorate the sufferings and misfortunes of the Voortrekkers. To the north-east, the white curtain hid from view a great part of the landscape. To the north, the continuation of the Drakensbergen stretched onward without interruption. In that direction, also, clouds obscured the more distant view.

Standing in the mountain pass and looking around them, the pioneers were once more struck with the stillness and the solitude, as the breeze wafted towards them the soft melodious sound of water falling over the edge of a deep glen, where huge tree ferns grew.

Let us try to recall from the Past—to bring into the Present—one or two salient features of the scene.

The Mountain  
Solitudes.

Hidden from view by some of the mountain ranges to the north, far away in the distance, towards the thickly-wooded slope of Amajuba, where the Spitskop rises at one end of the huge mass of rock, flocks of wood-pigeons are winging their way through the air. The *klipspringer* stands on the highest pinnacle of one of those groups of huge rocks away to the north, where the tops of the Drakensbergen are concealed in the clouds. The wild Bushman crouches in the shelter of a dark crag, perhaps watching the White strangers in the passes far below his feet. He grasps his bow and tiny arrow. High overhead in the hot sky, a black vulture sails lazily along. He, also, is watching. Then

the shrill piping cry of the little brown rock rabbit is heard once again, as, again, the shadow of the mountain eagle's wing flits across the face of the overhanging cliffs; and Pieter Retief and his companions ride down the eastern slope from the last mountain pass, into the unknown land, and under the veil of mist.

Travelling down the slope, which in several places they found so steep that they had to dismount and lead their horses, they gradually made their way past frowning precipices and immense ravines, often between huge stones and boulders overgrown with long reeds and grass, to lower ground, where they found the country well watered and with better pasturage for cattle. They were now on the affluents of the Upper Tugela, and Downward towards the Upper Tugela. this new land which they were exploring for their fellow-emigrants presented a remarkable contrast to the flat plateau plains which they had left behind them to the west of the giant mountain range. The hills, rising terrace upon terrace, one above the other, from the great Indian Ocean to the Drakensbergen; the well-wooded slopes and sheltered *kloofs*; the abundant water supply derived from the mountain streams combining to form magnificent rivers; the good pasturage and the great variety of climate and soil: all these were points of such importance as at once to attract the attention of the Emigrant leader and his companions. So far, they had not seen any Natives. The entire country seemed to have been depopulated by Chaka's savage battalions.

There were numerous wild animals in Natal in those days, and as the explorers came into the more eastern

Natalian Flora  
and Fauna.

region, away from the mountains, they observed elephant paths leading to the banks of the streams where those animals came to drink. Some of the plants—the bright-coloured scarlet flowers on the trees, the lianas and creepers, the fan-palms and tropical shrubs, as well as other features in the vegetation; the bright-coloured plumage of some of the birds which they saw; the strange insects and reptilia of this eastern zone: all these spoke to the Emigrants of the characteristics of a more genial, more salubrious climate than that which they had just left, and warned them of their near approach to the shores of that ocean, whose warm current, flowing southwards from the equatorial regions, tempers the cold of the upland slopes, even in the depths of winter (when the highest peaks of the Drakensberg are covered with snow), and throws that hazy curtain of vapoury mists, which had been observed from the passes, over the rounded hills of Natal.

As they had been advancing down the mountain slopes towards the sea, this veil of smoke-like clouds had limited the view of the explorers. Now that they were on lower ground, the sky was clear all round them; and they could see objects plainly (and unobscured by mist) at a much greater distance than before.

The traveller, coming from the west by the Pietermaritzburg road, first obtains a view of the Indian Ocean from the summit of the Inchanga mountain, or from one of the other elevated positions in the tract of beautiful country forming the watershed between the Umlaas and Umgeni. It was from one of these heights

that Retief's party saw the blue waters of the great sea before them in the distance. As far as is known, they had been the first people of European blood to traverse the country intervening between the inland plateau, where they had left the other Emigrants, and the point which they had now reached near the coast of Natal. With no other provisions than such as they could easily carry with them in the saddle-bag—dried camp biscuits, sun-dried antelopes' meat (*springbok biltong*), and perhaps a little coffee—varied now and then by the meat of such game as they could succeed in shooting along the way, they had arrived, after more than a fortnight's journey, within sight of the Indian Ocean. Far to the west, and thousands of feet above them, now lay those vast grassy plains and plateau lands where their countrymen were awaiting their return. Still higher up among the clouds, frowned the topmost peaks of those stupendous mountains in whose lonely defiles and dark passes their horses' hoofs had recently re-echoed; and further down the slope from the Drakensbergen, where mist and hazy vapour obscured the view, were the magnificent streams in which they had discovered the fords, and by the banks of which they had lit their camp fires at night. With the canopy of the Southern sky and its stars overhead, they had more than once, as the glow of the firelight lit up the adjacent thickets and brought out in strong relief the dark outlines of the distant mountains and of the wooded river banks, been impressed by the solitude of the wilderness around them. Occasionally they had heard the heavy tramp of elephants approach-

ing to drink, and even the roar of the lion had sometimes sounded in their ears.

During the daytime, they had often noticed abundance of game in many parts of the country through which they had ridden. The *spoor* of elephants and rhinoceri was especially well marked as the horsemen came to the low-lying districts of country towards the east. Koodoo, and many of the other South African antelope species also, were met with in large numbers.

But, though the land seemed to possess a variegated and plentiful fauna, and to be characterised by great variety of vegetation, human beings appeared to be scarce; for Retief and his companions saw, it is said, no Natives anywhere between the Drakensberg and the sea. The desolating scourge of Chaka's armies, or rather—to be more exact—of the hordes of refugees driven south of the Tugela by the Zulu Impis, had swept the country of its inhabitants. Year after year, the conquering hosts had overrun the fertile land. In the track of the Zulu conquest, flame-scorched ruins and the sun-bleached bones of human skeletons testified to the sufferings of the vanquished. The victors had taken a keen delight in slaughter. The legions of Dingaan, Chaka's successor, were as cruel and as merciless; but their predecessors had done the work of conquest and destruction so thoroughly, that no victims were left for massacre. The few thousands of Natives remaining alive in all Natal had concealed themselves in the woods and in the mountain caves to escape from their tyrants.

The White strangers had ridden through what was, indeed, a desolate land; and now, when they were at

the Inchanga mountain, Retief and his fellow-travellers obtained their first view of the Indian Ocean.

As he saw spread out before him that vast expanse of deep blue waters, which in the far distance appeared to be merged into the sky, the Africander leader, no doubt, once more reviewed in his own mind the great projects which he entertained. On the shores of that Ocean would be the harbour for the free Nation which he would bring to this land. Here would be, for his countrymen—driven from the homes of their forefathers by unjust government and bad laws—liberty; for the remnants of Native races—cruelly oppressed by their conquerors—protection and life in place of extermination and destruction.

In the history of the Western world the picture of Balboa first viewing the Pacific Ocean from the mountains of Panama has been handed down to our age enshrined in all the glamour of romance. The portrait of Pieter Retief in sight of the Indian Ocean has not yet been painted. What subject is more worthy the artist's brush?

We Africanders are called "an inarticulate people," a Nation without a Language: as yet, we have no Artists.

Another pale reflex, then, of the Past:—

As Balboa stood on the mountains of Panama, gazed on the magnificent expanse of the great Pacific Ocean, and, fired with all the enthusiastic Crusader-like ardour which characterised the explorers of those days, prayed to God that he might be able to navigate the waters of the unknown seas, so also stand Pieter Retief and his five companions on that ridge of Mount Inchanga, viewing the Indian Ocean. For a moment they rest

View of the Sea  
from Mount  
Inchanga.

The Africander  
Balboa.

their weary steeds, there where now goes the road to the sea from the town still named in memory of the great Africander leader, and look out upon the broad waters stretching towards the horizon. They, also, are stirred by enthusiasm. Ardent patriotism and love of liberty have led them—disgusted with a stupid Government, which desired to treat them as subjects, but which forgot justice and ignored their rights—to leave the land of their birth and the associations and surroundings which were dear to them, and to found a new home for themselves and their descendants by transforming the wilderness into a new Fatherland, where they will be free to make their own laws and establish their own Government.

We are justified in supposing that, as Retief's eyes rested on the blue waters to the east, he, also, prayed heaven to help him in realising his aspirations—freedom and independent nationality for his people; and for the new land through which he and his companions had travelled—not the cross and the sword, but peace and prosperity. As he came to that Ocean's shores from those mountains in the distance, he had seen around him a fertile country without inhabitants—the desolation wrought by the cruel conquering regiments of the Zulu Kings. For the surviving remnants of the oppressed and persecuted Natives, now hiding in the mountains and in the forests, the White strangers brought protection. The laws of the new State would give them security of life and property. The Republic would save them from further destruction. Retief's noble nature abhorred cruelty and tyranny. In founding a Republic for White people, he did not forget



the rights and interests of the Natives. This is proved by the special clauses in the Constitution which he framed.

To look once more on the reflex :—

Beyond the mountains to the west, on the great plains thousands of feet above him, his countrymen are awaiting his return. And thousands of feet above them again, high up among the clouds, are the giant silent rock sentinels of the Drakensberg summits, which in former days have heard the thundering tread of Chaka's Impis, and which, for aught we know, in the dim, distant past, may have witnessed the march of Arabian or Phœnician legions. They have seen the White men pass eastward to the sea. They have witnessed the advent of the herald of the Republic in Africa. Veiled in mist and crowned with clouds, lie the thickly-wooded glens, the steep ravines, the frowning *kransen* of the Amajuba, predestined to be an eternal monument through the ages which are to come.

Pieter Retief at Inchanga, gazing on the rolling waves of the Indian Ocean in the distance, is the representative and the embodiment of Africander aspirations. The sea itself is emblematic of those aspirations—of his people's unconquerable determination to advance towards the achievement of their independence and to fulfil their destiny.

Trichard and his party had previously found a way to the ocean much further north. This fact only became known to the southern pioneers after Retief's death, when Carel Trichard, one of the few survivors of the first trek, reached Natal.

Having now ascertained for themselves the suitability

of Natal for settlement by the Emigrants whom they represented, Retief and his fellow-travellers rode down to the Bay to visit the small Colony of English hunters and traders. They arrived at Durban on 19th October, 1837. The inhabitants seem to have given them a very hearty welcome. An address was publicly presented to the leader of the Emigrant Farmers. In this document the residents at the Bay of Natal expressed themselves as ready and willing to co-operate with the Farmers in the formation of their new Commonwealth; and, on Retief stating his intention of proceeding to visit the Zulu King, Dingaan, and getting that potentate's consent to the occupation of the country, the Englishmen at once sent a messenger to Umkungunhlovu to announce this to the Chief.

Pieter Retief  
welcomed at  
Durban.

Co-operation of  
English Settlers  
to Establish the  
Republic.

The loyal co-operation of the English settlers with Retief, and afterwards with Maritz, will astonish no one who has carefully read the history of South Africa. For, whoever has, could not fail to notice how, repeatedly, when civilisation has had to engage in mortal combat with barbarism, all the different sections of the White inhabitants — whether of Dutch, French-Huguenot, British, or German origin—have remembered that they had interests in common, that they were Africanders; and have stood by each other in the hour of peril, in the death struggle against the forces of savagery. The Kaffir wars in the Old Colony formed the first connecting bond between the two main European elements in the White population. The establishment of the Republic in Natal, and the war against Dingaan, made the second bond of union.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE MARTYR SENTINELS

#### THE ACELDAMA OF THE CHLOOMA AMABOOTA

Journey to Umkungunhlovu—Dingaan's Welcome—The Captured Cattle—Proposed Cession of Territory—Account of the Second Expedition against Umsiligaas—The Campaign of the Mariqua and the Capture of Kapayin—Abandonment of Territory by the Matabele—Potgieter's Proclamation—The Foundation of the Transvaal—The Crossing of the Drakensberg—Retief at Matawaan's Kop—Sikonyella—Second Journey to Umkungunhlovu—Dingaan's Treachery—The Cession of Territory—The Dance of Death—The Last Cup—Doomed—On the Chlooma Amaboota—The Faithful Sentinels—Pillars of the Republic.

ON the 27th October, 1837, Pieter Retief and his five fellow-travellers, accompanied by John Cane and Thomas Halstead as interpreters and guides, left the Bay of Natal for Umkungunhlovu. The Emigrant leader, having ascertained for himself that the White settlers at Durban were not only willing, but eager to co-operate with him in establishing an independent State in Natal, was now anxious to obtain the permission of the Zulu King to form a settlement.

Travelling in a north-easterly direction, through a country in which game (elephant, buffalo, eland, koodoo, water-buck, etc.) was then plentiful, the Voortrekker delegates saw before them a park-like land, forests alternating with grassy plains and hills. They crossed the Umgeni, Umvoti, Tugela, Lalazi, Umslatoosi, and

Journey to  
Umkungun-  
hlovu.

one or two smaller streams, as also the ridges and watersheds intervening between those rivers, and then arrived at the Chief's kraal on the right bank of the White Umveloosi, where they met with a very cordial reception. Quarters were assigned to them, to rest after the fatigues of their journey; and they were supplied with abundance of meat, maize, and other food. They were honoured, as distinguished guests are among the Kaffirs, by the performance of an elaborate war dance in their presence by large numbers of young warriors.

Dingaan's  
Welcome.

Then some thousands of old veteran Zulu soldiers followed the younger men to dance before the King's guests. Troops of cattle—trained to execute various military movements: ranged in rows and mixed with the men of the Zulu regiments; or, after representing the loot of the conquering army in this mimic warfare, filing off, at word of command, into a kraal set aside for them—took part in the entertainment. The King sent friendly messages expressive of his pleasure in welcoming them, to the Emigrant leader and his followers; and, when receiving Retief in audience, agreed with him as to the desirability of establishing a settlement for White people in the unoccupied country south of the Tugela, at the same time stating that he would consider the matter of a cession of territory, and give his decision in a few days. Near the Zulu kraal were some sheep, which had been brought from the plains to the west of the Drakensberg by Dingaan's armies. About July or August, 1837, a large Zulu expedition had been sent to invade

Umsiligaas' territory. A great battle was fought in the Marico district between the Matabele and these invaders under Tambusa and Salela. The latter were victorious. One of the Matabele regiments, which made a very brave stand against great odds, was entirely destroyed. But the remnants of Umsiligaas' defeated army, after losing all their cattle, fell back, received reinforcements, and, again advancing against the invaders, were led to victory by the Chief's favourite general, Kalipi. The Zulus were completely beaten and driven out of the country. They managed, however, to retain and carry off with them quite a number of the captured cattle. Some of the oxen and sheep thus carried off by the Zulus had previously been taken by the Matabele in their attacks on the Emigrant encampments on the Vaal river. One of Retief's companions now recognised a few of the sheep as having belonged to the members of Potgieter's trek. When this was pointed out to Dingaan he had all that could be found collected. There were a hundred and ten. These he asked Retief to take back, and stated at the same time that the others which were captured by his armies, and which had formerly belonged to the Farmers, had been slaughtered. It is also said that Dingaan offered to give the skins to the Farmers. Retief, in his capacity as leader and representative of the Emigrants, probably asked more questions about these sheep than the Zulu Chief liked. The bold and fearless Africander had already made a great impression at Umkungehlovu. The outward show of respect and the

The Captured  
Cattle.

marks of distinction with which the treacherous Chief received him proved this. The crafty savage stood in awe of these White strangers, whom he supposed to be very powerful and mighty wizards. He was always very ready to take offence, even where none was intended. It is quite possible that he may have felt piqued and angered when this matter was discussed. If so, however, he was skilful enough in diplomacy to conceal his displeasure. When, on the 8th of November, Retief and his party left Umkungunhlovu, the Chief gave him a written statement, which had been drawn up (in English) by Mr. Owen, a missionary resident at the King's kraal. In this document, Dingaan professed himself ready to cede to the Emigrants the land for which they asked, on condition of their restoring to him some cattle which had been carried off from a Zulu outpost by horsemen armed with guns and wearing European clothing. These robbers were Basutos, belonging to the tribe of Sikonyella, on the other side of the Drakensberg (on the upper Caledon river). Dingaan stated that the Zulus believed the cattle to have been taken by the Emigrant Farmers, and he wished to give Retief the opportunity of disproving this.

Accepting the conditions thus laid down by Dingaan as to the cession of territory, the Voortrekker leader now returned by way of Natal and the Drakensberg passes to the plateau regions to the west of the mountains.

Meanwhile, while Retief was coming back from Dingaan's kraal, hostilities against Umsiligaas had

been resumed. After the battle of Mosega, Potgieter and his followers had founded the town of Winburg (named in commemoration of their recent victory on the Rhenoster river). Large numbers of Emigrants were then arriving from the Colony. Many of these settled and built homes for themselves at Winburg. The first township established by the pioneers of the Republic grew rapidly in size. The houses were mostly little cottages with white or clay-coloured walls, and with straw-thatched roofs. It was at Winburg that Retief's Grondwet, the first Constitution of the Republic, was promulgated, and the first Volksraad and Uitvoerende Raad or Executive Council were elected, on the 6th of June, 1837, as has been described on a previous page.

The expedition which was undertaken against Umsiligaas, towards the end of 1837, was under the joint command of Andries Hendrik Potgieter and Pieter Lafras Uys. This Commandant, who, with his father, the patriarch Jacobus Uys, came from the district of Uitenhage, had already distinguished himself in the Kaffir wars of the Old Colony, and had also (in 1834) undertaken a journey of exploration to Natal. The family of Uys was held in high estimation by the English settlers in the Eastern Province. It will be remembered that Retief, before starting for Natal and Zululand, had made preparation for an expedition against the Matabele. The object of the commando which was now organised at Winburg was to ensure the safety of the new settlement. Umsiligaas, although his forces had been defeated and his kraal at Mosega

destroyed by the previous expedition under Maritz and Potgieter, was still in command of a powerful army, and had plainly shown his hostile intentions by disdaining to make any reply to the Commandant-General's demand for the restitution of the cattle which his impis had taken from the Emigrants on the Vaal river. To have left the Matabele power unbroken would have been to court a repetition of the disastrous massacres of 1836 whenever small parties of the Emigrants ventured northward on hunting expeditions. The campaign of Mosega had been interrupted by the rainy season, and by the necessity for further preparation. The force which now took the field consisted of three hundred and thirty men.\* There were two separate commandoes, one under Potgieter, and the other under Uys. No auxiliary Native fighting force was taken; but some Barolongs, under Mongala and two other brothers of Matchawe, acted as scouts and herdsmen.

In October, 1837, the expedition left the Vet river, and, pursuing the same course as had been followed by the commando at the beginning of the year, crossed the Vaal and proceeded in a north-westerly direction towards Mosega. The country was found as desolate and unoccupied as before. Scouts were sent out in all directions; but no hostile Natives, indeed no inhabitants whatever, were found. The ruins of the towns and kraals, and the skeletons of the Natives who

\* This is the figure given in his diary by Cilliers, who took part in the expedition. Theal puts the total number of Farmers in the united commandoes at a hundred and thirty-five.



had been massacred by the Matabele hordes, were seen along the way; and, when the camp fires of the expedition were lit in the valley of Mosega, where the great battle had been fought in February, no opposing impis had so far been encountered. The entire neighbourhood, as well as the immediate site, of the former regimental town, was found abandoned by the enemy. When once this fact was definitely ascertained, when it was known that by a forward movement no hostile force would be left in their rear or on their flank, the leaders of the expedition lost no time in moving northward towards the Marico,\* where, it was then known, Umsiligaas had his main fighting force. The intervening space of fifty miles or so was rapidly traversed by the advancing commando; but no precaution was neglected to guard against being taken unawares by the enemy on the march northward. The mounted scouts of Uys and Potgieter rode well in front of the column. Where the country was covered with bush and acacia forests, special care was taken to avoid falling into an ambush; and, at the night encampments, the laager formation was adhered to, and sentinels were placed all round the main body. The horses were picketed, well within reach, in the centre of the laager.

It was early in November when the Marico Poort—the region where the Marico river makes its way, through wild forest-covered mountain gorges, to its point of junction with the Limpopo—was sighted. Three mountain ranges are here pierced by the Great Marico river in its northward course. These mountains run

\* Great Marico, Mariqua, or Marikwa.

almost at right angles to the river basin. The southern range is known as the *Dwarsbergen*; and where the river finds its way through the range is the wild cañon of the *Eerste Poort*. Between this and the second transverse range of mountains, known as the *Witfonteinbergen*, the river winds by a somewhat tortuous course through a well-wooded valley. The gorge by which the Marico penetrates the second mountain range is known as *Tweede Poort*. To the north of this is another valley, stretching up to the *Derde Poort* or cleft through the third mountain range. This valley, also, has dense vegetation covering the mountain slopes, and the tract of country to the north of the third range of mountains is quite tropical in climate. The southern boundary of the region, the *Dwarsbergen*, lies almost directly under the 25th parallel of latitude.

This wild mountainous region of the Marico was the scene of the nine days' campaign in which Potgieter and Uys broke the power of the Matabele King. Little, or next to nothing, has been written about this contest, the issue of which was to decide whether the regions north of the Vaal should pass under White dominion, or remain the hunting-grounds of the fierce Matabele and the Aceldama of the hunted Bakwana. There was no scribe with the expedition. Sarel Cilliers, alone of all those who fought under Potgieter and Uys, in his journal, published subsequently, has made reference in a few brief lines to the fighting that took place during those nine days. His statement is to the effect that three thousand Matabele fell in the series of battles on the Marico.

The passes in the first range of mountains were soon seized by the attacking columns. Then followed incessant fighting; first, in the valley to the immediate north of the Dwarsbergen; then in the Witfontein mountain range; afterwards in the valley to the north of these mountains; and, finally, in the third range of mountains to the north. Where the country was much broken by bush and rocky ridges, the detachments of Uys and Potgieter fought on foot, and—always with their horses close at hand, to guard against the enemy making a flanking movement in strong force, and thus cutting them off—by a constant and well directed fire, drove the Matabele further northwards. Where broad stretches of open country favoured their tactics, the Matabele Chiefs adopted the old Zulu battle formation. From the front corners of a central mass or square, two long lines or columns of attack were thrown forward across the plain, attempting to surround the horsemen before attacking them at close quarters. Then the burghers fell back, galloping over the Veld, keeping parallel with the advancing lines of the impi, and directing a withering fire at the extremities or points of the columns. There would be no time for dismounting to fire on the enemy. Every one would fire from the saddle, and then load again, as well and as quickly as he could, with his horse cantering all the time. When the retreat had been kept up long enough to scatter and divide the Matabele, then the horsemen would wheel round and charge the disorganised masses, chasing them back over the plain, and inflicting heavy losses on them. Valley after valley, and mountain range

Campaign of  
the Mariqua.

Nine days'  
Fighting.

Defeat of the  
Matabele.

Annexation of  
Matabeleland  
and Depen-  
dencies.

District of  
Potchefstroom.

Original  
Boundaries.

The Crossing of  
the Drakens-  
berg.

upon mountain range, was stubbornly contested by Umsiligaas' soldiers. But, on the ninth day, they broke and fled with hardly a show of resistance, believing that the White horsemen were invincible, and that it was useless to continue the contest any longer. They were pursued into the desert, and the foundation of the Transvaal Republic was laid by the victory which Potgieter and Uys had gained. Between six and seven thousand cattle were captured, and Commandant Potgieter immediately issued a proclamation claiming (as compensation for losses sustained by the Emigrants) authority and government, by right of conquest, over the dominions previously ruled by Umsiligaas. These territories, which the Chief had in previous years himself acquired by conquest, and which were now uninhabited, comprised more than half the modern South African Republic, as well as a large portion of the present Orange Free State Republic and all Southern Bechuanaland. The new district of Potchefstroom was now formed. It embraced all the territory north of the Vaal river, as far as the Zoutpansberg ranges. Its western boundary was the edge of the Kalahari Desert, so that it included a large part of what is now British Bechuanaland. Eastward, it extended as far as Rhenoster Poort.

When the early summer rains had fallen, and the grass was again sprouting on the plains to the west of the Drakensbergen, the main body of the Emigrants on their way to Natal once more approached the mountain passes. They travelled with their waggons and cattle across the large plains which now form the eastern

part of the Orange Free State; and then undertook the passage of the Drakensberg.

The difficulties which they encountered in crossing the range have been thus graphically described by Cachet:

“A little to the south-west of the present main transport road along the Van Reenen’s Pass one sees a grey stripe, which appears to descend almost perpendicularly from the top of the mountain and soon loses itself among the boulders and bush. It is as if some thoughtless young baboons had here constructed a glissade, which, however, to prevent accidents, had been again destroyed by the older ones scattering rocks and digging furrows over its surface. That stripe, that glissade, is the commencement of the old road used by the Farmers in 1838-39 in their trek over the mountains.

“Let us join the waggon of the Farmer whom we already know, and see how the crossing was effected. For days previously the ‘path’ has been taken in hand to make it somewhat practicable. The larger rocks and boulders, hurled downwards from the crest of the mountain by the lightning, or gradually loosened by the action of continuous rains, have been removed out of the way, the deepest clefts filled up with earth and stones; the steepest places somewhat levelled by the spade; branches of trees and bush removed by the axe, and the numberless water-courses and gullies made passable. But . . . there are curves in the road, along projecting rocks and on the edge of precipices a thousand feet deep, which can neither be avoided nor changed; and

masses of rock three or four feet high—specially constructed, apparently, for the gymnastic exercises of gems-bok and klipspringers—from which the waggon will have to be made to jump after the manner of those graceful antelopes. Only a practised Africander waggon-driver will dare to cross the mountain by this ‘baboon path.’

“The whole waggon, and especially the *trek*-gear, must be once more thoroughly over-hauled before the journey is commenced; the front box-seat must be fixed by means of an extra rope to the side supports of the waggon, and all articles in the vehicle must be fastened as securely as possible, to prevent the load shifting its position and landing on the oxen. A select *span* of trek oxen must be yoked to the waggon: the leaders to step out well, those immediately in front of the rear or hindmost pair thoroughly trained to back at steep places, and the rear pair accustomed, in case of dire necessity, to let the waggon press against their bodies. The *baas* (owner or master) himself drives and his brother takes the ‘*touw*’—the thong by means of which the leaders are coupled together and by which they are steered. Under other circumstances this is the work of a Kaffir or Hottentot servant (often, also, on the journey, when servants are wanting, the task of the girls) but the road is so dangerous that the ‘*touw*’ can now only be entrusted to some one who, without anything being said to him, knows how to steer the oxen. Thongs have also been fastened to the waggon, which a number of friends accompany in order to balance the vehicle—where such a proceeding becomes neces-

sary—to save it from total destruction, by pulling at these ropes. No one remains on the waggon except the driver, who will, every now and then, have to cling with hands and feet to it, so as not to fall off, and the aged mother-in-law, who cannot walk, and places more confidence in the skilful driving of her son-in-law than in her tottering knees. When everything is ready, and when still on level ground, the oxen are deftly whipped up—‘warmed,’ as it is termed—and now, with double brakes on the wheels, the waggon goes slowly down the mountain side. Woe to our friend if his brake-chain gives way or the waggon-pole snaps; if his oxen shy at an ugly curve; if he does not know how to steer between that big boulder on the left and yonder hole on the right; if his rear oxen are not reliable at this and his leaders at that other spot, or the whole team does not pull evenly in that muddy hollow at the foot of the first ridge. Now the road is so slanting that five or six men are hardly able to prevent the waggon from being upset; then again so steep that the oxen can barely hold the vehicle back or drag it onwards. The worst trial comes when the heavy waggon has to jump from the rock masses three or four feet high, in imminent danger of being dashed to pieces. One faulty move, and the vehicle lies in the ravine a thousand feet deep. But it is as if a Higher Power has stretched forth a protecting hand, and, after hours of arduous labour, the farmer can enjoy the satisfaction of outspanning at the foot of the mountain on Natal’s soil, surrounded by wife and children. In this way the apparently impossible

passage of the Drakensberg was completed, and thus, marvellous though it may seem, the thousand waggons descended almost without accidents. Only one waggon, as far as is known, was lost—happily without sacrifice of human lives—by being dashed to atoms over a precipice.”\*

Retief at  
Matawaan's  
Kop.

Retief, in returning from Umkungunhlovu to the mountains, passed through the Klip River district of Natal. He met some of the advance parties of the pioneers who had crossed the Drakensberg. They were then laagered at Matawaan's Kop. Here future plans were discussed between them and their leader, who specially warned them not to scatter their encampments too much over the country, but to keep well together, so that, in case of necessity, they could at once concentrate their forces. This shows that he was not altogether unmindful of treachery on the part of the Zulu Chief. He was not blind to it as far as it affected others—his followers. But for himself, for his own safety, he never had a thought.

A thousand waggons of the Emigrant Farmers were by this time over the Drakensberg. Most of them had crossed by the defile already referred to (Van Reenen's Pass). Others had travelled by a pass lying more to the north (De Beers). All were now at the foot of the mountains, on the Natal side, and yet others were following from the plains to the north of the Orange river. While Retief was preparing for his second journey to Umkungunhlovu, some of the Emigrants begged him not

\*“Worstelstrijd der Transvalers aan het volk van Nederland Verhaald.”



again to risk his life by placing himself once more in the power of the Zulu King. They were beginning to have forebodings of evil, and many of them were of opinion that the Zulu Chief had treacherous designs. Retief's life, they said, was too valuable to the community that it should be endangered; some one else should be sent to negotiate with Dingaan, and to take back the Zulu cattle.

Several brave spirits offered to take the task upon themselves rather than again see their beloved leader endanger his own life. Maritz was one of these noble and unselfish volunteers. Truly, this man's name deserves to be remembered with love and respect by his countrymen—always self-denying, ever ready to do more than his duty.

The historians of South Africa have pointed out—some with scorn, others in sorrow—the too frequent quarrels and dissensions among the Emigrants, about this time and at a later date. But instances of such generous loyalty to each other and to the common cause, as we find in this proposal of Maritz, go far to make us forget the apparent want of cordial co-operation which was sometimes noticeable.

Returning to the western side of the Drakensberg, the Emigrant leader at once took steps to recover the Zulu cattle. Sikonyella's Kaffirs had also stolen some Sikonyella. horses belonging to the Farmers. A small commando having been quickly organised, these were retaken, and the Chief himself was surprised and captured without any difficulty. He was now informed that, unless the cattle taken from the Zulus were immediately given up,

Second Journey  
to Umkungun-  
hlovu.

he would be detained as a prisoner. This energetic action had the desired effect, Dingaan's oxen soon made their appearance, and preparations were made to return to Umkungunhlovu with them. Retief argued that he should himself go a second time. Were another, he said, deputed to negotiate with Dingaan, the Zulu Chief and his people would look upon the mission, unaccompanied as it was by the leader, as showing distrust and suspicion on the part of the Emigrants ; and failure to secure the desired cession of territory would be the result. Rather than that this should happen he was prepared to risk anything. But, as to the question of danger, why, there was none. He would even consent to take a strong body of volunteers with him. His followers, when they saw that Retief was determined to go, insisted on permission for volunteers to accompany him, and he made no objection. The Zulu Chief, he said, had, by way of compliment, entertained them with great display of warlike pomp. Let them, in return, show him a small body of their fighting forces, armed and mounted. Volunteers at once came forward, and about seventy were allowed to accompany Retief. A much larger force should have been taken ; but neither the Commandant-General nor his followers knew the real character of Dingaan and his councillors, Tambusa and Salela. Their treachery and deceit were soon to be revealed.

At this day it seems almost incredible that greater care was not taken to guard against surprise. Implicit trust appears to have been placed by some of the Emigrants in Dingaan's word and good faith. And why ?

Did they—most of them men from the Eastern Province of the Cape Colony; nearly all born and bred on the frontier; well acquainted with the character of the Kaffir races; and knowing the history of the early Kaffir wars—did they believe the Chief to be incapable of treachery? This is very unlikely, to say the least of it. Besides, we have direct evidence that many of them had their suspicions. The representations which were made to Retief point to this assumption.

The truth seems to be that they believed in Dingaan because Retief believed in him—at least they thought he did. Did he in reality? It is probable that the Commandant thought no better of Dingaan than of other savage potentates, and believed that he, Dingaan, would keep faith with a White man only as long as that White man showed his strength and was to be feared—that the Zulu Chief would not hesitate, should the opportunity offer, to destroy any one whom he no longer feared. It seemed as if Retief realised to the full that there was danger to himself; and those of his followers who placed themselves as a guard around him, and who afterwards died with him, also realised this. Coming forward in such numbers as they deemed sufficient to overawe the Zulu Chief should he meditate treachery, they accompanied their leader to Zululand. There were Bothmas and De Klerks, names honoured among the inhabitants of the frontier since Slachtersnek—as borne by those who had suffered and died for South Africa. Liebenberg, Pretorius, Botha, Basson, Cilliers, De Beer, Oosthuizen, Marais, Meyer, Greyling, Van Vuuren, Malan, Labuschagne, were some of the other

names of those who now rode to their death with Retief.

There were sixty-six Europeans in all. They were followed on horseback by about thirty Native servants, leading spare horses and taking charge of baggage and provisions. In passing through Natal, Retief once more impressed on those of his countrymen whom he found encamped along the line of his route the necessity of keeping well together, and of not spreading themselves out over too large an area of country before everything was settled and the cession of territory finally ratified by Dingaan.

The last injunctions, the last commands of the Emigrant leader were for the safety of his people. But his instructions were not attended to. In fancied security, large numbers of the Farmers spread their encampments over the new country into which their arduous passage of the mountains had brought them. Finding everywhere delightful pasturage and abundant water for their cattle, they looked upon the land as already theirs. Retief, their leader, had carried out his part of the agreement entered into with Dingaan in their name, and was even now taking back the King's cattle to Umkungunhlovu. They had such confidence in their Commandant, that they scattered their encampments along the Klip, Bushman, Mooi, Buffalo, and Tugela rivers. Others—those who had crossed by the more southern passes of the Drakensberg—were now encamped on the upper waters of the Umgeni and Umkomanzi.

Meanwhile, the Zulu Chief and his councillors were

awaiting Retief's arrival at Umkungunhlovu. There can be no doubt whatever that Dingaan had been much impressed by the striking personality of this remarkable man on the occasion of the first visit, and, while pretending to be very well disposed towards the Emigrants, had procrastinated and evaded as much as he could when discussing the question of cession of territory. Fearing the power of the Emigrants, the Chief's policy had been to gain time, and, meanwhile, to find out more about these strangers. In his previous intercourse with White men, Dingaan had found them always ready to propitiate him with gifts. These new arrivals had brought no presents. Boldly their leader had spoken to him. He whose very name was a terror to all surrounding nations, he who had slain Chaka, had listened to the fearless words of the White Chief who had dared, in the very stronghold of the Zulu nation, to lay claim to cattle and sheep which had been taken in war by the Zulu armies.

And now, while Dingaan was waiting for the return of the audacious strangers, there had come to Umkungunhlovu the tidings of the complete defeat of the great Matabele Chief whose army had but recently conquered that of Dingaan. Then had followed the news of the crossing of the Drakensberg by large numbers of the Emigrants. Intelligence is rapidly conveyed to a great Kaffir Chief from even the remotest frontiers of the territory over which he claims authority. The traveller passes through what appears to him a desolate and entirely voiceless wilderness. True, the country is uninhabited; but on the tops of the lonely

Kaffir Telegraph  
Service.

hills, here and there, Native sentinels are stationed. Soon a tiny column of smoke, perhaps quite unobserved by the uninitiated, rises from the side or from the very summit of one of these mountains. This signal, even if noticed by the White traveller, is to him quite meaningless except as an indication of the probable presence of a stray wild Bushman among the barren rocks. To the Kaffir sentinel on that other hilltop away towards the horizon, however, the little column of smoke is a telegraphic message. When he has deciphered it, which he does in some mysterious way—God knows how—by carefully noting the outline, direction, volume, etc., of the smoke column, he either repeats the signal by lighting on his own signal post a fire, the smoke of which is watched, and its message deciphered, by a sentinel on a more distant mountain summit; or, in case there is no other signal hill near enough to telegraph to, he runs across the intervening plain to the nearest post previously agreed on as a station for the King's intelligence department, and there delivers the message.

It may seem almost incredible to European readers, and yet it is a fact, that some of the express runners in the service of the great Abantu Chiefs travel at a rate of speed which is fully equal to that of a good horse. They carry the King's messages across the plains where no hilltops can be utilised for the smoke telegraph signals, which serve where the country is mountainous. The entire system, which has been used by all the principal Kaffir races from time immemorial, works so expeditiously that, over and over again in the

history of South Africa, it has been proved to convey intelligence more rapidly than the European horse-express. To take only one instance out of many. In the Transvaal War of Independence, when the Republican Executive was at the town of Heidelberg, news of the disasters to the British forces in the Drakensberg was brought by Native messengers sent by friendly Kaffir Chiefs. These messengers invariably reached their destination some considerable time before the arrival of the Transvaal express riders; and it is well known that the latter get over the ground more quickly than English cavalry scouts.

By the South African savage every superior acquirement of the White race, every art, every accomplishment which the Natives do not themselves possess, is looked upon as witchcraft. Nothing is so much feared, nothing so much respected, as the power of magic. Quite as much as the Aztecs had been astonished and awed by the Spaniards on horseback, were the Zulus also impressed and astounded by the first appearance among them of large bodies of Europeans with firearms—of White men riding on horseback, and bringing their household goods and chattels, as well as their families, into the country by means of the ox-waggon. The smoke signals and the King's runners rapidly carried the tidings to Umkungunhlovu, and thus ran the message:—

“They come in thousands across the great mountains. They bring with them their wives and children; they mean to dwell in the land, and their huge houses are drawn along the ground by trained oxen. They also

bring horses with them—the animals on which they rode when they conquered the Matabele nation; and they carry those weapons by means of which they hurl thunder and lightning, and death. The most powerful wild beasts—the lion, the rhinoceros, and the elephant—are struck down by their magic and die, as the antelope dies by the Zulu assegai.”

There is reason to suppose that Dingaan was informed as to the attitude which Retief and his followers had taken up in relation to the English Government in South Africa. In the archives of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope is a letter, dated Port Natal, 20th July, 1838, and addressed to Major Charters (Secretary to Governor Major-General Napier), at Cape Town. It was written by a Mr. John Parker. Mr. Parker accuses John Cane of having caused the massacre of Retief's party by treacherously sending a message to Dingaan: that the Emigrants, who had run away from the Cape Colony against the wishes of the English Government, would try to drive him from his country, and that the English would not assist them. Parker states that Daniel Toohey, a clerk in Maynard's business at the Port, informed him that he, Toohey, had it from Cane's own mouth that such a message had been sent.\* There does not seem, however, to be any other evidence against Cane than this hearsay statement; and the subsequent career of the man—his co-operation with others to help to organise an expedition against the Zulus in order to punish them for their treachery, and, most of all, his own death on the battlefield while fighting bravely

\* Theal: "History of South Africa,"



against Dingaan's army—tends to disprove Mr. Parker's statement altogether. Theal himself discredits the accusation.

Had such a message really been sent to Dingaan, it was more likely to have emanated from Henry Ogle than from John Cane. Both were Chiefs under Dingaan. Both had about an equal interest in land which, had the cession made by the Zulu Chief taken effect, would have passed into the possession of Retief and his followers. Cane, however, had co-operated with Retief, and had acted as guide and interpreter on the occasion of the Emigrant leader's first visit to Umkungunhlovu. Ogle had held aloof, and at a later stage of his career showed bitter hostility to the Emigrants. He and Richard King afterwards rendered themselves notorious by organising marauding bands of Kaffirs, who carried off cattle belonging to the Emigrants, and, after murdering White men, committed atrocities on defenceless women—the wives of Farmers who had taken part in the war against the British in Natal. Besides, Ogle's previous history was not without stain. He had put to death, by order of Dingaan, a Chief named Hlambamanzi; and, as a consequence of this act, had Retief's Government become established in Natal, it is not unlikely that he would have been tried for murder.

But Dingaan needed no message from any White adventurer or outlaw to make him decide on the destruction of Retief. The Chief was possessed of an almost maniacal passion for putting to death whoever he feared. His own brothers, and all the great Indunas

Dingaan's  
Character.

who had been faithful to Chaka, as well as all their followers, had shared that fate; and the favourite Councillor was he who always advised Dingaan to inflict the penalty of death. Dingaan's brother Panda, as well as all the Indunas whose evidence was taken before the *krygsraad* in Zululand in 1840, testified that the Zulu King never committed a murder without first consulting Tambusa, and that this Chief had taken a leading part in advising the massacre of Retief and of all the Emigrants.

On the 3rd of February, the Africander leader and the cavalcade which accompanied him rode over the hills which brought them in sight of Umkungunhlovu. They were received with every possible demonstration of welcome by the Zulus. The cattle which they had recaptured from the Basuto Chief, Sikonyella, were now restored to the King, who was, apparently, delighted at this proof of Retief's sincerity and good-will. As on the occasion of their first visit, elaborate war dances were performed in honour of the Emigrant delegates, and soon the day arrived on which the cession of territory was to be ratified by Dingaan in Council.

The Rev. Mr. Owen, a missionary who was then resident at the Zulu town, was asked to draw up a document embodying this cession, and the King and his councillors affixed their marks in lieu of signature. Three of the burghers also signed as witnesses.

“UMKUNGUNHLOVU, *4th February*, 1838.

“Be it known to all and everybody: that, as Pieter Retief has retaken my cattle which Sikonyella had

stolen, which cattle the above-mentioned Retief has now delivered to me, therefore now I, Dingaan, King of the Zulus, declare and certify that I have deemed it right to cede to him, Retief, and to his countrymen, the region Port Natal with all the land attached to it, that is to say, from the Tugela as far as the Umzimvubu River to the West, and from the sea to the North, as far as the country may be suitable for occupation, and as far as it belongs to me—which I hereby do, and give to them as their property in perpetuity.

The Cession of Territory.

<i>As Witnesses</i>	† Mark of Dingaan.
M. Oosthuizen.	<i>Chief Councillors</i>
A. C. Greyling.	x Maoro.
B. J. Liebenberg.	x Julavusa.
	x Manondo."

Such was the wording of that historic document.

Retief's mission was accomplished. His people would have a free harbour. The commerce of the world would be drawn to their coasts. Their flag would take its place among those of other free nations. The Republic would arise on the shores of that ocean. But its founder and his brave companions would soon be no more. It was part of the wily strategy of Dingaan to lure them to their destruction by his feigned candour and straightforwardness. So completely had the crafty Chief succeeded in concealing his real intentions from the Emigrants, that they would not listen to the warnings of the Rev. Mr. Owen, who seems to have understood Dingaan's character well, and who appears

Dingaan's Treachery.

to have repeatedly urged on Retief and the other leaders the necessity of extreme caution in all their dealings with the Zulus. Thomas Halstead, the interpreter, also seems to have feared treachery, and to have warned Retief to be on his guard. The latter, however, firmly maintained that there was no need whatever for any apprehension, that he was quite positive the King was acting honestly, and was friendly towards them.

After Dingaan's formal ratification of the cession of territory, the Farmers began to make preparations for their return journey. But the Chief sent a messenger to Retief, asking him to tarry another day in order that more war dances might be performed. It was requisite, the messenger stated, that this should be done, so as to properly honour the King's guests. The Emigrant leader readily acquiesced. On the 6th of February, after the performance of another great war dance by some of the most distinguished regiments, and when the Emigrants were on the point of departing, having already sent their servants to fetch the horses, Dingaan requested that they would come into the enclosure of the kraal and drink a parting cup of Kaffir beer (*Yuala*) with him before commencing their journey.

The Dance of  
Death.

The Last Cup.

Putting an unaccountable trust in the good faith of their hosts, Retief and his companions went forward, and even laid aside their arms at the entrance to the kraal. This was the fatal mistake.

It is said that Halstead and one or two others remonstrated with Retief, and advised that they should go armed, but that the leader thought that, by so doing,

they would show that they distrusted the Zulus. Large numbers of Natives were noticed inside the enclosure. Another war dance was performed, apparently in honour of the strangers. Two of the most famous Zulu regiments, the *Umshlanga Umjama* (Black Shields) and the *Umshlanga Umshlopa* (White Shields), were circling round with earth-resounding, thundering tread. The ground trembled with the incessant heavy thump of the feet of two thousand dusky warriors. Accompanying voices intoned the cadences of the battle song. Loud and clear rang out the herald's mimic challenge to the foe. Stalwart captains, whose head circlets were ornamented with plumes of splendid ostrich feathers, muscular Indunas, whose loins and shoulders were partly covered with massive leopard-skin karosses, roared and bellowed their words of command in deep-toned basso; and, from all the line of Zulu soldiers, came the answering echo of deep bass voices, as once more the earth seemed to tremble under the heels of the dancers. Then the vessel containing the maize brew was brought, and, as the Emigrants sat down to drink the parting cup, Dingaan, giving the signal to his warriors, called out: "*Bulala Amatagati!*" ("Kill the wizards!") and stepped backward towards his hut. In an instant the doomed men were seized. Halstead <sup>Doomed.</sup> shouted out in Zulu: "Let me speak to the King," and, at the same time, remarked to his companions: "We are done for." Dingaan merely waved his hand, to signify that he had decided; and then the unfortunate victims were set upon by the crowd of Zulus armed with battle-clubs and assegais. One or two of the

Farmers managed to draw their pocket-knives and despatch a few of the murderers before they were themselves slaughtered. Most of the others were dragged away to the hill Chlooma Amaboota, which overlooked the kraal, and is situated at the top of a precipice. Here they were killed, in most cases by blows on the head. From the accounts that have been obtained from Zulus who took part in the massacre, it appears that Retief himself was first made to witness the execution of all his companions, that he was then struck on the head and killed, and that, after his chest had been ripped open by the sharp cutting blade of an assegai, his heart was taken out and brought to Dingaan. According to Captain Corwallis Harris, who, in his work on South Africa, gives an account of the murder, Halstead, who was one of those who succeeded in drawing a knife before he was secured, and in killing with it two of his assailants, was tortured by being flayed alive. The bodies of Retief and the others were not stripped by the Zulus, but were all impaled on stakes driven into the ground on the hill Chlooma Amaboota. There they remained, for more than ten months, until the 21st of December, 1838, when the victorious commando, under Andries Pretorius, captured Umkungunhlovu. On that occasion, the deed of cession of Natal, signed by Dingaan, was found in a small leather despatch bag on the dead body of Retief.

\* \* \* \* \*

In all history there are few more tragic pictures than that of the martyred leader keeping guard on

that hill—his faithful heart torn from his body, his sixty-five murdered companions keeping watch with him, guarding the document for which they had given their lives, and on which their Nation's claim to independence in their own land of Natal rests.

The days, the weeks, the months, roll on, and, still stationed on that precipice, stand those faithful sentinels, The Faithful Sentinels. the guard of death, waiting for the advent of those to whom they have bequeathed the inheritance of their people's freedom. Through all their lonely vigil their leader holds clasped to his side, even in death, that document which will give life to a new Nation.

The savage Zulus look with awe on the silent watchers when the darkness of night falls upon the mountains. Even the vultures and wild beasts respect the dead sentinels.\*

The Republic in South Africa is not built on sand. Pillars of the Republic. Its foundations are on rocks. Mountain summits—Slachtersnek, Chlooma Amaboota, Amajuba—are the central supporting pillars of the enduring edifice.

Names of those who were murdered at Umkungunhlovu (from Theal's "History of South Africa"):

"Dirk Aukamp, Willem Basson, Jan de Beer, Matthys de Beer, Barend van den Berg, Pieter van den Berg the elder, Pieter van den Berg the younger, Jan Beukes, Joachim Botha, Gerrit Botma the elder, Gerrit Botma the younger, Christiaan Breidenbach, Jan Brits, Pieter Brits the elder, Pieter Brits the younger,

\* "Aasvogels en wilde dieren schenen eerbied gehad te hebben voor de lijken dier braven, en ze onaangetast te hebben gelaten."—CAOHET.

Pieter Cilliers, Andries van Dyk, Marthinus Esterhuizen, Samuel Esterhuizen, Hermanus Fourie, Abraham Greyling, Rynier Grobbelaar, Jacobus Hatting, Thomas Holstead, Jacobus Hugo, Jacobus Jooste, Pieter Jordaan, Abraham de Klerk, Jacobus de Klerk, Jan de Klerk, Balthazer Klopper, Coenraad Klopper, Lukas Klopper, Pieter Klopper, Hendrik Labuschagne, Barend Liebenberg, Daniel Liebenberg, Hercules Malan, Carel Marais, Jan van der Merwe, Pieter Meyer, Barend Oosthuizen, Jacobus Oosthuizen, Jan Oosthuizen, Marthinus Oosthuizen, Jacobus Opperman the elder, Jacobus Opperman the younger, Frederik Pretorius, Jan Pretorius, Marthinus Pretorius, Matthys Pretorius the elder, Matthys Pretorius the younger, Pieter Retief, Isaac Roberts, Jan Roberts, Christiaan van Schalkwyk, Gerrit Scheepers, Jan Scheepers, Marthinus Scheepers, Stephanus Scheepers, Stephanus Smit, Pieter Taute, Gerrit Visagie, Stephanus van Vuuren, Hendrik de Wet, and Jan de Wet."



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLE

#### THE DARKEST HOUR BEFORE THE DAWN

The Massacres of 11th February—Sunrise on the Mooi River—Weenen—Moordkraal—Blauwkrans—Bushman's River—The Fight at Van Rensburg's Laager—Marthinus Oosthuizen's Ride—Battle on the Bushman's River—Determined Zulu Onslaught—Brave Defence of Maritz's Laager—Noon—Cilliers, Malan, and Joubert to the Rescue—Exploits of Cilliers' Patrol—Renewed Zulu Assault on Maritz's Laager—Repulse of the Attacking Columns—Evening—'Weenen' for the Lost Ones—Brave Africander Women—Potgieter and Uys to the Rescue—Alexander and Robert Biggar—Dissensions Forgotten—Advance into Zululand—Battle of the Italeni—Death of Pieter and Dirk Cornelis Uys—Retreat of Potgieter—Abandonment of Natal by his Party—The English Expedition—Battle of Tugela—Death of Robert Biggar and his Brave Followers—Capture of Durban by Dingaan's Army—Reinforcements and New Encampments—Poverty and Distress—British Mission—Loyalty to the Soil of Africa—Proclamation by the British Government—Zulu Assault on Laager at Bushman's River—A Sortie—Foundation of Potchefstroom—The Winter of 1838 in Natal—In much Suffering and Misery—The Voices—To the Rescue—Carel Landman—Andries Pretorius.

DINGAAN and his councillors lost no time in following up the Umkungunhlovu massacre by a fierce onslaught on the encampments of the Emigrants along the Mooi, Bushman, Blauwkrans, and Tugela Rivers. Tambusa and Salela, at the head of ten regiments, ten thousand Zulu warriors in all, marched rapidly from Umkungunhlovu to the Tugela. Having crossed the stream near its junction with the Mooi River, the Zulus, at daybreak