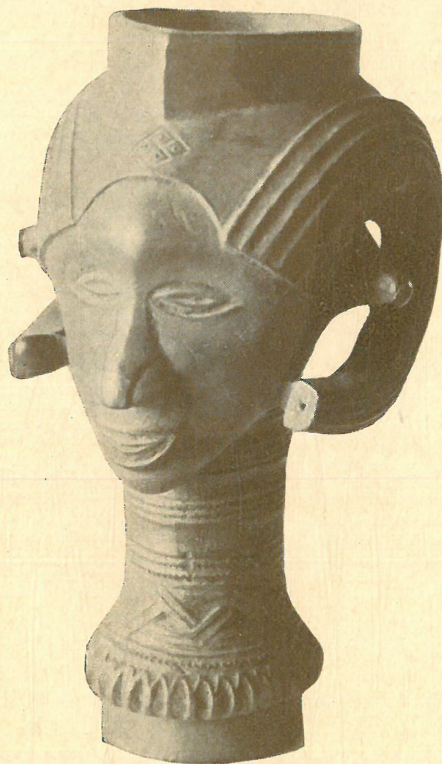

CARVED WOODEN GOBLET

(West Central Africa)

SONGS AND TALES FROM THE DARK CONTINENT

Recorded from the Singing and the Sayings

of

C. KAMBA SIMANGO
Ndau Tribe, Portuguese East Africa

and

MADIKANE ČELE
Zulu Tribe, Natal, Zululand, South Africa

By
NATALIE CURTIS

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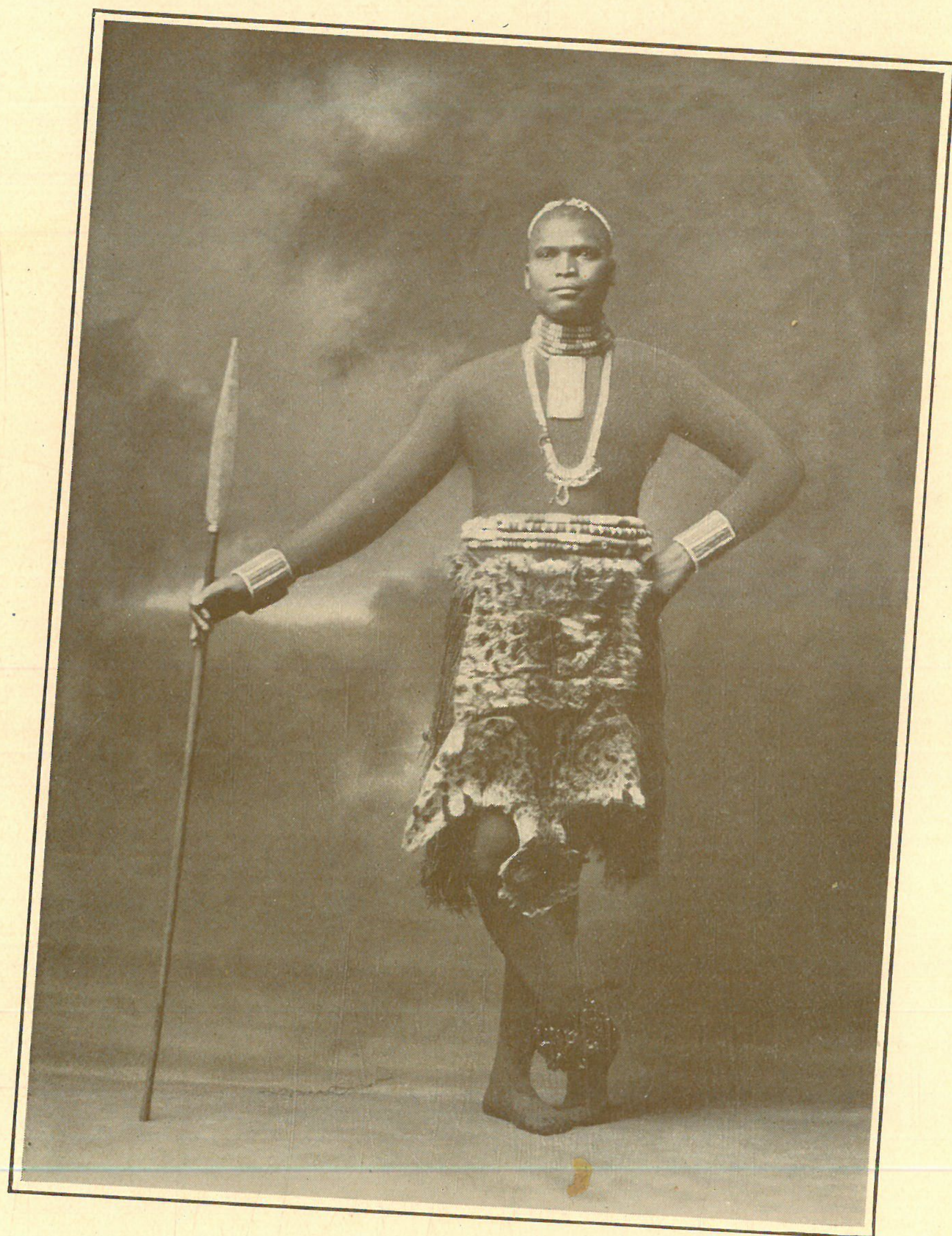

MADIKANE ČELE

SONGS AND TALES OF THE ZULU TRIBE

MADIKA'NE Q̌ANDEYA'NE ČE'LE[1]

Madika'ne Q̌andeya'ne Če'le is of royal Zulu blood, for his mother was sister of a high chieftain, and his father was a governor of rank in the palace. A convert to Christianity, Če'le's father went as a native missionary to his own people into the interior of pagan Zululand, where Če'le grew up. But the father was not satisfied with what Africa could teach his boy and he wanted Če'le to seek the larger world of white men for an education: it was to America that the African father decided to send his son. On reaching London, Če'le was so desperately homesick that he had but one longing—to go back at once to Africa! But his ticket to America had been bought, and there was nothing for the boy to do but go on to those unknown shores which were to him as forbidding in their mystery as ever the jungle seemed to a European.

The first months in the United States were difficult and bewildering, for Če'le knew no English and was alone in a big, strange land. But it was not long before the Zulu boy had mastered the new tongue, which he spoke with a slight but most alluring accent, and his career at Hampton Institute was marked by progress and great personal popularity. The gift of oratory, which seems to be a talent of the black race, was especially marked in Če'le. Tall and powerful, quiet and unassuming, never self-conscious, but always self-possessed, Če'le became a brilliant speaker both in the class-room and in public meetings. His deep earnestness was offset by flashes of humor, and his low, melodious African voice lent to his oratory a peculiar charm—the charm of a race distinct, and of a world as yet unknown to most of us. Through this tall Zulu, the silent millions of Black Africa seemed to speak.

Če'le has gone back to Zululand to preach to his people by precept, example and industrial education Hampton's gospel of "Work—for character's sake." His aim was "to found, with God's help, a little Hampton among the Zulu people."

His story is best told in his own words, contained in the following autobiographical sketch which was prepared by Če'le when a student at Hampton and delivered by him at meetings held in the interest of the school. Če'le's uncle, a native (called throughout Če'le's narrative "Mr. Du'be"), who had studied in America, had a large part, as will be seen, in shaping the boy's destiny. The autobiography is here reprinted by the courtesy of the "Southern Workman," a monthly magazine devoted to race-interests and printed at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Down in the southeastern part of Africa, along the coast of the Indian Ocean, there lives a tribe known as the Zulus, one of the most warlike tribes of Africa,

[1]For the pronunciation of Zulu names and Zulu words, see page 62.

and yet very kind in a way. There you will find my birthplace; but what date or in what year I was born, I cannot tell, and no one can tell, as people there do not keep the ages of children nor of grown people. We all live just as long as we can, and die when we can't help it.

My father lived in this tribe as a governor under the king of the Zulus, until white missionaries landed there and he became civilized, giving up his position and allowing the missionaries to instruct him in the word of God. When he became a civilized man I was just born. He spent six years with the missionaries, after which he went back to work among his own people as a missionary, where he is to this day. There I grew up as most Zulu boys do, watching my father's herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, until I became a large boy, and began to join other boys of my age in sports, such as hunting, playing at war with each other, and idling away all of the time.

With such habits my father was much displeased, for out of me he expected to make something real. So he sent me to the missionaries who had instructed him. There I spent two years. I finished what they could afford to teach me—only a blue Zulu speller. Then I went back to my father; he was well pleased with me and I was also pleased with what I had accomplished. What pleased my father especially was that now I could help him. The missionaries had instructed him only in the Zulu Bible. He could read a little in this Bible and explain its meaning to grown-up people, but the children were left alone. So with the little blue Zulu-speller learning I had, I was able to teach school in the Zulu language for two years.

Shortly after that, the evil spirit (so I called it) caught him; he became dissatisfied with only the blue-speller learning I had. He thought to himself that I must have a little more education. But he didn't know where he could send me to be educated, and I was pleased with that, because then I thought the life I lived was the best on earth. He tried in every way possible to find a place where he could send me. Finally he learned of America and her schools through the white missionaries, yet he knew nothing of the country nor of the language.

While he was wondering how he could learn more about America, something happened which pleased him greatly—that was the return to Zululand of Rev. John L. Du'be, my uncle, who had been in America for a number of years. Through Mr. Du'be my father was soon able to make arrangements for me to go. When I found that he had succeeded in his plans I was very sorry, exceedingly sorry. I tried every way I knew to keep him from sending me away from home, but when he said "go," I had to go. What troubled me was that I did not know anybody in America, and couldn't speak a word of the English language, and I was but a boy, probably about seventeen years of age. When my father found that I was really not willing to go, he sent me to Mr. Du'be and had him talk with me. But he had seen him first; so from what he said about America he made me change my mind, and I decided I would go.

I started and was six weeks and three days on the journey. In all that time no one said a word to me, for I could not speak their language and they did not understand the Zulu tongue. I landed in New York, where some friends of the missionaries took care of me. Soon they found a school for me down in North Carolina, and I studied there about five years.

Two of my teachers in that school were Hampton graduates. We used to talk about Hampton. They told me about it until I could imagine what Hampton stood for. Then, considering the condition and needs of my country, I was persuaded to believe that if I could have Hampton's training, the work I could do among my people in Africa would be so great that the world would never forget it.

So I went to Hampton in September, 1907. I was there only a short time when I found that the half of what Hampton is has never been told. Three years ago, when my classmates and I entered the Trade School, our minds were empty of mechanical knowledge, our hands were unskilled. The carpenter was unable to plane a piece of wood, or even saw to a straight line; the wheelwright was unable to make a joint; the tailor could not sew a button on a coat. But day by day we gained efficiency, and in May we received our trade certificates. To-day I can point out to you with pride the work of the carpenter, and of the wheelwright, and of those who can lay a pipe so that water is found wherever it is needed; while the battalion, in well-made uniforms, shows the ability of the tailor.

Now we stand before the gateway into the busy life of the world, as soldiers ready to march forward and to fight against our foes. To this point we were not brought forward on flowery beds of ease, nor did we come traveling on the road of pleasure. We had to fight our way through difficulties. When discouragements have come to us, when we have bent beneath the burden and have almost failed, we have thought how little has been accomplished in the world by men who have given up the fight, and how much by those who have persisted in the face of difficulties. The thought of General Armstrong's[1] persistency in founding and building the Hampton School, his courage when there seemed nothing to encourage him, his hard struggle with little money to work with, in order that we as students might enjoy the privileges we have to-day—all this has helped us, and we have been able to go forward with renewed strength and courage.

The lesson that we have learned at Hampton is not only to see how many dollars and cents a day will come to us at our trades, or to use our trades for ourselves individually, but to use our skill and knowledge in helping others. Yesterday we were responsible for ourselves only, now we are responsible for every human being, whether black, white, or red. Such responsibility has taken hold upon us while watching our leaders, how they have struggled and put forth every effort that we might rise to the highest. They have sacrificed themselves and their pleasure for the benefit of my people and your people. Let shame and disgrace seize any young man who could witness such struggles and then go back home and there sit down and do nothing.

We know there is no man who will come to us for help unless we possess those qualities by which he will be drawn to us, and I believe there is no place on earth better than Hampton for the Indian and colored man to develop intellect, morality and Christianity—the qualities one must have.

[1]For biography of General Armstrong as founder of Hampton Institute, see "Samuel Chapman Armstrong," by Edith Armstrong Talbot, Doubleday, Page & Co., N. Y.; also "Negro Folk-Songs," Book I, Hampton Series, G. Schirmer, Publisher.

AFRICAN TEXTILE DESIGN

Hampton stands for intellectual growth, for it will not allow a young man to take a trade without going to school and studying the things that broaden the mind. Our intellect has been developed in the shop as well as in the classroom. Our instructors have held us right to the mark and have made us make the best use of our thought. Punctuality, carefulness, industry and honesty are some of the qualities the Trade School has developed in us.

The spirit of Christianity, shown by the kindness of teachers and students, reaches beyond the school grounds, and meets the new student before he enters; this kindness changes his entire life and he is kind also. It goes further than this, for it goes with him when he leaves, and to-day you will find Hampton students scattered all over the country sowing seeds of kindness, and helping those who cannot help themselves.

I hope to carry these seeds to those forgotten children of South Africa to whom I belong. See them as they feel their way through dark shadows of ignorance, not knowing where they are going, falling down before false gods, trying to find the right one, living in miserable huts, and without enjoyment in their homes, and you will know why I am glad to go to them with all of Hampton's blessings.

(Signed) MADIKA'NE Q̌ANDEYA'NE ČE'LE.

Če'le married at Hampton an American Negress, a graduate of the school, and returned with her to South Africa to dedicate their lives to the education and uplift of the natives. American friends had promised to help Če'le with financial support in his effort to establish an industrial school for the blacks of South Africa. But the war paralyzed all assistance to a great extent, and this noble work for African self-help is in dire need. Here follow extracts from some of Če'le's letters to Hampton:

Ohlange Indus. School, Phœnix Station,
Durban, Natal, So. Africa.

We are moving on nicely here with work. Little by little we advance. This school is really a wonderful school in which to plant Hampton's ideas in the different tribes which gather here for an education. By different tribes I mean young people from these tribes. We have students from as far down as Capetown, as far up as Gassaland, and from the eastern coast far back to the central part. We have three young men from right in the central part of Africa. The success of this school means that almost entire South Africa is reached. I am trying my very best to have the shop as good as I can possibly make it. Every quarter, not quarter of a term, but quarter of a year, the instructor in each department has to make up a report to be sent to the Government. Each report must come to me to be signed, and then I have to make a report of the trade school as a whole. This shows the interest the Government has taken in our school.

* * * * * * * *

I received both letters and the draft. Now, besides thanking you for sending it, I must thank you also for promptness in sending it. If it were not for this kindness of our friends really I don't know what would have become of us by now. We met a dreadful time. The Africans are suffering terribly from this war. May God look upon them! I have received only these two contributions since I started in this work.

Things are very hard here yet, but are beginning to look more promising. We have been victorious over the Germans, who have been fighting here in Africa, so we feel somewhat cheered, because we feel that most everything will come down to the regular prices, especially food stuff.

* * * * * * * *

My checks are a little longer sometimes coming, but I tell you whenever one does get here it certainly does bring joy to myself and family. It is our only hope; without it I don't know really what would become of us. You see the South of Africa has changed so from the way it was when I was a boy.

* * * * * * * *

Some old people are not ashamed to say that the civilization they have had in Africa for ninety years has not helped them much here on earth. So many of them see their mistakes and they want their boys to get *trades* as well as Christianity. That is very encouraging. Sometimes I really spend half of my nights thinking what I can do to have my shop so that it will be a model to these natives all the time. I tell you, my friend, if the love one has for his people and his country will bring about the success that is needed, my country and my shop are all right.

* * * * * * * *

You know why food is so scarce now. The natives used to plough, but now the white people are taking all the best land for themselves, and what is no good these poor natives get. In some places the natives are not allowed to buy land. Really it is sinful to see how these white people treat the people that God gave this land to. They are being driven back and allowed only a piece of land big enough to put up a hut ten by ten. If they have ten children all of them have to stay in this same room—mother, father, children and visitors, all the same.

* * * * * * * *

Hard times here have grown worse and worse until we do not know what is going to be the outcome for us.

You will be surprised to know that from the effect of this war natives are dying just like little chickens out in the rain. Around my father's home where there are so many poor heathen it is a common thing to have four or five natives pass away in one week.

You know the natives of Africa are people who always lived on a simple diet because they have very small means. To-day the war has caused everything to go very high in cost, so high that natives cannot get it. Now, from the lack of proper food and enough nourishment in their bodies they are having a stomach trouble. Persons simply report pain in the stomach and in two or three days they pass away. That is the way they go.

It is almost impossible to get food here now, not because there is none, simply because the cost is too great, even for some things grown here in Africa.

Really when this war comes to an end, if it ever does, no one will rejoice more than my people. We certainly have suffered terribly. I am also suffering terribly with my shop. This term I have been bound to reduce the number of boys in the shop. I manage to keep it going. I don't think I'll be able to do much new work this term as it is almost impossible to get iron. I have to do a great deal of repair work. Our shop was certainly progressing nicely. To-day I have in my desk four orders for new wagons, but I don't see how I can fill them. Shops and all other similar businesses are suffering great losses these days here.

I must close with many thanks. Do remember the Africans in your prayers, they are needed worse than ever.

NOTE FOR THE PRONUNCIATION OF ZULU TEXTS

a as in "*father*"
b has two sounds; one, as in English and the other as in *bh.*
č represents the "*dental click*" formed by pressing the tip of the tongue sharply against the front teeth
d as in English
e as in "*there*"
f as in English
g always hard
h as in English
i as in "*ravine*"
j as in English
k as in English
l as in English
m as in English
n as in English
o as in "*nor*"
p as in English
q̌ represents the "palatal click"
r not used in these texts
s as in "*sail*," *never* the *z* sound
t as in English
u as "oo" in "*moon*"
v as in English
w represents the semi-vowel *u* when combined in sound with another vowel following it. The sound produced and represented by this letter is consequently not so full and broad as in English
x not used in these texts
y as in English
z as in English

Note:—The above is only a slight indication of the subtleties and peculiarities of the Zulu language. As this book is intended primarily for the general reader, the Zulu sounds have been reduced as nearly as possible to letters pronounced as in English, and the explanations of the "clicks" have been simplified as far as possible. The *student* is referred, however, to the excellent dictionaries of the Zulu language compiled by missionaries and contained in the New York Public Library, New York City and the Congressional Library, Washington, D. C. The various sounds of the Zulu clicks are produced by suction; the *c* click is formed by pressing the tip of the tongue sharply against the front teeth in *t* position; the *q* click is formed by striking the sides of the tongue sharply against the cheeks as in "clucking" to a horse; the most peculiar "click" consists in curling the tongue backward and striking it against the roof of the mouth—all these sounds are impossible of transcription according to the English use of written characters, and therefore it has been deemed wiser, owing to the nature of this book, to avoid elaborate indications and to offer merely a few general symbols. Clicks are generally indicated by the sign ˅ above a letter, as in "Če'le."

IGA'MA LE 'MPI

SONG OF WAR

Among the oldest traditional songs of the Zulus are the war-songs, which are the most sacred songs, composed by warriors and leading men. They are very ancient, there are not many of them, and their meaning is always the same. Of these songs there are two kinds: first, those that are sung only when ordered by the King on special occasions, such as the inauguration of the King or the preparation for battle; second, those sung by the people when expressing their loyalty to the King and their hatred of the enemy.

To the Zulus their King stands first, above all beings and revered beyond all else, even though he is not actually worshipped. Few men may talk to the King. Only the Governors, the "Indunas," or "Iziinduna," men of very high rank, may be admitted to the royal presence. If an ordinary man wishes to petition the King, he must stand outside the palace and offer prayers and thanks to the King, praising him aloud in a long eulogy. Then the Governor stationed within the King's palace comes out and listens to the man's petition: but before even the Governor may reënter the palace and approach the King again, he too must stand and make a long eulogy and prayer.

[To the white man, the definiteness of custom, the formality and the dignity of reverence in primitive life, are often a surprise. Nor is he always able to understand the wealth of symbolism through which simpler men enact a sort of nature-poetry in their ceremonies.]

Like many African tribes the Zulus are a pastoral people whose wealth is counted in cattle. Yet in old times they were known and dreaded for their aggressive warfare, and the terrible Warrior-King Tsha'ka (or Chaka), who extended the might of the Zulus over nearly the whole lower half of the Continent, ranks with the great generals of the world. His warriors were condemned by the severity of their physical training to remain unwed that they might be without all tender ties, and they were always kept in perfect condition for battle; the merciless infliction of the death-penalty for almost every offence made discipline fierce and absolute.[1] The white man is apt to think of the black man as a yoked and subject being. But when first encountered by the British, the Zulus were a strong and proudly militant people whose highly trained armies were the pride and glory of their kings. They were at the summit of their power under Tsha'ka and his successors early in the nineteenth century when European colonization began to press ominously upon the African tribes. It can not be forgotten how,

[1]In his valuable history of African races, entitled "The Negro," Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois has this to say of Tsha'ka's hosts: "He had organized a military system, not a new one by any means, but one of which we hear rumors back in the lake regions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. McDonald says, 'There has probably never been a more perfect system of discipline than that by which Chaka ruled his army and kingdom. At a review an order might be given in the most unexpected manner, which meant death to hundreds. If the regiment hesitated or dared to remonstrate, so perfect was the discipline and so great the jealousy that another was ready to cut them down. A warrior returning from battle without his arms was put to death without a trial. A general returning unsuccessful in the main purpose of his expedition shared the same fate. Whoever displeased the king was immediately executed. The traditional courts practically ceased to exist so far as the will and action of the tyrant were concerned.' "

Tsha'ka has been called—perhaps not inappropriately—"The Napoleon of Black Africa." Under him, war and conquest were the aim of Zulu life.

with only the assegai (the short native javelin) and the shield, the naked hosts kept at bay the firearms of the English. But in 1879 the inevitable superiority of machine guns finally broke down native resistance. Zululand became a British protectorate. But the black man yielded neither territory nor independence until he had exhausted all his forces and had seen with despair the failure of that supernatural aid in which he had desperately believed.

In olden times the Zulus fought among other tribes for two main reasons: to win renown for a new King or to add to the glory of an old one. The victors seized the cattle of their foes and also took a few of the handsomest maidens for the King, who bestowed some of these upon his nobles. Peace was then made, the women captives remaining true to the victors; and the whole tribe treated the prisoners thenceforward as well as their own women.

The following war-song may be sung before a battle, and also at the inauguration of a King when the people express their loyalty and their readiness to fight for the ruler. As a prelude to battle, it is sung to rouse in the warriors the frenzy of war, and it is accompanied by the war-dance with its defiant and terrifying gestures.

To understand the meaning of the song, one must be familiar with the native figures of speech. In Zululand there are deep gullies, sometimes dry, sometimes with water at the bottom;[1] being sudden rifts in the ground, they are almost imperceptible until one comes close upon them, so that a man in the heat of fighting, might easily step over the brink and fall into the gully. Hence the phrase in the first verse of the song: "Do I fear to fall over the gully-wall?" which means to die the death of a brave man. For the enemy is likened to the gaping rift wherein the warrior meets his end. "To die in the man's pit," even as an animal walks into the pit of the hunter, means to die in battle. The gully-wall is indeed a powerful bit of native imagery, vividly expressing the violent contrast of standing at one moment full of life and the throbbing lust of battle, and falling the next instant over the sudden bank into the death-chasm.

The expression "Are we seen by strangers?" means that other tribes or hostile people are watching in fear and dread. The line "We shall capture the distant one, yea, King," or "yea, the King," is a little obscure. It may mean that the warriors will capture the enemy-king, or it may be an assurance to their own King. The Zulu who explained the song said that the words were a defiant vaunting of Zulu prowess, declaring: "We will take not only you, against whom we are now warring, but all who presume to trouble us!"

The "Child of the King" is the ruler now in power, for every king is a royal offspring, and the expression signifies the long line of regal descent. It is best translated "The Child of Kings." However, any English rendering of this African poem, which is quite perfect in form and firm of outline, can be at best but a mere approximation; for it cannot reproduce the even rhythm of the original lines, which are not only sonorous, but highly musical in flow and emphasis—a complete poem in every sense.

So far as the music itself is concerned, however, it is more a dramatic intonation of the verses than a song. There are no actual time-values for the notes

[1]Probably like the canyons or the arroyos of the Southwestern U. S.

and bars into which the recorder must cast these fluent vocal figures. It has seemed most appropriate, therefore, to make the musical bars correspond to the lines of the verses. The song is declaimed with the greatest possible freedom, like an extemporization, full of excitement and passion. In the second verse, which intensifies the first and rises to a climax of emotion, the warriors are supposed to draw nearer to the enemy, and the song grows faster as the war-dance raises clouds of dust. For the warriors personify the lowering storm, and the unity of song, dance and gesture is in reality the raw material from which is fashioned primitive drama.

The cry "Awu-ye'lelema'ma" ("Woe!"), rising from many throats, reverberates through the oncoming ranks of warrior-dancers at first like muttering thunder, then with loud peals of threatening anger as the singers advance, their black forms dim and terrible, half hidden in the swirls of dust which circle around them and rise high above their heads. Likening themselves to the might and fury of the thunderstorm, the dancers shake their assegais that these may glitter like shafts of lightning and strike terror to their foes, while the thud of feet intensifies the rhythmic power of the song which seems indeed like the roar of the storm-wind.

Seen near to, the individual dancer is the embodiment of terrifying wrath. His black eyes roll; the sudden flashes of white eyeballs and white teeth are high-lights in the dark rage of his face. His naked form, polished like ebony,[1] shines with the spring of lithe and powerful muscles. The hide of a leopard or of an ox, or perhaps a girdle decked with drooping feathers—these are his sole garments. But ornaments, fashioned with rare artistry and skill, give flecks of color to the lustre of his blue-black skin. Plumes crest the crisp wool of his hair; anklets clank upon his dancing feet; and metal bracelets bind the swell of his sinewy arms. The Zulus are among the tallest people in the world,[2] and their magnificent physical development gives to their war-dance the swift agility of the panther. A long narrow shield, beautiful in native craftsmanship, protects the body from breast to knee and is held in one hand; the other brandishes the assegai, which the Zulus thrust and hurl with such deadly skill that they may well liken themselves to the striking lightning.

This war-drama, performed on occasions of great tribal importance, seems a poetic symbol of the Zulu people personified by their warriors, who, like a veritable tempest, swept South Africa,[3] subjugating other tribes to their military dominance and helping to spread the Bantu tongues[4] from coast to coast and from Cape to Equator.

This song is very old; it was sung before ever a white invader trod the land so bravely defended by a fearless race. It is still sung as a ceremonial tribal song.

[1]The Zulu youths carry in their girdles small gourd flasks containing a grease made of native butter. With this they polish their bodies, even as did the Greeks. "And when the sun shines on them, they are beautiful indeed," declare the Zulus.

[2]For description of Zulus see "The Negro," by W. E. B. Du Bois, published by Henry Holt & Co. N. Y. (page 96).

[3]For Zulu conquest of the Ndau people of Portuguese East Africa, see page 28.

[4]Ba'ntu languages, see pages xiii, xv.

Se′nge sa′ba naku′pi we′ ma-ko′si?
Se′nge sa′ba ukuwe′la odonge′ni?

Ti′na si′ya hlu′shwa nga′bezi′zwe na′?
Awu-ye′lelema′ma!
Ye′ka inga′ne enča′ne ye nkos′!

Se′si bon′wa nga′bezizwe na′?
Li′zo du′ma li muta′te,
Nose ku′de pe′la ye nko′si:
Awu-ye′lelema′ma!
Ye′ka inga′ne enča′ne ye nkos′!

(Literal translation)

Fear I aught, ye hostile Kings?
Fear I to fall o'er the Gully-Wall?

Are we troubled by Strangers?
Awu-ye′lelema′ma! (Woe!)
Trouble not the Child of Kings!

Are we watched by Strangers?
Our lightning shall strike them captive,
Even the Distant One, yea, their King:
Awu-ye′lelema′ma! (Woe!)
Trouble not the Child of Kings!

NOTE. It has not been possible to make a metrical translation that would exactly fit the African rhythm without losing the directness, the austere vigor and the sombre dignity of this song—nevertheless, a singing version, matching the rhythmic values of the Zulu poem, had to be devised and is here offered:

(Metrical translation)

Fear I aught, what fear I, ye hostile Kings?
Fear I aught, fear I the Gully-Wall?
And shall we be troubled by these hostile strangers?
Awu-ye′lelema′ma!
Trouble not ye the Child of Kings!

Are we watched by enemies and strangers?
Then our lightning shall strike them,
Strike and take them captive, yea, King!
Awu-ye′lelema′ma!
Trouble not ye the Child of Kings!

IGA′MA LA BANTWA′NA
SONG OF CHILDREN
(Lullaby)

Among no people, perhaps, is the mother more important in the affections of the children than with the Africans.[1] Naturally emotional, the black race is demonstrative as well, and the love of the African mother for her child is as strong as is the native feeling of dependence upon her whose affections are unchanging. The love of a wife may alter, but never that of a mother.

Like the American Indian, the African carries her baby on her back in order that her ever busy hands may be free for their manifold tasks. The child is thus the almost constant companion of the mother, who rarely leaves it unless she must go a long distance, perhaps to labor in the fields or to gather fruit or berries.

In his book[2] "Missionary Story-Sketches and Folk-Lore from Africa," the Rev. Alexander P. Camphor says: "It is thought by those who do not know the

[1]For the place of the mother in African affections see pages xxiii, 21, 29.
[2]Published by Jennings & Graham, Cincinnati; Eaton & Mains, New York. Page 114.

Africans that there is not much affection among them. This is not correct, as the close observer will find that there is a tender relation existing, especially between mother and children. We witnessed scenes that were pathetic and touching when parents had been separated from their children and were united again. Mothers take their children in their arms and lavish upon them the same affection that a civilized mother would."

The same author tells elsewhere (page 18) how an African boy who had been left at the mission by his father as a child of four to be educated in the "God-Way," was sent back years later, a grown lad of sixteen, to see his mother. The woman was so overcome with joy that, to the boy's embarrassment, she insisted on *lifting him on her back* and carrying him through the village to show all her people that her very own child, her baby, had returned to her—another instance of the unconscious poetry of nature-people and the powerful part that symbol, and the personal, incorporate dramatization of symbol, plays in the life-expression of primitive races.

In the same book (page 313) is told another little tale of an African mother who found at the mission her only child whom she had mourned as lost. Sitting on the floor, her boy in her arms, the poor woman clasped the missionary's foot and laid her tear-wet cheeks against it while she spoke her thanks. Quick, demonstrative affection; and, when affection is rooted, a rare devotion, faithful and loyal:—these traits make the richer side of the nature of the pure-blooded African, whether found in the Negro of the United States or in the native of the Dark Continent.

The following lullaby is a soothing little song very commonly used to put Zulu babies to sleep. The words assume that a group of natives has set out across the mountains, among them a mother who has been obliged to leave her baby in the care of another woman. The little one cries, and the woman quiets it, singing that mother will soon return, bringing "something pretty" for baby—fruit or bright berries. Perhaps it is a grandmother, an aunt, or maybe another mother in the polygamous Zulu household, who croons this song. Though the tune has no strongly marked native characteristics, it has a certain melodic grace, and its gentle rocking rhythm is typical of lullabies the world over. Like most of the Zulu songs in this collection, this one is offered less for its musical value than for its glimpse into an intimately human side of African life.

The poem is absolutely even in rhythm, definite in form, and melodious of line. As the literal translation fails to give the deep sense of music that underlies most African song-poems, a metrical translation, reproducing the original African rhythms, is added.

	(Metrical translation which corresponds exactly to the rhythmic accents and the length of line in the original African poem)
O tu′la, mntwa′na, O tu′la, Unyo′ko akamu′ko Use′le ezintabe′ni, Uhlu′shwa izigwe′gwe,— *Iwa′!*	O hush thee, baby, O hush thee; Thy mother is not with thee, She tarried in the mountains, The zig-zag trail hath held her,— *Iwa′!*

O tu′la, mntwa′na, O tu′la,
Unyo′ko u-zezobu′ya,
Akupate′le in′to en′hle,—
Iwa′!

O hush thee, baby, O hush thee;
Thy mother soon is coming,
She'll bring thee pretty berries,—
Iwa′!

(*Literal translation*)

O hush, child, O hush;
Thy mother is not here,
She tarried in the mountains,
Troubled by the zig-zag trail,—
Iwa′!

O hush, child, O hush;
Thy mother will return,
She will bring thee something pretty,—
Iwa′!

DANCE-SONGS

It has been said that "when the moon is full, all Africa dances." What a wealth of tropical feeling pours from this phrase! With a people whose emotions are strong and elemental, and in whom the sense of rhythm and the love of melody are so highly developed, the dance, which in primitive humanity is always close-linked with music, must be of primal necessity as an outlet for that spontaneous and emotional self-expression which is urgent in the blood of the black race.

Among the Zulus there are many social dances; when the people, especially the young, gather for amusement, it is with dance and music that they play. A group of singers forms a circle and accompanies a chanted song with rhythmic hand-clapping. The Zulus say that the rhythm forms a musical basis for the steps of the dance and indicates the movements with such exactness that the dancers cannot fail to catch the step as soon as they hear the song and the clapping.[1] Indeed, the music and the dance are really one.

Within the circle of singers move the dancers, one or two, or sometimes three at a time, but rarely more than three. If the dance be in a hut, the singers sit; but if held in the larger freedom of the open air, the chorus stands. And everything is rhythm, for everybody sways with the beat of the song, though the singers do not actually dance, nor do the dancers sing; for those who are treading all sorts of intricate steps leave the making of music to the choir.

The songs for social dancing often have love for their theme; they are not traditional, and every generation has its own songs. For dance-songs—like love itself, and youth, and the full moon—are constantly springing into life and then withering away into oblivion. Often they live but a year or two, and new songs quickly replace the old which are soon forgotten. Such songs are never ceremonial, but popular in the sense that they are the informal outpourings of the people, or their village bards.

[1]For peculiarities of African hand-clapping, see pages xxi, 70, 100, 138.

At a social gathering, one man leads the singing throughout the festivities. Although there may be men present who are the composers of some of the songs, these never infringe on the leadership of the one chosen for that task, but are content with their place in the chorus.[1] Among the Zulus, there are in each village men who are especially gifted in the making of songs, and these bards, as well as the leaders, are often rewarded with presents after the dance.

The two following dance-songs are sung in pagan Africa and are entirely characteristic so far as the poems are concerned. But though they are typically African in sentiment and origin, their music proves that not with firearms alone has the European conquered the Zulu; in no spot is the African more vulnerable than in his keen susceptibility to music. Even where the Gospel may fail of converts, the tunes of missionaries and white settlers penetrate bush and jungle, carried in the quick, retentive memory of a people with whom music is far more contagious than thought. Let the African but hear a melody, and he possesses it. But even as the American Indian, when presented by the white man with a string of beads, instantly restrings it in a pattern of his own imagining, so the African recasts the European melody in native mould. Though the black man copies, he recreates as well.

IGA'MA LO KUSI'NA

DANCE-SONG

I

The two following dance-songs sing of love; but to understand the words, one must know something of the customs of the Zulu youth in wooing.

The Zulus may never marry any one even remotely descended from the same ancestor; the intermarriage of even the most distant blood-relatives is strictly forbidden.[2] So, when a youth comes of age, he often journeys to some other village to find a wife. Sometimes he travels—on foot of course—two or three days. On reaching another settlement, if he hears of a girl who he thinks will suit him, or catches a glimpse of one who pleases him, he lingers about trying to see her, and watches and follows her until she goes into some hut. He now knows where he may find her again, and so perhaps he returns to his home to think it all over, after this his first seeking. If he decides that he wants to know more of the maid, he travels again to her clan, finds out her name and family and just where she lives. Then, if he feels that he really loves her and wants her for his wife, he goes into the forest, where he knows that she has gone to draw water or to gather fruit or berries; and now, unseen by her, he sings his love-song, knowing that she will hear. If the maiden wishes to reply, she composes and sings an answering song so that her voice will tell him where she is, and that she will listen to him. Then the lover composes such a song as this that follows, to describe how he has been watching and waiting for her.

[1]The song-leader is often an important feature of the Negro chorus in America. See "Negro Folk-Songs," Hampton Series, published by G. Schirmer, New York.

[2]Compare with the customs of the American Indians. Many primitive peoples have a strict eugenic code, and my Zulu informant was much shocked at the eugenic carelessness of the white race. See also page 29.

The quality of the Zulu voice, and the manner of singing, make this song more characteristic when heard than when seen on the written page. With regard to the music, there is no limit to the number of times that the different phrases may be sung, nor is there any set sequence. Said the Zulu singer, "We go up to the high part just whenever we feel like it, and we fit the low part in as we go along, and we repeat when we want to, and we clap as we feel."

Če'le explained that the impulse to "go up high" or "go down low" was contagious and that all the singers would extemporize, moved by a common feeling. The singers sing as long as they choose and stop anywhere they like in the song, not necessarily ending on the phrases indicated in this notation, as they may never sing the song twice alike in all details. However, the song usually ends on long-drawn tones as though dying away.

The tune is a melodious little "catch," sung over and over until the chorus tires and breaks into a new song. The hand-clapping lends some variety to the many repetitions, and the rhythm has a certain dynamic quality that gives life to the song, for as the voice goes up, the clapping becomes louder and the beats quicker; as the voice sinks, the clapping dies down and grows softer and slower. So as the different parts rise alternately above each other, weaving their melody in and out, the interplay of hand-claps swells and dies away, and the effect is thus almost like that of incoming waves, rushing in crescendo to the shore, then ebbing away while the next wave, overlapping, booms across the first. The song has no particular melodic value; its interest lies in the rhythmic embellishment which gives it character.

Be′ngi le′le egq̌ume′ni,
Be′ngi lele ngi,
Be′ngi le′le egq̌ume′ni,
Be′ngi lele ngi,
Be′ngi le′le egq̌ume′ni,
Be′ngi le′le ezizwe′ni
Nga ze′nga mu bō′na
S'ba′li:
U-be′ngi qwe′ba!

(*Metrical translation to fit the original African rhythms*)

On the hillside I slumbered,
On the hillside,
On the hillside I slumbered,
On the hillside,
On the hillside I slumbered,
On the hillside 'mid strangers,
Till I saw
My belov'd:
She beckoned me!

(*Literal translation*)

I slept on the hillside,
I slept,
I slept on the hillside,
I slept,
I slept on the hillside,
I slept among strangers,
Till I saw
My belov'd:
She beckoned me!

II

The lover has talked with his maiden and has almost won her love. But she has heard something about him that she does not like, and for that one thing she holds him back and will not give him her love. He has perhaps been wooing her for years, but only this year has he found out that it is because of this one thing that she has withheld herself from him.

	(Metrical and literal translation)
Dubul′!	Shout!
U′ngi bambe′le i′nto i′nye—	She kept me waiting, for one thing—
U-be′ngi bambe′le i′nto i′nye	She kept me waiting, for one thing
Nonya′ka,	Till this year,
Awu-ye′lelema′ma, nonya′ka!	Awu-ye′lelema′ma—till this year!
Ube′ngi bambe′le i′nto i′nye—	She kept me waiting, for one thing—
U-be′ngi bambe′le i′nto i′nye	She kept me waiting, for one thing,
Nonya′ka!	Till this year!

(NOTE: The Zulu who gave the above explanation of this song, said that the words might possibly be otherwise interpreted. As in the songs of many simple people, so too in Zulu songs, the words often merely indicate the idea that gave rise to them; they do not fully express it. But as the singers usually know the incident on which the song is founded, they understand what the few words imply, though a stranger may not.)

ZULU LOVE-SONGS, OR SONGS OF MEDITATION

Zulu love-songs are composed chiefly by men, though sometimes also by women, and they are the expression of the individual feeling of their authors. But if a lover, in the stress of his passion, composes a beautiful song, it soon becomes popular and is sung by every one.

Love-songs have few words; often a melody is only hummed, but even this humming expresses the feeling which is the reason for the song. The Zulus are fond of humming and sometimes even a whole chorus of people will hum together with closed lips.[1]

A Zulu youth may never go to see the maid that he is wooing in her home, for that would be against the custom. He hides near her dwelling in some spot where her relatives will not see him, and he meets her when she goes to fetch water or to gather fruit. While he waits in hiding, he thinks of what she last said to him, or he wonders what she will say when he reaches her, and dreaming thus of her, he composes a love-song.

The Zulu women are the workers. They raise the crops, cook, draw water and gather wood. When the maid leaves her house to do her homely tasks, she

[1]This same humming is an interesting feature of the singing of American Negroes.

does not let her people see her or know where she goes; but she sings, so that the waiting lover may find her by her voice. And as the Zulus are always singing, no one will notice; only the lover will understand and come.

The love-songs of both men and women are either sad or joyful: the lover laments that his courting is in vain, or he rejoices in his success. If he has been with the maid whom he loves and she has told him good tidings and sent him home happy, then indeed he composes songs of joy. But the love-songs of the women are chiefly songs of regret. So often she goes to the spring or into the forest in the hope of seeing him whom she loves, only to find wooers whom she will none of! She sings her disappointment, and the waiting lovers know then that they need not hope.

The Zulus are polygamous and each man usually has from five to fifteen wives; but the King has at least fifty. For every bride the ordinary man must pay eleven cows, but the daughter of a Governor or of the King commands a larger price.[1] Since the number of a man's wives is limited only by purchasing power, women are in much demand; every young man has to strive hard to win the love of the girl, because for her there are always plenty of opportunities to marry. There is much competition among the men to procure the pretty or desirable girls, since every one may try—unmarried youths and men who already have many wives. No girl cares to marry a poor man, or a man with only one wife, for she does not like to give herself to one whom nobody else wants. She wishes to wed a prosperous man whom other women have been glad to marry and are still anxious to marry, a husband to be proud of for his riches and his popularity. The woman must be true to her husband, and she must not steal. After she is married she may no longer sing love-songs, but the man never stops, for such songs are sung not only by young unmarried men, but also by any man who wishes to court a new wife.

The wedding feast, which is celebrated by continuous eating, drinking, dancing and singing, is held at the home of the man and lasts for three days; one day before the marriage, the day of the marriage and the day after. The night before the marriage a contest of song is held between the man's people and the woman's people, divided into sides, to see which side can sing the longest. The singing lasts all night, and the winners get glory for their prize. When the hour for the marriage-vows has come, a nobleman quiets every one for a few moments and there is a lull in the singing and drinking. Then he calls the girl before him and asks her if she loves the man who is to be her husband and if she is willing to take care of him, work for him and support him during all his life. She replies "yes" to every question, and that ends the marriage ceremony, for the man makes no vows. It is understood that he has already fulfilled his part of the marriage contract, for he has been persistent in his wooing, has had a hard time to make the girl love him, and he has paid dearly for her in cattle. But as the woman must now work for the man, she must be bound by a promise. And woe to her if she breaks it!

[1]This custom is the reverse of the European system of the *dot* or dowry, when it is the father of the maid who must pay the man who takes her, instead of the lover who pays the father.

IGA'MA LO TA'NDO

LOVE-SONG

I

In the olden time the maidens had the privilege of choice in their marriage; yet the father [like fathers all over the world!] often interposed, forbidding the daughter to marry the man that she loved if he were poor, and compelling her to marry a rich man. In this song the thwarted maiden sings with rapture at the approach of her lover. She likens him to the wind, for even as the wind blows and none may stop it, so against all commands he comes to her. She, not less defiant, declares that if she cannot actually marry him, she will nevertheless wed him in spirit by speaking her vows to his garment, if he will but let her have it. "By law" means to take the marriage oath. This song, explains the Zulu, is the expression of the strength and fidelity of love.

"Ma'me" is an exclamation which literally means "mother." The African calls "O Mother!" when expressing strong emotion, as the white man cries "O Heaven." In this case the exclamation means "rapture," and was thus translated by the Zulu informant.[1]

(Metrical translation to fit the original African rhythms)

U-ye'ze, u-ye'ze, Ma'me! U-ye'ze U-mo'ya! U-ye'ze, u-ye'ze, Ma'me! U-ye'ze U-mo'ya!	He cometh, he cometh, Rapture! Cometh the Strong Wind! He cometh, he cometh, Rapture! Cometh the Strong Wind!
Nakuba' Se'ku li— Ba'nchi la'ke ngo— Sha'da na'lo Ngomte'to![2]	Let me have But his robe, And the marriage-vows I will utter, By the law!

(Literal translation)

He cometh, he cometh
Rapture, he cometh, the Wind!
He cometh, he cometh,
Rapture, he cometh, the Wind!

Even though
But his robe,
I will marry it,
I will,
By the law!

[1]See pages xxiii, 21, 37, 41.

[2]In conversation the words in this verse are accented thus:
Naku'ba se'ku
Liba'ntyi la'ke
Ngo sha'da na'lo
Ngomte'to!

II

The "West" is a mystical place that no one ever reached, the place of the vanishing light, the place where hope dies. The word comes from the verb "tsho-na," which means "to sink," and is used for the sinking sun in the west, as also for anything that sinks in the water, that goes far away out of sight, that dies or perishes. If the Zulus say that a person has gone to the "West," they mean that he will never be seen again. If a maiden says to her lover, "You must go to the West," he understands that she is going to send him away. If anyone asks her, "Where is your friend?" and she replies, "In the West," she means that she has no friend. A girl may sing this song to tell the man that there is no hope for him, or that she loves him but cannot marry him, or that her father objects. The lover may sing this song to tell the girl that though he loves her, he has not cows enough to win her. The "West" is the land without hope. This song might even mean that the lover was dead. In South Africa it is customary to announce death—more especially the death of an adult person—with the expression *u shoni'le*, "he has set," likening the life of man to the course of the sun which, after reaching its zenith, declines to the West. This poetic way of telling sad news is considered more respectful and less shocking than the blunt statement "he has died." The expressions *U-ye emasho'na*, "he went West," and *Zu'va la'ke la vi'la*, "his sun has set," find their equivalent in the Chindau' language also. During the world-war this figurative language was adopted by the white soldiers in France, and many a British or American boy "went West."

The melody of this song is obviously taken from the whites. "Uda'li" is also a modern Zulu word, said to be derived from the European word "darling." The song is a great favorite among the Zulus, who are deeply affected by its plaintive words and tune, and in spite of the fact that it is in not pure African music, it is included in this collection because of the native poetry of the words.

(*Metrical and literal translation*)

Uda'li use'le ematsho'n',
Uye' ematsho'na ule'le ematsho'n'.
Uda'li uha'mba ematsho'n',
Kača'ne unenga'ne enčane,
Uda'li use'le ematsho'n';
Ye'ka mtakwe'tu use'le ematsho'n';
Uda'li ule'le ematsho'n'.
Awu-ye'lelema'm'! Awu-ye'lelema'm'!

My darling stayed in the West,
Westward faring, he slept in the West.
My darling walked toward the West,
Slow, thinking of his little one,
My darling stayed in the West;
He, my beloved, he stayed in the West;
My darling slept in the West.
Alas, alas! Alas, alas!

III

A young man on returning to his kraal tells of all the maidens that he has met.

(*Metrical and literal translation to fit the original African song-rhythms*)

Awu-yi'ni-ye'lelema'm'!
Ngi hla'ngene neku'lu ngomtet':
Awu-yi'ni-ye'lelema'm'!

Ah,—think of this, *'lelema'm'!*
I met a hundred maidens, in truth:
Ah,—think of this, *'lelema'm'!*

IV

A youth sees a group of maidens coming up from the South, from the country below the stream, carrying their water-jars to fill them at the lake. The sight of them is so beautiful that it seems to him as though they held all the pain of lovers in their jars. When they reach the lake and stoop to draw water, he speaks to them and at first they scatter his pain and fill him with hope. But as he nears them, they turn and mock him. The "Troubler," Longing, now seizes him and trembles within him. "O Troubler," he cries, "drive me further on, into the upper country to the north, where I may find a maid of single heart; for the heart of these others is double!"

Thus is this love-song interpreted by a native, who admitted, however, that the verses might be differently explained. For, like most folk-poems, this was undoubtedly the fruit of the actual experience of the poet who had poured out his song with no thought of a listener. So the stranger who hears it can but guess its meaning, which may have been well known to the village of the author. Its mystery is perhaps its greatest charm, for as emotional and impressionistic poetry it appeals vividly to the imagination.

As sung, the Zulu verse flows in even, melodious lines with the syllables sliding into each other in regular accents, heightened in some places by the sharp "clicks" which make the Zulu language so rhythmically interesting and unique of sound. The translation seeks to reproduce the original structure of the poem with its soft melody and even rhythms, while retaining with entire literalness the word-character which paints river, lake, jungle and sudden passion with such deep-carved emphasis of symbol. The tune of this song has a wooing sweetness like the love-notes of mating birds; the long-drawn tones at the beginning of each of the rounded, undulating phrases sing of longing, and the tenderness and appeal of the whole melody tell even the unaccustomed ear of the white man that this is a love-song.

	(*Metrical translation to fit the rhythms of Zulu verse and music*)
Ngi ȟla′ngene nento′mbi za se nza′nsi,	I saw some maidens coming from the Southland,
Zi twe′le ugču′nsula′ nge si′kwante′la,	Whose water-jars were filled with pain of lovers,
Za fi′ka eči′bini′ za lu pala′za;	They came unto the lake and poured the pain out;
Wa fi′ka, Unog′q̌aq̌a, wa q̌a′q̌aze′la.	Then came to me the Troubler, came and trembled.
"Ngi ka′pe, 'Nog′q̌aq̌a, ngiye kweli′ pezu′lu,	O Troubler, drive me northward, to the upper country,
Ngo fu′na into′mbi enhli′ziyo nga yi′nye;	To seek a maid of single heart and faithful—
A′manye anhli′ziyo nga mbi′li!"[1]	For the heart of these is false and double!

[1]The words in this song are differently accented when spoken. See Appendix, page 170.

(*Literal translation*)
I met maidens, those from the South-
land
Who were carrying the pain of lovers in
water-jars.
They came to the lake, they poured out
the pain;
He came, the Troubler, he trembled.
Drive me, O Troubler, I go to the
Northland
To seek a maid whose heart is single—
The heart of these others is double!

CREATION STORY

UMUVE'LI NGǪA'NGE

(The Eternal One)

On a beautiful day Umuve'li Ngǫa'nge, the Eternal One, creator of the world, went up into the hills. There were many reeds growing by the river, and he spoke to a reed and said, "Bring forth male creatures!" Then he put all the males together in one place and spoke again to the reed and said, "Bring forth female creatures!" Then he went home. And he said to himself, "These that I have made shall live forever and never die."

He called Unwa'ba, the Chameleon, one of the creatures that he had created, and said to him, "Go up to the hill-top where I stood when I spoke to the reed, and cry aloud to the people and tell them that they shall live forever and never die."

So the Chameleon started. After he had been gone a long time the Creator changed his mind and said to himself, "I will have people live a long time until they are old, and then die." So he called Intu'lo, the Lizard, to him and said, "Go and stand where I stood when I was creating the people, and tell them that I say: 'You shall live until you are old and then die!' "

The Lizard went quickly and reached the hilltop before the Chameleon, who had been stopping all along the wayside, enjoying himself eating red berries. When the Lizard came to the place where the Creator had stood, he cried out and said, "The Creator says you shall all live until you grow old and then die." Then the Lizard went back.

Long, long after came the Chameleon and cried aloud to the people, and said, "The Creator says that you shall live always and never die." But the people answered: "The Creator has sent us his word by the Lizard, who told us that we shall live until we are old and then die. So we believe the Lizard. You can go back; to you we will not reply."

And so the Zulus believe that no one should die in youth. When a young person dies, it is not as it should be, but because he has been conjured or bewitched.

* * * * * * * *

Thus does the belief in witchcraft have its place even in the very story of creation—a belief that underlies the spiritual life and the instinctive thought of all black Africa.

SIMA'NGO'S FAREWELL TO THE READER

I think that there will be people who will undoubtedly appreciate this work and think of it as a great work in approaching Africans' life and habit. So those who shall perhaps do more in the future with African songs shall think of this work as one of the many appreciative ways which led into the life of the African, for the songs are the expression of his various experiences—love, work, recreation, sorrow, joy and religion, all these sides of his life, are embodied in his songs. Perhaps the present work may not bring the desired goal, but like all the *lasting* work of the world seemed at the beginning as failure were appreciated afterwards. So I think of this work with the songs as a great work which required an unlimited amount of patience. Perhaps to some people when the songs are in book-form, may appear as having been an easy work, but I know that it has been a hard one!

C. KAMBA SIMANGO.

AFRICAN WOOD-CARVING
Cups and Ladle
(*West Central Africa*)