THE LAST ZULU KING

The Life and Death of Cetshwayo

CETSHWAYO
Portrait by Carl Sohn, 1862

C. T. BINNS

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137 Bond Street, Toronto 2

First published 1963

Printed in Great Britain by
The Camelot Press Ltd., London and Southampton

TO

DR KILLIE CAMPBELL

without whose splendid assistance and
magnificent Africana Library the writing of this book
would have been impossible.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The portrait on the jacket and frontispiece is reproduced by gracious permission of H.M. the Queen. It was lent to the People of Durban by King George VI and is in the Old Town House Museum, Durban.

For permission to reproduce illustrations we are indebted to the following:

Dr Killie Campbell for plates facing pp. 32, 33 (top) and 176 (top); The Curator, Old Town House Museum, Durban, for the frontispiece; Lt.-Col. J. E. Fairlie for plates facing pp. 49 and 161; The Archivist, Natal Archives for plate facing p. 177 (top). Plate facing p. 176 (bottom) is from *Radio Times Hulton Picture Library*. Plates facing pp. 48 and 161 are from *The Illustrated London News*, 1879.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE author wishes to thank the many people – both European and Zulu – who have so readily assisted him in obtaining much of the material for this book. Not only has he been helped by the loan of books, documents and papers relating to this period of Zulu history, but on his numerous visits to Zululand much kindness has been shown; mission stations, often in isolated places, have given warm hospitality and in the thousands of miles covered in field work unfailing assistance has made research a sheer delight.

Special thanks are due to the following:

Dr Killie Campbell for great assistance and the full use of her magnificent Africana Library.

Mrs V. G. M. Robinson for the loan of much valuable material.

Mr George Buntting, Fugitives Drift, for valuable help in field work relating to Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift.

Lt.-Col. J. E. Fairlie of Pietermaritzburg for the use of his uncle's sketches of the Zulu War (Lt.-Col. W. F. Fairlie).

Major Barr, Vryheid.

The Librarian and Staff of the Natal Society Library, Pietermaritzburg.

The Archivist, Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg, and others too numerous to mention.

A special word of thanks is due to Miss Olive Juckes of Durban for tedious hours spent in typing out the manuscript.

The story of the finding of Cetshwayo's cup is authentic although several other versions have appeared from time to time in the South African press. All the facts in the text were given to the author by Cecil R. Harris Esq., of Richard's Bay, who has

kindly granted full permission to make use of them in the writing of this book. It was Mr Harris himself who, while trading at Ulundi, acquired the cup in question from a Zulu well known to him.

In order that the cup should be preserved for the nation Mr Harris has kindly loaned it to the Natal Archives at Pietermaritzburg where it now rests and where the author has not only seen and handled it but was also, by kind permission of the Archivist, permitted to photograph it, a reproduction of which appears in this book.

PIETERMARITZBURG
March 1962

FOREWORD

by

The Hon. Dr D. G. SHEPSTONE

(*Former Administrator of Natal*)

THE story of the Zulu War has always been a fruitful ground for historians and a fascinating subject for those who are interested in the history of our country.

The massive and despotic figure of Cetshwayo, who defeated and totally destroyed a British army at the Battle of Isandhlwana and who himself at a later stage was to fall at the hands of the British at Ulundi from the proud position of King of the powerful and warlike Zulu nation, has always been a controversial figure in the great drama of those years.

Mr Binns has set out with sensitiveness and sympathy to restore something of the greatness which was undoubtedly Cetshwayo's and to examine the causes underlying the tragedy of his conflict with the British, whom he always professed to like and respect.

In doing so Mr Binns has discharged a laborious task entailing much research and travelling and critical appraisement of the policies and figures of that age. How far he has succeeded must of course be left to the judgment of the individual reader, but his power of descriptive narrative is certainly outstanding and his account of the Battle of Isandhlwana is in my opinion by far the best that has been written on the subject.

PIETERMARITZBURG
March 1962

CHAPTER 1

Queen Victoria's Cup and the Zulus

The Zulu nation: the people and the military system

On a hot, sultry day during the summer of 1938 a certain Zulu was making his way homewards over the Ulundi Plain, not very far from the spot where once stood the Ondini Kraal, the residence and headquarters of the great Zulu King, Cetshwayo.

Although the sun was shining brilliantly at the time, there were heavy clouds in the sky and torrential rain had fallen a short while before; as a result every little rivulet was flooded with swirling waters which rushed down from the surrounding circle of hills.

Reaching a stream that crossed his tracks, the Zulu squatted down to wait till the waters should have subsided somewhat. In typical Zulu fashion, time being of no importance to most of the members of this race, he reconciled himself to the fact that it might be an hour or two before he was able to proceed. From one of the pockets of his tattered and torn old coat he took a pipe and filled it with tobacco from a dirty little bag slung around his middle and soon he was puffing away contentedly.

When the rush of the water subsided and he was preparing to wade across, his sharp eyes caught sight of something unusual sticking up out of the mud of the opposite bank. His curiosity aroused, he plunged into the stream towards the object. A rather peculiarly shaped handle was all that was visible. So taking the stick that every Zulu carries he pushed it through the loop formed by the handle and pulled. It was hard work, for the suction of the soft mud held his find firmly, but at last out it came – a large

three-handled metal mug. Well, he thought, a little bucket like this is always useful; though it is small and filthy, it is strong and well made and could possibly, when cleaned up a bit, be used as a milk-pail.

After washing some of the slime from his newly found treasure he fastened it to his stick and made his way to his kraal, where he threw it down amongst the numerous tins and baskets spread around the interior of his hut.

Next morning, after having attended to his cattle, he began to give the cup a further clean-up, this time with sharp, dry sand. Very slowly some of the black grime disappeared and patches of a white shining metal came to light, and an inscription appeared to be engraved on part of it. Rubbing away and spelling out each letter slowly, to his amazement he made out the words 'Cetywayo'* and 'Queen Victoria'. It was obvious that he had found something of importance; he must visit his friend the trader, an Englishman, who would no doubt be interested in it, especially as the lettering referrred to the Great White Queen; possibly he might exchange it for a big bucket suitable for milking.

At the store the trader's interest was aroused, and that evening the Englishman walked over to the kraal to see the cup. It needed only a few moments' scrutiny to convince him that it was the gift which Queen Victoria had made to Cetshwayo when he was in England in 1882. It had vanished in the following year, after Cetshwayo's defeat by Sibebu, and was thought to have been lost irretrievably.

Handing it back to the man, the trader told him that he would be only too pleased to give him a new galvanized bucket in exchange and also a reward for his honesty. It was therefore arranged that the Zulu should bring the cup to the store on the following day.

The next day came – and went – but no Zulu. As days passed into weeks with no sign of him the trader began to get anxious and determined to visit the kraal again. Reaching the hut in the late afternoon he found his man quietly smoking his pipe. After

* This form of the name was commonly used by the English at that time. In Zulu *ty* has the English sound of *ch* as in 'church'.

the usual preliminary salutations and idle talk,* he came to the real purpose of the visit – why had he not brought the cup and claimed the reward?

The Zulu feigned complete ignorance of the whole affair.

'Cup? What cup? I know nothing of any cup,' he said.

The white man, having an intimate knowledge of the Zulus and their mentality, sensed immediately that the African had been tampered with and told not to part with his treasure. Then ensued a long discussion, the outcome of which was that, under a guarantee of the strictest secrecy, the Zulu obtained his galvanized bucket together with a handsome reward and the trader acquired a historic trophy which he determined should be placed in safe keeping at the earliest opportunity on behalf of the nation.

The recovery of this historic cup stirred memories of the Zulu War of 1879 and of the defeat and capture of Cetshwayo after the British disasters of Isandhlwana and Hlobane. The dramatic story of the Zulu King's rise and fall was thus again brought into prominence.

The 'birthplace of the Zulu Nation'† is in the Makosini Valley, a wide depression flanked by numerous hills, studded with thorny mimosa bushes and euphorbias, also known as the Valley of the Kings from the fact that in it are the graves of many of the early Zulu rulers.

Two of these are of special significance (both now declared National Monuments); one marks the last resting place of Nkosinkulu, the progenitor of the nation (known originally as Zulu); the other is the grave of Senzangakhona, the father of that historic trio, Shaka, Dingaan and Mpande. Incidentally, this is still regarded as one of the most sacred spots in Zululand, for here in times of national crisis the nation used to assemble in their thousands to make sacrifice and pray to the *imZimu*, the departed spirits of their kings.

It was in this historic valley that Shaka, the founder of Zulu greatness, first saw the light of day and from here, after a turbulent

* It is not Zulu etiquette to broach the main subject of any visit until considerable preliminary chatter has been carried on.

† Dr Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, p. 23.

boyhood, he was driven forth by an angry father. After much wandering, fighting and many vicissitudes, it was to this spot that he returned to claim his lands and chieftainship, a paltry little parcel of ground barely 100 miles square, with a ragged regiment of about 500 ill-trained and badly armed warriors. Here his dynamic leadership and military genius came to fruition, so that from a single regiment he was able in a few short years to build up the mightiest fighting force that Africa had ever known. In this valley the foundations were laid of that great Empire over which Shaka held undisputed sway till the day of his assassination at Dukuza.

True, Dingaan, his successor, wrecked that Empire and Mpande, who followed him, cared nothing for warfare, but the great military system that Shaka had organized and built up, though sadly neglected for years, was still in existence and only needed a strong king to resuscitate it. This Cetshwayo did, and it is a generally accepted fact that shortly after he ascended the throne the Zulu armies were at the zenith of their power.

What then was this military system that raised a relatively insignificant clan to a position of such pre-eminence that it was able not only to subdue Southern Africa but later to stand up against the might of Britain and inflict on her the most crushing defeat in the annals of her military history?

(NOTE: For the following particulars of the military system the author is indebted to James Stuart's *History of the Zulu Rebellion, 1906*, Chapter IV.)

Primarily, it was a system based upon a rigorous form of conscription. At its head stood the King who was supreme; his word was law and in his hands was the power of life and death; against his judgments there was no appeal. True, in *civil* matters he was guided by a council of specially selected *indunas* and it was as much as his position was worth to run counter to their general opinion, but in all military affairs he assumed undisputed leadership.

A remarkable feature of this system was the early age at which semi-military training began, for boys of twelve or so were often

enlisted as *udibi* boys, or servants to the officers, and in this capacity they marched in the rear of the actual fighting forces, carrying their sleeping mats, *karosses* and spare equipment. Sometimes they were ordered to drive a herd of cattle which would be used as meat for the troops on the march, though the generally adopted policy was for the soldiers to feed themselves at the expense of their foes.

Thus boys from their earliest years became accustomed to the rigours and hardships of long marches and, being witnesses of many a bloody conflict, soon developed a spartan spirit in regard to suffering and death. Further, it was drilled into their youthful minds that indomitable courage was the highest virtue that any Zulu could possess.

At the age of sixteen every boy in the nation, unless mentally or physically unfit, was required to serve as a cadet and had to make his way to the *kanda* or military barracks within whose jurisdiction his father's kraal happened to fall. There were about fifteen or twenty *amakanda* dotted about at various strategic points in the country, in addition to the great Royal Kraal at which the King himself resided.

As the influx of cadets was automatic year by year, these youths would be drafted into the various regiments to fill up any vacancies caused by death or disablement, thus keeping them up to full strength. Should there be a surplus then a new regiment would be formed and a special *kanda* erected for their habitation. Here they were subjected to stern military discipline and underwent a strict military training; long marches of twenty, thirty or even forty miles over semi-mountainous and rugged country would be undertaken, not only to acquire physical fitness but to make them nimble and agile, to exercise them in manœuvres and to harden their feet, for no sandals were allowed.

They were also trained in the use of both the stabbing and the throwing assegais, particular stress being laid on the former, for it was their prowess in the use of this weapon that carried them to victory in countless conflicts and made them the most efficient military power in Africa.

Little spare time was allowed these young men when in

training, for in addition to their military duties they had to help in keeping the military kraals in a good state of repair; they had to learn how to make the shields of war; they had also to act as a police force in finding and bringing in those accused of any crime, and if and when sentence of death was pronounced, it was they who had to slay the victim.

It was hard work and stern training and for it all they received no wages and, except on rare occasions, no rations; the latter they were expected to find for themselves unless they were lucky enough to have them supplied by members of their home kraal.

In everything implicit obedience was demanded; insubordination brought retribution swift and severe; the slightest breach of discipline incurred a heavy thrashing; for speaking ill of the King, for cowardice in any shape or form, for adultery, there was but one punishment and one only—death.

After about two years of this training these regiments would be marched off to the King for inspection and if, after rigorous testing, they merited his approval they would be given a new or regimental title and granted a novel head or body decoration of fur or feathers as the distinguishing badge of their regiment.

At the head of every regiment was its commanding officer or *induna*, always a trusted and well-tried soldier. Under him was a second in command, together with a number of junior officers, for every regiment was sub-divided into companies of fifty or sixty men, known as *amaviyo*, each company (*viyo*) having two junior officers. In supreme command was the King, assisted by a Commander-in-Chief and a small group of staff officers who formed a type of privy council and controlled the whole organization, directing its affairs and leading it in war.

No man was permitted to marry or even to associate with girls until he had reached the age of about thirty-five, and even then only when Royal permission had been granted. This was usually obtained by the King allowing a certain regiment to assume the *isicoco*, or headring, and once this was placed on a man's head he was free to select his bride.

A somewhat similar rule governed the conduct of the girls, for they too were collected into certain regiments or classes, given

distinctive titles and strictly forbidden to marry until the sanction of the King was obtained. When a regiment was allowed to assume the *isicoco* the King usually at the same time sanctioned marriage in a certain regiment of girls: thus the men would have to select their wives from the ranks of the girls now free to marry.

Mention must also be made of the remarkable system of espionage that existed amongst the Zulus (also initiated by Shaka). Under this system information was collected from every part of the country and transmitted with great speed by experienced runners to the Royal Kraal.

Every intelligence agent was a skilled and intrepid observer and some of these men, measured even by present-day standards, were of outstanding ability, for not only were they successful in mingling fearlessly with their foes, ascertaining their strength and projected moves, but by their great ingenuity and cunning on occasion were known to have gained access to the most secret discussions between enemy chiefs and their *indunas*.

Before any campaign was undertaken one of their most important – and often one of their easiest tasks – was to find out the exact position of the grain storage pits and the number and quality of enemy cattle, so that when an assault was made the warriors would know exactly where to find food, thus obviating all danger of hunger in their ranks. Most of the cattle would, of course, have to be taken back to the King as booty; the bulk of these would then go to swell the national herds – the wealth of the people – but a considerable number were usually distributed amongst the warriors who had distinguished themselves in the conflict.

Mobilization in time of war was rapid and effective. The King would issue an order by urgent runners from the Royal Kraal to the officers in charge of the various *amakanda*, who would in turn transmit the order to their subordinates, and within a matter of hours the regiments would not only assemble but be on the march to headquarters, where all would gather and receive their respective commands.

In battle their method of attack was swift and awe-inspiring, their object always being to surround their enemy and force his

surrender; if this was not forthcoming then they were annihilated without mercy. Their armies were drawn up in the form of a crescent, a large force always being held in reserve. With a stamping of feet that shook the earth, beating upon their shields with their assegais and roaring out their terrible war-cry, they advanced to the attack with incredible speed, the right and left horns spreading out to encircle their foe. At the same time the 'Chest' – the strongest section of the army – would sweep forward and endeavour to get to close quarters, where they would make full use of their stabbing assegais. It was a fight to the bitter end and when all was over the warriors would proceed, according to the ancient custom of their race, to rip open the deceased's stomach, for it was their firm belief that unless this was done the unreleased spirit of the slain victim would invest his slayer and turn him into a raving lunatic.

This then was the system which Cetshwayo resuscitated and there can be little doubt that it was his desire to reintroduce, perhaps in a somewhat modified form, the same iron discipline that prevailed during the régime of his illustrious uncle Shaka.

Yet in spite of the stern discipline which governed their lives the Zulus were a simple, virile people, cheerful and hospitable, loyal and brave, proud and dignified in their bearing. True, in some ways they were barbaric and cruel but their barbarism and cruelty pale into insignificance before the horrors and atrocities committed by so-called civilized nations in the last two world wars.

Those who knew these people in bygone days all lay emphasis upon their cleanliness and high sense of morality. Adultery was almost unknown amongst them and when it *did* occur there was but one punishment for both man and woman – death. It was not until the impact of the seamy side of European and Asiatic civilization was felt by these people that moral decay set in and ate like a canker into the very soul of the nation, destroying those splendid qualities that made them tower head and shoulders above all the other native races of Africa.

The homes of these people, circular clusters of dome-shaped, grass-thatched huts, were dotted on the hillsides all over the

country and were always erected on elevated and sloping ground. There were three reasons for this, the first of which was naturally that of defence, for from such a vantage point the approach of an enemy could easily be detected and the necessary precautions taken. A second reason for such a situation was in order to catch the cooling breezes, for it must be remembered that summers in Zululand are exceedingly hot and humid, except in the higher and more arid parts of the land. Finally, there was the extremely important question of drainage. These primitive people, though knowing nothing of modern systems of drainage, understood well enough that in torrential rain kraals built in the valleys would soon be swept away by the floods, whereas those built on the slopes of the hills were passed harmlessly by.

The smallness of the entrance to their huts has often been commented upon, and to get inside these dwellings one has to stoop very low indeed. Discussing this feature one day with an old *induna* the author had an interesting fact revealed to him. In the pre-Shakan era these entrances were much larger and there was little need to stoop in order to get inside, but Shaka saw in this a grave weakness, for an enemy would thus find no difficulty in rushing in to the attack and overpowering the inmates before they had time to defend themselves. Let this entrance be small, so that to gain access to the hut an enemy would have to stoop very low, thus exposing a vital part of his body to the downward thrust of an assegai.

This was the nation and such were the people over whom in due course Cetshwayo came to reign.

CHAPTER 2

Birth and Early Days of Cetshwayo

Cetshwayo's boyhood; uneasy peace under Dingaan; the Boers spread inland; murder of Piet Retief's party; the Peace Treaty of 1839; Mpande defeats Dingaan; Dingaan's death

CETSHWAYO tells us in the story of his life as dictated by him to his interpreter, R. C. Samuelson, that he was born about the year 1826 at his father's Mlambongwenya kraal, which was situated near the Hlintza Forest on the outskirts of which the present town of Eshowe stands.

His father, Mpande, was the third of the renowned sons of Senzangakhona, the other two being Shaka and Dingaan. His mother, Ngqumbazi, was a member of the Zulu aristocracy, for she was the daughter of a chief named Manzini, whose kraal lay to the south of the Umhlatuzi River.

At the time of Cetshwayo's birth Shaka was at the zenith of his power; Nandi, Shaka's mother, was still alive; the Zulu armies held supreme sway over most of Southern Africa. Yet dark clouds were gathering with great rapidity and soon the storm was to break in all its fury, shaking the whole nation to its foundations. Its approach was heralded by the death, from dysentery, of Nandi in October 1827, followed immediately by the shocking and senseless slaughter of thousands of Zulus. Less than a year later, on 24 September 1828, Shaka himself fell by the spears of his assassins, and the mighty kingdom which he had built up came crashing down in ruins.

On the return of Shaka's army from that disastrous campaign against Soshangane,* where it met a fate that can be likened to

* Soshangane was originally commander-in-chief of the Ndwandwes; was several times defeated by Shaka; and eventually fled to the region of Delagoa Bay, where he gathered round himself a large following from the tribes broken by Shaka.

that of Napoleon in his retreat from Moscow, Mpande, who had remained with the forces, was greeted with the news of Shaka's murder and the wholesale butchery of all who were closely allied to him. Fearing lest he and his household should suffer a similar end Mpande left his old kraal, moving to one which had been built many years before by his father Senzangakhona. This was situated in surroundings which would present many difficulties to any attacking force. On the left it was protected by the Immamba and on the right by the Isilambo streams, while behind it the Tugela River formed a great loop through a deep valley banked by lofty mountains. Here, at Enqakavini, Mpande felt more secure, and here he and his family settled down for the time being. Close at hand towered the huge mass of Ntunjambili (Kranskop), and from its rugged heights it was possible to espy the movements of any large body of men: should an *impi** be sent to attack him he could take precautions, and, if necessity arose, seek safety in the numerous bush-hidden caves and *krantzes* which abound in that area.

Fortunately for Mpande no attack was made. It had been Dingaan's intention to murder him, but he was dissuaded by one of his chief *indunas*, who is reported to have said: 'No, Sir, IT [Mpande, derisively spoken of as a thing] is a simpleton and good-for-nothing; you will gain no renown by killing IT: let IT alone.' Dingaan followed this advice and Mpande was left in peace in his new quarters.

It was in these beautiful and majestic surroundings that the young Cetshwayo spent his early boyhood and here, no doubt, he learned to love the land over which, in later years, he was destined to rule. It was here also that he was initiated into his first responsibility – that of looking after his father's sheep and goats – for this work was invariably carried out by boys of tender years. Here too he played his games with other Zulu boys of his own age.

From their youngest days Zulu boys used to practise stalking birds by snaking so noiselessly through the grass that they could approach to within a few feet of their quarry without disturbing

* Zulu army.

it in the slightest degree. They would then hurl a knobbed stick at the bird, and so skilful did they become that nine times out of ten a kill was effected.

In another of these games the boys made use of sticks, which were sharpened to a point, and the large spherical root of the ground euphorbia (somewhat like a melon). The lads would stand facing each other spaced out in a double line down the side of a hill. One of them would then climb to the top of the slope and roll the heavy ball down with all his might between the contestants. As it went scuttling past them each boy would hurl his pointed stick at this swiftly moving target and those who managed to score a direct hit were regarded as the winners. It was a game that needed considerable skill and formed a prelude to the sterner task of playing with small assegais, which took the place of the pointed sticks as the boys grew a little older.

But the most popular game of all was sham fighting. This was played with sticks, for every Zulu boy, as soon as he was big enough to do so, always carried with him two good, strong sticks and whenever a fight took place it was always with these, never with fists.

One stick, held about the middle in the left hand, was used for parrying; the other, held near its end in the right hand, for attacking. It was a fine, manly exercise, teaching not only the art of self-defence, but alertness and self-control, for once a boy lost his temper and began striking wildly, he was very quickly given a sound thrashing and then left to nurse his bruises without any sympathy being shown him either by his fellows or his elders.

In 1833 Mpande moved his kraal to Mangweni, on the Amatikulu River, under the lee of the Ngoye Hills, for there was peace now throughout the land, over which Dingaan was undisputed ruler. True, the military system instituted by Shaka still prevailed, but Dingaan cared little for war and spent most of his time feasting, dancing and indulging in the pleasures of his huge harem. From time to time he received visits from some of the English settlers at Port Natal, who brought trade goods to barter with him for ivory, hippo tusks and buffalo hides. This suited the King's purpose, for it provided him with trinkets to adorn his women, and on occasions he was able to trade cattle for the

much-coveted guns of the white men, and powder and shot with which to fire them. Although Dingaan was suspicious of these white men he knew that for the present he had nothing to fear from them, for they were but a mere handful (only about thirty-five): should they at any time arouse his displeasure it would be an easy matter to order his *impis* to assegai the lot or to sweep them into the sea.

Yet the peace that brooded over the land was an uneasy one: rumours kept reaching the King through his spies of other strange white men who were overrunning the distant lands, and then reports that Mzilikazi* and his Matabele warriors had clashed with these people and suffered heavy loss. Grasping the significance of these reports and fearing lest he himself should be attacked, he determined to get first-hand information about these white men by sending his armies up north to attack the Matabele, their bitterest enemies, and instructing his *indunas* not only to seize as many cattle as possible, but also to bring back with them some Matabele warriors as captives. From these he would be able to obtain all the information he desired regarding these aggressive white people and their methods of warfare.

Before long his victorious warriors returned home, bringing many prisoners from whom Dingaan learned that the Amabunu (Boers) had fallen on the Matabele while most of Mzilikazi's warriors were away. They had wiped out many kraals, slaying old men, women and children, shooting them down like dogs with their guns, against which the Matabele were able to offer little or no resistance.

Dingaan remembered the warning of cunning old Jacob Hlambamanzi† that these white men would come asking for

* Mzilikazi was a son of Mashobane of the Kumalo tribe; he became an officer in Shaka's army, but deserted him in 1823 with many of his followers; later he founded the Matabele nation.

† Jacob was originally a cattle thief, who was caught and sent to Robbin Island at the Cape as a prisoner; he was later taken as interpreter by Captain King of the *Salisbury* on an expedition to survey the coast of Natal. In an attempt to land at St Lucia their small boat overturned and four were drowned, but the others with Jacob's help managed to get ashore. Jacob fled, eventually reaching Shaka's kraal, where he was used as an interpreter when Farewell and Fynn visited the Zulu King. After Shaka's death he became attached to the Court of Dingaan, but was eventually put to death for treachery.

land; they would then build houses and forts; then more and more would come, seizing more and more land, till in the end the Zulus would find their whole country taken from them.

Dingaan remembered, too, the uncanny prophecy which Shaka gasped out as he lay dying: 'When I die stars will break forth, and this our land will be crossed and recrossed by swallows in every direction.' These words clearly foretold the overrunning of his land by the white people, who were drawing nearer every day. How could his Zulus repulse these people with their deadly guns against which their ox-hide shields were of no avail?

Then came the news they dreaded. Zulu spies reported that a party of Boers had reached Port Natal and that others, many others, were swarming down the mountains and their wagons were covering the land. A few days later, Piet Retief himself, the Boer leader, turned up at Mgungundhlovu with four of his men, making the request which the Zulus anticipated yet feared – they wanted land on which to settle.

Seeking an excuse till he should have put the final touches to his plans, Dingaan sent this little party off on a wild chase to recover some stolen cattle. He hoped to have them all murdered before that mission could be accomplished, but the chief deputed to carry out this plot failed him and fled to Port Natal. Dingaan was filled with wrath and executed his vengeance not only upon that chief's kraal but also upon Retief and his sixty followers when they returned.

It appears probable that Mpande, Cetshwayo's father, was in the vicinity of, if not actually present at, Dingaan's kraal on Tuesday, 6 February 1838, when Retief and his men were murdered together with the Englishman, Thomas Holstead, their interpreter, for Mpande affirms that he had been living near Dingaan's capital while Dambuza was in power as the head *induna*, and that he was a witness of Dambuza's acts. Mpande further states 'that he could swear that it was by [Dambuza's] influence that Retief and his companions had been assassinated.'* Thus it is possible that Cetshwayo, now at least twelve years old,

* See Delegorgue's account of the trial of Dambuza by the Boers, narrated in Bird's *Annals of Natal*, Vol. 1, pp. 569–70.

was also present in attendance on his father, but of this we have no positive proof.

Dingaan now decided to adopt somewhat similar tactics to those used by the Boers against the Matabele, making full use of the element of surprise, as they had done. He gave orders to his *indunas* to creep up under cover of darkness to the various Boer encampments and just before dawn to swoop down suddenly and swiftly upon their foes, killing men, women and children without mercy. They would thus be able to make full use of their stabbing assegais before the Boers could bring their guns into play. Their overwhelming superiority in numbers should assure them of a decisive victory.

These plans were duly carried out, but as the encampments were attacked one after another many of the Boers received adequate warning of the Zulu approach, and when the *impis* appeared they were met with a hail of bullets which checked further advance; though many were slain on both sides the Zulus were glad to break off the conflict and the Boers were given a much needed respite.

News of the disaster spread like wildfire among the Boer emigrants, who vowed to avenge the slaughter of their kinsfolk. By early April a force of about 300 men had gathered together for this purpose, under the joint command of Piet Uys and Hendrik Potgieter. Overestimating their own prowess and underestimating the ability of Dingaan's generals, on the morning of 11 April this force rode into a carefully prepared ambush in which Piet Uys and his gallant young son, Dirk, lost their lives, owing chiefly to the cowardice of Potgieter and his men, who at the crucial moments of the struggle, instead of going to the assistance of their comrades, turned tail and fled.

While these events had been taking place the English settlers at Port Natal, angered at the murder of the popular interpreter Holstead and at Dingaan's treachery, had rallied to the support of the Boers and on 13 March 1838, under the leadership of John Cane, mounted their first attack against the Zulus; but this turned out to be little more than a cattle raid, for only a small vassal tribe was encountered.

Some days later, however, a second expedition set out under Robert Biggar and John Cane, comprising fifteen other Britishers, thirty Hottentots and a large number of loyal Zulus. They crossed the Tugela River at the old Settlers Drift, entering Zululand proper about daybreak on 17 April. Sighting a small body of Zulus near the summit of a hill on which was situated the kraal of Ndondakusuka, they made straight for them, regarding them as an easy prey. But this time the Zulus had prepared a trap, and before the British force had reached the hilltop 10,000 Zulu warriors, who had concealed themselves in the long grass, suddenly rose up and swooped upon them. A terrific struggle ensued. The rifles of the little band of Englishmen wrought havoc in the closely-packed ranks of Zulus, but sheer weight of numbers told in the end. Gradually the crack of the rifles died away as the men firing them were pierced through and through by assegais. Only four survived.

This encounter is of particular importance in the story of Cetshwayo, for the Commander-in-Chief of the Zulu *impi* was none other than Mpande, though there can be little doubt that the tactics were devised and carried out by his generals Nongalazi, Umahlebe and Zulu, for Mpande was no soldier. With Mpande was his son Cetshwayo, in the role of *udibi* boy to his father, carrying his mats, serving him with meat and beer and acting generally as his body-servant.

Meanwhile the victorious Zulu army swept on to Port Natal, reaching the Umgeni River on the evening of 23 April, and the following morning they poured across the Berea. Here for nine days they wreaked their vengeance on the little settlement. Nothing was spared; every home was plundered, every bit of furniture broken in pieces; books and papers were torn and scattered to the winds, crockery smashed to atoms, gardens stamped flat, and what was once a smiling settlement now became a desolate ruin.

Thus Cetshwayo as a lad had, as he tells us, his first view of what was to grow later into the great city of Durban. Thus early in life he was initiated into all the hardships and horrors of Zulu warfare and had instilled into him the callous disregard for

human life and cold indifference to the shedding of human blood which were such marked characteristics of the Zulu race at that period of its history.

Dingaan could now, with a certain degree of justification, claim to have conquered his foes, for both English and Dutch had been severely defeated. For a few months no further action took place. Yet it was only a respite, and both sides made ready for the next round, which all knew to be inevitable.

It came on 10 August of the same year, when Dingaan's forces made a fierce attack upon the Boers at Bushman's River: for three days this conflict raged, but every onslaught was repulsed by the determined defence of the Boers, and after having suffered heavy losses the Zulus retired.

Another four months passed, during which there was an uneasy peace, but meanwhile the Boers were soliciting aid from their friends in the Cape and elsewhere. By December a commando force of about 600 men had been gathered together, among whom were a number of Britishers. By general consent A. W. Pretorius, who had arrived from Graaf Reinet, was appointed as Commander-in-Chief. On 16 December was fought the historic battle of Blood River, in which the Boers, by reason of their vastly superior weapons, were able to inflict a crushing defeat on the Zulu armies and thus curb their power.

What part Mpande played we do not know, but it is fairly certain that he would be present with the Zulu forces in so important a battle, for Dingaan had mustered his warriors from every part of his kingdom in this attempt to defeat the Boers. Consequently it is equally certain that Cetshwayo would also be present as a *udibi* boy to his father and so be a witness of the disaster which befell his nation.

Ironically enough, on the very day of the battle of Blood River the British flag was officially hoisted at Port Natal by a small force which had landed there on the 4th of the month, under the instructions of Sir George Napier. The main purpose of this force was to try to bring the conflict between Boer and Zulu to a speedy end, for the British authorities felt that unless they intervened the Zulu nation might be exterminated. It was largely due to the

painstaking efforts of Captain Jervis that this mission was successful, and on 23 March 1839 a Peace Treaty was officially ratified by the Governor of the Cape, and later by Downing Street, by which the Tugela River was to mark the boundary between Zululand and Natal.

For six months the Treaty was observed by both parties except that Dingaan failed to hand over to the Boers the cattle which they had demanded as compensation.

Dingaan, realizing that the Boers were spreading over territory which was formerly occupied by his people, decided to try to recoup himself in this respect by attacking the Swazis and seizing their country. With this object in view, and facing the fact that his armies had been seriously depleted by recent conflicts, he summoned Mpande to his kraal to assist him in this enterprise, knowing that his half-brother was popular with his people and had a large following, among whom were some of the finest warriors of the nation.

This peremptory summons to Mpande immediately brought matters to a head, because for some considerable time discontent at Dingaan's arbitrary rule had been simmering throughout the Zulu nation, with the result that many had gone over to Mpande, who now had a following almost equal to, if not exceeding, that of the King himself. Dingaan's jealousy had naturally been aroused, and the situation was still further aggravated by his attempt to seize Mpande's cattle under the pretext that they were required to be handed over to the Boers by the terms of the Peace Treaty, though he had not the slightest intention of fulfilling that proviso.

Mpande grasped the situation and realized that he must act without delay if he was to save himself and his people from destruction. He knew only too well that if he obeyed the summons he would place himself in the clutches of his crafty brother, who would not hesitate to deal with him as he had dealt with Shaka some years previously.

On the other hand, if he disobeyed and remained with his people at his kraal on the Amatikulu, then he also knew what to expect – Dingaan's *impis* would sweep down upon him and he

could not forecast the outcome of such an onslaught. In any case it would mean the death of many of his followers, and this at a time when he wished more than anything to conserve all his resources.

There is not the slightest doubt that Mpande and his *indunas*, kept constantly and carefully informed by their spies of all Dingaan's movements, had already laid their plans in case this happened. They would flee across the Tugela in spite of the terms of the Peace Treaty, throw themselves on the mercy of the Boers and seek their aid to crush Dingaan once for all. Then the path would be open for Mpande himself to assume the kingship over the Zulu nation – for his claims to that position were stronger than those of any other.

These plans were now put into operation, and soon many thousands of Zulus swarmed across the Tugela and messages were sent through to Maritzburg (Pietermaritzburg) informing the Boers of their action, requesting permission to settle temporarily at the Tongaat, seeking their aid in a proposed campaign to smash Dingaan and promising in return that, if and when victory should be gained, payment of all the cattle due according to the terms of the Peace Treaty would be made.

The first reaction of the Volksraad (the council of the Boers) was to mistrust this message and to send a commando force against Mpande to drive him and his people back over the Tugela, but wiser counsels prevailed and it was soon realized that here was a heaven-sent opportunity to settle scores finally with their hated enemy, Dingaan. Accordingly, a strong deputation was appointed to interview Mpande, to test his sincerity and, if possible, draw up satisfactory plans for their combined efforts against the common foe.

The convoy set out on 21 October and on arrival was warmly welcomed by Mpande and his *indunas*. It was then arranged that preparations should be made for an attack upon Dingaan by their combined forces; the armies of Mpande were to proceed via the Lower Tugela under the command of Nongalaza, while the Boer commando force under Pretorius would go via the Buffalo River; and in order to safeguard themselves against any treachery

on the part of the Zulus Mpande himself was not to march with his army but was to accompany the Boers. It was further agreed that once Dingaan was destroyed or driven out of the country, Mpande should be created King of the Zulu nation. Cetshwayo himself was present at these negotiations and, we are told,* was shown to the Boers as Mpande's chief son. In order to avoid any mistake being made as to his identity in the future, the Boers snicked a small piece out of Cetshwayo's ear.† In return for their aid in this campaign they were to be paid a total of 40,000 head of cattle.

This alliance was concluded on 27 October 1839, and the Boer deputation then returned to Maritzburg.

It was necessary to observe great caution in making preparations for the forthcoming campaign, which was a direct breach of the Peace Treaty with Dingaan, for had knowledge of it come to the ears of the British authorities they would undoubtedly have intervened. However, fortune favoured the Boers, for the British troops withdrew from Port Natal on 24 December and thus left the way open for them to put their plans into effect.

Meanwhile Dingaan, seriously alarmed at the turn of events, retreated first to the Ivuna River and then, as his enemies drew nearer, took refuge in the Magundu mountain, about eight miles to the south of the Pongola River, while his army took up its position in a group of hills at Maqongqo, a short distance from him.

On 29 January 1840 Mpande's forces, under the able generalship of Nongalaza, launched their attack against the forces of Dingaan, which were commanded by Ndhela, an equally competent general. A grim struggle now took place, and for some considerable time the issue was in doubt, for the armies were evenly matched and both sides fought with the utmost valour. At

* *Macmillan's Magazine*, February 1880. This issue contains Cetshwayo's story of the Zulu nation and the Zulu War as taken down by Captain J. R. Poole, R.A., at Cape Town through the interpreter, Longcast. Copy in the library of Dr Killie Campbell.

† James Stuart, author of *A History of the Zulu Rebellion, 1906*. After the Boer War he became Chief Magistrate of Durban. He was a great Zulu scholar and gathered much history from the Zulus themselves.

the start Dingaan's army was superior in numbers, but during the action a body of his troops went over to Mpande's side and turned the scale.

Those who were faithful stood their ground, and fell as became Zulu warriors. The slaughter on each side was enormous. The two best regiments of Dingaan perished, for the veterans who had won their plumes under Shaka chose to die rather than show their backs to the traitors who had deserted their cause. Ndhela placed himself at the head of the reserve and went into the hottest part of the field, where he was pierced through the heart with an assegai. Still the issue of the day was doubtful when the cry echoed along Nongalaza's ranks 'The farmers are coming'. It was not so, but the belief that it was answered Nongalaza's purpose. The remnant of Dingaan's army, the men who could not flee from a foe armed with spear and shield, gave way in their fear of those dreaded horsemen who had power to deal out death without meeting it themselves. A bushy country spread out before them and favoured their escape. The battle was over and the terror which the Zulu name had inspired was a thing of the past.*

News of Nongalaza's victory reached the Boers on 1 February while they were at the Black Umfolozi River. Two hundred and fifty of them set off in pursuit of Dingaan, who had meanwhile gathered together the scattered remnants of his army in order to continue the conflict. A very heavy mist had fallen at the time when the battle was about to be renewed and this screened the approach of the Boers from the view of the Zulus. But their sharp ears caught the sound of horses' hooves, and peering through the gloom they made out the forms of horses. Almost in a flash the *impis* of Dingaan had vanished in the mist, and though the Boers continued their pursuit as far as the Pongola River their enemies eluded them.

No further action took place, and the Boers, considering the expedition at an end, retreated without having fired a shot in the whole campaign. None the less they collected their 40,000 head of cattle, holding Mpande as a hostage till this was accomplished. On 10 February they declared Mpande King of the Zulus. Yet four days later Pretorius read a most unexpected proclamation in

* Theal, *South Africa*, p. 215.

which the Boers coolly claimed all the land of the Zulus from the Black Umfolozi to the Tugela and thence right up to the Drakensberg. No mention had been made of this when drawing up the terms of agreement with Mpande.

Dingaan and his army meanwhile crossed the Pongola River and eventually came to rest on the Ubombo mountains, near Hlatikulu. As this was still a large force considerable difficulty was experienced in feeding it, as most of their cattle had been left behind. Consequently his warriors were mainly occupied in foraging for food, with the result that Dingaan had but a small personal bodyguard. Taking advantage of this situation a body of Swazis, the hereditary enemies of the Zulus, swept down at night, silently surrounded and attacked the King's kraal. In the struggle Dingaan was severely wounded in the side and three days later he was dead. A few hours before he expired the remnant of his forces 'sat in military order, in mute astonishment, in awful silence, with their shields lying on the ground, indicating that their great living shield was about to lie in the dust. As he died he praised their fidelity and cursed Mpande, but for whom he would still have "made the earth to tremble".'*

The armies of Dingaan, now leaderless, decided to make their way back to Zululand and submit to the authority of Mpande, hoping thereby to gain a measure of security and a relief from the strain of incessant and senseless warfare among themselves.

* Graham Mackeurtan, *Cradle Days of Natal*, p. 259.

CHAPTER 3

Cetshwayo, Prince and Heir Apparent

Cetshwayo's military training; Mpande murders his brother; native tribes attacked by the Boers; British troops defeat the Boers; the Colony of Natal established; Cetshwayo defeats his brother and 23,000 people perish

Now that Mpande was King, Cetshwayo, although only a lad of about fifteen, assumed an enhanced importance in the eyes of the Zulu nation, for having already been presented to the Boers as the 'Chief Son', he was naturally looked upon as the future heir to the throne, even though 'Chief Sons' among native tribes were often liquidated before they reached the exalted post which their fathers had held. This was particularly the case when such sons showed talent and initiative, for as they approached manhood they would naturally gather their friends and admirers around them and, should their parent's rule have been oppressive or tyrannical, the circle of adherents would increase, often arousing jealousy and suspicion, and the more despotic the ruler the more likely was he apt to look with grave disfavour on any aspirant to the throne, particularly should that aspirant be one of his own sons. Fortunately for Cetshwayo, his father was of a peaceful disposition, taking but little interest in political intrigue except on those rare occasions when it directly threatened his position as King.

Consequently, this young Prince, though manifesting at an early age some of the remarkable talent of his illustrious uncle, Shaka, was yet allowed to pursue his career without interference or molestation.

He had now reached the age at which he must begin his military training: this necessitated his leaving home and entering one of the military kraals as a young recruit. Here he was drilled

and trained under the strictest discipline to endure hardship and was instructed in the use of both types of assegai; learnt military tactics, how to marshal the warriors and to manœuvre with them; to tramp mile after mile without flagging; to creep silently up to an enemy and then, with incredible swiftness, to strike him down with a single blow.

The work was hard, strenuous and exacting, proceeding without a break from month to month, but before long these young men were trained to such a degree of perfection that they were able to execute a forced march right through the night and follow this up by a whirlwind attack upon an imaginary foe.

For Cetshwayo there was no relaxation of the iron discipline, no lightening of his tasks because he was a Royal Prince; rather the reverse, for among so warlike a people as the Zulus it was necessary that their future ruler should prove himself first and foremost a thoroughly efficient officer, able to command the confidence and respect of all his subordinates.

Nor was this all, for in the case of a young Prince not only was it essential that he should receive a thorough military training, but he must also learn as much as possible about the laws, the history and folklore of his people, for the Royal Household was the chief repository of those laws and customs by which the nation was governed.

Further, as there were no written historical records the task of memorizing the main historical events of the nation fell not only on the official historians and the chief *indunas*, but also on the members of the Royal Household, who were looked upon as authorities on such matters, and to acquire this knowledge meant many hours of solid concentration.

No doubt Cetshwayo would welcome those periods when, after long spells of heavy training, he would be sent out with his regiment, the Tulwana, to see to the repair of some of the Royal kraals, or to arrest some fugitive from justice, for such duties would afford a respite from their strenuous training in military barracks.

Thus the years sped by, and as Cetshwayo grew to manhood so efficient a soldier did he become that it is affirmed that he could

outdistance any other warrior in his father's army and was equal to the best of them in the use of the assegai. But as yet no opportunity was given him to 'wash his spear' in actual warfare, for Mpande chose rather to indulge in dancing and the pleasures of his harem than in the sterner task of leading his armies into battle. This caused considerable discontent among his warriors, for vast numbers of them were left kicking their heels in idleness.

True, there were isolated instances when Mpande was roused to action, particularly in the early part of his reign when his position was none too secure, for many of his people had been loyal followers of Dingaan and their allegiance to Mpande was weak. So when in 1843 rumours reached him that his only surviving brother, Gquazi, was plotting against him, he acted swiftly. Not merely was Gquazi slain and his wives literally ripped open, but Mpande's warriors dashed out the brains of every one of his children so that there should not be a single survivor to dispute the throne. The direct result of this atrocious deed was the exodus of all Gquazi's sympathizers to Natal – an event known even today as 'The Crossing of Mawa', Mawa being the aunt of Gquazi's who had led the flight of his followers into Natal.

Meanwhile on the other side of the Tugela a crisis was approaching, for numerous Boers were already adopting a policy of aggression against the natives. Natal at this period embraced within her borders a considerable native population, some of whom had lived there for generations, (e.g. the AmaTuli on the Bluff and surroundings). This number had been greatly augmented after the arrival of the early British settlers (Farewell, Fynn, King, Isaacs, etc.), to whom many Zulus had fled seeking refuge, first from the wrath of Shaka and later from that of Dingaan.

The influx caused considerable annoyance to the Boers, who were now pouring into Natal and wished to reserve the land entirely for themselves, retaining only a sufficient number of Zulus to act as their servants. Yet here the Zulus were in their thousands, and here they determined to stay, building their kraals, cultivating their gardens, tilling the soil and grazing their cattle. The majority of them were not prepared to submit quietly to being employed

as farm labourers by the Boers, particularly in view of the treatment that was often meted out to them – all work and no pay.

Thus we find the two sections of the population vying with each other for the occupation of the land. There was the Boer who wished to secure for himself a vast area which he would term a farm, on which he could live in splendid isolation, sit on his stoep, smoke his pipe, drink his coffee and be so separated from his fellows that he would not be able to see the smoke from his neighbour's chimney; that was his ideal, his ambition and his intention. On the other hand, there was the native in great numbers, also desperately anxious to acquire land and settle in safety from his enemies, yet with views diametrically opposed to those of the Dutch farmers. He wished to live the communal life as he and his people had done for generations; to dwell in his kraal with his fellow men, share the land with them for the grazing of his cattle and for the growing of his maize, and thus be able to give his wives their allotted plots to cultivate their gardens and grow his food. Unless some form of compromise could be satisfactorily arranged between these two elements of the population a clash was bound to occur sooner or later.

Considerable correspondence had already passed between the Volksraad and the British authorities at the Cape regarding the Boer invasion of Natal, and as the latter were anxious to come to terms with the British on the question of their settlement in this country they had made definite promises: (*a*) 'to oppose every attempt at establishing the slave trade,' and (*b*) 'not to make any hostile movement against any of the surrounding native tribes, unless such tribe, by any preceding hostile attack, should give the republicans occasion thereto, so that they for the maintenance of their rights or for the security of their property, should be compelled to take up arms against such tribe.'*

Yet even while these negotiations were proceeding certain Boer farmers had already armed themselves in order to make an attack on one of these tribes.

Towards the end of 1840 some farmers who had settled between the Umkomaas and the Umzimkulu Rivers complained to the

* Cloete, *History of the Great Boer Trek*, p. 135.

Volksraad that a number of their cattle had been stolen by parties of Bushmen living in the Drakensberg mountains and urged that an armed party be assembled to follow them up and attack them. A commando force of approximately 200 men was formed, under the leadership of Andries Pretorius, and in December this party set out for the Berg.

Following up the rivers to their source they failed to find any sign of the stolen cattle, but some of their scouts reported that their spoor could be traced to the kraal of the Amabaca tribe, then under the chief N'Capai. It was therefore resolved to make an attack upon this chief, and at daybreak, while the kraal still slumbered, an assault was carried out resulting in the slaughter of over 150 of N'Capai's people. More than 3,000 head of cattle and about 250 sheep and goats were plundered and about seventeen little boys and girls were carried off into captivity. The onesidedness of the encounter can be gauged from the fact that not a single Boer received so much as a scratch although they reported it as a 'desperate fight'!

Upon the return of the commando force every respectable member of the Volksraad protested, for all felt that an inhuman and wicked crime had been committed. At the next meeting of the Volksraad Pretorius was sternly called to account for his conduct, but being supported by his powerful clan of kindred spirits he succeeded in getting the resolution of censure withdrawn, and little more was heard of the affair in that quarter.

But such a crime could not pass unnoticed, and when news of it reached the Cape a wave of indignation swept over the Colony, and Sir George Napier, the Governor, took immediate action by dispatching a force of 250 infantry with a small detachment of the Cape Corps and two fieldpieces under the command of Captain Smith. They marched into Faku's country and encamped near the Umgazi River at a short distance from the Umzimvubu.

That the promises of the Volksraad were not to be relied upon can be seen from the events which followed. Undeterred by the general outcry against their unwarranted attack upon N'Capai the Boers now decided upon a plan to bundle all the Natal natives

out of their kraals into a territory that was largely unoccupied, without giving any consideration to the fact that this land belonged to the Pondo chief, Faku, who was nominally under the protection of the British authorities at the Cape and who had not even been consulted. Should the natives offer the slightest resistance to this move then force was to be used.

Two resolutions were taken on this matter in the Volksraad, dated Monday, 2 August 1841, and read as follows:

RESOLVED:

THAT it is highly necessary for the safety of this community that all the Kafirs who are now residing amongst us be separately located on one side, instead of allowing them to live amongst us; that the said Kafirs, with the exception of a few, who lived at Natal, had no right or claim to any part of the country, they having only come amongst us after the emigrants had come hither, with a view of being protected by us; but not wishing that they should be driven away without any provisions being made in their behalf, the Council is of opinion: THAT, as the tract of ground from the mouth of the Umtamfuna to the Umzimvubu, along the coast, is well adapted for a great Kafir nation . . . that said tract of country be granted to the Kafirs, to be by them occupied as long as they behave well, and are obedient to and acknowledge the authority of this community; and under further condition that they shall submit to such laws and arrangements as the Council shall from time to time think fit to make, and that a chief captain or resident commander be appointed over them by this Council.

RESOLVED FURTHER:

THAT the Commandant-General shall, as soon as possible, adopt measures for the removal of all Kafirs who shall be considered as unsafe for the country, or such as will not leave the inhabitants, either willingly, if possible, or, *should they refuse to obey, by force to the above-mentioned tract of ground, and to order for this purpose the assistance of the burgers*. It is, however, recommended first to endeavour as much as possible to prevail upon the several Kafir chiefs willingly to approve of the proposed plan, so that they voluntarily proceed thither, either at once or within a certain fixed time; but, *should it become necessary to have recourse to compulsory measures*, in that case first to begin with those Kafir Kraals, who live within parts already inhabited and in a manner,

unless in case of great necessity, that the employment of too great a number of burgers be avoided.*

Not content with the above, the Boers were committing acts of aggression even in Zululand itself, and it was repeatedly being reported that they were occupying tracts of country to which they had no right whatsoever; on the slightest pretext the Zulus' cattle were plundered, their women taken as captives and large numbers of their children seized as 'apprentices'. This so-called 'apprenticeship' was a euphemistic term for slavery, for the children were not merely taken from their homes and forced to labour for their masters without pay, but in many instances they were regarded as simple merchandise; there are cases on record without number where such children were sold for a horse apiece.

On top of all this the Volksraad now ordered Faku to appear before them, apparently with a view to compelling him to submit to their unjust decree that all the Natal natives should be settled in his territory. With such a threat hanging over his head Faku appealed to Sir George Napier for protection. This is explicitly stated in the latter's dispatch to the Volksraad, sent from Grahamstown and dated 27 January 1841, which reads:

I have received a message from Faku, Chief of the Amaponda, intimating that orders were sent to him to appear before the Council of the emigrant farmers, which command it not being his intention to obey, he feared that an attack would be made upon him and therefore applied to the Government for protection.†

Thus Sir George Napier's action in sending the troops to the Umzimvubu was fully justified; had he not done so there is little doubt but that the whole native population of both Natal and the Cape would have risen in wrath against them and the whole country would have been aflame.

Further correspondence now passed between Sir George Napier and the Volksraad, in which the Governor asserted explicitly that the Boers were still British subjects and their acts of aggression against the native population were a responsibility of the Crown. This the Boers denied, stating that they were a free and independent

* Bird, *The Annals of Natal*, Vol. 1, p. 644. Author's italics. † Ibid., p. 631.

people and thus could do exactly as they chose. Realizing clearly that if such a challenge were allowed to pass unheeded and the Boers were given a free hand in their dealings with the Zulus, the inevitable result would be yet another blood bath, the Governor promptly ordered Captain Smith and his men to march from the Umgazi right into Natal and occupy the Port as soon as possible, at the same time conveying this information to the Volksraad.

After some little delay, due to the rainy season, the troops (a detachment of the 27th Regiment) moved forward, and early in May 1842 a camp was established at Port Natal at a spot where the Old Fort now stands. Pretorius, the Boer commandant, thereupon issued an ultimatum to Captain Smith demanding that he break up his camp immediately, surrender his arms, withdraw across the border and pay compensation to the Boers; should these terms not be complied with, he would resort to war.

Captain Smith's answer was to prepare for action. In the meantime Boers had been flocking into their camp at Congella, and they had mustered a force of about 500 fighting men as against Smith's contingent of about 250. A certain amount of skirmishing took place during which the Boers seized and drove away the 600 draught oxen which the English had used to draw their wagons. This was a serious loss, and Smith determined to have his revenge.

Accordingly, that night he led 110 of his men with two six-pounder guns in an attack on the Boer camp which would probably have proved successful had it not been for the noise made by the hasp of one of the guns which had been carelessly fitted upon its gun-carriage. A Boer scout investigating this strange sound spotted the troops, raced back to Congella and gave the alarm. Alerted, the Boers concealed themselves behind the trees and poured a heavy fire upon the British soldiers, of whom seventeen were killed and thirty-one wounded. A retreat to the camp was ordered, and there they were besieged for more than a month, suffering great privations but bravely resisting every attack made upon their position. It was at this time that Dick King made his historic ride to Grahamstown, calling for reinforcements. In due

course these were rushed through to the Port and the situation was saved, for the Boers offered only feeble resistance to the Imperial forces.

The British Government now determined to take full possession of and establish a civil administration in the territory, which henceforward became known as the Colony of Natal. On 5 June 1843 the Hon. Henry Cloete arrived at the Port to take over his duties as Her Majesty's Commissioner.

One of the first matters requiring attention was the settlement of the boundaries between Natal and Zululand, for no clear line of demarcation had as yet been established. In order that this might be effected Commissioner Cloete proceeded to the kraal of Mpande, who incidentally was just as anxious as the British that this question should be settled without delay.

After a friendly discussion it was decided that the Tugela and Umzinyati Rivers should form the north-eastern boundary between Natal and Zululand. Land to the north-east of the Umzinyati, though but sparsely populated, belonged to the Zulus, and all the inhabitants of this area were subjects of the Zulu King. These terms were embodied in a Treaty, which bears the marks of King Panda, the *induna* Umwanklauna, the *induna* Umkondamie and, of course, the signature of H. Cloete as Her Majesty's Commissioner, along with the two witnesses D. C. Toohey and C. J. Buissinne, and the Interpreter, J. Kirkman. It is dated 5 October 1843.*

On this occasion the *northern* boundary of Zululand did not enter into the discussion, because at that time it was not the concern of Natal; it was some years later before it became the source of much wrangling and strife.

This Treaty is of great significance, and that it was recognized even by the Boers is evident from the fact that in 1847, after the British occupation of Natal, when a number of Boers had trekked out of the country in order to be rid of British authority, Cornelius van Rooyen and a few others were given Mpande's permission to graze their cattle on that part of the country where the town of Utrecht now stands on the clear understanding that the land

* Bird, *The Annals of Natal*, Vol. 2, p. 299.

itself belonged to the Zulus; and in order to establish this right Mpande appointed a farmer named Landtman as the Outside or Border Boer. The Boers acquired no rights to the land and occupied it on exactly the same terms as the King's own Zulu subjects.

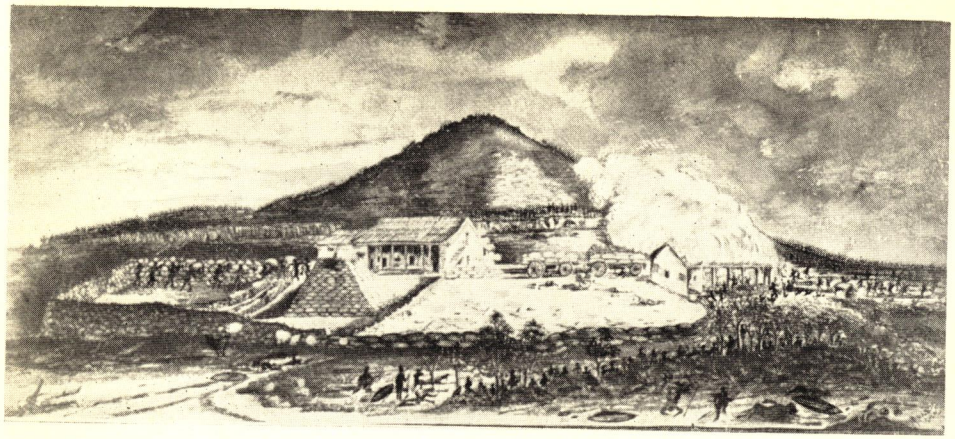
Meanwhile in Zululand itself peace prevailed and life had more or less gone back to normal. The Zulus were indulging in the same forms of amusement as their predecessors had done. Many of the younger men were engaged in training at the numerous military kraals dotted about the country; the older men followed their various pursuits, while the women were busily engaged in agriculture in order to feed the people. Bands of fighting men were called up regularly to the Royal Kraal to perform their war dances before the King; numbers of his women sang to him in his private apartments; more and more was he indulging in the pleasures of his Court, less and less was he attending to the welfare of his people. The little contact which he had had with civilization left no mark on him and he was far too indolent to attempt any reforms.

There was one occasion, however, around the year 1848, when he was stirred to action, for it was reported that the Hlubis, who lived along the Pongola River (near Luneburg), had been plundering the Royal cattle. A crime as serious as this could not be allowed to go unpunished, so mustering a body of warriors he sent them off with strict instructions to put the thieves to death and give the whole kraal a thorough drubbing. In a few weeks all was over, some of the cattle recovered and the Hlubi tribe chased out of Zululand and over the border.

The only campaign of any moment during the reign of this monarch took place in the years 1853 and 1854. This was undertaken for two reasons. Certain new regiments had been formed as young men of military age had joined the army and it was now high time that these regiments were tested out in actual warfare. Among them was the Tulwana, which numbered among its officers the heir-apparent, Cetshwayo, and it was expedient that an opportunity be given him to show his prowess and so justify himself as a suitable candidate for the high office which would fall to

Fort Pearson and the Tugela River

Tugela Drift: the Ultimatum Tree in the foreground, Fort Tenedos on the opposite bank



The Battle of Rorke's Drift

Troops burying the dead after the battle of Isandhlwana

his lot in due course. A second reason for this campaign was to employ the armies on some active service, for thousands of fully trained warriors were not only growing restless but in many cases were definitely resentful at being kept in protracted idleness.

Accordingly, the *impis* were ordered to attack their hereditary enemies the Swazis, who, learning of the approach of the Zulus, scattered and hid themselves in the caves and dense bush. Consequently little actual fighting took place on this first assault, and only a few cattle were seized. As a result a feeling of general dissatisfaction prevailed among the Zulus and a second attack was planned. Fearing that this would happen, the Swazis sent most of their cattle into Boer territory with the request that they be taken care of till the fighting was over.

On the approach of the *impis* the Swazis once more retreated to their caves and into the dense bush, but this time the Zulus were prepared for them: having collected huge piles of wood and old ox-hide shields they piled these up in the mouths of the caves and set them alight. Those who attempted to escape were despatched with the assegai. Later an encircling movement was carried out around those secreted in the bush, who were thus compelled to fight it out with their foes. Cetshwayo distinguished himself greatly in this conflict, during the course of which he took on a whole pack of Swazis single-handed, slaying most of them and putting the rest to flight.*

As the Zulu armies retired, the Swazis sent after them a large present of cattle as a propitiation and act of submission to Mpande.

The Boers now appeared upon the scene and claimed a present of slaves as compensation for hiding the cattle of the Swazis. These the Swazis obtained by raiding their neighbours, the inoffensive Tongas, and a batch of boys and girls was sent over to the Boers. The Swazis now appealed to Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs, Natal, for protection against the Zulus, in consequence of which pressure was brought to bear upon Mpande to refrain from further aggression in that quarter.†

* R. C. Samuelson, *Long, Long Ago*, p. 230.

† Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, pp. 679–80.

The outstanding result of this Swazi campaign was to increase the prestige of Cetshwayo. Mpande had only too clearly revealed himself as a weak and incompetent monarch. The generals of his army had received their training under Shaka, who, though stern and ruthless, was a brilliant soldier, spending most of his life with his warriors, fighting with them, sharing their hardships and never demanding anything of them which he would not do himself. Cetshwayo was already displaying in his character something of the greatness of his uncle: he was a fine officer, an able man and, though young, showed considerable ability. Consequently the armies and the nation were already turning away from Mpande to him; Cetshwayo thus became the hope of the future.

On his return from this campaign Cetshwayo was allowed to establish his own kraal; this was set up for him at Ondini, under the lee of the Ngoye Hills, on the south side of the Umhlatuzi River. Here he lived for many years, and to him flocked an ever-increasing number of supporters, so that in time his influence on the nation became as great as, if not even greater than that of the King himself.

During the year 1855 trouble began to simmer on the northern boundary of Zululand. It will be remembered that in 1847 Mpande had granted certain concessions to Cornelius van Rooyen, allowing him and a few other Boers to reside and graze their cattle on certain lands in the north on the distinct understanding that the land itself belonged to the Zulus and that while the Boers resided in that area they were to be regarded as Zulu subjects. Van Rooyen and his fellow Boers now claimed this territory as their own, spreading abroad an incredible story that they had purchased the land from Mpande for a hundred head of cattle and producing a spurious document in support of their claim which they alleged had been signed by Mpande himself! As a further affront Potgieter, who had founded another of those numerous republics of which the Boers were so fond, coolly annexed this territory to what he termed the Republic of Lydenburg. Had Shaka been on the throne he would have known how to deal with these people, but although Cetshwayo and the Zulu nation boiled with anger, Mpande, as usual, did nothing. It was

little wonder that the people turned more and more to Cetshwayo, hoping to find in him the strength of character and bold leadership that would not allow a proud nation such as theirs to have their country filched from them by such dishonest means.

This rapid increase in the popularity and strength of Cetshwayo did not pass unnoticed by his younger brother, Mbuyazi, and particularly not by Monase, his mother, who was the favourite wife of the King. There can be little doubt that she took every advantage of her position to influence Mpande in her son's favour, and many people observed that of late his leanings had been more in the direction of Mbuyazi than towards Cetshwayo.* Had Mpande taken a firm stand at this time and definitely nominated his successor to the throne, he would have prevented the smouldering jealousy between Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi from bursting into a flame which ripped through the nation and later caused the worst slaughter that the Zulus – accustomed as they were to wars – had ever witnessed. Instead of facing up to the issue which daily grew more menacing, he adopted a policy of procrastination which resulted in the formation of two distinct parties, the one favouring Cetshwayo and calling themselves the Usutu, the other supporting Mbuyazi and giving themselves the name of the Izigqoza.

It was about this time that Mpande rashly summoned Mbuyazi and his people to dance before him at the Royal Kraal, with Cetshwayo present as a spectator. After the display was over the King was loud in his praises of the dance, and then turning to Cetshwayo instructed him to go back to his people, dress them up and teach them to dance like Mbuyazi's, at the same time giving him a large quantity of feathers, skins and ornaments to assist him in decking out his men. Both brothers went away extremely angry, Cetshwayo because his father had implied that his people could not dance as well as Mbuyazi's, and Mbuyazi because of his father's lavish gifts to Cetshwayo.

* There is considerable evidence that Mbuyazi was the son of Shaka, for Monase, his mother, was given by Shaka to Mpande from among his numerous 'sisters'. When given, so it is said, she was already pregnant by Shaka, who remarked to Mpande: 'I am king, my duty is to rule, not to beget children. Yours is to rear a family' (or words to that effect).

The situation was still further aggravated by Mbuyazi, who commenced raiding his brother's cattle. This was an unpardonable crime in the eyes of the Zulus, and Cetshwayo appealed to the King, demanding the immediate return of his stock. Mbuyazi was weakly reprimanded, but instead of returning the cattle he openly defied his father, slew the animals and fed his soldiers on them. The whole country was now in an uproar and both parties began to arm.

Yet in face of imminent disaster Mpande failed to assert his authority and when appealed to by his leading *indunas* could only reply, 'Two bulls cannot live together in the same kraal.'

A crisis was at hand. Cetshwayo made all preparations to thrash his brother for his insolence and to insist upon his father nominating him publicly as the future heir to the throne. Summoning his followers to his Ondini kraal, Cetshwayo ordered them to prepare for war. Within a few days they were on the march towards the Tugela, where the followers of Mbuyazi were assembling.

Meanwhile Mbuyazi, realizing that his followers were far fewer in number than those of his brother, himself raced across the Tugela to appeal to the British Border Agent, Captain Walmsley, for military assistance from the British. Naturally, such a request was refused. Yet some little help was forthcoming, for assisting Captain Walmsley at the Tugela Drift was a young hunter and adventurer named John Dunn, who offered Mbuyazi his services and those of his native followers, subject to the permission of Captain Walmsley. This being readily granted, Dunn promptly took a hand in affairs. His first consideration was to try and get the women and children belonging to Mbuyazi's men to safety, for there were literally thousands of them milling around, and all were in a position of extreme danger, situated as they were with hostile forces in front and the wide Tugela River behind, which at that time was in full flood, for heavy rains had fallen.

But all suggestions to ferry them over to the Natal side of the stream, and so temporarily to a position of safety, were brusquely set aside by the over-confident Mbuyazi, who assured Dunn that

his 7,000 warriors were more than a match for Cetshwayo's armies.

Dunn therefore decided upon another course. He would cross over to Zululand, send a message direct to Cetshwayo and see if he himself could not act as arbitrator and hit upon some plan by which a conflict might be averted.

Accordingly he set out with about 250 of his followers (fifty of whom were armed with rifles), Walmsley accompanying him in the boat across the Tugela. Wishing him good luck he added: 'Make peace if you can, Dunn, but if you cannot succeed, fight like devils and give a good account of yourselves.'

On reaching the Zululand side of the river a message was dispatched to Cetshwayo, whose armies were encamped a few miles away. No reply being received, a second attempt was made, but still no answer was forthcoming. So early on the morning of 2 December 1856 Dunn and his men rode through the rain and mist (it had rained incessantly throughout the previous week) and climbed the steep slopes of the Ndondakusuka Hill towards where the armies of Cetshwayo were assembled.

When within a few yards Dunn hailed them, requesting some of their *indunas* to come forward and hold a parley with him. He was answered by a shot which zipped past his ear, followed by a shower of assegais. It was the signal for action.

Instantly, from 20,000 throats the battle-cry of '*Usutu*' roared forth, and raising high their great shields with a stamping of feet that shook the earth, the army of Cetshwayo's warriors swept forward, their supple bodies glistening in the mist, their assegais flashing in the early morning light.

Dunn formed his men into a compact body and though retreating they yet managed to use their rifles to good effect on the closely packed ranks of the enemy, causing havoc among them. This in some measure halted their advance and so enabled Dunn and his handful of men to reach the little shelter afforded by Mbuyazi's forces, which had now moved in to the attack. But Mbuyazi's men, in spite of all their boasting, were no match for the warriors of Cetshwayo who scattered them at the very first onslaught.

Sweeping onward, the horns of their *impis* closed around their foes, who were driven nearer and nearer to the precipitous banks of the crocodile-infested Tugela. In the confusion of the rout the screams of women and children now became mingled with the cries of the wounded and the groans of the dying. Even Dunn and his men, fighting to the last, were swept down to the river and their only hope was to plunge into it; yet as they swam assegais rained down upon them, piercing their bodies till, weakened by loss of blood, many sank for ever beneath the swirling waters. Dunn himself narrowly escaped death, losing horse, rifle and all else.

Mbuyazi's army being annihilated, Cetshwayo's forces now turned their attention to the hordes of women and children hiding in the dense bush that lined the steep banks. A scene of horror ensued such as had never before been witnessed in Africa, as the defenceless women and children were driven into the raging waters below. In the space of a few hours there perished close on 23,000 people. Among the slain was Mbuyazi himself, together with five other sons of Mpande and also – so we are told by Shepstone – the only son of Dingaan.

So ended the battle of Ndondakusuka. Evidence of its carnage could be seen for many years afterwards, for the hill itself was littered with the whitened bones of the slain, and the stream which runs down its slopes derives its name from the slaughter, the Mtambo – the Stream of Bones.*

* Rider Haggard, in his Author's Note to *Child of Storm*, states that Sir Melmoth Osborn was present, in hiding, at this battle and from him he obtained a graphic account of the struggle.

CHAPTER 4

Cetshwayo's Public Recognition as Heir

Theophilus Shepstone visits the battlefield; John Dunn's interview with Mpande; Cetshwayo virtually ruler of Zululand; Shepstone's great courage

On the day of the Battle of Ndondakusuka Theophilus Shepstone happened to be in the vicinity and, hearing of the conflict, hastened to the battlefield, arriving about 1.30 p.m., some hours after the slaughter had ended. He records, *inter alia*: 'The loss of life has been awful according to all accounts I have received. It is said but one quarter of the women and children have escaped the assegai or drowning. . . . The sandbanks in the river were strewn with dead bodies and many were floating in the eddies of streams. From the field of battle to the river the country is filled with dead and dying.'

Two days later he continues:

I fear Cetshwayo's successes will make him a troublesome neighbour. The day before yesterday he had the whole of the Colony from this to the Umgeni at Durban in his power and he might in two days have ravaged the whole of it, even to Durban itself, and before any force sufficient to cope with him could have been organized he would have been safe in the fastnesses of his own country. Henceforth this country will require a much larger military force, especially cavalry. The presence on the Border of two or three military posts of 100 men each would for offensive measures be comparatively useless, but for defensive ones, invaluable; very little would make them impregnable to the Zulus. . . . The effect of these proceedings is to establish Cetshwayo as King of the Zulus. He will either pension his father or kill him immediately.* . . . I do not think there is any danger of his entering Natal

* In fact, he did neither.

just now but it will be necessary to be on the look-out to ascertain in which direction his attention is directed. . . . Just received intelligence a section of Cetshwayo's army has returned to the neighbourhood of the Ford on the Tugela. It succeeded in surprising a number of Umbuyazi's people who were collecting wounded of all ages and both sexes and destroyed all. They were supposed to be friends till too late. . . . One chief man who had on the day of battle lost eighteen wives and thirty children, all killed, besides his cattle, said, 'What happiness could be enjoyed under a rule which allowed a man to get rich only to plunder and destroy him.'

Shepstone also throws a most interesting side-light on this event in his dispatch to Sir John Scott, the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal:

During my conversation with the chief men yesterday I found that Mpande commissioned his son Umbuyazi* to inform this Government of the state of the Zulu country and request Your Excellency to take it into your consideration and, seeing that all lawful authority was at an end, and to prevent such an influx into the Colony as would surely follow the anarchy that was then imminent, to at once send a force into the Zulu country and undertake its Government and succeed to his authority. They declared that the object of their appearing with Umbuyazi on the Border was the execution of this urgent command of their King, and that if Umbuyazi has been nominated the Chief he would only have accepted the charge as a Lieutenant of this Government, acting under its immediate orders. They all declared they would return tomorrow if the British Government would rule the country.†

Thus early in the history of the colonization of Natal did the Zulu nation, or, at any rate, a part of it, reveal their ardent desire to be taken under the protection of Britain. This protection was not only sought after by Mpande, but was requested by Cetshwayo himself at a later date.

One of the results of this dispatch of Shepstone's was the immediate planning of a chain of forts on the Natal side of the Tugela extending from Umhlali to Kranskop, to protect the Natal

* Variant spellings are Umbulazi and Mbuyazi, the latter being generally acknowledged as the correct form.

† The above extracts are from the Shepstone Papers (Letters to Lieutenant-Governor Scott) in the library of Dr Killie Campbell.

Border. Fort Scott (near Umhlali) was erected in 1857, Fort Buckingham in 1861 (near Ntunjambili Store), Fort Williamson in 1861 (near the Tugela mouth), and Fort Cross in 1861 (halfway between Kranskop and Mapumulo). Other forts followed on the outbreak of the Zulu War in 1879.

On the return of Cetshwayo's armies to his Mangweni kraal vast numbers of cattle belonging to Mbuyazi's people were seized as the spoils of war. Among them were some belonging to four or five Dutch traders, who, though, as Shepstone points out, 'they all had had abundant time to get out of the way, they had failed to do so', made preposterous claims in spite of a Government notice which distinctly informed them that 'they entered the Zulu country at their own risk'. However, the Government was generous and decided to help them, entrusting the task of recovery to Henry Francis Fynn.* When he was unsuccessful, John Dunn stepped into the breach and, having obtained Captain Walmsley's permission, set out for the kraal of Mpande at Nodwengu.

His interview with Mpande is of great significance, for it throws much light on the workings of this monarch's mind with regard to his selection of a successor to the throne. After Dunn had stated the purpose of his mission Mpande replied: 'As far as the cattle are concerned you must go to Cetshwayo's kraal at Mangweni; they are ready to be given up; Sifili [Fynn] left them: I don't know why. Now come with me for I can't let you go without speaking what is in my heart, but this is not the place in which I intend to sit.'†

So saying, unaccompanied by his shield-bearer, he walked into the centre of the cattle kraal, bidding Dunn and his headman follow. Looking carefully around in order to assure himself that none could overhear what he was about to say, Mpande sat down. After several minutes of deep thought, he said:

'Child of Mr Dunn, I thought you had come on other matters when I heard that it was you who died [metaphorically] with my children. I must first thank you for the part you took to help my sons who were being killed. I now thank you with my mouth; when all is settled and quiet you must come to me again and I

* Son of the early pioneer. † John Dunn, *Cetshwayo and the Three Generals*, p. 9.

will give you some cattle as my thanks for what you have done for my children. Although you escaped I still look on you as having seen their last, but still there is something in my heart I must tell you, and that is that although Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi fought for my place, I gave the preference to neither. The one in my heart is yet young and I am afraid to mention who he is, even to you. Of the two that have been killing each other – Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi – Cetshwayo was my favourite, but it was not he whom I intended to take my place. As I said before, he is still too young, but I will send and tell Somtseu [Shepstone]. You see I am afraid of letting the sticks of the kraal hear what I am saying.'*

After a long talk, during which he made Dunn give him a full description of the battle – the first true account he had heard – he again stated that the cattle would be handed over and that a messenger would go with him to Cetshwayo so that there would be no trouble, for he did not wish to quarrel with the white men. As he was leaving Mpande said: 'You are a man, child of Mr Dunn; your father was my friend. Try and do your best that no harm comes to my children from their having taken the cattle of the white men.' Dunn reassured him that if the cattle were restored there would be no further trouble.

On his arrival at Mangweni Cetshwayo sent for Dunn and informed him that the cattle would be handed over in a few days' time, as soon as they could be collected. In the course of their conversation Cetshwayo also thanked Dunn for his services, promised him a present of some cattle and requested him to visit him again when he had settled the business in hand. Thus began a friendship that was to be of great moment to both.

Cetshwayo was as good as his word, and in a couple of days messengers were sent to accompany Dunn to the Gingindhlovu kraal, where all the beasts were handed over as promised. The task of driving a thousand head of cattle with only four native helpers through miles of country thickly covered with bush which was infested with wild animals was no easy job, and Dunn was much relieved when he brought them safely back to Natal. After a certain amount of haggling with the traders about the payment

* John Dunn, *Cetshwayo and the Three Generals*, p. 10.

of the stipulated reward, a sum of £250 was handed over to Dunn.

Before long he made his way once more to Cetshwayo, as the latter had sent him several messages urging him to take up residence in Zululand, for, said Cetshwayo, 'I want a white man as friend to live near me and advise me.' His reception was most cordial, and Cetshwayo immediately honoured his earlier promise by making Dunn a present of ten fine oxen, at the same time urging him to leave his present post and take up his abode in Zululand. 'Come and act as my adviser,' said Cetshwayo, 'and I will give you any tract of land that you would like to select as a gift from the King and Zulu nation.*

So tempting an offer was not to be lightly cast aside, so, returning to the Tugela, Dunn handed in his resignation to Captain Walmsley and went to settle permanently in Zululand. On arrival he was asked to select the area in which he wished to reside and when he answered without hesitation, 'The Ngoye Forest region', Cetshwayo laughingly replied, 'I never thought John Dunn was such a fool, for that's a deadly spot; no cattle will live there and you will be chewed up by wild beasts.'* But Dunn hankered after the wild life, and as the forest was alive with game he would be able to shoot without interference.

His first task was to carve himself a habitation. Sometimes as his building proceeded he would slip away for an hour or two to shoot buffalo or buck to keep himself and his native servants supplied with meat. Frequently he had also to shoot marauding lions, leopards, and hyenas; often he would venture farther afield and bag a number of elephants, whose tusks were always a profitable commodity. In the midst of it all messengers were constantly arriving from Cetshwayo demanding his presence as counsellor.

Cetshwayo was now virtually ruler of Zululand, for in most matters of State the Zulus turned to this energetic and forceful Prince rather than to his weak and ailing father, who had grown so enormously stout that he was hardly able to move around except in a four-wheeled cart pulled by oxen. Hearing that the Swazis had again been plundering Zulu cattle, he resolved to call

* Verbatim report of the incident by John Dunn's son, Albert, to the author.

together his armies and march against them. Dunn, knowing that the Zulus were as yet divided in their loyalty to Cetshwayo, did his utmost to dissuade him from such a step, pointing out that any defeat, however small, would turn the whole country against him, with the result that he would never become King. But Cetshwayo remained obdurate. Finally Dunn urged him to recollect that the Swazis had guns while his men had only spears, and it would be nothing short of madness to fight against them on such unequal terms. 'Wait till you also have guns,' persisted Dunn. 'Where am I to get guns?' replied Cetshwayo. 'The Natal Government will not let people bring them into my country and *you* won't help me.'* Dunn, ever with an eye to business, said that if Cetshwayo would refrain from sending his *impis* against the Swazis he himself would go to Natal and see if the Government would allow the importation of a certain number of guns into Zululand. On these terms Cetshwayo agreed to call off the war, at any rate for the time being.

Accordingly a few days later Dunn made his way to Durban and was fortunate in finding both the Lieutenant-Governor, R. W. Keate, and Theophilus Shepstone staying at one of the local hotels. He submitted the request that a limited importation of arms be granted to Cetshwayo on the grounds that there was a grave possibility of civil war. In order to maintain peace it was necessary to strengthen Cetshwayo's position, and if it became known that his party was armed with guns then the whole nation would flock to his standard, the rebellious factions would have no following, and thus order would be maintained. Dunn carefully concealed the fact that Cetshwayo's primary object was to use the firearms against the Swazis when opportunity offered.

After careful consideration the Governor agreed to grant permits for 250 guns and ammunition on condition that no further requests would be made and that their should be no smuggling of arms or ammunition into the country. Having purchased the guns, Dunn went back to Cetshwayo, to whom he sold the lot at an exorbitant profit. Though a few were breech-loading rifles of good quality the majority were Old Tower muskets, nicknamed

* John Dunn, *Cetshwayo and the Three Generals*, p. 27.

'Birmingham Gas-pipes', costing merely 10*s.* 6*d.* apiece, but sold by this astute young man to Cetshwayo at the rate of ten head of cattle for one gun!

Cetshwayo, blissfully ignorant of the fact that he was being badly duped, was delighted that Dunn had succeeded in his mission and told him: 'Now I see that you are really my friend and you have advised me for the best.' All thoughts of war with the Swazis were abandoned for the present, and Dunn was now given a number of young men in order that he might teach them how to use these newly acquired weapons effectively.

Feeling that he was in Cetshwayo's good books, Dunn ventured to suggest to him that he be given a further grant of land between the Tugela and Amatikulu Rivers, a stretch of country that was at that time but sparsely inhabited. It was his idea to get the whole of this area populated by natives who would come directly under his supervision and who would acknowledge him as their chief. As a start he intended to bring across the Tugela a number of natives who had been attached to him in Natal and settle them in this area. Others would then follow from different parts of Zululand, and Dunn so arranged matters with Cetshwayo that should any native leave his chief and come to reside in his territory he would then be free from all allegiance to his former master and would no longer be subject to the King's call to arms except with his (Dunn's) consent. The only stipulation was that if any native left another chief to enter Dunn's territory he would not be allowed to remove his cattle; these would be considered to have been forfeited to the King.

Thus a new and independent tribe was formed with the sanction of Cetshwayo, whose boundaries stretched from beyond the Ngoye Forest right down to the Tugela River, and every inhabitant of that region had to acknowledge the chieftainship of John Dunn.

Although the many favours granted to him were condoned by a fairly large section of the community, there were others who strongly opposed the actions of Cetshwayo, feeling, no doubt with some justification, that he was presuming too much on his position and usurping the rights of Mpande himself, who was

still King and had not yet made any public declaration nominating Cetshwayo as his heir and successor. True, many years before he had held him up as his 'Chief Son' before the Boers, but much had happened since those days and now there were others among his numerous sons who might possibly be considered as claimants to the throne.

Thus during the years 1858 to 1861 there was much unrest and discontent owing to the uncertainty as to the future heir. It was impossible for the Government of Natal to intervene as the question was a purely domestic one. The Zulus themselves were afraid to nominate an heir as there was no precedent for such an action, and Mpande persistently refrained from taking any decisive step. To make matters worse, of late he had been showing marked attention to the son of one of his favourite wives, a young boy named Umtonga, whose mother was exerting all her influence over the weak-minded monarch, hoping to get her son nominated as heir. Mpande had already referred to this in his private talk with Dunn, and now in an unguarded moment he let fall the remark in the hearing of others that 'his successor might yet be among the calves', (meaning 'not yet grown up').* A report of this soon reached Cetshwayo, who, realizing the seriousness of a fresh menace in an already dangerous situation, determined to act swiftly. Sending a strong body of soldiers to the home of this woman who had dared to plot against him, he had the whole kraal wiped out. It was a ruthless act, but the situation demanded stern measures and had Cetshwayo shown any weakness he would have lost the respect of his followers, for it was a firmly established law amongst the Zulu nation that anyone who spoke evil of the King – or his heir – must die, and no person whether noble or commoner could expect mercy to be shown once such an accusation had been proved.

Unfortunately for Cetshwayo, Umtonga and his brother Umgidhlwana, having possibly sensed the approach of danger, were away from home at this time, and when news of the slaughter

* *Memorials of Henrietta Robertson*, Chapter VII. The wife of an Anglican missionary, she was killed in 1864 when a wagon overturned, and is buried at Kwa Mondi.

reached them they fled to Natal. Cetshwayo requested the Natal Government to give them up. The Government refused, but undertook to place the young men under the supervision of an old and trusted chief who resided in the Colony.

While the two brothers were being escorted to their new home they managed to escape and this time fled to that district between the Umzinyati River and the Drakensberg in which Cornelius van Rooyen was living with certain other Boers. Cetshwayo was now more determined than ever to secure these two fugitives, for he feared that they might attempt to conspire with the Boers to wrest the kingdom from him as Mpande had done in the case of Dingaan some years previously. He placed himself at the head of a large body of warriors and marched off to demand of van Rooyen the immediate surrender of Umtonga and his brother. The Boers, to save their own skins, handed over the two brothers, but tried to strike a bargain by requesting Cetshwayo to cede to them that portion of the country which they were then occupying, but this Cetshwayo flatly refused. As he was leaving, the Boers made him a present of some cattle – a courtesy usually extended to any important visitor – and no doubt they were much relieved when the Zulu *impi* marched away.

Some time later the Boers spread around their own version of this incident. According to *their* story, in return for the handing over of Umtonga and his brother and the gift of the cattle Cetshwayo had ceded to them the land which they were occupying. (Incidentally, when this story came to the ears of Cetshwayo he promptly returned the cattle the Boers had given him.) In confirmation of the fact, so they asserted, Cetshwayo and his two brothers, Siwedu and Uhamu, had also signed a document ceding that part of the country to them! On this alleged bargain the Boers founded one of their claims to this area, which henceforward became known as a part of the 'Disputed Territory'.

There is not a vestige of truth in this story, and as far as the document is concerned it must be remembered that the Boers at that time were past-masters in the art of forged documents, especially when the question of land cessions arose. This was amply proved at a later date when the Commission of Inquiry sat to

investigate such claims.* Cetshwayo himself states: 'I have never given or sold any land to the Boers of the Transvaal. They tried to get me to sign a paper but I threw the pen down and never would do so, telling them that it was out of my power to either grant or sell land as it belonged to the King, my father, and the nation. I know the Boers say I signed a paper and that my brothers Uhamu and Siwedu did also. I never did, and if they say I held the pen or made a mark, giving or selling land, it is a lie!' This was confirmed by Dabulamanzi and other chiefs.† Shepstone also states, 'Panda [Mpande], who is still living, repudiated the bargain and Cetshwayo denied it.'

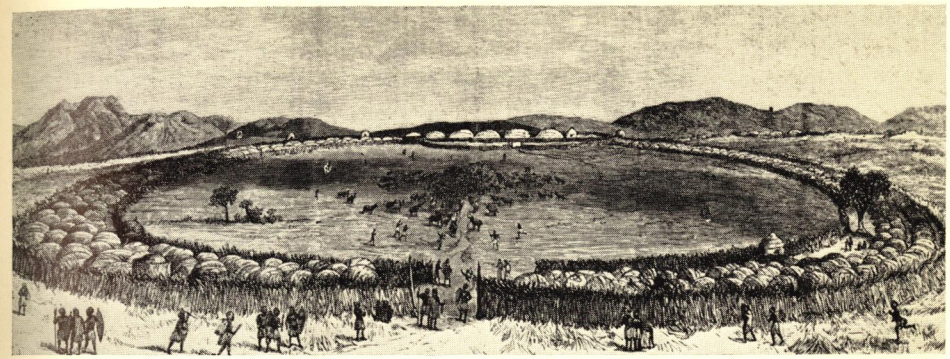
Meanwhile Mpande, much distressed at the loss of his favourite wife, the exiling of his young sons and the general unrest in his kingdom, sought the advice of Shepstone. Shepstone wisely grasped at the opportunity to intervene, hoping thereby to persuade Mpande to nominate his successor without further delay and so effect some sort of a reconciliation between the various factions which were splitting the nation asunder, causing such grave unrest throughout the land and presenting a continuous menace to the little Colony of Natal. Consequently he set out for Zululand in 1861.

Information about Mpande's approach to Shepstone had evidently been kept secret from Cetshwayo, for the first intimation that he received was a summons from his father stating that Shepstone had arrived at Nodwengu and desired his immediate presence. Needless to say, this came somewhat as a bombshell to Cetshwayo, whose first impulse was to send an urgent message to Dunn, from whom he hoped to ascertain the reason for this visit. On his arrival Dunn was questioned closely on the matter, but though undoubtedly he had drawn his own conclusions he could yet reply quite truthfully that this was the first he had heard of it.

The following morning, long before daybreak, Cetshwayo, very worried, routed Dunn out of his hut with the words 'Come out,

* See the statement of Cetshwayo and his *indunas* to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, written down by John Dunn about 3 April 1886, in his *Cetshwayo and the Three Generals*, pp. 127–31.

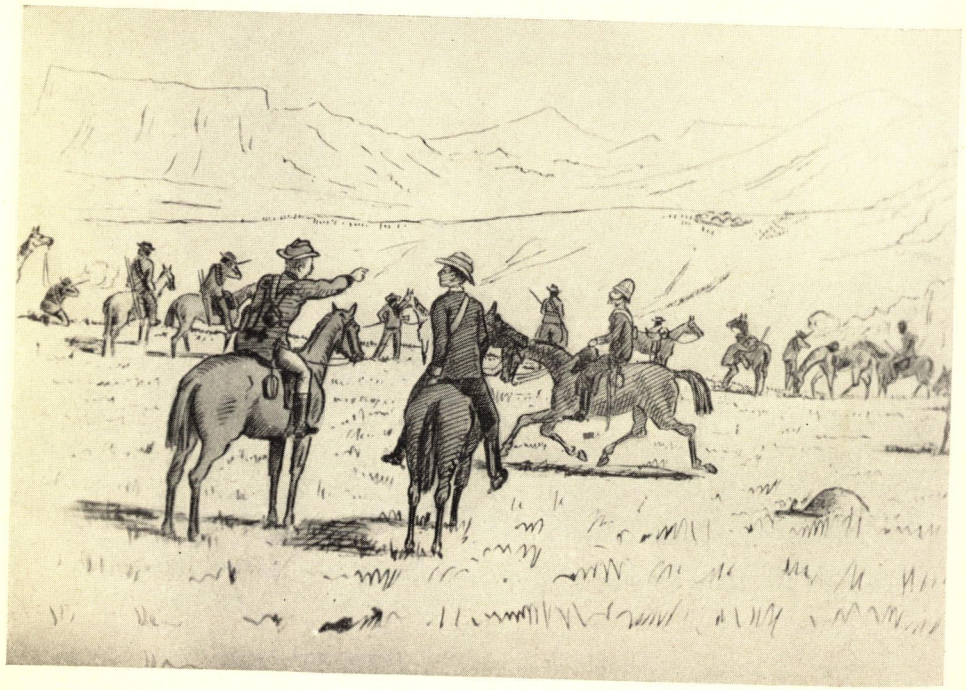
† See report of F. B. Fynney, 4 July 1877. He was the Border Agent on the Lower Tugela and was a fine Zulu linguist.



Cetshwayo's kraal at Ulundi

Colonel Pearson's column of troops marching to the relief of Eshowe Fort

Natal Mounted Police



Shepstone's Native Horse: a sketch made on the spot by Lt.-Col. Fairlie, 5 June 1879

I want to speak to you', and on his making an appearance Cetshwayo stated: 'I have not slept the whole night. My head has been thinking why Somtseu [Shepstone] sent for me. I wish you to go ahead, before I see him: I will follow and you can tell him I am coming, but send me back word should you see anything wrong.'*

This was more or less an order, so Dunn set off for Nodwengu and delivered to Shepstone the message that Cetshwayo was on his way; and he ascertained that the reason for the visit was to nominate Cetshwayo before the nation as the future heir to the throne. Dunn, as requested, now sent back a messenger to Cetshwayo giving him this news and informing him that his fears were groundless. The next day Cetshwayo and his retinue arrived at Nodwengu and the day following he had an interview with Shepstone.

As several days had to elapse before the numerous headmen and the nation could be assembled for the great *indaba*, Dunn absented himself for a while, returning a couple of days later to find Cetshwayo in a flaming rage, for it had been reported to him that Shepstone's *induna* had been taking great liberties at Mpande's kraal, even venturing within the sacred precincts of the King's *isigodhlo* (harem), an act of effrontery that was invariably punished by instant death. Dunn met the full blast of Cetshwayo's anger as he stormed: 'Does Somtseu know about the way his *induna*, Umgoza, is going on? Walking about the King's kraal as if it was his own and even going into the *isigodhlo*! What does he think he is? What is he but a dog! If it were not from fear of the "White House"† I would kill him at once!'‡

Dunn, realizing that a dangerous situation was likely to develop unless immediate steps were taken to prevent it, warned Shepstone and requested him to take Umgoza seriously to task for his conduct.

After this interview, during which Dunn stressed the extreme

* Dunn, *Cetshwayo and the Three Generals*, p. 30.

† A fairly wide term embracing the Natal authorities, with special reference to the Lieutenant-Governor as representing the Great White Queen.

‡ Dunn, *Cetshwayo and the Three Generals*, p. 31.

seriousness of the offence, he rode off home, for he felt that his presence was no longer necessary. As later events proved, it was unfortunate that he left before the Ceremony of Nomination, for his presence might have prevented the scenes of disorder that marred this memorable occasion.

Some days later the great *indaba* took place. But Cetshwayo, unable to restrain his wrath against Umgoza, had allowed news of the incident to leak out, with the result that his warriors were now blazing with anger at what they regarded as a direct insult to the nation. Consequently, when they reached the spot where the ceremony was to take place and saw Shepstone seated at the side of their King, Mpande, a wave of hostility swept over them against the man whom they held to be primarily responsible for Umgoza's outrage. The result was inevitable; the whole vast assembly became a roaring mob out for Umgoza's blood and demanding revenge.

Both Mpande and Cetshwayo were aware of the dangerous situation, for at any moment the warriors might surge forward and plunge their assegais into Shepstone. For close on two hours, passions were at white heat; yet Shepstone sat unperturbed and unflinching, with set face.

At last Mpande managed in some measure to quieten his unruly followers by ordering his *indunas* to belabour them with their sticks. He then stood up and in an eloquent and touching speech – the greatest he ever made in his long life – he berated his people for their shameful behaviour and utter disregard of all the duties of hospitality to a guest.

Then Shepstone rose with dignity and in stern tones addressed the assembled warriors: 'I know it is your purpose to kill me. That is an easy thing to do as I come among you unarmed. But I tell you Zulus that for every drop of my blood that falls to the ground, 10,000 men will come out of the seas yonder, from the country of which Natal is one of the cattle-kraals, and will bitterly avenge me.'*

Raising his arm as he uttered this solemn warning, he turned and pointed in the direction of the ocean, and in the silence which

* Haggard, *Cetshwayo and his White Neighbours*, p. 8.

followed almost every warrior present followed his gaze, as if expecting British troops to sweep down in vengeance upon them.

By his indomitable courage Shepstone had won the day; and from that moment his name became a power throughout the land, for the Zulus, to their credit, always honour and respect a brave man. Some time afterwards Cetshwayo himself, describing the scene, said, 'Somtseu is a great man; no man but he could have come through that day alive.'*

In the calm that followed Cetshwayo was duly nominated and declared the future heir to the throne, Shepstone himself being 'chief witness to the formal act'. Thus at last a settlement of this all-important question was effected, and, as Shepstone stated at a later date, 'The result was quiet to the Zulu country and relief to this Colony [Natal] from continuous apprehension of fresh disturbances.'

* Ibid., p. 10.

CHAPTER 5

The Death of Mpande

The Boers encroach upon Zululand; Mpande's death; gruesome burial rites; Shepstone sets out for Cetshwayo's coronation; the Royal salute is given prematurely

AFTER the excitement of the Nomination Ceremony had died down and the numerous chiefs with their followers had returned to their kraals, one of the first matters to which Mpande and Cetshwayo, in collaboration with the Great Zulu Council, gave their attention was the Land Dispute with the Boers, who were again causing trouble. In addition to land already unlawfully seized by them, they were now encroaching upon the *northern* borders of Zululand, and were reported to be erecting a line of beacons which penetrated deep into Zulu territory and to be claiming this land also as theirs. Worse still, they were driving the Zulus out of this area, seizing their cattle on flimsy pretexts and adopting their usual policy of flagrant aggression.

Messengers were sent warning these Boers that they were on Zulu territory, to which the reply was given 'that they were aware that they had no right to the land but were building for the King'. The only building they were doing was the erection of houses for themselves.

At last Mpande, driven to action by his Great Council, in order to assert his authority sent Tshingwayo, an important *induna*, along with some of his followers to the Luneberg district with instructions to build a kraal there on his behalf. He assumed that the Boers would never dare to interfere with a chief who was sent by the express orders of the King himself. The kraal was duly built and Tshingwayo returned, leaving some of his people behind to safeguard Zulu interests, but the moment his back was turned the Boers swarmed in again, destroyed the kraal and drove out the Zulus. Thus the situation daily became more serious. Mpande,

ever anxious to avoid a conflict, on 5 September 1861 sent a letter of protest to the British authorities in Natal giving details of the various acts of Boer aggression and requesting the Government to intervene.

Shepstone replied urging restraint and promised to look into the matter. Weeks passed but nothing was done. Another letter of protest was sent, and then another. Still Shepstone took no action; meanwhile the Boers were growing more and more aggressive. Eventually, after a long and careful deliberation by both King and Council, a fourth letter was addressed to the Natal Government (received by them on 5 June 1869), in which occur the following important passages:

> They [the Zulus] beg that the Governor will take a strip of country, the length and breadth of which is to be agreed upon between the Zulus and the Commissioners (for which they are asking) sent from Natal, the strip to abut on the Colony of Natal, and to run to the northward and eastward in such a manner, in a line parallel to the sea-coast, so as to interpose in all its length between the Boers and the Zulus, and to be governed by the Colony of Natal, and form a portion of it, if thought desirable.
>
> The Zulu people earnestly pray that this arrangement may be carried out immediately, because they have been neighbours of Natal for so many years, separated only by a stream of water, and no question has arisen between them and the Government of Natal; they know that where the boundary is fixed by agreement with the English there it will remain. Panda, Cetshwayo and all the heads of the Zulu people assembled, directed us to urge in the most earnest manner upon the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal the prayer we have stated.

The Lieutenant-Governor* forwarded a dispatch to the President of the South African Republic and suggested that the whole question be submitted to arbitration. The President accepted this proposal on condition that all expenses should be paid by the losing party. Correspondence dragged on for two years, during which Keate reminded the President that 'being already in possession of what the Zulu Authorities put forward as justifying their claims, he only awaits the like information from

* R. W. Keate.

the other side before visiting the locality and hearing the respective parties'.

On 16 August 1871 the Secretary of the South African Republic replied that he had 'been instructed to forward to the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal the necessary documents bearing on the Zulu question, together with a statement of the case, and hopes to do so by next post but that as the session of the Volksraad had been postponed from May to September it would be extremely difficult to settle the matter in 1871'. He therefore proposed January 1872 as a convenient time. Eight weeks later, on 9 October, Keate informed the President that the documents had not yet been received, but that he saw nothing that would be likely to prevent the meeting in the following January.

The promised papers were never sent, and consequently no arbitration took place during January nor any other month of that year, and Keate left Natal in December 1872.

Meanwhile an event happened in Zululand which for the time being put an end to all discussion on the question of the Border Dispute, for Mpande died on 18 October 1872 at his Nodwengu kraal. His death was not unexpected, for not only had he attained the ripe age of seventy-four years but for a long time he had been a very sick man, totally unable to attend to matters of State, though according to an old Zulu custom his illness had been kept secret and even those who knew of it dared not tell others; the most they were allowed to say was 'The King is *dunguzele* [indisposed]!' This secrecy was maintained even in the face of death itself and continued right through the period of burial; 'those who knew were too scared to tell, and those in the vicinity could only surmise'.* Eventually, of course, the full story leaked out, often with such added details that it was difficult to distinguish fact from fiction.

According to Zulu custom, no sooner was the monarch dead than his body, while still flexible, was bent into a sitting posture and was wrapped and bound inside the still wet hide of a black bull slaughtered for the purpose. 'For a whole month thereafter the body remained propped up against the central pillar in the

* Bryant, *The Zulu People*, p. 526.

hut, with a blazing fire nearby, till at last it had become quite odourless and dry. Throughout the whole of that period men had to sit watching in the hut with their nostrils plugged with Umsuzwane leaves, whilst the fire was kept supplied with fragrant woods in order to counteract the stench. No family wailing was permitted at a King's burial, lest it give the show away, and throughout the whole of the aforesaid period the King was reported to be "unwell".'*

The grave was dug in the usual place allotted to family heads, just outside the top and on the left-hand side of the great cattle-fold of Mpande's Nodwengu kraal.† All the body-wear of the dead King, his skin girdles, blankets and snuff boxes were buried with him, but his assegais, which had been removed from his hut immediately after death, were taken and buried secretly, far away and 'out of reach', lest his spirit should turn malicious and stab his former friends and foes with them.

Some of the customs at a Royal burial were grim and though it is reported that Cetshwayo forbade the most atrocious of these from fear of the British Government, yet there seems little doubt that Masipula, the Prime Minister, carried through many of them so that his late Royal Master should arrive in the spirit world with the customary pomp and ceremony which he felt was due to him. Cetshwayo himself, however, was not present at any of these functions connected with the burial, for it was contrary to custom for a new King to be present at his predecessor's funeral rites; he remained at his Ondini kraal.

Owing to the veil of secrecy which shrouded all these proceedings no official report is available, but it is a well-authenticated fact that the dead King's body-servants (*izinceku*), who had attended to his needs during life, were sacrificed at his death. These victims were ceremonially led into the Great Hut, where their necks, arms and legs were broken, while the personal valet of the late monarch was strangled. To the latter was given the place of honour in the grave, for his corpse was used as a couch

* Ibid., pp. 525–8.

† Now marked by a monument erected by the National Monuments Commission.

whereon to lay the body of their late King, while the other servants were interred near by.

The Royal burial being over, for the next two months a beast was slaughtered every day to provide food for Mpande and his servants in the spirit world, and in order that his ghost should not be unloved there, certain of the Royal ladies were required to accompany their late lord. These martyrs were compelled to walk silently and submissively to a spot three miles distant, known as kwaNkata, a flat bushy place opposite the uPate hill, on the farther bank of the White Umfolozi River, situated about a mile or so below the uPate drift. Here the official executioners entwined a long rope around the women's necks; two men pulled the rope taut with all their strength, while a third dealt heavy blows with a knobkerry on the rope itself. This gruesome method was adopted because it was not lawful for a Royal victim to appear before her master in the spirit world with 'blood upon the person'. When strangulation was effected the bodies were left untouched, lying as they fell, to be devoured by vultures.

Two months after the burial the regulation Great Hunt (*iHlambo*) was held in order to wash the spears of the warriors of any evil influence that may have come upon them as a result of the King's death. For this function all the clansmen assembled at the Great Place and later marched off to some selected wood, which was then surrounded, the game driven out and slain, after which fires were lit on the veld and everyone gathered round and feasted, later returning home to regale themselves still further with copious pots of beer. In this way, it was believed, all evil influences which might possibly have contaminated their spears were completely wiped away.

It was now essential that the Natal Government should be officially informed of Mpande's death and burial, and that steps should be taken to prepare for the Coronation of the new monarch, Cetshwayo. This was a necessary procedure, for there was still considerable opposition to his appointment up and down the country. Accordingly on 26 February 1873 Umhlabalala, Gwaisa and Hlabemcitsha, the messengers selected by the Zulu nation, together with John Dunn, set forth for Maritzburg

and on arrival submitted the following statement to the authorities:*

THE ZULU NATION ASSEMBLED has sent us to the Government of Natal; there were present Cetshwayo, Uhamu, Siwedu and the other sons of the King, together with all the Headmen of the Nation, mourning and cast down.

The Nation had suddenly found itself wandering it knows not whither; it wanders and wanders and wanders again, for its guide is no more. Although for many years the King was so ill that he could not move about, his spirit was still there, and by his words the Nation was guided and knew what to do; these have ceased and none but children are left.

We bring from the Nation the Head of the King [four oxen] to the Government of Natal.

The Nation asks that *Somtseu* [Shepstone] may prepare himself to go to Zululand when the winter is near and establish what is wanting among the Zulu people, for he knows all about it, and occupies the position of Father to the King's children. Another embassy will be sent to fetch him when the time comes; we ask only that he may prepare.

The Zulu Nation wishes to be more one with the Government of Natal; it desires to be covered with the same mantle; it wishes Somtseu to go and establish this unity by the charge which he will deliver when he arranges the family of the King, and that he shall breathe the spirit by which the Nation is to be governed.

We are also commissioned to urge what has already been urged so frequently, that the Government of Natal be extended so as to intervene between the Zulus and the territory of the Transvaal Republic.

On the return of the messengers it was reported by them that the Natal Government had received information from the Boers that the Zulus had invited the President of the South African Republic to visit Zululand and crown Cetshwayo as their King. Cetshwayo and his Council, realizing that this was another act of effrontery on the part of the Boers, for the Zulus had certainly not invited the Boer President, sent the following refutation by the messengers Manyono and Umpepa to the British authorities at Maritzburg:

* Official Blue Book C1137, 1873.

We are sent by the Zulu Nation to the Government of Natal. The last messengers, under Umhlabalala, took back intelligence that news had reached the Government of Natal that the Zulus had invited the President of the Transvaal to go in the winter time to set apart Cetshwayo to be King of the Zulus and that the deceased King's head had been sent to the Transvaal Republic.

We are directed to contradict these reports, and to explain with regard to them that in the last days of the King some Boers arrived at Nodwengu, the King's residence, and sought an interview with the King; they were told that he could not be seen, but they forced their way to where he lay and saw the condition he was in. They went away saying he could not live long and the people heard them. Shortly after this the King died; several times since have the Boers sent down to ask if the King still lived, and the answer has been in the affirmative.

Cetshwayo then received a message from the President of the Transvaal Republic asking him to go and meet him on a question of the boundary, but the Zulus said no such question could be discussed while the Nation was dead, so the meeting did not take place.

Two oxen were sent by Cetshwayo to the President, as food, and the messenger was authorized to answer the inquiry whether Panda yet lived in the negative.

The Zulu Headmen desire us to point out that both these were acts of courtesy . . .

The two oxen were presented by Cetshwayo as an act of civility and hospitality to supply a visitor of rank with food, and to serve as an apology for Cetshwayo's not having gone to meet the President at his invitation. *The Zulu Nation did not send the oxen, nor was their being sent intended to represent anything more than Cetshwayo's personal respect for his visitor.*

On the other hand, the oxen sent to the Natal Government were sent *by the Zulu Nation to carry the Head of the King to the Power to which, by the united will of the Zulu people, it really belongs,* and they have further willed that the son which is to succeed, *shall belong as its son to that same Power.**

The reply of the Government to this request for Shepstone to visit Zululand and perform the Coronation ceremony was considerably delayed because the Natal authorities were awaiting the arrival of the new Governor, in order that his sanction might first be obtained before this invitation was formally accepted.

* Author's italics.

Keate had left the Colony at the end of December 1872, and his successor did not arrive in Maritzburg until July 1873.

The new Governor, Sir Benjamin Pine, on being informed of the Zulu nation's desire, authorized an expedition and called for volunteers to form an escort befitting the occasion, for he felt that such an important ceremony should be made as impressive as possible in order to show the Zulu Nation that the British authorities were deeply concerned with their welfare. As the matter was urgent, arrangements were quickly made and messengers hurried to Zululand with the news.

A few days later quite an imposing cavalcade was on its way. The military escort, under Major Giles, consisted of 110 officers and men, representing nearly all the volunteer corps of Natal and including the Royal Durban Artillery, with two field-guns. Along with them there also went about 300 natives under their various headmen.

Before crossing the Tugela Shepstone sent the following message to Cetshwayo and the Zulu nobles:

I cross the Tugela as the representative of the Government of Natal with an escort befitting that position and the occasion that has rendered the visit necessary to the Zulus. I carry with me the dignity of the Government that has sent me. But the Head of that Government has desired me to make a preliminary stipulation, namely, that its courtesy and condescension be not stained by one drop of blood. My own rank in Zululand entitles me to make another, and it is that should any Zulu be adjudged to die for any political offence while I am in the country, such sentence shall not be carried out until the charges and evidence have been submitted to me. I shall expect to meet on my way a decided acceptance of these conditions, or I shall refuse to proceed, as I cannot allow myself to be a witness to the spilling of blood while I am deputed by my Government only to carry out a mission of peace.

I have every hope that the result of this mission will be to show the Zulu people that their interests and those of Natal are in many respects one. Each can give what the other wants; and by arrangements mutually agreed upon both can be served.

On 8 August 1873 the expedition crossed the Tugela at the Old Settlers Drift and entered Zululand, where they were met

with a gift from Cetshwayo of ten fine oxen and a message welcoming them to the country and placing all its resources at their disposal. As they proceeded the almost universal greeting from the womenfolk was (for all the men had been called to the Royal Kraal), 'We now see that the country will be settled, we feel it is more so already: make good laws for us: save us from the continual fear of death and provide that we may reap what we sow.'

Their journey of close on 100 miles from the Tugela took them into the heart of Zululand. Calling at the Norwegian Mission Station of Eshowe (Kwa Mondi), where Bishop Schreuder and his colleagues joined them, they rode through the valley of the Umhlatuzi River to one of the highest points in the country, called Emtonjaneni, from which they saw the White Umfolozi River.

At this point three messages reached Shepstone. The first was an answer to his communication sent forward when he entered Zululand and stated that 'they had no word of objection to the conditions I had laid down but accepted them as orders'. The second gave them a hearty welcome to the country, but also contained the somewhat startling news that 'Masipula, the Prime Minister, and the Zulu headman had in their impatience found themselves trespassing and had saluted Cetshwayo with the Royal Salute.' The third message was from John Dunn reporting that 'a portion of the Coronation Ceremony had been completed and had gone off quietly'.

The last two messages caused Shepstone considerable anxiety, for *all* arrangements for the Coronation had been placed in the hands of the Natal Government, which had deputed him to act on their behalf; Cetshwayo had agreed to this programme, no doubt under the impression that the projected visit would take place some time in June, when the nine months' ceremonial mourning for the late King would be completed. This is obvious from a message dated 3 May and confirmed by Shepstone himself, wherein it is stated, 'We are instructed to announce that Sidini, the *induna* selected to take charge of the Embassy which is coming to conduct Mr Shepstone to Zululand, will arrive this moon.'

Cetshwayo, who was staying at his Ondini kraal, near the

Umhlatuzi River, had therefore begun to make the necessary preparations for the ceremony. He had ordered the nation to assemble, and thousands of warriors had gathered together at this kraal to set forth on the Royal Progress to Mahlabatini, where the actual Coronation was to take place. As there was no news of the Natal expedition having crossed the Tugela Cetshwayo became somewhat anxious, for the task of feeding about 15,000 warriors was no easy one. He had therefore organized a great hunt, to serve the dual purpose of providing food for his hungry men and at the same time keeping them well occupied while waiting for Shepstone.

Meanwhile, Masipula, the Prime Minister, who all along had felt that it was derogatory to Zulu dignity to call in the assistance of the British to install a Zulu King, taking full advantage of this delay had persuaded Cetshwayo to halt his forces on the sacred slopes of Makheni, and there to celebrate some of the old-time Zulu ritual for the enthronement of a new King.

Three days after Cetshwayo's arrival here two more contingents of warriors had appeared, the one under the command of Sibebu, and the other under Mnyamana and Uhamu, three powerful chiefs from the northern districts of Zululand. Relations between these men and Cetshwayo had been strained, for they were jealous of his power and position. John Dunn, who was at the King's side, noted that they had formed up in battle array and were advancing from two directions in order to converge upon the spot where Cetshwayo's warriors were mustered. Suddenly Sibebu's men quickened their pace, making a rapid movement forward as if to attack. Dunn, grasping the danger of the situation, urged Cetshwayo to send forward messengers ordering Sibebu's men to halt; meanwhile the King quietly commanded the members of his own party to load their guns. It was an anxious moment, but the leaders paid heed to Cetshwayo's order and had sufficient command over their warriors to check any further advance. Explanations followed, and what might have been a serious collision, with heavy loss of life, was averted.

Now that the whole Zulu nation was assembled it was decided that Masipula should proclaim Cetshwayo King without further

delay and that the ancient ceremonial should take place on the following day.

Accordingly, the next morning this vast crowd of plumed and fully accoutred warriors marched in solemn procession to the cattle kraal (where all great ceremonies were held), their deep voices rising and falling in majestic harmony as they chanted their national anthem (*iHubo*). Forming up into one huge circle they stood round in silence while the chief medicine-man of the country started the ceremony by kindling the new fire with the tribal firesticks, thereby inaugurating a new reign in the life of the nation. Next, he mixed up the 'fortifying' (protective) charms to manufacture the new King's *inKata*, or magic grass ring. Each King had his own special private *inKata* which, when he died, was incorporated into the greater State or national *inKata*, made up of the *inKatas* of previous monarchs. This national *inKata* was an heirloom of the Royal family and was entrusted to the keeping of one of the elder queens, whilst the King's private *inKata* was kept by a specially selected old lady, who took up her residence in his *isiGodhlo* (Royal harem). The particular charms which were used in the make-up of the new king's *inKata* consisted of grass stolen from the top of the doorways of neighbouring powerful chiefs, bits of their wearing apparel and scraps of rubbish collected from the pathways leading to the Royal Kraal. Some of these charms were ceremonially burned by the medicine-man, who then smeared the body of the King with the ash, thus 'fortifying' him against all noxious influences.

While this ritual was being performed the next step in the ceremony was being prepared by pouring a varied mixture of vegetable matter into a large earthen pot and setting this on to boil. When all was ready the King was instructed to thrust his finger-tips into this brew and to lick them clean. By this act he was rendered powerful and made outstanding among his peers.

A still more potent spell was now produced – the animal charm. This was made up of human fat, together with that of the black mamba and of fearsome wild beasts. With this mixture the face and body of the new King were anointed; he was thus fully

protected from all harm, and was made great and powerful and would in future be possessed of occult powers.

Thus magically adorned, he was now led forth to his temple to pray, the temple in this case being the graves of his great ancestors, Jama and Senzangakhona. Following him in procession, chanting as they marched, were the thousands of warriors gathered from every part of the kingdom. Accompanying them was a herd of black oxen, and as each grave was reached several of these animals were sacrificed to the spirits of their ancestors, who were duly invoked in solemn chants to send down their blessings upon the new monarch.

On completion of this ritual the whole assembly, headed by the King, the chief medicine-man and the Prime Minister, marched back to the Great Kraal, all awaiting in eager anticipation the supreme moment of the whole ceremony. Here, in one of the most hallowed spots of their land, surrounded by his nobles, his chiefs and his magnificently arrayed warriors, the King, standing like an ebony statue upon the great State *inKata*, received from the hand of his Prime Minister the ancestral spear of the Zulu Kings, thus indicating before all men that henceforward he was their duly elected monarch, in whose hands lay the welfare of the nation and upon whom was conferred the power of life and death. Then, facing that vast assembly, the Prime Minister in a loud voice proclaimed Cetshwayo as King. Instantly, there rose great roars of acclamation, as the whole nation with one voice gave their new King the Royal salute – '*Bayete!*'*

At the conclusion of this ceremony there was much feasting and drinking, and the following day large numbers of warriors, together with many of the womenfolk who had assembled for the pageant, made their way back to their kraals. Cetshwayo

* The word '*Bayete*' was first used when Dingiswayo assumed paramountcy. 'It is an abbreviation of three words, *Ma Ba Lete*, and means "Let them bring". There is this peculiarity in the Umtetwa speech, that the *y* sound is employed where *l* is used in Zulu. Thus their pronunciation of *Ma Ba Lete* would be *Ma Ba Yete*. It would take the character of a proclamation by the praisers of the King to this effect: "The all-powerful reigns; if there be that which oppresses, or troubles the people *let them bring it*, and he will give them rest." ' (J. Y. Gibson's *The Story of the Zulus*.)

remained for another three days, and when there was still no news of Shepstone's arrival he too moved on to the vicinity of the Nodwengu kraal. Some days later he was informed that the expedition had at long last crossed the Tugela and was on its way to Emtonjaneni.

Shepstone, hearing that a portion of the Coronation ceremony had already been completed, and that the Royal salute had been given to Cetshwayo, was annoyed, for according to the original arrangement he was to have 'taken possession' of the King at his Ondini kraal and brought him along with him to Mahlabatini, where the Coronation was to take place. He sent a sharp note to Cetshwayo demanding a full explanation of his actions and threatening to return to Natal unless a satisfactory reply could be given.

The following day, 16 August, the expedition reached the mission station on the Imfule River, where a message was received from Cetshwayo reporting the sudden death of Masipula, in view of which the party was requested to proceed to Emtonjaneni and wait there for four days to allow the Court mourning for the late Prime Minister to be completed. Two days later Sibebu and Sirayo, two important chiefs, arrived with a gift of seven oxen and explained to Shepstone that the ceremony which had taken place was in no sense a slight upon him, nor was it in any way a substitution for any portion of the forthcoming installation ceremony: 'No one could do that but himself, for he came as Shaka. He was commissioned by the Zulus, and by the Government that was superior to the Zulus, and he had his own special rank besides; no one could contest that right with him and no one had ventured to contest it.'* Then six high-ranking Zulus presented a fine tusk of ivory as a personal gift to Shepstone from Cetshwayo and as a token of his apologies for any offence that his conduct might have caused.

Thus the breach was healed, the apology accepted, and next morning (24 August) the whole expedition crossed the White Umfolozi River, reaching their destination on the following day, where a camp was erected for the period of the Coronation.

* Blue Book, August 1873.

CHAPTER 6

The Coronation of Cetshwayo

Discussions between Cetshwayo and Shepstone; Shepstone performs the coronation ceremony; his talks with the Great Council; Christianity in Zululand; Shepstone leaves for Natal

As soon as the expedition had settled in at Mahlabatini, Cetshwayo sent a messenger to Shepstone asking what course of action he intended to adopt at the forthcoming ceremony. Shepstone replied that the King should call upon him as soon as possible and he himself would later repay the compliment; at these meetings all matters relating to the Coronation could be discussed.

The visit to Shepstone was fixed for the following day, but Cetshwayo was sick: in his place, however, several of the King's brothers and a number of his chief *indunas* came to offer their felicitations and a cordial welcome, while the band gave a performance which ended with the National Anthem.

The next day Cetshwayo was still laid up with a swollen leg, but the following afternoon (28 August) he and his *indunas* arrived. They were preceded by John Dunn in a carriage drawn by four grey horses; he had purchased this specially for Cetshwayo's Coronation, but the King instead of using his State coach walked slowly behind it! It was later explained to Shepstone that the *indunas* strongly objected to their monarch driving ahead of them while they had to walk.

As the procession approached it was seen that the King was accompanied by about fifty of his headmen, followed by about 1,500 warriors, all unarmed. Cetshwayo proceeded slowly, with great dignity, and as he drew nearer his pace grew slower, as if he expected someone to come forward to meet him. Dunn, sensing the reason, went out to accompany him and when the column was about a hundred yards away Shepstone and his officials advanced to meet his guests. Meanwhile, a mounted

escort of Volunteers had been drawn up in line, together with the Durban Artillery, who were stationed on their right. As the King drew near the escort was called to attention and the band struck up some martial music. Cetshwayo then warmly welcomed Shepstone to his country, expressing his pleasure and gratitude for this visit of the Queen's Representative in order to carry out his Coronation.

These formalities being over, the King, anxious to convince Shepstone that he had not been deceiving him on a false plea of sickness, asked leave to go into his tent, where he showed him a leg that was still inflamed, thus hampering his movements very considerably.

A lengthy discussion ensued about the Boers' encroachments. Cetshwayo stated that his people would rather die than submit to their preposterous claims; he also reproached the Natal Government for their dilatoriness in not having investigated these claims, for he and his councillors felt that some active steps should have been taken long before to put an end to this constant aggression.

To all these complaints Shepstone replied that he would return the King's visit on the morrow, when they would discuss not only this question but other matters of equal importance.

Accordingly, the following day (29 August) the whole party assembled at Cetshwayo's kraal, where they met the King and his leading headmen. For fully five hours discussion ranged over the following topics:

1. *The relations of Natal with Zululand.* The Zulus desired that these relations should not merely be continued on the same footing as in the past, but that they should be more cordial and intimate.
2. *New Laws.* Shepstone suggested new laws which should be promulgated at the Coronation, and after much discussion these laws were agreed upon and adopted by all the Zulu Council.
3. *Boer Aggression.* A lengthy argument was carried on regarding Boer aggression, and it was decided that the Natal Government would take up the matter with the Transvaal Republic at the earliest opportunity.

An interesting sidelight is thrown upon the character of Cetshwayo in the official report of this interview. During the

discussion the King rebuked his councillors for wandering from the point. 'Do you hear the wind?' he asked them on one occasion. 'Yes,' they replied. 'What does it say?' continued Cetshwayo. 'We cannot discover that it says anything,' was their answer. At which the King promptly retorted: 'That is exactly what you have been doing. Don't you see what my Father [Shepstone] means? Why do you not say so-and-so?' hitting the point exactly.

Shepstone remarks, regarding the character of Cetshwayo, that 'he is a man of considerable ability, much force of character and has a dignified manner; in all my conversations with him he was remarkably frank and straightforward and he ranks in every respect far above any Native Chief I have ever had to do with. I do not think that his disposition is very warlike and even if it is, his obesity will impose prudence; but he is naturally proud of the military traditions of his family, especially the policy and deeds of his uncle and predecessor Shaka, to which he made frequent reference. His sagacity enables him, however, to see clearly the bearing of the new circumstances by which he is surrounded and the necessity for so adjusting his policy as to suit them.'*

The next day (30 August) was the Day of Recrimination (*Ukubuzana*), an annual event instituted in the very early days of Zulu history and brought into prominence by Shaka. On that one day the King could be freely questioned, without fear of punishment, about his conduct or any new laws promulgated during the past year.

Often a battle of wits ensued, and in Shaka's time the questioner frequently had the tables turned upon him, for Shaka was not only an extremely able man but possessed a tongue like a rapier. It is reported that on one of these occasions a warrior questioned him about a Ntuli recruit, an ex-cannibal called Ndlela, who, having proved himself a brave and capable soldier, had received rapid promotion from Shaka, thus arousing some jealousy in the ranks. He asked: 'Why are outsiders promoted over the heads of the Zulus?' Like a flash came the answer: 'Any man who joins the Zulu army becomes a Zulu. Thereafter his promotion is

* Blue Book, August 1873.

purely a question of merit, irrespective of the road [ndlela] he came by.' There was a roar of applause at this pun.*

One can hardly imagine the stolid and somewhat obtuse Mpande ever answering in such a manner, but Cetshwayo was doubtless well able to hold his own, even though some of the queries coming from those who opposed him may have been barbed, for on this occasion the day passed off satisfactorily, though no details of the proceedings are recorded. The following afternoon (Sunday) Cetshwayo and his headmen visited the camp of the Volunteers, staying with the men for a couple of hours.†

During this visit Dabulamanzi, one of Cetshwayo's generals, who was regarded as one of the best rifle shots in the Zulu army, ventured to challenge the Volunteers to a shooting competition, using a bottle as target at a range of approximately 100 yards. They replied by pointing to one of the small drummer-boys, who was one of their best shots (though this fact was of course unknown to Dabulamanzi), and saying, 'If you can beat *this child* in shooting, then talk to us men.' A bottle being stuck up on an ant-heap and the distance duly measured off, Dabulamanzi was asked to fire the first shot. Raising the gun to his shoulder he took careful aim, pulled the trigger and missed! The little drummer-boy then fired and managed to land the bullet just under the bottle, raising a roar of applause. Dabulamanzi had to retire somewhat discomfited as one of the Volunteers remarked, 'Don't talk to us *men* after this about your shooting.'

That night there was a grand fireworks display and as rockets soared into the sky, cascading a flood of multi-coloured stars, loud were the exclamations of wonder from the spell-bound spectators, who had never before witnessed such a sight.

And so the great day of Cetshwayo's Coronation dawned (1 September 1873). Elaborate preparations had been made, and although the number present was much less than that at the earlier ceremony conducted by Masipula there was still a crowd of about 10,000 warriors.

* Ritter, *Shaka Zulu*, p. 161.

† These incidents are taken from the account of a spectator, A. Blamey, the manuscript of which is in the library of Dr Killie Campbell.

A large marquee had been erected in which were housed the many presents brought along for the King; prominent among these was the crown which was to be used for the ceremony. The design for this had been taken from the Zulu warrior's head-dress, but the master-tailor of the 75th Regiment had used his ingenuity to give these trappings a more dignified and peaceful appearance. Near at hand stood the Chair of State and on it was laid the scarlet and gold mantle which was to drape the shoulders and person of Cetshwayo when he should be presented to the nation as their King.

Meanwhile at the Volunteers' camp the bugles had sounded. The men had saddled their horses and fallen into line under the command of Major Giles. After ordering them to load their rifles and revolvers he addressed them as follows: 'Every man of you must be on the alert while we are over at the Coronation, and if we are attacked fire at the Zulus for all you are worth and die like true Britons, shoulder to shoulder.' Then the procession was formed up and moved to Mlambongwenya. At its head walked Shepstone, supported by his numerous officials, with the band of the Maritzburg Rifles playing martial music. Following them were the Durban Artillery drawing their two field-pieces,* and finally the long column of Mounted Volunteers. It formed an imposing spectacle, the officers in their glittering uniforms, the clergy in their robes, the long line of splendidly mounted men, the brightly polished metal on the horses' harness flashing in the brilliant sunlight.

Entering by the lower gate of the kraal, they took up their positions at the top end of the great arena where the marquee had been erected and where Cetshwayo and his councillors were assembled. All around the Zulu warriors were being jostled into position by their officers who, disdaining the word of command, were making effective use of their sticks, belabouring all who did not move quickly enough.

Shepstone then stood up and, speaking in fluent Zulu, explained the nature and importance of the ceremony he had come to perform, and the goodwill of the Natal Government in allowing

* These guns are now outside one of the buildings of the Old Fort at Durban.

him to visit them and in sending such a large escort with him. Then, expressly addressing the brothers of Cetshwayo, the nobles and councillors of the country, he asked a series of questions to which they must give their assent before the actual coronation could take place. These questions took the form of a summary of the deliberations which had already been held a couple of days earlier and were put to them, not only to refresh their memories, but to make them realize their significance and the importance of their being put into effect without delay.

The councillors having given their enthusiastic assent, Shepstone then proclaimed the following new laws, which were to be binding upon the nation from that day:

1. That the indiscriminate shedding of blood shall cease in the land.
2. That no Zulu shall be condemned without open trial and the public examination of witnesses for and against, and that he shall have a right of appeal to the King.
3. That no Zulu's life shall be taken without the previous knowledge and consent of the King.
4. That for minor crimes the loss of property, all or a portion, shall be substituted for the punishment of death.

Regarding these new laws Shepstone states, 'Although these were fully and even vehemently assented to, it cannot be expected that the amelioration described will immediately take effect. To have got such principles admitted and declared to be what a Zulu may plead when oppressed, was but sowing the seed which will still take many years to grow and mature.'*

It was now necessary for Shepstone, who was there in the place of Cetshwayo's father and thus represented the nation, to 'take possession' of Cetshwayo and 'so transform him that his own people would not know him; it must not be done in public; the Zulus had given him over to him. He must take him from their sight a minor and present him to them a man; he must take him as a Prince and restore him to them as their King.'

To do this he led Cetshwayo into the marquee, followed by the European officials. The flaps of the tent were then drawn and

* See Blue Book C1137, *Report of the Expedition Sent by the Natal Government*, August 1873, for this and later extracts.

guarded by two sentries of the Durban Royal Artillery. The Prince was thus in Shepstone's possession, unattended by any of his own people except one *inceku* (body servant). It was now necessary to transform him: this was effected by Shepstone putting the scarlet and gold mantle on his shoulders and by placing the crown upon his head. Meanwhile, outside the tent a carpet had been spread in a conspicuous spot facing the people, and on this stood the Chair of State, with another of a less pretentious nature placed alongside for Shepstone.

At the word of command the marquee was opened, the sentries stood to attention and Shepstone led forth Cetshwayo, duly seating him on his throne. After a few minutes' pause he rose and presented the King to his brothers, his councillors and his nobles, pointing out to them that he who but a short while ago was only a minor and a Prince was now their Ruler and their King.

The band struck up, heralds went among the people proclaiming Cetshwayo as King, the military escort stood to attention, and the Durban Artillery fired a salute of seventeen guns.

There now occurred an incident that might have had disastrous consequences. Most of the mounted men had dismounted, leaving their animals standing in line but quite unattended, except for Corporal Cooke of the Volunteers, who remained on his horse while the others wandered off on a tour of inspection of the King's huts. The moment the reading of the Proclamation had ended the thousands of Zulu warriors raised their shields aloft and struck them sharply with their sticks by way of applause. The noise was so sudden and startling that the horses stampeded and, wheeling to the left, charged down upon the spot where the King and Shepstone were seated. Corporal Cooke dashed forward and with great presence of mind turned the animals and soon had them under control. The smartness of his action drew shouts of admiration from the whole assembly.

The actual ceremony being completed, fourteen of the Volunteers gave an exhibition of horse-riding and jumping, and as donga after donga was cleared in fine style some Zulus were heard to exclaim, 'They fly over those dongas like *amatagati* [witch-doctors]!'

A little later Shepstone again addressed the councillors on the

responsibility laid upon them by the new laws and urged the King to show moderation, prudence and justice, for only in this way could the Zulus become a really contented, happy nation, and by following the peaceful pursuits of life instead of fighting among themselves or against the other nations they would gain the respect of all the Europeans on their borders; this more than anything was what the British Government desired of them.

Shepstone then presented Cetshwayo with the marquee just as it stood, the Coronation Chair, the carpet and numerous other gifts, which were all accepted with alacrity. After expressions of satisfaction and thanks from all sides the official party, with a small escort of Volunteers, rode over to a little kraal named Shaka's Saddle, to interview Shaka's sister, an old woman who had lived through many stirring times and witnessed many upheavals among the Zulu people. This visit gave much pleasure and brought to a close the official duties of a tiring day.

The following morning Shepstone paid his farewell visit to Cetshwayo and his Great Council, when he held another lengthy discussion with them. The subject of Zululand's good relations with Natal was once more stressed; concerning these Shepstone states: 'The Government of Natal has no formal or written treaty with Zululand. Such treaties between civilized Governments and savage tribes are usually objectionable and fail. They involve an admission of equality and thus mislead and produce misunderstanding. Again, men who cannot read are apt to forget, or distort the words of a treaty; they may pretend that they understood wrongly, consequently they bind only one party or often produce disagreement when the true meaning is enforced. It has always been admitted that Natal is the superior, Zululand the inferior power.'*

On the subject of relations between the Zulus and the Transvaal Republic it was only too obvious that there was very bitter feeling and much antagonism towards the Boers on account of their frequent seizure of Zulu territory. The Zulu Council again pressed Shepstone to do all in his power to get the matter settled without delay before it was too late and blood was spilt.

* Blue Book C1137.

The position of Christian missionaries and their converts was also discussed at length, and there was considerable justification for Cetshwayo's bitter jibe that 'a Christian Zulu was a Zulu spoiled', for in many cases the missionaries had only themselves to blame, as some of them were simply traders or political agitators in clerical garb. In considering the attitude of the Zulus themselves, two facts clearly emerged.

The first concerned polygamy. This was a national institution inbred in the nation for countless generations, and however much it may be argued to the contrary it was a *fact* that the women themselves liked it and strongly supported it. With the men, the number of wives was the indication of their wealth. Further, they were his servants and as such worked in his fields and produced the food necessary for himself and his family. This was a type of work which men would never under any circumstances consent to do; had they even attempted it, they would immediately have been held up to the ridicule of their fellow men. Again, when the missionary insisted on monogamy, was the Zulu to throw out the woman who had been faithful to him for many years, who had borne him children and loved them as any mother would? She may have been wife number two – or twenty-two for that matter – but she had the protection of her husband and the safety of her home, whereas if she were thrown out she would be regarded by the nation as an outcast, a useless shrew or an adultress, and adultery – a crime punished by death – was almost unknown. It was little wonder that as Sir Rider Haggard said,* 'The missionaries produce no more permanent effect on the Zulu mind than a child does on the granite rock which he chips at with his chisel.' Another writer who had a wonderful knowledge of the workings of the Zulu mind states,† 'Christian ethics were not compatible with the system by which the Kingdom [Zululand] had been set up and maintained.' It is obvious that the first step which had to be taken was to *civilize* these people and to wean them away from polygamy; then it might be possible to Christianize them.

The second fact that emerged in this discussion was that the men who embraced the Christian faith more often than not did

* *Cetshwayo and his White Neighbours*, p. 63. † Gibson, *Story of the Zulus*, p. 145.

so to escape punishment or to gain exemption from military service and the laws of the land. They considered that once they were garbed as Europeans and became nominal Christians they could roam about the country – often from one mission station to another – doing exactly as they pleased, which more often than not meant doing nothing except sponge on their neighbours for the means of existence. The situation was aptly summed up in a letter to the *Natal Colonist*, dated 6 November 1879: 'The higher Zulus were of opinion that some of the missionaries had made their stations places of refuge for bad characters and that such people held themselves free from the laws of the country which no King or chief would allow. In a few cases the missionaries were extremely rude to the King and he began to dislike to have any intercourse with them although he had no wish to interfere with their proper mission work.'

With regard to the new laws which had been proclaimed with such success, Shepstone makes the following important statement: 'I attribute my success to the sagacity of Cetshwayo, for my proposals, though unpalatable to the nobles, were warmly supported by him. He felt that the heads of the people had become possessed of a power which it was in his interest to curtail.'*

At the conclusion of these talks 'at a sign from Cetshwayo some fine tusks of ivory were now brought from the Royal apartments and laid before me [Shepstone], a herd of oxen had previously been driven into the enclosure. Cetshwayo addressed me saying he wished to convey to me the thanks of the Zulu people for the services I had rendered them and that the ivory and oxen I saw represented their gratitude. "He well knew," he said, "that the acknowledgment was small and that it was in no way the measure of what they felt and that it indicated more the poverty of the country than the greatness of their obligation. But," he added, "it is no bargain or sale; it is an expression of thanks and of a wish that on your way home your heart may be white and your path prosperous." '

In thanking Cetshwayo Shepstone told him that the Government 'had cheerfully incurred the cost of the expedition in the

* Blue Book C1137.

hope that it would tend not only to the future benefit of Zululand, but of the countries adjoining, that therefore, whether the thanks of the Zulus were represented by what did or did not fill the eye was of no consequence, that the Government of Natal would be satisfied if the great objects it had in view were put in a way of being accomplished.' Cetshwayo replied that 'nothing he could give would represent the obligations of the Zulus to the Government of Natal; they themselves now belonged to the Government and must be accepted in payment of that debt: but the offering they had made was an acknowledgement to me of the personal services I had rendered to the Zulu nation.'

The presents were duly accepted by Shepstone, as a refusal would have been considered an affront to the King and the Zulu nation, but on his return to Natal they were sold by public auction, the proceeds being paid over to the Treasury.

On 3 September camp was broken and the expedition set forth on its return to Natal, reaching Maritzburg on the 9th. The whole journey through Zululand was marked by an amazing exhibition of gratitude from high and low of both sexes, many having travelled miles for the occasion. All along the route, even as far as the Tugela itself, were groups of men and women patiently waiting to express their thanks to Shepstone and the expedition for what had been done by the Government on behalf of their King and country.

CHAPTER 7

The Reign of Cetshwayo

Cetshwayo builds up his military strength; the Natal Government refuses him permission to make war on the Swazis; the Border Dispute

SOME days before the Coronation a somewhat serious fire had broken out in Cetshwayo's kraal, and a number of huts had been burnt down, including some in the King's quarters. As a result a certain amount of pilfering had occurred in spite of the heavy penalties inflicted on any who might be caught. One of the articles stolen, strangely enough, was a case of chlorodyne belonging to Cetshwayo, who was much annoyed when he discovered its loss and issued instructions to some of his men to try to trace the thief.

A few days later it was reported that a case resembling the one stolen from the King's hut had been seen at the kraal of a servant who had returned to his home after the ceremony. Cetshwayo sent a man to investigate; the suspect, to give his visitor a special treat, took out half a dozen bottles of chlorodyne and emptied them into some pots of beer. After offering his guest a drink and taking one himself, he handed the remainder to his wives, who, finding it to their taste, quickly drank the lot. Soon its effects began to be felt: some of the women became unconscious, others fell ill. The King's messenger, who had drunk but sparingly, quietly made his way back to Cetshwayo and reported the incident.

A couple of days later the servant was summoned before the King and the Council of *indunas*, was confronted by his accuser, found guilty and condemned to death.

One of the King's first acts was to issue instructions for the erection of a huge new kraal. This was built on a ridge overlooking the Nolele Drift, which crosses the White Umfolozi River. (Little now remains of this place though the floors of some of the huts

can still be distinguished and on the site there is a large boulder which Cetshwayo used as a Seat of State when reviewing his troops.)

It is recorded that Cetshwayo, in building this new kraal, wished it to be similar in every respect to that which had been constructed for Dingaan many years earlier. So he sent numbers of his men to Mgungundhlovu to take careful measurements in order that an exact replica should be erected at Ondini. Some idea of the size of the kraal may be gained from the measurements made by the Rev. R. Robertson, a friend of Cetshwayo's: diameter, 747 yards; area of the *isibaya* (cattle kraal), approximately ninety acres; outside circumference of kraal, 2,354 yards (about one and a third miles). Between the inner and outer fences close on 1,000 huts were built in rows of three, each trio occupying a frontage of twenty yards. At the top of the kraal, facing the main entrance, were the huts of the King and his wives, behind which were numerous others housing his 'Maids of Honour' and their servants. Outside the main kraal were two smaller ones, one for milking the Royal cattle, the other for the storage of food. Any unauthorized persons found within the precincts of the King's quarters were liable to the death penalty, a regulation which was strictly enforced.

Some weeks after the Coronation, while thousands of people were building this new kraal, another event of importance took place – the receiving by the King of his inheritance in cattle. Orders went out that the great herds belonging to Mpande were to be assembled at Ondini for inspection. These cattle, though nominally belonging to the King, were in reality the property of the State and constituted its wealth. They were usually distributed among the various military kraals; officers were placed in charge of them whose duty it was to maintain the herds in good condition, reporting all deaths or thefts to their *indunas*, who in turn reported to the King. Thus a careful check was kept and should the King require any particular herd he knew exactly where it could be found and whom to summon in order to have it brought to him.

Soon vast numbers of cattle arrived from every part of the country until more than 100,000 were assembled. It was a

wonderful spectacle to watch as herd after herd passed before the King. Never was such a sight to be witnessed again in Zululand, for the dreaded lung-sickness had already made its appearance among the animals and this mustering together of such great numbers spread the disease as they returned to their kraals. So devastating was this epidemic that the number of cattle throughout the country was reduced by more than a half.

Now that Cetshwayo was firmly seated upon his throne it became obvious that he was determined to consolidate his position from a military point of view, and in this he was strongly backed by his Great Council, for it must be remembered that without this support he would have been almost powerless. This fact is often overlooked, but it is undoubtedly true that many of his great *indunas* were as powerful as the feudal barons in early English history. They wielded enormous influence, governing their subjects with a rod of iron, and should they disagree with the policy of the King would quickly rise against him in open rebellion. It says much, therefore, for the wisdom of Cetshwayo that he was able to sense their feeling, to gain their confidence and carry forward a policy that won their almost unanimous support. Many of them had lived through the tragic days of Dingaan; they knew from bitter experience the strength of the Boers and were determined to build up their military might to such a degree that should hostilities again break out they would be able to put up an effective resistance. The Boers' attempts to seize Zulu territory not only presented a constant menace but welded the Zulus together. This was obvious from Cetshwayo's remark to Shepstone, in the discussions prior to the Coronation, that the Zulus preferred to die rather than submit to Boer claims.

Consequently steps were taken to put this policy into operation. The military system, organized on such an efficient basis by Shaka, had in large measure been allowed to lapse during the weak reign of Mpande, and hundreds of men had evaded military service on the flimsiest excuses. The number of witch-doctors, all of whom were exempt from conscription, had increased enormously and had become a menace to the country with their ritual murders. It was therefore decided to take strong action, and the

indunas were ordered to call all their subjects to arms, punishing severely any who disobeyed. At frequent intervals they must appear at the Royal Kraal for training and manœuvres. The number and power of the witch-doctors was reduced by compelling them to live together in certain specified kraals, exceptions only being made in the case of the great doctors connected with the Royal Kraal or the kraals of the chief *indunas*.

The question of equipping the warriors with firearms was one which exercised the minds of both King and councillors, for it was realized that unless a satisfactory supply could be obtained their armies stood little chance of success. They knew that any request for weapons to the Natal Government would be flatly turned down. However, they took full advantage of the opportunity of importing them from the Portuguese. There was still another source of supply; many of the traders in Zululand, although such traffic was illegal, were only too ready to sell guns to the Zulus, reaping enormous profits, and many weapons secretly changed hands in this way.

Then also there was the problem of gunpowder. This problem was solved by the simple expedient of employing a Portuguese named Mqhali, who was willing to manufacture it for them, and although such supplies were naturally limited, yet they helped in some measure to satisfy an urgent need.

While this build-up of military strength was proceeding it was reported that a consignment of guns had been landed on the northern coast. Instructions were forwarded to the tribes occupying the territory between the Ubombo mountains and the sea to convey these to Ondini. Some days later, no arms having arrived, Sibebu was ordered to take a contingent of his warriors to investigate the cause of the delay. On his approach the tribes scattered, hiding around the lakes and in the woods. A desultory fight took place in which little damage was done on either side, but it proved to all recalcitrant Zulus that their King and Council were not to be trifled with and would brook no disobedience.

The Zulu system of espionage was again as efficient as in Shaka's day. Cetshwayo and his Council were fully aware of all the unrest in the Eastern Province, and reports were now pouring in of the

successful resistance being offered by Sekukuni* against the encroachments of the Boers in the Transvaal. Undoubtedly this gave them great satisfaction, for if a small tribe like the Bapedi could put up such a good fight then a nation of well-trained warriors such as the Zulus, with their large and powerful army, ought to be able to inflict a crushing defeat on the Boers when the day came for them to take their revenge. Thus hopes ran high, and messages of encouragement went from Zululand to Sekukuni urging him on to even greater efforts.

Meanwhile Cetshwayo himself grew restless, for he had to hold in check a large standing army that was eager for war. According to an old and well-established custom it was necessary for a newly crowned monarch to stabilize his position against evil influences by enabling his warriors to 'wash their spears' in the blood of an enemy. Much as Cetshwayo desired to send his men against the Boers he felt that the time was not yet ripe; they needed further training and greater experience in the use of firearms before facing so formidable a foe. Rather let them have their initiation in a contest with a weaker enemy, and who better for this venture than the hated Swazis?

But Cetshwayo and his Council had to be careful not to incur the wrath of Shepstone and the Natal Government. Thus to keep the peace with the British authorities and as an act of courtesy the Great Council decided to notify the Natal Government of their intentions and obtain leave to march against the Swazis, ostensibly with a view to punishing them for the theft of Zulu cattle. John Dunn was therefore asked to write a letter to Government expressing this desire.

The reply was a prompt refusal.

> The Lieut.-Governor sees no cause whatever for making war and informs Cetshwayo that such an intention on the part of the Zulus meets with his entire disapproval.
>
> Cetshwayo must also remember that the Amaswazi are almost entirely surrounded by white people who have settled in the country

* When the Transvaal Government attempted to exercise rights of possession over Sekukuni's territory in August 1876 this chief put up so stiff a resistance that the Boers were forced to retire and abandoned the enterprise.

> and it will be impossible for the Zulus, if war is made, to avoid getting into difficulties with them. . . .
>
> The Lieut.-Governor trusts that what he has said will be sufficient to deter Cetshwayo and the Zulu Nation from entertaining such a project.*

Cetshwayo and his Council were highly incensed. However, for the time being there was nothing they could do but submit.

In connection with this incident it is related that Cetshwayo, angered at Shepstone's reply, sent him a sack of a grain called *upoko* (millet) with this message: 'If you can count the grains in this sack then you may also be able to count the Zulu warriors.' Shepstone retorted by forwarding to Cetshwayo a large ox-hide with the recommendation that he 'count the hairs on this ox-hide, for they represent the number of British soldiers with whom you will have to contend.'

Matters had hardly settled down when suddenly the Border Dispute flared up again. A beast belonging to the Boers had died close to a Zulu kraal; they demanded that the Zulus assist them in dragging the carcase down to a donga to bury it. While this was being done one of the Boers started abusing a Zulu. High words ensued, whereupon the Boer shot the man dead. Cetshwayo protested both to Shepstone and the Transvaal Republic. The Boers admitted that their fellow-countryman was in the wrong, but no reparation was made and the murderer got off without any punishment. In defence of their action the Boers stated to the Natal Government that the Zulus had been stealing their cattle and sheep and accused a chief named Sirayo as the ringleader. Sirayo replied: 'Come and search my country; look at my cattle and sheep and see if you can see any of your property.' Needless to say, his challenge was not taken up.

In an endeavour to calm the Zulus Shepstone, on 3 April 1876, wrote to John Dunn requesting him to use his influence in restraining Cetshwayo and the Zulus from any acts of aggression. He was particularly anxious that peaceful relations should be maintained.

> You are probably aware that Her Majesty's Government have proposed that a Conference of Representatives from the different Governments

* Dunn, *Cetshwayo and the Three Generals*, p. 59.

and States in South Africa should be held in London this year, at which various questions of difference may be discussed and settled, and it would be unfortunate if at such a meeting, any aggressive act on the part of the Zulu people could be truly averred against them.

This Government will be represented by myself, and possibly others as well, at that Conference.

Should Cetshwayo desire to make any further statement on the subject of his difference with the Transvaal Government, the Lieut.-Governor will be prepared to forward it to the Secretary of State.

This Government has urged upon the Government of the Transvaal, as it has upon Cetshwayo, the great importance of moderation and of preserving the peace between the two countries, and he trusts that should a Conference be held, a means may be found of bringing to a satisfactory and equitable termination this long-vexed question.*

Dunn brought this communication before the Great Council of the Zulus where, after long discussion, a carefully worded statement was drawn up and forwarded to Shepstone for transmission to the Secretary of State. This document includes the following important passages:

We ignore any right or claim for land by the Dutch Boers on the Zulu nation, as Shaka, the founder of the Zulu tribe, claimed all the land from under the Drakensberg Mountains to the sea, by right of conquest. . . .

On the English defeating the Dutch Boers (or Emigrant Farmers of the Cape Colony) a party of Boers came and presented Mpande with a hundred head of cattle and asked for some land in the upper country, across the Buffalo River, where Langalibalele then lived, saying that they wished to act as a buffer between the English and the Zulus, to which Mpande agreed. Cetshwayo repudiates any further claim by the Boers on the Zulu country, as, on a pressing occasion, when the late King Mpande was alive, Cetshwayo went with a lot of his followers after some brothers of his who had fled to the Boers, but who were given up to him. On this occasion the Boers tried to get him to give them some land, which he refused to do. The Boers then made him a present of some cattle without any stipulation whatever. On Cetshwayo afterwards hearing that the Boers said they had given these cattle for land, he at once returned such cattle.

* Dunn, op. cit., Appendix, pp. 126–7.

After the lapse of some time, it came to his knowledge that his father Mpande had received some cattle and sheep from the Dutch, and hearing that, in consequence, the Boers again laid claim to land, he advised the Indunas to return the cattle. On several occasions have the Boers tried by representations to get documents signed by the late King Mpande and Cetshwayo for grants of land but have always been refused. On a pretext of a right to land the Boers have constantly kept the Zulu border in an unsettled state by harbouring people from the Zulu country who have taken the King's cattle away with them, which the Boers in their turn, deprive them of and keep them. Cetshwayo and his Indunas deny any claim that the Boers have for land in the Zulu country, as on one occasion when the question was again raised, the Indunas had 200 head of cattle collected and sent back to the Boers, who would not receive them, declaring that Mpande had given them the land, but the King on being questioned by the Indunas, denied that he had given away land. Shortly after this it was reported by the people on the borders that the Boers were putting up a line of beacons, cutting off a large portion of the Zulu country. On this becoming known, some of the Chiefs living in the neighbourhood ordered a lot of young men to pull up these beacons, which was done. Since this occurred, a Boer came with some Kaffirs and destroyed a kraal, and on some people trying to prevent him, he fired at them and wounded a young Zulu. On another occasion some Boers came and requested Mpande to place one of his headmen near them, naming a spot, which the King consented to do and on Zingwayo being sent, and upon his building a kraal, another party of Boers came and pulled it down. Upon another occasion a man was shot by a Boer for refusing to assist in skinning a cow. No notice was taken of this by the Boers. We state these facts to show that no aggressive acts have been committed by the Zulus. All these facts were duly reported to the British Government, and when Mr Shepstone came to this country to crown Cetshwayo the facts were again reported and he was begged to try and settle the question so as to prevent a war, which he promised to do, also to consult with the Governor of Natal about the matter, and a white man named Taylor was sent with some of the Indunas to see about the disputed boundary, and Mr Shepstone was to have let Cetshwayo know what steps would be taken.

Since the above, the Boers have on several occasions and on several pretexts, taken cattle to the number of upwards of fifty and have often beaten men, women and children, and they lately took a Zulu named

Manyonyob a prisoner, alleging for excuse that he had killed one of his own people.

We as a Nation now perceive that the Boers want to have trouble because the English, they openly say, are our protectors and not the Boers.*

It was naturally expected that this document would be taken to England and laid before the Secretary of State, but judging by the sequel it appears that this was not done, for nothing more was heard of it until Shepstone returned to Africa as Sir Theophilus, and by that time the scene of his activities was transferred to the Transvaal and his former attitude towards the Zulus had of necessity undergone considerable change.

Meanwhile there had occurred the most flagrant act of aggression that the Boers had yet committed. In spite of Shepstone's repeated entreaties to refrain from acts likely to cause further irritation the acting President Joubert had issued a Proclamation annexing the whole of the Disputed Territory to the Transvaal Republic, though arbitration had been agreed upon as far back as the régime of R. W. Keate. The Boers then proceeded to occupy this territory, exercising all the functions of government, even to levying taxes upon the natives.

Naturally, the Zulus were furious and bitterly resisted all Boer demands. War appeared imminent and had the Proclamation not been withdrawn, a clash would certainly have taken place.

In this connection Cetshwayo's letter to the Natal Government is of interest:

Cetshwayo desires to urge upon the Government of Natal to interfere and save the destruction of perhaps both countries, Zululand and the Transvaal. He requests us to state that he cannot and will not submit to being turned out of his own house. It may be that he will be vanquished, but as he is not the aggressor, death will not be so hard to meet.†

Fortunately Sir Henry Bulwer, the newly appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, was able to save the situation by appointing a Commission of Inquiry to arbitrate upon the whole Border Dispute. His prompt action prevented a disastrous war in which both sides would have suffered severe losses and the Boers, quite possibly, a humiliating defeat.

* Dunn, op. cit., Appendix, pp. 127–30. † Blue Book C1748, p. 14.

CHAPTER 8

Gathering Clouds

Marriage laws and witchcraft; Shepstone is knighted; Cetshwayo mobilizes on Transvaal borders; the Transvaal is annexed by Britain; Cetshwayo reluctantly agrees to arbitration

ABOUT August 1876 there occurred an event that was later to figure large in the charges that were brought against Cetshwayo. It is known in Zulu history as the 'Marriage of the Ingcugce'.

Years earlier, Shaka had realized that men without family ties became much better warriors than those encumbered with wives and children. So every warrior had to remain single till the King chose to grant permission for marriage; disobedience was punished by death. Girls were also governed by the same regulation.

Cetshwayo had also determined to enforce this rule strictly, with the result that at this time two of his regiments had already reached middle-age without having yet obtained the necessary permission to marry. He now decided that permission should be granted and that the two regiments should be allowed to wear the much-coveted *isiCoco* or head-ring, the distinguishing mark of a regiment of married men. At the same time he gave orders that the women whom these men were to marry must be taken from the Ingcugce regiment, which consisted entirely of young girls. The men were delighted, but the girls were furious, for they had no desire to marry men whose ages ranged from thirty-seven to forty; moreover, many had secretly formed alliances with young men belonging to junior regiments. So a number of them refused to obey the order; some fled to Natal, others to the Transvaal. Six or seven were seized and put to death, their bodies being placed in the principal paths or at the crossroads as a warning to others; parents who might venture to remove the bodies for burial knew that they and all their household would suffer a similar fate, and their cattle and possessions would also be confiscated by the State.

News of these tragic happenings soon reached the Natal authorities, and J. W. Shepstone, who had succeeded his elder brother as Secretary for Native Affairs and was known to the Zulus as 'Misjan', sent a message by two Government runners to Cetshwayo on 3 October 1876. Cetshwayo was told that the Lieutenant-Governor had heard with concern that many men and young women had been put to death by order of the King. It was hoped that these reports were incorrect, in view of the advice given at his Coronation.

The Lieut.-Governor therefore finds it difficult to believe that such acts have taken place in Zululand, or if they have taken place by Cetshwayo's orders, he looks forward to Cetshwayo's reply in great hope of a satisfactory explanation.'*

Unfortunately for all concerned, the Natal Government had blundered in the selection of the messengers, for one of them, Matshonga, was a bitter enemy of Cetshwayo's, having fought against him in the conflict with Mbuyazi, after which he had fled to Natal, where eventually he became employed by the Natal Government. Had he not been protected by the fact that he was a Government envoy he would have been promptly arrested by Cetshwayo and put to death as a traitor.

The message and the means of its delivery angered Cetshwayo. He and his Council felt, with a certain amount of justification, that this was an unwonted interference with the domestic policy of the nation, for after all they were an independent state and the Natal Government had no authority to dictate to them how their laws should be administered. Although they had no desire to come into direct conflict with the British authorities and did what they regarded as their best to acquiesce in their wishes, they felt that unless they were allowed to enforce this old law their authority would be seriously undermined and any relaxation of discipline would soon produce chaos.

The reply sent to the Lieutenant-Governor strongly expressed their exasperation, and was later to become known as the 'Outrageous Letter'.†

* Dunn, *Cetshwayo and the Three Generals*, pp. 142–3.

† Rider Haggard, *Cetshwayo and his White Neighbours*, note on pp. 13–14.

Did I ever tell Mr Shepstone I would not kill? Did he tell the White People I made such an arrangement? Because if he did he has deceived them. I do kill: but do not consider that I have done anything yet in the way of killing. Why do the White People start at nothing? I have not yet begun; I have yet to kill, it is the custom of our nation, and I shall not depart from it. Why does the Governor of Natal speak to me about my laws? Do I go to Natal and dictate to him about his laws? I shall not agree to any laws or rules from Natal and by doing so throw the large kraal which I govern into the water. My people will not listen unless they are killed, and while wishing to be friends with the English, I do not agree to give my people over to be governed by laws sent to me by them. Have I not asked the English to allow me to wash my spears since the death of my father Umpandi and they have kept playing with me all this time, treating me as a child? Go back and tell the English that I shall now act on my own account, and if they wish me to agree to their laws, I shall leave and become a wanderer, but before I go it will be seen, as I shall not go without having acted. Go back and tell the White Men this and let them hear it well. The Governor of Natal and I are equal; he is Governor of Natal and I am Governor here.

In assessing the tone of this outburst (the only one of its kind during Cetshwayo's reign), two facts should be borne in mind. Firstly, it was in no sense a *letter*; in its original form it was a *message* conveyed by word of mouth by the Government messenger to the Secretary for Native Affairs and in due course written down by him or by one of his subordinates. And secondly, as Matshonga was known to be bitterly hostile to Cetshwayo it is generally accepted that the message he delivered was much exaggerated in order to blacken Cetshwayo's reputation as much as possible.

Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that Cetshwayo was not strictly adhering to the promises he made at his Coronation and was behaving in an arbitrary manner. This is confirmed not only by a report from Osborn, the Resident Magistrate of Newcastle, about the killing of the girls, but also by a story told personally to the author by the grandson of a man called George Frederick Buntting.*

* The grandson, Mr G. G. Buntting, now (1962) lives at Fugitive's Drift Farm.

Buntting happened to be visiting a kraal on the slopes of the Hlobane Mountain for the purpose of trading, when news came through that Cetshwayo had lost his mother. Her death, as was usual with the Zulus, was attributed to witchcraft on the part of some person or persons evilly disposed towards her, and consequently victims had to be 'smelt out' by the witch-doctors. To Buntting's surprise, early one morning he found his wagon surrounded by a mob led by the witch-doctor.

Instantly grasping the danger of his situation, he was yet able to show them that he was, to all outward appearances, calm and unperturbed; he stood quietly facing the Zulus while the hideously garbed witch-doctor, to the accompaniment of the howls of his followers, danced and pirouetted around him, springing forward every now and again to raise the switch of wildebeeste tails as if about to strike, then stretching out his neck and glaring right into the face of the white man, sniffing him up and down, hunting to find the scent of the so-called guilty party so that the spears of the waiting warriors could be plunged into his body. It was a ghastly ordeal, but Buntting stood firm, and after a while the witch-doctor and his followers moved on, to swarm round the kraal and put the inhabitants through a similar testing. Terror-stricken, they were nevertheless encouraged by the trader's brave stand and for several hours they grimly endured the strain. Some time later the whole horde vanished as they had come.

Two days afterwards, as dawn was breaking, the trader was roused from his sleep by screams from the nearby kraal; the mob had returned, for the witch-doctor had decreed that these were the people responsible for the death of the King's mother, his switch had fallen upon them and all must die. The trader was spared, for no trace of guilt was found on him.

Although these occurrences indicate what was happening throughout the country it must not be assumed that the blame rested solely upon Cetshwayo, for he was fully supported by his Council, who must accept a large share of the responsibility.

Meanwhile events which were to have a great impact upon the future of Zululand were taking place outside that country.

Theophilus Shepstone, summoned for consultation with Her Majesty's Ministers, had left Natal about the end of June 1876. On his arrival in England at the end of July he was met by Sir Robert Herbert, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, and was requested to submit memoranda regarding Zululand and various matters relating to the South African Republic. He later had frequent meetings with Lord Carnarvon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and also with Sir Garnet Wolseley. It became clear to Shepstone that Carnarvon had arrived at the conclusion that the Government of South Africa should be placed on a footing somewhat similar to that of India. With this end in view it was decided to appoint Sir Bartle Frere – a man well versed in Anglo-Indian statesmanship – as High Commissioner for Southern Africa and Governor of the Cape.

To pave the way for this appointment Sir Garnet Wolseley was to visit Natal and ingratiate himself with all classes by lavish hospitality. He was to be supported by an impressive staff. Thus it was hoped to drown the spirit of independence in Natal and open up the path for the formation of a South-Eastern Confederation of States; when this softening-up process was completed Sir Bartle Frere would arrive upon the scene, take up the reins of authority and add the final touches to the plan. But before any Confederation could take place it was necessary not merely to subdue Natal but also to obliterate the independence of the Transvaal and bring that hostile and conservative Republic within the orbit of British influence. And who more suitable for the performance of this task than the man who understood the Boers so well, who spoke their language and who was held by them in great esteem, Theophilus Shepstone?

Accordingly it was decided that he should be appointed to carry this ambitious, though difficult, plan to fruition, and, in view of his long record of outstanding service to his country, as a prelude to his new post he was awarded a knighthood.

On 14 September the following telegram was received at the Colonial Office:

Army of President totally routed – deserters pouring into Pretoria – Sekukuni pursuing in force – meeting at Landrost Office Leydenburg

to ask British Government to take over Transvaal – Volksraad summoned fourth September.*

This was a heaven-sent opportunity for Lord Carnarvon, and he wrote to the Prime Minister, Disraeli, suggesting that Shepstone he sent back immediately to South Africa with a secret dispatch empowering him to take over the Transvaal if and when such opportunity should arise, and to become its first Governor. Disraeli readily gave his approval.

Accordingly, acting on Lord Carnarvon's instructions, Shepstone hurriedly packed his bags and on Saturday, 23 September went aboard the *Windsor*, arriving in Cape Town on 21 October, having suffered shipwreck just outside that port.

On reaching the Cape, Shepstone discovered that the telegram which had been the cause of his leaving England in such haste was not merely an exaggeration but contained statements that were completely false, for the President's army had not been 'totally routed', nor had Sekukuni 'pursued in force' – in fact he had failed to follow up the advantage which he had gained over the Boers. All danger from that quarter had passed away for the time being, but in its place two other factors loomed up ominously on the horizon.

The first of these concerned Cetshwayo and the Zulus. Exasperated beyond measure at the dilatoriness in the settlement of the Border Dispute and by further aggressive acts on the part of the Boers, the Zulus, encouraged by the successful resistance of Sekukuni, were mobilizing their forces on the borders of the Transvaal and were poised to strike at the first available opportunity.

The second disturbing factor was the condition of the Transvaal Government. The whole country was rent asunder with dissension. The Boers, refusing to continue the struggle against Sekukuni, had returned to their homes; they also repudiated the payment of all taxes; not only was revenue unobtainable but all authority was held in open defiance; the salaries of Government officials had not been paid for months, with the result that irregular and corrupt practices were rife; the Treasury was empty;

* C. J. Uys, *In the Era of Shepstone*, p. 173.

education was conspicuous by its absence; roads were appalling and utterly impassable in the rainy season, for there was no money to spend on them; water supplies were non-existent and, as many of the people were living under shockingly insanitary conditions, especially in the towns, enteric fever was claiming a heavy toll. Their own President, Burgers, addressing the Volksraad in March 1877, summed up the situation in stinging words:

> You have lost the country by your own stupidity. It is not this Englishman or that Englishman, it is you – you who have sold the country for a *soupie* [dram of liquor]. It is now too late, you have become a danger and a nuisance and, like Turkey, your prostrate carcase is infecting the air. England now says, as she said to Turkey, 'Remove it at once, remove it, or we shall do it at your cost.'*

Again, in the last speech he ever delivered to the Members of the Volksraad he lashed them mercilessly:

> Gentlemen, I may say in conclusion that when you want presidents, when you want doctors, when you want clergymen, when you want surgeons, when you want any educated men whatever, you have to get them from abroad; but whenever I bring forward measures for railways, for education and for other necessary advancements, you refuse to pass them or to pay for them. I say emphatically your independence is not *to be* lost, but *is* lost!*

But Burgers's words fell upon deaf ears; the Boers obstinately refused to lift a finger to help redeem their country from the chaotic state into which they had allowed it to drift.

On his arrival in the Transvaal Shepstone justly felt that drastic action was absolutely necessary. A heavy burden of responsibility rested upon his shoulders, for no one had a better understanding of the dangers of the situation than he. On the one hand was a hard core of narrow, bigoted Boers strongly opposed to all progress, with a deep hatred of Britain and all things British – a lawless, reckless community, everlastingly quarrelling amongst themselves, yet too obstinate to realize the dangers which threatened them from a huge indigenous population whose anger they had aroused by their all too frequent raids and depredations. On

* Dr J. W. Matthews, *Incwadi Yami*.

the other hand there was Cetshwayo with 50,000 magnificently trained warriors thirsting to avenge their defeat at Blood River. Up to this point Shepstone had been their wise counsellor and friend, and had been able to hold them in leash, but now it was his duty to try to effect a reconciliation in order to win the Boers to loyalty to the British Crown so that in case of a conflict between black and white – which was not unlikely – then all the white peoples would stand together. But by favouring the Transvaal Republic in its claims against the Zulus regarding their old dispute for territory, Shepstone knew he would rouse the wrath of that people against himself with the likelihood of their uniting with other native peoples, also eager for revenge, and thus set the whole country aflame. One thing, and one thing only, could save the situation – the Transvaal must be annexed and the power of Britain must be there to hold in check the legions of Cetshwayo and of Sekukuni; negotiations could come later and the influence which he knew he exerted over Cetshwayo must be used to prevent an immediate clash of arms.

Few men have been faced with so difficult a problem, for in the background was Carnarvon with his grandiose scheme of a Federated States of Africa, which Shepstone knew he could wreck by one false step. Was he to allow his heart to rule his head and be a humanitarian or to have his head rule his heart and be ruthless?

Some light is thrown upon the reason for his final decision to annex in a private conversation he had with Rider Haggard at this time. Haggard had suggested that it would be wiser to leave the country unannexed and retire to Natal. Then, said he, to quote his own words, 'The Zulus and the Boers will destroy each other and the Transvaal will fall like a ripe apple into the lap of Britain.' Shepstone retorted angrily by asking him if he understood what he was saying, for 'Such a policy would mean the destruction of thousands of white men, women and children by the Zulu assegais, to be followed probably by a great war between white and black.'*

Possibly Haggard was right, for, as he states, 'What happened?

* Haggard, *The Days of My Life*, p. 70.

First we had to fight the Zulus and slaughter them by thousands, paying no small toll ourselves, and then we had to fight the Boers, not once but twice. If we had allowed them to exhaust themselves upon each other the total loss of life would have been no greater, if so great, and the settlement of South Africa would have been effected without the shedding of British blood; moreover, in the end the Boers would have implored our assistance and gladly have accepted our rule.'

But Shepstone would not allow the Zulus or Sekukuni's *impis* to sweep across the Transvaal and so destroy a people whom he knew and respected in spite of all their idiosyncrasies. The thousands of warriors waiting along the frontier, eagerly anticipating an attack upon their hated enemies, must be sternly ordered to return to their kraals, for Britain was about to annex the Transvaal and as that territory would then be under her protection, Cetshwayo must not dare to attack it, for then he would be fighting, not against the Boers, but against the British, whom he always said he honoured and respected.

On 12 April 1877 the Transvaal was officially annexed. Britain took over all the responsibility for the rehabilitation of the country, the redemption of debts, the regular payment of the salaries of officials – something which was quite new to the Transvaal; she subdued Sekukuni with her military forces and eventually fought and conquered the Zulus at great cost to herself both in men and money, and then in a few short years she handed back the country to the Boers and received nothing in return but a heritage of recrimination, bitterness and hatred which remains with us to this day.

The main fact which emerges now is that the Border Dispute, which up to this time had been a dispute between the Zulus and the *Transvaal*, now became a dispute between the Zulus and *Britain*.

Cetshwayo's reaction to the Annexation reflects much credit on him. The Sekukuni war had resulted in the grave discomfiture of the Boer forces and confusion in the Transvaal. Cetshwayo was fully aware of the state of affairs in that troubled country, knew that the Boers were in no position to resist a Zulu onslaught and

realized that now was his opportunity to attack, as the following incident proves.

Cetshwayo's spies had reported to him that at the Vaal River a party of Boers had met Shepstone as he entered the Transvaal and in the excitement of the moment they had fired their guns into the air as a welcoming salute. Cetshwayo sent a message to Pretoria asking if it was true that 'his father' (Shepstone) had been fired at; if so, he would not hesitate to give the word to his armies to 'sweep the Transvaal'.

A little later, in a conversation with Fynney, the Border Agent, Cetshwayo said: 'I heard that the Boers were not treating him [Shepstone] properly and that they intended to put him in a corner. If they had done so I should not have waited for anything more. *Had but one shot been fired*, I should have said "What more do I wait for? They have touched my father." I should have poured my men over the land and I can tell you, son of Mr Fynney, the land would have burned with fire.'

When Shepstone told him the facts Cetshwayo replied: 'Kabana, my *impis* are gathered; now at my father's bidding I send them back to their homes,' and to Fynney he said, 'I am glad to know the Transvaal is English ground; perhaps now there may be rest,' and he continued: 'The Boers are a nation of liars; they are a bad people, bad altogether. I do not want them near my people; they lie and claim what is not theirs and ill-use my people.'*

The Border Dispute that had already lasted for sixteen years had to be settled finally. While Shepstone was Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, he had managed by adroit manœuvring and vague promises to put off any decision. Previously the blame for any Boer aggression could be laid squarely on the Transvaal Government, but now it became Shepstone's responsibility both to check all future aggression and to settle where the boundary line should be drawn between Zululand and the Transvaal. Not only were the Zulus pressing for a settlement but complaints were daily reaching the Administrator from Boers bemoaning the fact that their possessions and their lives were in great danger.

* Haggard, *Cetshwayo and his White Neighbours*, p. 29.

It was a delicate situation which placed Shepstone on the horns of a dilemma. Previously, and rightly, he had favoured the Zulus in their quarrel with the Boers, for he realized the justness of many of their complaints. Now as Administrator of the Transvaal he had to turn a complete volte-face in his attempt to curry favour with the Boers in order to consolidate Britain's hold of their country. This is obvious from his dispatch to Lord Carnarvon in which he writes:

> I shall be forced to take some action with regard to the Disputed Territory of which your Lordship has heard so much, but I shall be careful to avoid any direct issue. It is of the utmost importance that all questions involving disturbance outside of this territory should be, if possible, postponed until the Government of the Transvaal is consolidated and the numerous tribes within its boundaries have begun to feel and recognise the hand of the new administration.*

Accordingly, as the matter was urgent Shepstone arranged a meeting with the Boers and the Zulus at Conference Hill, near the Blood River, hoping to be able once more to put off the evil day, yet to give the impression that a settlement was at long last being seriously attempted.

Although only a few Boers were present there was a great gathering of Zulu chiefs. Shepstone, exerting his persuasive powers to the uttermost, attempted to get the Zulus to moderate their claims, but they, sensing the difficulties of Shepstone's situation, were adamant that the Buffalo River to its source in the Drakensberg should mark the boundary as it had done in the past.

After long hours of discussion it was clear that compromise was out of the question. Shepstone retired baffled, and the Conference ended in failure, the Zulus returning to their kraals disgusted and angry.

Some time later, Cetshwayo made a further appeal to Shepstone: 'Would he not remove the Queen's blanket from the Boers for the space of a moon – just for the space of *one* moon – and look the other way?' . . . 'It is the custom of our country when a new King is placed over the nation to wash their spears and it has been done

* Colenso and Durnford, *The Zulu War and its Origin*, p. 137.

in the case of all former Kings of Zululand. I am no King but sit in a heap. I cannot be a King till I have washed my assegais.'*

Shepstone sternly replied that there must be no war, or the wrath of Britain would descend upon Cetshwayo and the Zulu people. Thus baulked in his desire for revenge, Cetshwayo decided to take the initiative and send an *impi* to occupy the land in dispute. Fortunately for all concerned, immediately the Zulu warriors were sighted the Boers hastily gathered up their possessions and fled, leaving the Zulu forces in full possession.

From his quiet haven in Maritzburg Sir Henry Bulwer, the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, had been watching events. He was gravely disturbed and issued a message of peace: 'Let there be arbitration.' Cetshwayo and his Great Council accepted the proposition with alacrity. The situation was saved, and the danger of an immediate war was averted.

It was suggested to Cetshwayo that 'the Disputed Territory should be considered and treated as *neutral* between the two countries for the time being', to which the King replied:

> Cetshwayo hears what the Governor of Natal says and thanks him for these words, for they are good words; they show that the Natal Government still wishes Cetshwayo to drink water and live. Cetshwayo thanks the Governor for the words which say the ground in dispute should not be occupied while the matter is talked over . . . Cetshwayo says he cannot trust the Transvaal Boers any longer; they have killed his people, they have robbed them of their cattle on the slightest grounds.†

None the less, though he accepted the principle of arbitration, Cetshwayo's bitter feelings of resentment against Shepstone for thwarting him were apparent when he continued:

> He had hoped Somtseu [Shepstone] would have settled all these matters but he has not done so, he wishes to cast Cetshwayo off; he is no more a father but a firebrand.†

* Haggard, *Cetshwayo and his White Neighbours*, p. 30.
† Colenso and Durnford, *History of the Zulu War and its Origin*, pp. 142–3.

CHAPTER 9

The Path to War

Fighting within Cetshwayo's army; Sir Bartle Frere's dream of a Federation of African States; Commission of Inquiry on Border Dispute set up; war with the Zulus imminent

Sir Henry Bulwer had made his arbitration proposal about the Border Dispute on 8 December 1877. It was now necessary for him to inform Sir Bartle Frere, the High Commissioner, who had taken up his new post at the Cape the previous March, and to obtain his consent to act as referee when the findings of the Border Commission were submitted in due course.

Meanwhile events of great moment were happening in Zululand. December was always an important month among the Zulu people, for at that time the whole nation gathered together for the greatest event of the year, the four-day Feast of First-Fruits. The attendance of every man in the country was compulsory; absence, unless with the King's special sanction, was punished by death; even the young boys had to be present.*

On the last day of the Feast in 1877 two of the regiments that were quartered at Ulundi, the Tulwana and the Ngobamakosi, were involved in an unhappy incident. The Tulwana was the regiment to which Cetshwayo himself belonged and embodied in its ranks mainly seasoned warriors, the proud veterans of many a combat, whereas the Ngobamakosi was a comparatively new regiment consisting chiefly of young and inexperienced soldiers. At this time much bitter feeling existed between these two regiments owing to the fact that some of the Ingcugce girls had married members of the Tulwana in order to escape destruction and in so doing they had been obliged to abandon their young Ngobamakosi lovers. This animosity flared when the young Ngobamakosi, fired no doubt by the potent medicine of the witch-doctors,

* For a description of the Feast see Appendix A, p. 215.

suddenly attacked the junior ranks of the Tulwana with their sticks. The onslaught being unexpected, the Tulwana suffered so considerably that the whole regiment was roused to action; sticks were flung aside and assegais were seized, for the veterans were determined to teach these insolent young upstarts a lesson. The struggle went on till darkness fell.

Though many exaggerated accounts of the affair seeped through to Natal, Dunn, who was present, states that at least sixty to seventy men were killed. Many others were severely wounded. Most of these were taken over to the Norwegian Mission Station near by and were carefully tended by the two missionaries, Dr Oftebro and Mr Gundersen.

Cetshwayo was furious with the commander of the Ngobamakosi, Usigcwelegcwele, who fled to his home in the Ngoye Forest. Uhamu also, the chief *induna* of the Tulwana, made for his kraal north of the Income, declaring that nothing but the execution of Usigcwelegcwele would appease his wrath.

Stern action had to be taken, for this was open rebellion, which, if allowed to pass unpunished, might have disastrous results for the whole nation. Consequently Cetshwayo and his Great Council decreed that Usigcwelegcwele should die. He was summoned to appear before the King, but secret arrangements were made to waylay and kill him *en route*. Fortunately for him, Dunn discovered the plan and warned Usigcwelegcwele so that he found an excuse for not complying with the summons and was later able to adjust the matter by the payment of a heavy fine.

Now began a series of inaccurate reports to England by Sir Bartle Frere, who, having already determined to push through Lord Carnarvon's policy of a Federation of African States, decided to pave the way for its implementation by the complete subjugation of Zululand. To accomplish this it was necessary to paint the Zulus in the darkest colours as an unruly and barbaric race, unfit to govern their country and a menace to the white civilization of Natal. In this way he hoped to prepare the authorities in England for any drastic action which he might take, even to the extent of forcing a war upon the Zulu nation.

The fight at the Feast of First-Fruits gave him his first opportunity. He reported to the Colonial Office that 'many hundreds of men were killed' and laid the entire blame upon Cetshwayo.

Meanwhile, Sir Henry Bulwer was doing everything in his power to avert war.

Writing to Sir Bartle Frere on 26 November 1877, he said: 'I have always maintained since I have been here that the Zulus have in this matter of territory considerable right on their side,' and on 9 January 1878, he wrote to Sir Theophilus Shepstone:

> The question should be settled without coming to blows, and so long as the question can be settled peaceably nothing will or can justify a war. . . Why should there be war if the dispute can be settled by negotiation? I believe that it can be so settled and that if a war is begun now it will be begun without any necessity for it. . . . There is first the intermediation and enquiry by the Natal Commissioners. If you don't like, or if the Zulu King does not like their finding, then there can be an enquiry and reconsideration of the whole case by some one or more persons appointed by the High Commissioner, or by the Secretary of State. If the Zulu King will accept the decision obtained in this way, surely your Government will be prepared to accept it also. I really cannot see why this question should not be settled without a single shot being fired. If the Zulus are in earnest to have it settled peaceably, we certainly might be very much in earnest with the same object. Of course, there may not be the same mind on the part of the Boer population and that is a danger which you must guard against.*

Cetshwayo was now informed by Sir Henry Bulwer that the Commission of Inquiry would begin its deliberations at Rorke's Drift on Thursday, 7 March 1878, and that he must appoint three Zulu chiefs to represent his nation and to plead their cause. The Transvaal would be represented by three Boers nominated by their Government. The Commission of Inquiry appointed by the Colonial Office would consist of the Attorney-General of Natal (the Hon. M. H. Gallwey), the Secretary for Native Affairs (the Hon. J. W. Shepstone, younger brother of Sir Theophilus), Colonel A. W. Durnford (Royal Engineers), with the High Commissioner for South Africa, Sir Bartle Frere, acting as referee.

* Shepstone Papers.

This Commission duly assembled at the appointed place and immediately set about its arduous task, which kept it hard at work for five weeks.

Investigation revealed the fact that many of the so-called 'documents' presented to the Commissioners by the Boers were forgeries. In one case a statement purporting to have been drawn up in 1865 bore a cross against Mpande's name which had been witnessed by a whole Boer Commando and no one else. Another 'document' reported a meeting between Shepstone, Mpande and Cetshwayo on 16 March 1861, yet Shepstone did not arrive at the Nodwengu kraal until *May 9*. Other documents contained additions and alterations in writing which was totally different from that of the original.*

In due course the Commission found that 'there has been no cession of land at all by the Zulu King, past or present, or by the Zulu nation. Permission had only been given to squat and the land was looked on as belonging to the squatter for only so long as he occupied it, for the Zulu nation acknowledge no individual title to any land whatsoever.'

The full report on their findings was handed over to Sir Bartle Frere on 20 June and from that date till 11 December not one word of its contents was divulged to Cetshwayo or to any of the Zulu people.

This dilatoriness in the publication of the Report was little short of criminal, especially in view of the unsettled state of the country. The Cape had been waging war against the Gaikas and the Galekas. In the Transvaal there had been the struggle against Sekukuni in which the Boers had suffered a serious reverse, and hostilities were on the point of being resumed, possibly at the instigation of Cetshwayo, who had his spies in every part of the country and knew exactly what was going on. In the Transvaal, too, further trouble could be expected from the recalcitrant Boers, who were bitterly opposed to the Annexation and were waiting a favourable opportunity to strike. In Zululand tension

* For a more detailed account of these forgeries see Oliver Walker's *Proud Zulu*, pp. 81 and 161. Also Colenso and Durnford, *History of the Zulu War and its Origin*, p. 157.

was mounting daily; military preparations were being pushed forward along her borders, and though the older men counselled restraint the young warriors were clamouring for war.

Had Cetshwayo been informed of the findings of the Commission with as little delay as possible there is no doubt that *once the Award had been strictly enforced*, the rising tide of wrath among the Zulu people would have been allayed. But this did not fall in with the carefully prepared plans of Sir Bartle Frere and his military advisers, and it is impossible to avoid the suspicion that the Report was purposely withheld from Cetshwayo. It is known that Frere was bitterly disappointed with the findings of the Commissioners, for he had fully anticipated that they would have laid all the blame upon Cetshwayo. Now that his plans had gone awry, he would delay publication of the Report, hoping that Cetshwayo would become so exasperated that he would be forced by his military leaders into some act of indiscretion. These Frere would seize upon, exaggerate where necessary, and so present a picture to the British authorities of Cetshwayo as a bloodthirsty tyrant, holding his nation in thrall, committing daily the most unheard-of atrocities and presenting a terrible menace to the white inhabitants of both Natal and the Transvaal. Thus the blame for any hostilities that might break out would rest not on Frere, but upon Cetshwayo.

It was a subtle scheme, and Frere played his cards cleverly, for in those intervening months certain events happened in Zululand which immensely strengthened his position.

In July of that year (1878) two women, the unfaithful wives of the sons of the chief Sirayo, had fled into Natal, followed a few days later by their angry husbands, who were escorted by an armed band of Zulu warriors. These men illegally crossed the Buffalo River into British territory, seized the women by force, dragged them back across the river into Zululand, and there put them to death.

Sir Henry Bulwer issued a reprimand to Cetshwayo, who, as was later proved, knew nothing of the event till some time after it had happened. He was instructed to surrender the ringleaders to the British authorities for punishment. The Zulu King, taking

his cue from past experiences with the British, temporized by offering to pay an immediate fine of £50 as restitution. This was refused by the Natal Government, and a stern note was sent to Cetshwayo, who replied that he could not hand over the guilty parties till the whole matter had been discussed by his Great Council.

Sir Bartle Frere now pounced upon the incident and sent a highly exaggerated dispatch to Sir Michael Hicks Beach, the Colonial Secretary, concluding with the following passage:

> Unless apologized and atoned for by compliance with the Lieutenant Governor's demands that the leaders of the murderous gangs shall be given up to Justice, it will be necessary to send to the Zulu King *an Ultimatum which must put an end to pacific relations with our neighbours.**

The Colonial Secretary replied:

> The abduction and murder of the Zulu women who had taken refuge in Natal is undoubtedly a serious matter and no sufficient reparation for it has yet been made. But I observe that Cetshwayo has expressed his regret for this occurrence; and although the compensation offered by him was inadequate, there would seem to have been nothing in his conduct with regard to it which would preclude the hope of a satisfactory arrangement.†

In September a further incident took place, this time on the small island in the Tugela River, just below Fort Buckingham (Kranskop). Two Britishers – Smith, a surveyor, and Deighton, a trader – had gone to inspect a road which had fallen into disuse. Smith, owing to the unsettled state of the country, had been specially warned to proceed with great discretion. As there was little water in the river at the time the two men had wandered on to this small island, unaware that it was regarded by the Zulus as their territory. The Zulus' fear of a British invasion had become so great that orders had been issued by Cetshwayo to guard all the river crossings, and when the two men appeared on the island they were regarded as trespassers and surrounded by an armed Zulu patrol, who suspected them of examining the crossing with

* Blue Book C2220, p. 280. Author's italics. † Ibid., p. 320.

a view to its being used for the invasion of their country. They were ordered to sit down and were subjected to much indignity, the Zulus in a most excited state telling them that they had no right to be there. Eventually the warriors calmed down, but not before the Britishers had been detained for about an hour and a half.

In due course Sir Bartle Frere reported the matter to the Colonial Secretary, at first attaching no special significance to it. Hicks Beach replied:

> I concur with you in attributing no special importance to the seizure and temporary arrest of the surveyors, which was partly due to their own indiscretion and was evidently in no way sanctioned by the Zulu Authorities.

But a little later, with no fresh facts before him, Frere wrote:

> It was only one of many instances of insult and threatening such as cannot possibly be passed over without severe notice being taken of them. What occurred . . . seems to me a most serious insult and outrage and should be severely noticed.*

The following month on 7 October 1878, in the country north of the Pongola River, a savage raid took place upon some Swazi kraals: many cattle were looted, kraals were burned, some ten women were carried off as captives, several Swazis were killed and a number wounded. This attack was led by Umbilini, an ex-Swazi chief who had fled from his country when his claim to the throne was rejected by the Swazi nation. As a fugitive he had appealed to Cetshwayo and in return for his homage had been allowed to live in the disputed territory. He and his followers had taken possession of a number of rocky caves in the mountains near Luneberg, but had soon proved themselves to be nothing but a gang of freebooters. Nobody was safe in their vicinity; frequent raids were made by them on the Swazis, the Boers and even on the Zulus themselves; cattle were plundered, women and children were seized. Cetshwayo, exasperated beyond measure by his unruly conduct, gave the Boers full permission to kill him, but Umbilini evaded them.

* Colenso and Durnford, op. cit., pp. 175–6.

Reporting this incident in the *Cape Argus* John Dunn stated: 'It is an incontrovertible fact that Cetshwayo knew nothing of the raid upon the Swazis until it was all over; and, when the report reached him, he was so incensed that he gave orders for a party to go out and kill the freebooter.' However, the King's purpose was frustrated through Mnyamana, one of the *indunas*, who let Umbilini know in good time and enabled him to escape.

Sir Bartle Frere viewed the raid as 'made by Umbilini with the connivance, if not under the orders, of Cetshwayo', further stating that 'the indiscriminate massacre of every human being, armed or unarmed, including women and children is by no means a new feature in Zulu warfare'.* He felt that the time was now opportune, not only for the release of the Report on the Border Dispute, but for that much more important document, the Ultimatum to the Zulu King which he knew must result in war – but it would be an easy conquest, so he thought, and thus his great scheme would march to its fulfilment; a Federation of African States with himself as its first Governor-General.

* Blue Book C2308, p. 62.

CHAPTER 10

The Storm Breaks

Frere asks for reinforcements; the findings of the Border Commission are presented to Cetshwayo; he is also given an Ultimatum; war breaks out

CETSHWAYO, thwarted in his attacks upon the Boers, now had the onerous task of holding the thousands of his young warriors in check. He organized great hunts which tended in some measure to distract their attention from the military preparations which were going on all along their borders, for Cetshwayo himself and many of his senior councillors were opposed to war.

Meanwhile, Sir Bartle Frere, who had arrived in Maritzburg on 23 September, was urging on London the necessity of immediate military reinforcements. On 30 September he wrote to the Colonial Secretary:

The people here seem slumbering on a volcano and I much fear you will not be able to send out the reinforcements we have asked for in time to prevent an explosion. The Zulus are now quite out of hand and the maintenance of peace depends upon their forbearance.*

On Sir Henry Bulwer he wrote:

I found his opinions differed widely from mine on many points. On some I think I have succeeded in bringing him round to my views, on others I hope to do so.†

On 28 October he wrote again:

I can only repeat my own conviction that the continued preservation of peace depends no longer on what the servants of the British Government here may do or abstain from doing, but simply on the caprice of an ignorant and bloodthirsty despot, with an organized force of at least 40,000 armed men at his absolute command.‡

* Martineau, *Life and Letters of Sir Bartle Frere*, p. 245.
† Ibid., p. 246. ‡ Ibid., p. 259.

To the above dispatches the Colonial Secretary replied:

Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to comply with a request for a reinforcement of troops. All the information which has hitherto reached them with respect to the position of affairs in Zululand appears to them to justify a confident hope that by the exercise of prudence and by meeting the Zulus in a spirit of forbearance and reasonable compromise it will be possible to avert the very serious evil of a war with Cetshwayo.*

This did not suit Frere's plan of campaign so he proceeded to paint the situation in even darker colours, telegraphing on 5 November:

Troops asked for urgently needed to prevent war of races. . . . On other side of fordable river Zulu army 40 to 60,000 strong, well-armed, unconquered, insolent; burning to clear out white men.†

The Colonial Secretary, having counselled restraint and pointed out the urgent necessity of a peaceful settlement, now administered a mild rebuke to Frere for his delay in communicating the findings of the Border Commissioners to Cetshwayo. He wrote on 12 November:

I trust that Cetshwayo may have been informed that a decision regarding the disputed boundary would speedily be communicated to him. His complaint that the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal 'is hiding from him the answer that has come from across the sea about the land boundary question and is only making an excuse for taking time so as to surprise him', is not altogether an unnatural one for a native chief situated in his circumstances, who is necessarily ignorant of much that has passed on this subject, and of the many causes to which the delay is attributable. But *it is a misunderstanding which it should be the earnest endeavour of the Government to remove* and I am confident that there is no need to impress upon you the importance of losing no time in dealing with this question, or the beneficial effect which its satisfactory settlement may be expected to have upon the strained relations which you describe as now existing between the Colony of Natal and the Zulu Nation.‡

* Martineau, *Life and Letters of Sir Bartle Frere*, p. 262.
† Ibid., p. 261. ‡ Blue Book C2220, p. 322. Author's italics.

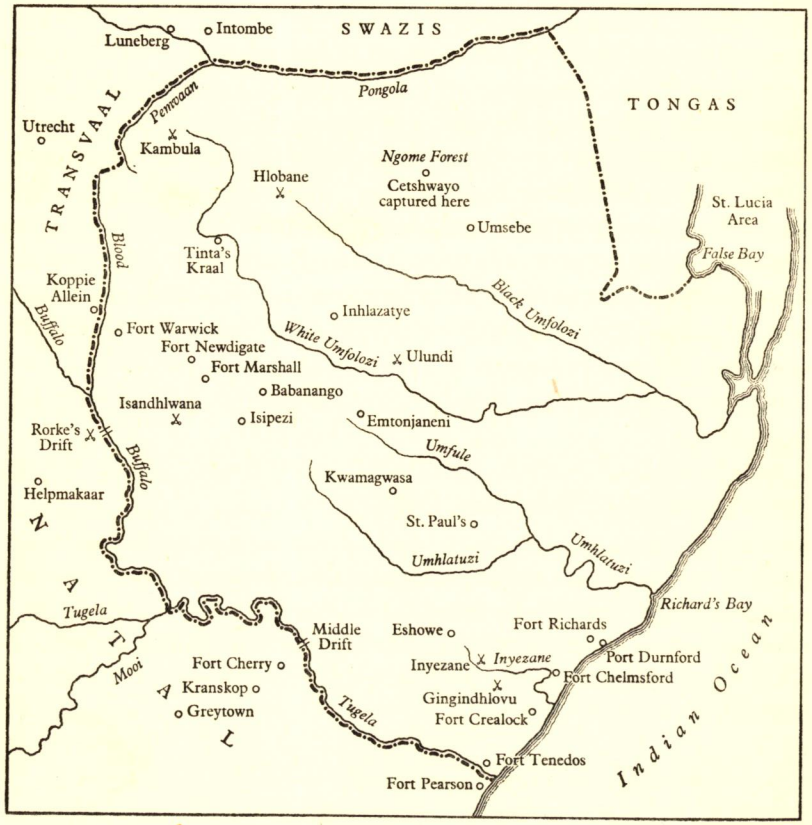
Disregarding this rebuke, Frere pushed ahead with his plans, and about the time of the delivery of the findings of the Border Commission to Cetshwayo he published, without even consulting Natal's Lieutenant-Governor, a special Memorandum in the Natal papers which caused a considerable sensation; it stated that a Resident would be appointed in Zululand and the territory allotted to Cetshwayo would only be ceded on certain conditions.

Months before, the whole of this Disputed Territory had been allocated to the Boers by the Transvaal Government; all they now had to do was to claim their farms, which, according to Frere, they would then occupy *under British guarantee*. Thus the land which had been allocated to the Zulus by the Border Commission would now, to all intents and purposes, be taken away from them in spite of the Commissioners' findings that the Boers had no claim to this territory. As a sop to the Zulus they would be told that *the land* belonged to them, though they would have no power to evict any Boer dwelling upon it and no control over his actions.

On receipt of further dispatches from Frere, Hicks Beach wrote again on 21 November 1878:

The several circumstances which you have reported as tending to cause an open rupture do not appear, in themselves, to present any difficulties which are not capable of a peaceful solution. . . . On a full review, therefore, of all the circumstances reported by you and influenced by the strong representations made by Lord Chelmsford as to the insufficiency of his present force to ensure the safety of the European residents in Natal and the Transvaal, Her Majesty's Government have felt themselves justified in directing that further re-inforcements of troops, as well as the additional officers recently placed under orders for special service, should be sent out to Natal and the necessary steps will at once be taken for this purpose. But in conveying to you the decision at which, in compliance with your urgent representations, Her Majesty's Government have arrived, it is my duty to impress upon you that in supplying these reinforcements it is the desire of Her Majesty's Government not to furnish means for a campaign of invasion and conquest but to afford such protection as may be necessary at this juncture to the lives and property of the Colonists. Though the present aspect of affairs is menacing in a high degree, I can by no means

arrive at the conclusion that war with the Zulus should be unavoidable, and I am confident that you, in concert with Sir H. Bulwer, will use every effort to overcome the existing difficulties by judgment and forbearance, and to avoid an evil so much to be deprecated as a Zulu war.*



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The repeated warnings of the Colonial Secretary went unheeded. Messengers were sent to Cetshwayo demanding that he send his envoys to meet representatives of the Natal Government at the Tugela Drift on 11 December, there to hear the results of the deliberations of the Commissioners regarding the Border

* Blue Book C2220, pp. 320–1.

Dispute. Frere did not tell Cetshwayo, nor did he even hint at the fact, that within half an hour of the presentation of the findings of the Border Commission he would also receive an Ultimatum which would be tantamount to a declaration of war against the Zulu nation unless its terms were agreed upon within thirty days.

Accordingly all the parties concerned assembled at what is now known as the Ultimatum Tree on the Natal side of the Tugela River, near the old Settlers' Drift, on 11 December 1878. The British Government was represented by Hon. J. W. Shepstone (Secretary of Native Affairs, Natal), Hon. Charles Brownlee (Commissioner for Native Affairs, Cape Colony), Henry Francis Fynn (Magistrate of Umsinga), and Colonel F. Walker (Scots Guards). Three principal and eleven subordinate chiefs, together with John Dunn, represented Cetshwayo; the Zulus also had forty to fifty followers with them.

The Award concerning the Disputed Territory was read by John Shepstone, who then translated it into Zulu; it was obvious that the findings gave general satisfaction. Not until later did the Zulus learn of the conditions which Frere had attached to these findings, of the fact that it was only the *sovereignty* that would be restored to Cetshwayo, and of the appointment of a Resident who was to see that the occupation by the Boers was safeguarded.

Up to this point the Zulus had had only a mild foretaste of what was to follow. Half an hour later all the delegates were again summoned and the document called the Ultimatum was read to them. In that document Cetshwayo was called upon to (1) deliver up to the Natal Government for trial Mehlo-Ka-Zulu and those of his relatives who had aided him in the seizure of the wives of Sirayo on Natal territory (a fine of 500 head of cattle must also be paid for this offence); and (2) pay a fine of 100 head of cattle for the insult to Smith and Deighton at Middle Drift on the Tugela.

These provisions were to be complied with within twenty days. Further:

It is necessary that the military system which is at present kept up by the King should be done away with, as a bad and hurtful one, and that he should instead adopt such military regulations as may be

decided on after consultation with the Great Council of the Zulus, and with the representatives of the British Government.

It is necessary that the Zulu army, as it is now, shall be disbanded, and that the men shall return to their homes.

Let the obligation on every able-bodied man to come out for the defence of his country, when it is needed, remain, but until then let it be that every man shall live, if he pleases, quietly at his own home.

Let every man then be free to remain at his home, and let him plant and sow; reap and tend his cattle, and let him live in peace with his family.

Let him not be called out for war or for fighting, or for assembling in regiments, except with the permission of the Great Council of the nation assembled, and with the consent also of the British Government.

Let every man, when he comes to man's estate, be free to marry. Let him not wait for years before he gets permission to do this, for oftentimes the King forgets to give the permission, and the years pass on and the man becomes old. But let him be free to marry when he pleases, as it is in Natal.

So will the King have contented subjects.

Then with respect to the promises made at the Coronation, let rules at once be laid down that any Zulu, man or woman, old or young, who is accused of any crime, be tried by properly appointed Indunas before punishment, that no one may be punished without cause, and that the life of no one be taken until the offence of which he is accused be heard openly against him, and on answers given by him in defence, in order that those by whom he is tried may say whether he is guilty or not before he is punished; and if anyone is declared guilty let him not be killed until the King has given his consent, and until the person declared guilty has been able to make an appeal to the King.

Thus it was promised it should be at the time of the Coronation but the promises have not been kept.

But in future it will be necessary that the promises be kept, for the British Government holds itself bound to see that this is so, and in order that they may be kept and that the laws regarding them may be duly carried out, the Queen's High Commissioner, on behalf of the British Government, will appoint an officer as his deputy to reside in the Zulu country, or on its immediate borders, who will be the eyes and ears and mouth of the British Government towards the Zulu King and the Great Council of the nation.

What words the King or the Council of the nation may desire to say

to the British Government can then be said through this officer, as also what words the British Government may desire to say to the King and the Great Council can be said through him, so that all misunderstandings and questions that arise between the two countries, or between the subjects of the two countries, may be dealt with and settled through this one officer speaking with the King and the Great Council.

This officer will see that the rules regarding the trials of all Zulus before punishment are kept, and that no man is killed without trial, but that all men may have an opportunity of answering the accusations brought against them and if need be, of appealing to the King.

He will see also that the arrangements to be made regarding the army are carried out; that no one is called out for war without necessity; that all men are allowed to live at their homes in peace, and that every young man is free to marry. So it will be well with the Zulu people.

These are the words of Her Majesty's High Commissioner which the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal sends to the Zulu King and the chief men of the nation, and for the whole Zulu nation.

These are the conditions which Her Majesty's High Commissioner in the name of the British Government considers necessary for the establishment of a satisfactory state of things in the Zulu country and for the peace and safety of the adjoining countries. Let therefore, the King and the chief men of the nation consider them and let them give their answer regarding them *within 30 days from the day on which this communication is made to the Zulu representatives*,* in order that Her Majesty's High Commissioner may then know if the King and the Great Council agrees to the words which are here given and will give effect to these conditions, which are necessary both for the peace and safety of the Queen's subjects and allies and also for the safety and welfare of the Zulu people, to which the Queen's Government wishes well.

After listening attentively to the words of the Ultimatum and hearing of the reforms which were to ameliorate the condition of the Zulus, one of the King's councillors asked the pertinent question, 'Have the Zulus complained?' Some of the deputies then attempted to argue upon the terms which had been presented, but Shepstone firmly replied that he had no authority to discuss the matter, he had simply to deliver the words of the Government for them to take to their King.

* Author's italics.

The meeting then broke up and the parties separated, the Zulus going along with John Dunn to his Mangete home, about four miles from the Tugela, with whom the actual document was left.

The following morning the Zulus set off to carry the terms to Cetshwayo, but as Dunn felt convinced that they would not disclose anything like the full terms of the document to their King, he himself sent his own messengers, having previously instructed them to hide nothing but to impress upon Cetshwayo the seriousness of the situation.

Dunn's men reached the King's kraal several days before the others, but even so the journey took them considerably longer than usual owing to the rivers being in flood (it was the rainy season). Cetshwayo immediately sent them back to Dunn with the request that he write to the Lieutenant-Governor stating that the King and his *indunas* took strong exception to the shortness of the time allowed to carry out the conditions imposed upon them. Dunn therefore wrote to Sir Henry Bulwer stating that he had been requested by Cetshwayo 'to write and say that he agrees to the demands of giving up Sirayo's sons and brother and the fines of cattle but begs that, should the number of days (twenty) have expired before the arrival of the cattle His Excellency will take no immediate action, as, owing to the heavy rains we have had since the meeting of the Commissioners and his Indunas, they have not been able to reach him yet; and Sirayo's sons being at their kraals, which are some way from him, it will take some days to send for them.'

Meanwhile Frere had requested Bulwer to give Cetshwayo notice that 'rigid punctuality with regard to time will be insisted on and unless observed, such steps as may appear necessary will be immediately taken to ensure compliance.'*

Consequently, the following reply was sent to Dunn by John Shepstone on 26 December:

I am directed to express the satisfaction of the High Commissioner at the receipt of your letter, and to inform you that the word of the Government, as already given, cannot be altered.

* Blue Book C2222, p. 222.

Unless the prisoners and cattle are given up within the time specified Her Majesty's troops will advance, but, in consideration of the disposition expressed in your letter to comply with the demands of the Government, the troops will be halted at convenient posts within the Zulu border, and will await the expiration of the term of thirty days, without in the meantime taking any hostile action, unless it is provoked by the Zulus.*

The contents of this letter were forwarded at once to Cetshwayo, but on 24 December, two days before its date, Dunn had already noted: 'The cattle are still being collected and it will be impossible now for them to be up in time.'†

There are many indications in the Blue Book of that period that Cetshwayo was collecting cattle in order to pay the fine, or even more than the fine demanded. This is vouched for by the Border Agent, Mr Fannin, who states:

The cattle for the fine are being collected but he thinks it very doubtful if the sons of Sirayo will be given up. The King can understand a demand being made for the persons of the culprits or for a cattle fine, but not for *both*; they regard it like being punished twice for the same offence, or paying twice for the same article.‡

An interesting fact regarding the collection of these cattle and their dispatch to the British authorities is recorded by Cornelius Vijn.§ He himself at that time was residing near Cetshwayo's kraal:

When the chief men had returned 600 or 800 cattle must have been collected, which were being sent by the King to Natal to pay for the persons demanded by the Government; but these cattle, as I was told, were driven back by the Zulus and slaughtered and stolen not far from Kwamagwaza. The Zulus, when they were with the King, refused to agree with the chief men and said that they would take the four persons (sons of Sirayo) into their midst and die together fighting against the English.

Yet Frere persistently laid all the blame upon Cetshwayo, repeatedly stating that it was not against the Zulus that the Ultimatum was directed!

* Dunn, *Cetshwayo and the Three Generals*, p. 92. † Blue Book C2308, p. 34.
‡ Ibid., p. 35. § In his book *Cetshwayo's Dutchman*, p. 17.

A clash was now inevitable, for it was obvious that in so limited a period as thirty days it was utterly impossible to fulfil the terms of the Ultimatum. To expect a huge army, with its various regiments scattered all over the country, to be disbanded in a matter of days was out of the question, particularly when one remembers that the military system of the Zulus, which had been established for half a century, had taken such deep roots in the nation.

Further, the nature of the new military system which was to replace the old was not stated in the Ultimatum, and this in itself was a serious omission. The only points which were mentioned were that every man was to be allowed to employ his time as he wished without being compelled to enlist in the army unless occasion arose to defend his country; and that men were to be permitted to marry on arrival at man's estate. No doubt it was believed that the Zulus would welcome this reform and so withdraw their support from the King. But such a belief showed an utter lack of understanding of the Zulu character, for the Zulus willingly submitted to certain hardships and disadvantages and were proud to belong to those great armies which had swept over the continent, vanquished all their enemies and given them the reputation of being the greatest warriors among all the African races.

With regard to the surrender of the guilty parties, no doubt there was much discussion at the King's kraal, but it is evident that the majority was opposed to this step, mainly because they knew their own strength and from what they had seen of the forces opposed to them their number was so small that one of them reported to Cetshwayo that 'they might be demolished like bits of meat'.

During these critical days John Dunn had been doing his utmost to dissuade Cetshwayo from rashly undertaking a war which could have but one outcome, for though the Zulu forces might be numerically much greater than the British yet the superiority of the weapons that would be used against them would take a terrible toll of his warriors, and in the end bring about the downfall of the nation.

His advice went unheeded. As a last resort Dunn endeavoured to persuade Cetshwayo to refrain from invading Natal and to act purely on the defensive. This advice was evidently taken, for, later, Natal was left in peace and Frere's alarmist reports of a contemplated invasion were shown to have no foundation in fact.

As the thirty days' grace drew to a close and the Zulus were determined to fight in defence of their country, the age-old custom of 'the Doctoring of the Army' (*Ukuqwanjiswa Kwempi*) was decided upon. The proclamation went out: '*Maihlome*' (Let them arm).* Soon the whole manhood of the nation, fully equipped for war, proceeded to the King's kraal and encamped there. No women were permitted to be present. At the appointed hour all the regiments were drawn up in a huge crescent and the national war-doctor then appeared in all his war-paint. A wild black bull was driven in and seized by certain selected warriors and held down by them while the doctor killed it by a blow with his axe on the nape of the neck. As in the Feast of the First-Fruits, the flesh was cut into strips, roasted, rubbed with magical potions and tossed to the soldiers, who bit at the strips in turn. This was supposed to make them brave and fearless in battle.

The doctor's attendants now brought in vessels full of a liquid composed of various medicines, pounded and mixed with water, with which he then sprinkled all the warriors, shouting meanwhile '*Umabope Kabope*' (Let all the strength of the army be concentrated).†

This ceremony being concluded, the army was now ready for the conflict.

Meanwhile, Lord Chelmsford had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British forces, and John Dunn made his way to the Tugela to meet him.

* The Author is indebted to Miss L. H. Samuelson's *Zululand, its Customs and Folklore* for an account of this ceremony.

† *Umabope* is a climbing plant with red roots, bits of which were much worn about the neck. This root was chewed by Zulus when going to battle, the *induna* giving the word '*Lumani Umabope*' (Bite the Umabope), which they did for a few minutes and then spat it out again. (Colenso's Dictionary.) The idea was that their enemy would be bound as a consequence to commit some foolish blunder.

At the interview Dunn was asked what action he intended to take; he answered that he would remain neutral. Chelmsford retaliated: 'I cannot allow you to do that. You must either take one side or the other. Join us or – take the consequences.' Dunn replied that he did not wish to take up arms against the Zulus as he had no quarrel with them; then he suggested that Chelmsford should advise him on the matter. 'Take my advice,' replied the General, 'cross over to this side of the river with all your people and bring as many more with you as you can. We will give you room to locate them and will feed them free of expense to you, and after the war is over I promise to see you reinstated in your possessions.'

Dunn said he would act on this advice and then ventured to suggest to Chelmsford that he should divide his forces into two strong columns so that either of them could deal with the whole Zulu army. The General repudiated this suggestion with the words, 'The only thing I am afraid of is that I won't get Cetshwayo to fight.' To which Dunn replied, 'Well, my lord, supposing you get to his kraal and he won't fight, what will you do?' Chelmsford promptly answered, 'I must drive him into a corner and *make* him fight.'*

It is thus quite clear that Chelmsford was determined upon war and that he woefully underestimated the prowess, the striking power and the bravery of the Zulus. Sir Bartle Frere did his best to dispel this over-confidence, and it was at his request that when the Boer leaders Kruger and Joubert passed through Natal an interview was arranged between them and Chelmsford.

The following extracts from the diary of the Rev. George Stegmann, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church who acted as Frere's Dutch interpreter and secretary, show conclusively how Chelmsford was warned of the dangers ahead:

November 29. I took them to the General [Chelmsford]. Mr Kruger . . . *impressed upon him the absolute necessity of laagering his wagons every evening, and always at the approach of the enemy.* He also urged the necessity of scouting at considerable distances, as the movements of the Zulus were very rapid.

* Dunn, *Cetshwayo and the Three Generals*, p. 93.

December 3. Took Mr Paul Bester, at Sir Bartle Frere's request, to the General. . . . He urged the same precautions. Kruger said 'Ask what precautions the General has taken that his orders should be carried out *every evening, because if they are omitted one evening it will be fatal.*'*

Commandant Bowker, an old Colonial soldier, also warned the military authorities. But this spirit of over-confidence and under-estimation of the might of the Zulu armies spread through all ranks of the British forces, many of the officers openly stating that 'this little war would be a pleasant military promenade in Zululand'.† Advice which the Colonists – who knew the Zulus only too well – offered them was spurned. Colonial Bellairs of the Intelligence Department had even issued a book detailing the precautions to be observed when once the troops had entered Zululand; a copy was handed to *every* officer, but it was treated with such contempt that it was nicknamed 'Bellairs' Mixture'.‡

If only a few of the officers, including the General himself, had taken this advice the disasters of Isandhlwana, Hlobane, and Intombi could have been averted.

So the time limit of thirty days expired; Cetshwayo had not complied with the terms of the Ultimatum; the British forces crossed the Tugela and invaded Zululand.

War had begun.

* Martineau, *Life and Letters of Sir Bartle Frere*, p. 270, Author's italics.
† Owen Watkins Report in the library of Dr Killie Campbell.
‡ Martineau, *Life and Letters of Sir Bartle Frere*, p. 269.

CHAPTER 11

The Battle of Isandhlwana

British and Zulu preparations for battle; Lord Chelmsford's arrogance and unpreparedness; defeat of the British

THE Boundary Line, as decided upon by the Border Commissioners, ran from the mouth of the Tugela up to its confluence with the Buffalo in the Umsinga district; thence along the Buffalo to its junction with the Blood River (above Vant's Drift), along the latter river to its main source near Kambula, and then in a straight line to the Pemvaan River and along this stream to its junction with the Pongola, which formed the northern boundary of Zululand.

The country over which the Zulu War was waged covered an area of some 15,000 square miles, the greater portion of which consisted of fairly open but hilly country, furrowed by deep watercourses. In many parts the scenery is extremely beautiful and there are several fine indigenous forest areas, while most of the hills are covered with fairly dense bush, affording ample cover for Zulu armies. The coastal belt, from twenty to forty miles wide, is low-lying and at the time of this war was infested with malaria and dysentery, diseases which took an extremely heavy toll among the British soldiers stationed in that area.

The Tugela near its mouth is wide and deep and during the rains it becomes a raging torrent, utterly impossible to ford. Within a few miles of the coast it runs through a long, deep valley with banks that are high and precipitous, attaining an altitude in places of from 2,000–3,000 feet. The scenery is mountainous and magnificent, and along this portion of the Zulu boundary these mountains and precipitous valleys form an effective barrier against any invader, for drifts across the river are few and their approaches extremely steep; moreover, the roads at this period

were nothing but mere tracks down the mountain sides, slippery and dangerous in the rainy season, certainly most unsuitable for the passage of heavily laden wagons conveying the impedimenta of an army on the march.

As one journeys farther inland the country becomes more open and though it is extremely hilly and intersected by deep dongas the rivers, except when in flood, are fordable, thus offering various lines of advance for an invading army.

Lord Chelmsford's plan of campaign was to advance into Zululand in three main columns, right, centre and left; all were eventually to converge on Ulundi, Cetshwayo's chief kraal, which was situated in the heart of the country. The right column, under the command of Colonel Pearson, was stationed at Fort Pearson, on the Lower Tugela (or Settlers') Drift, near the Ultimatum Tree, with its main supply depot at Stanger. It comprised eight companies of the Buffs, six companies of the 99th Regiment, the 2nd Company Royal Engineers, No. 2 Squadron Mounted Infantry, the Naval Brigade from H.M.S. *Active* and *Tenedos*, two battalions Native Contingent, No. 2 Company Native Pioneers, all supported by four guns, one Gatling and two rocket tubes – a total of about 300 mounted men, 1,500 European infantry and 2,000 Natives. A further battalion was to join them on its arrival from England – although the British authorities had stipulated that it was to be used for defensive purposes only. Pearson's orders were to retain the Naval Brigade as a garrison at Fort Pearson while his main force was to cross the Tugela and camp in Zululand until the days of grace had expired. It was then to move forward in a northerly direction, making Eshowe (Ekowe) its first objective. Here they were to halt until the other two columns had made such progress as would enable them to link up with this column in the general advance, and while waiting they were to push forward with the transport of supplies from the Tugela, using Eshowe as a base.

The centre column under Colonel Glyn, with supply bases at Greytown, Ladysmith, and Helpmakaar, consisted of seven companies 1/24th Regiment, eight companies 2/24th Regiment, two squadrons Imperial Mounted Infantry, 200 Natal Volunteers,

150 Natal Mounted Police, two battalions Natal Native Contingent and No. 1 Company Native Pioneers. They were supported by six guns and two rocket tubes of the Royal Artillery and a half-company of the Royal Engineers – a total of about 300 mounted men, 1,300 European infantry and 2,500 Natives. This column was to cross into Zululand at Rorke's Drift, about eight miles from Helpmakaar, and on the expiry of the days of grace was to move eastward towards Ulundi.

The left column, under Colonel Evelyn Wood, was based on Newcastle and Utrecht and was made up of eight companies of the 13th Regiment; eight companies of the 90th Light Infantry; Buller's Frontier Light Horse; about fifty Boers under Piet Uys, a half-company of Royal Engineers and a small contingent of about 300 Natives; they were supported by four guns and two rocket tubes. This column was to march south-east to Blood River and so by easy stages on to Ulundi.

In addition to the three main columns there were two subsidiary forces, the first, under Colonel Durnford, consisting of three battalions of Natives and five troops of the Native Mounted Contingent, supported by a rocket battery. This force, based at Fort Cherry, near Kranskop, was formed primarily for the protection of the Border but was also to be employed as a supporting column if and when required. As events turned out, shortly after the commencement of hostilities, crossing the Tugela at Middle Drift, it became linked up with the centre column under Colonel Glyn.

The second subsidiary force, under the command of Colonel Rowland, was stationed at Luneberg, north of the River Pongola. The primary purpose of this column, which had been operating against Sekukuni and the Bapedi, was to defend the Transvaal border, should this be necessary.

Lord Chelmsford had, early in January, established his headquarters at Helpmakaar, intending to go forward with Colonel Glyn. On 11 January, as Cetshwayo had not accepted in full the terms of the Ultimatum, the following Notification was issued by Sir Bartle Frere in both English and Zulu:

The British forces are crossing into Zululand to exact from Cetshwayo reparations for violations of British territory committed by the sons of

Sirayo and others and to enforce compliance with the promises made by Cetshwayo at his coronation, for the better government of his people.

The British Government has no quarrel with the Zulu people. All Zulus who come in unarmed, or who lay down their arms, will be provided for till the troubles of their country are over, and will then, if they please, be allowed to return to their own land; but all who do not so submit will be dealt with as enemies.

When the war is finished, the British Government will make the best arrangements in its power for the future good government of the Zulus in their own country, in peace and quietness, and will not permit the killing and oppression they have suffered from Cetshwayo to continue.

All the columns now advanced into Zululand. But the time selected for the campaign was most inopportune and indicated a blunder of the first magnitude on the part of Frere for forcing the issue at the very worst possible time of the year; it was the height of the rainy season, rivers were in flood, and tracks – for there were no roads – were almost impassable, especially for the movement of a massive wagon train. On 12 January Chelmsford wrote:

The country is in a terrible state from the rain. I do not know how we shall manage to get our wagons across the valley near Sirayo's Kraal. . . . Between this camp and Greytown alone, a distance of some seventy miles, three rivers are now impassable and wagons have to cross by ferries, a laborious operation requiring more skilled labour than we at present have available. . . . The transport difficulties are augmented by the great mortality in oxen.

Cetshwayo, learning from his scouts that the British were invading his country, assembled his main army at Nodwengu, near Ulundi, on the afternoon of 17 January. It comprised the following regiments: the Undi Corps (8,000 men); the Nokenke Regiment (2,000); the Ngobamakosi (5,000); the Umcityu (4,000): the Nodwengu Corps (2,000); the Mbonambi (3,000); and the Udhloko (1,000); making a total of approximately 25,000 men.*

When they were all assembled the King addressed them thus:

* For a description of Zulu regiments see Appendix B.

I am sending you out against the Whitemen who have invaded Zululand and driven away our cattle. You are to go against the column at Rorke's Drift and drive it back into Natal. You will attack by daylight as there are enough of you to eat it up and you will march slowly so as not to tire yourselves.*

That afternoon the Zulus set forth and bivouacked for the night on the west bank of the White Umfolozi River, a distance of about six miles. The following day they covered nine miles and slept the night at the Isixepi military kraal. On the 19th, marching about an equal distance, they reached the tableland near the Isihlungu Hills (Babanango) where they stayed the night. Here they divided into two parallel columns, each keeping in sight of the other. On the 20th, as they were moving across open country, they took the precaution of sending out scouts from their crack Ngobamakosi Regiment (commanded by Sirayo) and by evening the whole force had reached the Isipezi Mountain in safety.

Next morning as a body of mounted white men had been seen in the distance, the Zulu Commander-in-Chief, Tshingwayo, sent out scouts in every direction in order to be fully informed of all enemy movements. Meanwhile the Zulu main army moved westward and took up its position under cover of darkness in the deep valley of the Nxcata stream, about four miles east of the Isipezi Mountain, and hidden from the Isandhlwana Mountain. Here they halted, for no attack was to be made until the 23rd, the day after the new moon. The Zulus never fought, or did anything of importance if it could possibly be avoided, when the moon was 'dead'.

Meanwhile, 12 January, Colonel Glyn with a body of his men, having crossed the Buffalo River at Rorke's Drift the preceding day, set out to reconnoitre the country to the east in the direction of Sirayo's kraal. Chelmsford and his staff accompanied this force and after a march of about five miles arrived at a ravine in the Bashee valley in which a considerable number of cattle were grazing. A small body of Zulus were spotted on the surrounding hills and were soon dislodged. Three companies of the 1/24th, accompanied by the 3rd Natal Native Contingent, pushed on

* *Natal Witness*, 20 February 1879.

towards where the cattle had been observed. The Zulu guards opened fire, but were driven off and the cattle seized. Sirayo's kraal, which was farther up the valley, was then set on fire, the troops later returning to their camp at Rorke's Drift. For the next few days – till 19 January – all were busy ferrying wagons and stores across the Buffalo and making the road passable for the heavy transport.

While the troops were thus engaged Lord Chelmsford, on the 17th, rode forward with some of his staff to the Isandhlwana mountain and decided upon this spot as the next camping site for the whole column. No more Zulus had been seen; the country, open and treeless, appeared quite deserted.

On the 20th a general advance of the whole centre column, accompanied by about 100 wagons, was made to Isandhlwana, two companies of the 1/24th having been left at Helpmakaar and one of the 2/24th at Rorke's Drift. By about noon the camp had been pitched on the eastern slopes of the mountain.

The hill itself forms a conspicuous landmark, sphinx-like in shape, the head pointing to the south, the rump to the north. Still further south and connected with Isandhlwana by a fairly steep ridge or neck, is another stony hill, considerably less in height, known as Black's Koppie; over this neck ran the road from Rorke's Drift to Ulundi.

The eastern side of Isandhlwana slopes gently down to a deep donga (gulley) which runs roughly parallel to the mountain; on this slope the camp was sited. In front an open plain extended for some six to eight miles, deeply furrowed by innumerable dongas; this plain, about four miles wide, is bounded on the south by the 'Ndhlazagazi' mountains and on the north by the Nqutu hills.

In spite of repeated warnings from those who knew the methods of Zulu warfare, no preparations were made for defence; no laager was formed behind which the troops could have retreated in case of emergency; no scouts were sent out. When Colonel Glyn suggested that defensive precautions should be taken Lord Chelmsford pooh-poohed the very idea, and when the construction of a laager was recommended his reply was, 'It would take a week to make'! On 20 January, while the Zulu army was creeping

forward, he could write to Sir Bartle Frere: 'I do not believe Mr Fannin's report about a large force approaching from the Inkandhla Bush. Mr Fannin, like a great many other Natal officials, is an alarmist and not being able to appreciate what an enemy can do and what he cannot do, sees danger where really there is none.'

Sub-Inspector F. L. Phillips, a Colonial-born officer of the Natal Mounted Police, ventured to suggest to Colonel Crealock, private secretary to Chelmsford, the unsuitability of the site. He pointed out that the camp only commanded a frontal view, while the hills and ridges at the rear afforded excellent cover for the Zulus to approach within striking distance. Emphasizing that the movements of a Zulu army were as swift as any cavalry, he counselled instant laagering and the movement of the camp on the following day to a more suitable site. Chelmsford, informed of the suggestion, sent back the arrogant reply: 'Tell the police officer my troops will do all the attacking, but even if the enemy does venture to attack, the hill he complains about will serve to protect our rear.'*

Consequently 'not a trench was dug, nor a spadeful of earth thrown up in a bank.'†

At about 1 p.m. on 20 January Lord Chelmsford and a body of mounted infantry set out to reconnoitre a fastness known as Matyana's stronghold, where that chief had his kraal, but no signs of a Zulu force being seen they returned to camp that evening. Reports, however, came in that many Zulus were lurking in the valleys near this fastness, so a force of mounted Volunteers, police and Native troops started about 4.30 a.m. the following morning under Major Dartnell and Commandant Lonsdale to search for the elusive enemy. A small party of mounted infantry was also sent out the same morning in the direction of the Isipezi hill; these returned about midday stating that they had seen some Zulu scouts and had had a skirmish with a small number of them. Meanwhile Dartnell and his men had pushed on toward the Mangweni Gorge, where a few hundred Zulus were seen. A message to this effect was dispatched to Chelmsford.

* Clements, *Glamour and Tragedy of the Zulu War*. † Theal, *South Africa*, p. 346.

At about 4 o'clock that afternoon mounted scouts reported that a body of about 1,500 Zulus had been sighted on a distant hill; Dartnell immediately ordered the Native Contingent, supported by a small mounted force, to test the position. As the men went forward 'there appeared as if by magic, from one end of the ridge to the other, a long line of black men in skirmishing order, advancing at a run. It was a grand sight and they never uttered a sound. I defy the men of any British regiment to keep their intervals so well at the double. On reaching the brow of the hill, the centre halted and the Horns appeared.'* Realizing that it would be foolhardy to attack, for it was now near sunset, the troops retired and the Zulus withdrew. Dartnell, having consulted with his fellow officers, decided to bivouac for the night in the vicinity, near the spot where the present Mangeni store stands, so that they would be able to go into action the following morning.

Accordingly, a further report was sent back to Chelmsford stating that the enemy was found to be in greater strength than he had anticipated, and 'requesting that a further reinforcement of two or three companies of the 24th might be sent out to them the next morning'.†

This note was received by Chelmsford at 1.30 a.m. on the morning of 22 January. About 4 a.m. Chelmsford himself, accompanied by Colonel Glyn with four guns of Harness's Battery, six companies of the 2/24th Regiment, Mounted Infantry and the Native Pioneers, moved off to join the Major.

The story of this Zulu *impi* at the Mangeni Gorge was told by Mehlo-ka-Zulu to Benjamin Bartle Buntting,‡ a sergeant in the Natal Carbineers. There had been considerable jealousy among the Zulu commanders. Matyana was very dissatisfied that he had not been appointed Commander-in-Chief, and there were

* Sir R. Coupland, *Zulu Battle Piece*, p. 69.

† *War Office Narrative of the Zulu War of 1879*, p. 31.

‡ Father of G. G. Buntting, referred to on p. 87, to whom the Author is indebted for this account. During the latter part of the Boer War, Mehlo-ka-Zulu (the son of Sirayo, who was the Commander of the Ngobamakosi Regiment at Isandhlwana), was appointed chief native scout in that area, for at that time he was living in the Sigubudu Valley, opposite Fugitive's Drift. Meetings frequently took place between Buntting and Mehlo-ka-Zulu.

considerable differences between Tshingwayo and himself as to the conduct of the war and the strategy to be followed. Matyana advocated a guerrilla type of warfare while Cetshwayo and most of his commanders favoured direct action. Bitter arguments had taken place on this question and matters came to a head when the Zulu armies camped for the night near Babanango. A dispute developed between Tshingwayo and Matyana, and the latter, ignoring his Commander-in-Chief, marched off in a rage, taking his regiment with him. He and his *impi* then made their way to their own tribal lands at the head of the Mangeni Gorge.

So Dartnell and his men came into contact with these Zulus before they had reached their objective. The British column, now strongly reinforced, moved in to the attack, and Tshingwayo, hearing of Matyana's predicament (for the scouting of the Zulus was admirable), decided to leave him to his fate and expressed the hope that his rebellious officer would be soundly thrashed as he justly deserved to be.

The attack met with only small success, for all efforts to reach the main body of these Zulus proved fruitless; the majority of them, with their perfect knowledge of the country, were able to elude their pursuers, and it was soon obvious that they had no intention of fighting. A few, however, were trapped, and among the slain were fourteen sons of Mehlo-ka-Zulu, while he himself, hotly pursued by men of the Native Contingent (probably Basutos), narrowly escaped death by jumping over a cliff.

Before Chelmsford had set out on this wild-goose chase he had sent a message to Colonel Durnford, ordering him to come in from Rorke's Drift with all his mounted men and aid Colonel Pulleine to 'defend the camp', notwithstanding the fact that for the two days in which he himself was there no action whatsoever had been taken in this matter and every suggestion to place the camp in a defensive condition had been contemptuously thrust aside.

Thus dawned the fateful 22 January 1879.

About 8 a.m. a report reached the camp from a few mounted men who had been sent out in a northerly direction that a Zulu *impi* was approaching from the north-east. The camp was immediately put under arms facing the direction from which the enemy

were supposed to be approaching, and Pulleine sent forward a dispatch to Chelmsford: 'Report just come in (8.05 a.m.) that the Zulus are advancing in force from left front of the camp.'

No Zulus were visible from the camp till about 9 a.m., when a small number was seen on the crests of the hills in the distance, but these withdrew immediately. A little later, however, another message came in from the forward party that the enemy were in three columns, two of which were retiring while the third had moved out of sight toward the north-west.

About 10 o'clock Colonel Durnford arrived with his Native troops from Rorke's Drift and, hearing that the Zulus were in the vicinity, sent back one troop of mounted Natives to protect his wagons, which were coming on behind. He also dispatched two troops to the distant hills on the left of the camp to reconnoitre, the first under Captain Shepstone and Lieutenant Raw, the second under Captain Barton and Lieutenant Roberts.

He next ordered 1/24 Company under Lieutenant Cavaye to take up a position on the hills to the north of the camp, about 1,500 yards away. Durnford himself then rode forward across the plain in order to prevent any Zulu columns from joining the force against Chelmsford; with him went two troops of mounted Natives, a rocket battery and one company of the Natal Native Contingent under their European officers; all were on their way by 11 a.m. About twelve o'clock firing was heard from the direction of the hill where Cavaye was posted.

Meanwhile Lieutenant Raw and his troop of Basutos, having advanced three or four miles in a northerly direction, had come across a herd of cattle which they followed over some rising ground. Reaching the top of the hill, to their amazement they saw a large Zulu force not more than a mile away and extending to their left; this was the Umcityu *impi*, of about 4,000 men. Unaware that the whole Zulu army was hiding in the near-by valley, but realizing his danger, Raw ordered a retreat, Shepstone meanwhile having galloped back to the camp to raise the alarm. Like a flash the whole Umcityu *impi*, roaring out their battle-cry '*Usutu*', sprang forward to the attack. The sudden advance of the Umcityu *impi* set the other regiments aflame, and they too rushed

into action. The battle of Isandhlwana, which should not have taken place till the following day, had begun. Raw and his little force at first retired slowly, stopping at intervals to pour volley after volley into the closely packed ranks of their advancing foes. Undaunted and unfaltering, the Zulus swept forward, till Raw realized that his only hope of safety lay in getting back to camp with the utmost speed.

As soon as Shepstone reached the camp with the information that a vast Zulu army was approaching, two Carbineers galloped out to tell Durnford and his men of their danger, for by this time they had reached a point about four and a half miles away from the camp, well in advance of the rocket battery and the Native Contingent. Hardly had this information been received when the enemy appeared advancing swiftly towards them in an attempt to cut them off from the camp. Instantly a retreat was ordered, which was carried out fairly steadily, fire being maintained by alternate troops, and about two miles back they came upon all that remained of the rocket battery.

This battery also had been informed by another Carbineer that Raw and his men were being heavily attacked on the further side of the ridge and that the enemy were approaching in great force. Almost at the same moment a small body of Zulus appeared, so it was decided to drive the guns up on to a small plateau on this ridge and open fire from this vantage-point. The going was heavy, for the climb was steep, rough and stony, and to add to the confusion the Zulus fired a volley at the mules from a distance of about 100 yards, frightening them out of control. Unharnessing the animals, the men tried to manhandle the guns up the slope. Suddenly the tip of the left horn of the Zulu army appeared on the crest of the ridge and bore down on the gunners. The men, taken completely by surprise and greatly outnumbered, lost the guns in the first onrush and soon after fell fighting bravely, only four escaping with their lives out of a total of approximately 120 men. It was just about this time that Durnford and his men appeared on the scene. In their retreat they reached a deep donga,* which afforded a measure of protection, and from it they

* Near where the present Isandhlwana store stands.

poured volley after volley into the Zulus – the Edendale Mounted Rifles specially distinguishing themselves – but as quickly as warriors fell, others took their places. The advance was checked for a few moments, but the Zulus pressed on, and when the British fire became too severe they used their dead comrades as a temporary shield. Nothing could halt their onward rush, and soon the donga became untenable, for men were falling all around, ammunition was running short, and by now (1 p.m.) the 'chest' of the Zulu army was approaching. Leaping on their horses the remnants of this little force made a last desperate attempt to rejoin their comrades. But when they realized that to reach the camp was an utter impossibility, Durnford and his fast-diminishing body of men turned at bay and faced the oncoming horde, taking their stand just below Black's Koppie, which had already been partially occupied by the Zulus. Here the Colonel with his Volunteers, the remnants of his Native Contingent, and some men of the 24th Regiment who had rallied round him, made their last stand, attacked from all sides, overwhelmed by vastly superior numbers and, when every round of ammunition was expended, fighting desperately with swords and bayonets. No quarter was asked, none was given.

About 12 noon another company of the 1/24th Regiment, under Captain Mostyn, which had been sent forward to support Cavaye on the hills north of the camp, had taken up a position between the two sections of Cavaye's men, who were in extended order. On their extreme right and some distance from them the two companies of the Native Contingent under Lieutenant Raw began to retreat to the camp, as the right horn of the Zulu army swept forward. Cavaye and Mostyn, in danger of being isolated, were instructed to fall back on the camp. They did so without loss, for the Zulus, though under fire, temporarily refrained from attacking and pushed on, now swinging round to their left and pouring through the deep valley at the back (or western side) of Isandhlwana till the tip of this horn should reach the neck and Black's Koppie, and thus link up with the tip of their left horn more or less at the spot where Durnford and his men made their last gallant stand. Thus the encirclement of the camp would

be complete and the annihilation of the whole British force assured.

The positions which the British had taken up were as follows: on the left of the camp, facing north, were three companies of the 1/24th Regiment in echelon formation, under Captain Younghusband, Captain Mostyn, and Lieutenant Cavaye respectively, all in extended order; on their right and in the angle between them and the front line of defence were the two companies of the Natal Native Contingent. The front line of defence was built up as follows: at the extreme left, near the angle formed by the Native Contingent, were the artillery (two guns), firing towards the east, and to the right of the guns was a thin line of soldiers in extended order, consisting of two companies of the 1/24th Regiment and one company of the 2/24th under Lieutenant Pope, with a wide open gap between each. Still further to the right, and some distance away, Colonel Durnford and his men were making their last gallant stand.

Silently now the Zulus came on in their thousands, the 'chest' advancing from the north-east, and though countless numbers were mown down the British front line had to fall back. The Native Contingent were left in a somewhat advanced and isolated position, and by 1 p.m. in spite of their heroic defence the Zulus had approached to within 200 yards.

They were now so short of ammunition that their fire was no longer effective. Runners sent to the camp for fresh supplies discovered that the Regimental Sergeant-Major in charge of the ammunition-boxes could not find a screwdriver with which to open them!

Quick to grasp this advantage, the Zulus surged forward, till the Native Contingent broke and fled. Through the gap in that vital angle the enemy poured in a solid mass. Then frightful slaughter began, for at in-fighting no army in the world could excel the Zulus. Before Cavaye and Mostyn had time to reform or even to fix bayonets, the warriors were among them and slew them to a man. Younghusband and his men succeeded momentarily in retreating to a terrace on the southern slopes of the mountain, but they too soon fell to the deadly assegais.

Colonel Pulleine was killed in his tent. Here is the story of his death from the lips of the Zulu who slew him:

> I saw a little white house standing by itself and I sprang into its opening, looking for the Whiteman's drink. At a table there was seated an officer, who when he saw me appear plucked out a little gun and shot me through the cheek. I staggered but found myself still alive. So I sprang upon him and finished him with my spear. That is why I am called Maqedindaba [literally, he who finishes the matter], because I killed the chief Induna of the army. And here is the scar of the wound he gave me.*

The artillery had only been able to fire a few rounds before every gunner was killed. Although an heroic attempt was made to save the guns by dragging them over a space in the neck as yet unoccupied by the Zulus, they crashed into a deep donga, and every man, with the exception of two officers and a sergeant, was assegaied.

By two o'clock all was over; the Zulus were in complete possession of the whole camp, looting was in full swing and the British Army had suffered the most humiliating defeat in its annals.

The few who escaped, ignorant of the country, made for Fugitive's Drift, *en route* for Helpmakaar, but unless they were mounted they had no chance, for the fleet-footed warriors speedily overtook them. After an appalling ride, through dongas, across swamps and down the slippery slopes of a precipice, pursued the whole way by the Zulus who were able to travel almost as swiftly as their horses, the few mounted men managed to reach the Buffalo River, only to find to their dismay that it was in full flood, with banks that in some places were almost vertical. Most of those fugitives who had temporarily outdistanced their pursuers were here overtaken and slain by the exultant Zulus, and only a mere handful got across the forty-foot-wide torrent.

Among the men who reached the river were Lieutenants Melville and Coghill, who had taken upon themselves the responsibility of saving the colours of the 24th Regiment. Plunging in, they attempted to cross, but Melville, still clutching the colours,

* Bishop A. W. Lee, *Once Dark Country*, p. 78.

was torn from his horse and carried downstream to a big jutting rock where he attempted to save himself, but, hampered by the bulky colour standard, was swept away, the colours slipping from his grasp. Coghill meanwhile, in spite of a damaged and intensely painful knee, had reached the further bank, but, looking back, saw his comrade in distress. Disregarding his personal safety, he spurred his horse back again into the swirling flood to go to the rescue. Almost immediately he too was swept away, but both came out alive, and not too far apart on the farther bank. Struggling up the steep slope under heavy enemy fire, Coghill had his horse shot under him, so together the two battled forward, clambering over rocks and plunging through deep bush, which in some measure helped to shield them. But at last they sank down exhausted, and there, side by side, revolvers in hand, they sold their lives dearly for when their bodies were found later they were surrounded by a ring of dead Zulus. They were later buried where they fell, and today their grave is marked by a white cross, standing high amid the boulders. The colours, wrenched from Melville's grasp, were found some time afterwards wedged amongst the rocks.

CHAPTER 12

The Battle of Rorke's Drift

Gallant stand by the British; Colonel Pearson is besieged at Eshowe; a break in hostilities; Cetshwayo requests peace negotiations and receives scant courtesy

COLONEL Pulleine's report that the Zulus were advancing on the camp was received by Chelmsford at 9.30 a.m. Lieutenant Milne was therefore sent to a near-by hill to watch the camp through his telescope. He remained for an hour and a half (till approximately 11 a.m.), but was unable to detect any sign of Zulus (they did not appear on the Isandhlwana plain till approximately 12 noon).*

The General therefore felt that there was no reason for anxiety, but he ordered one battalion of the Native Contingent under Commandant Browne back to the camp to ensure the safety of his lines of communication. Further, as his own troops had failed to establish any contact with the *impi* of Matyana he decided to desist from further pursuit and to concentrate the whole column at a new camp near the head of the Mangweni Gorge. Captain Gardiner was ordered to take instructions to Colonel Pulleine to strike camp and send along all the baggage, etc., to the new site.

Chelmsford and his staff reached the new camp about noon. Some of his officers viewing Isandhlwana through their glasses from a near-by hill reported several large bodies of Zulus moving around the camp, but Chelmsford, somewhat surprisingly, paid little attention, merely remarking that Pulleine and Durnford would easily be able to cope with any Zulu force that could possibly have gathered in that area.

About this time two or three Zulu prisoners were brought in

* A singular feature of this hill is that though normally Isandhlwana and its surroundings can be clearly seen from it, yet on certain days, owing no doubt to atmospheric conditions, it is quite invisible.

(probably captured and sent forward by Browne from his Native Contingent) and questioned by Longcast, the interpreter, and from them it was ascertained that a large Zulu army was preparing to attack the camp. During the interrogation the sound of firing was heard in the distance, and the Zulus immediately remarked, 'Do you hear that? There is fighting at the camp.' About an hour later (1 p.m.) a mounted Native galloped up with the news that he had seen a battle at the camp. Chelmsford then, in leisurely fashion, rode up the hill, looked at the camp, and as the tents were still visible took no further notice.

Meanwhile Colonel Harness and Captain Church, who were moving to the new camp with the guns and were only about eight miles from Isandhlwana, noticed shells bursting in that direction. While deliberating on what action to take, they saw on the plain below them Browne's battalion of the Native Contingent, and it was evident from their behaviour that something serious had happened. As Church hurriedly rode down to investigate he was met by a galloping horseman with the startling message from Browne: 'For God's sake come back: the camp is surrounded!' Two messages had already been sent by Browne, but whether they ever reached Chelmsford is not known. Meanwhile he and his men had been unable to reach Isandhlwana, for as they approached they discovered to their horror that a huge Zulu army was manœuvring into position to attack them. Church raced back to Harness, who decided to dash to Isandhlwana with the guns, while Major Gossett, the senior A.D.C., rode back to tell Chelmsford the tragic news. Still the over-confident General disdained to act and sent Gossett back to recall Harness and the guns from their march on Isandhlwana, directing him to carry out the original order and proceed to the new camp site.

About two o'clock Chelmsford decided to return to Isandhlwana. By 3.30 p.m., riding slowly, they had reached a point about five miles from the old camp when they noticed a solitary horseman approaching them from the direction of the camp; both horse and rider appeared to be exhausted. As he drew nearer he was recognized as Commandant Lonsdale, the man who had been sent out with Major Dartnell and his body of the Native Contingent

to reconnoitre. Riding up to the General he gasped out, 'Our camp is in the possession of the enemy, Sir!'*

Chelmsford, roused at last to awareness of the disaster, pressed on to Isandhlwana. By the time the camp was reached it was quite dark, but across the neck the outline of a few wagons could clearly be distinguished against the night sky, and, as some of the men thought they could discern figures moving about, the guns were ordered to fire several rounds and three companies of the 2/24th were sent forward to occupy Black's Koppie. But no one was there, for the whole Zulu army, after ransacking the camp, had dispersed to their kraals some hours earlier, taking their booty, which included 800 Martini-Henry rifles and 400,000 cartridges obtained by smashing the screwed-down boxes which the troops had been unable to open.†

Chelmsford now decided to bring his column right back across the frontier, taking the only possible route over the neck to Rorke's Drift and so back to his base at Helpmakaar. But it was first necessary to give the men a brief rest, so they halted near the spot where some hours earlier Durnford had made his last stand.

* A graphic account of Lonsdale's adventure was given in the *Natal Witness* of 30 January 1879: 'He had been ill of sunstroke and was slowly jogging along with a sort of lazy perseverance characteristic of a tired traveller. He had crossed the small watercourse to the south of the camp when his attention was attracted by a bullet passing near him and on looking up he saw a black man who had evidently just fired. He merely thought it was one of his own contingent carelessly firing off his rifle. To some extent the incident seems fortunately to have woken him up and although he saw what seemed to be our red-coats sitting in groups around the tents, he kept his eyes opened and when approximately within ten yards of the tents a great black Zulu came out with a bloody assegai in his hands. This made him look about more closely and he saw that black men – and black men only – were the wearers of the redcoats. The truth flashed on him. He could read the scowl of hatred on their faces but his self-possession did not desert him, for quietly turning round he galloped off before the enemy were aware of his intention. Scores of shots were fired at him as he did so but by the mercy of Providence he escaped and was thus able to warn the General and so save his life and those with him. Undoubtedly had such warning not been given they would have walked without suspicion into the skilful trap thus laid, and under such circumstances few would have escaped. . . . The entire camp was swarming with Zulus. Many of the tents were burning.'

† *War Office Narrative of the Zulu War of 1879*, p. 48.

The weary troops lay down amid the bodies of their dead comrades and tried to snatch a few hours' sleep, for before dawn they would have to be on the march again. They did not know that a few miles away a handful of their comrades were engaged in another life-and-death struggle.

During the battle at Isandhlwana another Zulu *impi* consisting of the Tulwana and the Udhloko Regiments* had swept round the back of the mountain and later made its way to Rorke's Drift to cut off the British retreat. But the soldiers who had managed to escape the slaughter had taken the shorter and more direct route to the Buffalo, crossing the river at what is now known as Fugitive's Drift; had they taken the Rorke's Drift road it is doubtful whether a single man would have escaped alive, for the *impi* which was there lying in wait was commanded by one of the ablest of the Zulu generals, Dabulamanzi.

This *impi*, which had taken no part in the battle of Isandhlwana, was only too anxious to 'wash its spears' in the enemy's blood, so Dabulamanzi, thwarted in his design of annihilating the survivors, decided to swoop down upon the small military post at Rorke's Drift in spite of Cetshwayo's orders, forbidding all attacks on fortified positions. Indeed, when news of this assault reached Cetshwayo, Dabulamanzi would have been executed for his disobedience had he not been of Royal blood (he was the King's brother) and had not other high-ranking officers in the Zulu army pleaded on his behalf.

The post at Rorke's Drift was a Swedish Mission Station which had been taken over by the military and used as a base hospital and magazine for stores; it was situated on sloping ground on the Natal side of the Buffalo River, which ran below it at a distance of some 800 yards; behind, and about 400 yards from it, was a rocky hill on the face of which was a ledge which overlooked the station. From this ledge a bird's eye view of the various buildings which made up the station could be obtained. On the extreme left stood the hospital, a single-story building about seventy-five feet long, under a thatched roof; running along its whole front length – which faced the river – was a verandah. The interior of

* They formed part of the Undi Corps. See Appendix B.

this building was divided into several wards, but there was no means of communication between them except through doors which opened directly on to the verandah.

To the right of the hospital, about thirty yards from it and about twenty yards farther back and nearer to the hill, was the Mission House, which at this time had been converted into the magazine or storehouse. Still farther to the right and slightly forward of the store was a well-built stone cattle kraal divided by a wall into two pens, while beyond this again was another larger but rougher kraal. Behind the hospital and about twelve yards from it ran a ditch with a two-foot bank along its whole length, and behind the magazine, and about ten yards from its right-hand corner, there was a small cookhouse. By a stroke of luck two wagons were standing near by and in front of the magazine was a large stack of mealies. Along the full length of the front of these buildings there stretched an area of dense bush about thirty yards broad, sloping down to a road beyond which was a garden containing numerous fruit-trees.

When on the morning of 22 January Colonel Durnford had been summoned by Lord Chelmsford from Rorke's Drift to take over at Isandhlwana, bringing with him his Native Contingent, a young subaltern, Lieutenant Chard, was left in command of this post as his senior officer had gone to Helpmakaar for reinforcements. Thus the total British force at Rorke's Drift was only about 128 men, chiefly of the 2/24th Regiment, and of this small company twenty-eight were hospital patients. In addition to these Europeans there were about 100 men of the Native Contingent.

About 3.15 p.m. on that day, while Chard was down at the river, two horsemen came galloping to the Zululand side of the Drift and shouted to be taken across. One of them, Lieutenant Adendorff of Lonsdale's Native Contingent, told Chard of the disaster at Isandhlwana, adding that a Zulu *impi* was even then advancing towards the Drift. The second horseman, Sibthorpe, a Natal Carbineer, then raced on to Helpmakaar to warn the base camp to prepare for an attack. At the station Chard found a Native messenger, who confirmed the news and brought him

orders to strengthen the post with all possible speed and hold it at all costs.

Instantly Chard and his fellow subaltern, Lieutenant Bromhead, ably assisted by an officer of the commissariat named Dalton,* set to work. The windows of both hospital and magazine were all barricaded and their walls pierced with loopholes. The stack of mealie bags was formed into a breastwork four feet high running from the hospital to the magazine and into it the two wagons were fixed. A body of Basutos about 100 strong – sent back by Durnford to protect his wagons – now rode up and were ordered to the Drift to keep a sharp look-out for the advancing Zulus, to check them as they approached, and then gradually to fall back upon the camp to help in its defence.

The breastwork had been almost completed when about 4.30 p.m. the first sound of firing was heard coming not, as was anticipated, from the Drift, but from behind the hill at the *back* of the station. The Zulus had crossed the river higher up and were now encircling the camp. As they closed in the officer in charge of the Basutos at the river rushed up to inform Chard that his Native troops were in full retreat, riding off to Helpmakaar. Infected with the same panic, the whole body of the Native Contingent then followed suit, thus leaving only a hundred white men to face the full fury of the Zulu *impi*. It was a desperate situation, and Chard saw at once that he would have to reduce his line of defence; the hospital might have to be abandoned and another line of defence must be built; the question was how, for the supply of mealie bags was now exhausted. Resourceful as ever, Chard thought of the big, square wooden biscuit boxes in the store. These were dragged out and built to form a wall which extended from the corner of the magazine to the northern breastwork of mealie bags.

Barely had this been done when several hundred Zulus came round the hill. Though the soldiers poured volley after volley into them they swept forward till they were only a few yards from the mealie bags; here they were partially halted, but some of them, taking advantage of the cover afforded by the cookhouse

* *The War Office Narrative of the Zulu War* gives the name as Dunne.

and the ditch at the rear of the hospital, were able to shield themselves from the fire of the defenders and keep up their attack on the little garrison. Others continued their assault from the front corner of the hospital, but being again met by heavy fire at close range were driven back to the protection of the near-by bush. Meanwhile the main body of the Zulus had joined in the attack, and a section of them, having clambered up to the ridge overlooking the station, were able to pour a continuous fire on the men behind the defences, making it dangerous for any of them to expose themselves. Another, much larger, section joined their comrades in the thick bush facing the station and advanced with unabated fury till, regardless of their losses, they reached the line of mealie bags and tried to clamber over so that they could use their assegais at close quarters. So furious was their onslaught that time and again they grasped the bayonets of the defenders with their bare hands and wrenched them from their sockets. But the British held their ground, fighting with characteristic fearlessness and ferocity.

The struggle went on till sunset, when Chard decided that he must retire his men to a new line of defence behind the biscuit boxes, for he was losing too many from the fire of the Zulus posted on the ledge of rock overlooking his position. The hospital must be evacuated. This proved a most difficult and dangerous operation, for though the Zulus had failed to force their way through the barricaded doors and windows of the building, they had by now succeeded in setting the thatched roof on fire. To add to Chard's difficulties, as there were no inter-communicating doors between the wards holes had to be hacked in the walls through which the patients could be passed, while a mere handful of soldiers kept the enemy at bay first with their rifles and then, their ammunition expended, with bayonets. Unfortunately a few of the patients, too ill to walk, had eventually to be left to their fate.

Darkness had now fallen, but the blazing roof of the hospital lit up the struggle as wave after wave of fanatical Zulus charged, swarming forward to clamber over the breastwork and into the storehouse itself. The sheer weight of numbers slowly but surely

strained the thin red line of soldiers to breaking-point. Yet, though it had to fall back even as far as the dividing wall of the cattle kraal, it held, and held to the bitter end.

Some time after midnight the intervals between the attacks grew longer and longer, for even the Zulus were becoming weary of the slaughter, but it was not till about four o'clock in the morning that they finally ceased fighting. At sunrise, an hour later, not a Zulu was to be seen. Around the gallant band of British lay 300 to 400 Zulu dead. The little garrison lost fifteen killed and twelve wounded, two of whom died later. Eleven Victoria Crosses were later presented to these heroic defenders, a greater number than had ever before been awarded in any engagement of the British Army.

Yet this was no time for self-congratulation, for a fresh attack might be launched upon them by a greatly reinforced enemy. Defences must be rebuilt and strengthened; batches of exhausted men must be given rest in turn; the wounded must receive attention and the camp be restored to some semblance of order.

About seven o'clock in the morning came the news they dreaded – another large body of Zulus was approaching. Chard sent off a Native runner to Helpmakaar begging for reinforcements. Suddenly the advancing *impi* halted and melted away in the surrounding hills. The reason soon became obvious: a long column of British soldiers was seen marching down the track from the direction of Isandhlwana; relief was at hand in the shape of the remnants of the centre column under Chelmsford.

Chelmsford, after having strengthened the garrison by the addition of about 600 men, pushed on to Maritzburg, arriving in that city on 26 January. It was now necessary to apply to England for reinforcements, and until their arrival he adopted a purely defensive attitude.

Yet another battle had been fought on the same day as Isandhlwana, though of much less significance and with far fewer forces engaged. Colonel Pearson, having established a supply depot at Fort Tenedos, on the Zululand side of the Tugela opposite Fort Pearson, set out from this place on 18 January with the Right Column in their advance on Eshowe. Progress was slow owing to

the flooded state of four rivers, the Inyoni, Umsindusi, Amatikulu and the Inyezane, the last-named being forded about 8 a.m. on 22 January. It was then decided to call a halt for about a couple of hours in order to rest the oxen and to allow the men time for breakfast.

While the meal was being prepared scouts reported that a number of Zulus had been seen on the top of a hill (known as Majia's Hill) to the right of the track which the column was about to take. Pearson ordered the Native Contingent to disperse them, but as they advanced the Zulus disappeared from this height, but in their place a much larger body rose up on another spur of the hill. To attack these it was necessary to cross a wooded and marshy ravine, and as the troops emerged they were met by heavy fire from the Zulus, who were seen to be throwing out their horns in their usual method of attack; to avoid encirclement the Native Contingent had to retire, losing five Europeans and three Natives killed.

Pearson now advanced with his troops and guns and occupied a knoll on a small ridge to the right of the road. From this point a large Zulu *impi* could be seen, one horn of which was working round the spot below them where the wagons were outspanned, while the other was sweeping round behind a kraal near the top of Majia's Hill, thus attempting to carry out a pincer movement and encircle the column. From the dominating position of this kraal the Zulus were able to pour a heavy and galling fire on the troops. Pearson brought his guns into play and sent forward a company to dislodge the enemy. The action was entirely successful; the kraal was seized and set on fire and the Zulus driven off the crest of Majia, after which they made a rapid retreat and vanished in the surrounding hills. The last shot in this encounter was fired by 9.30 a.m. Pearson's casualties were ten killed and sixteen wounded, whereas the Zulus were estimated to have lost between 200 and 300.

After a short halt, during which the dead were buried, the column proceeded without further incident and arrived at the Kwa Mondi Mission Station (Eshowe) early the next morning.

Colonel Pearson took steps to guard against a surprise attack.

The church and mission buildings were utilized as storehouses and hospital, the whole place being surrounded by a deep entrenchment. It was fortunate that these precautions were taken, else another disaster would have befallen this column, for they had barely settled in their camp when they found themselves ringed around by a dense mass of Zulus. Once again Zulu tactics proved effective, for the Right Column remained besieged from 25 January till they were relieved on 3 April.

Throughout this campaign Cetshwayo acted purely on the defensive, though the whole of Natal was now more or less open to invasion. Some Zulu *indunas*, questioned on this matter at a later date, replied that they could not have exceeded the King's orders, which were that they were to resist to the utmost in Zululand, but not to invade Natal.* Again, Cetshwayo himself is reported to have said at the time: 'The English are attacking me in my own country and I will defend myself in my country. I will not send my *impis* to kill them in Natal because I and those who went before me have always been good friends with the English.'†

Meanwhile the Left Column, under Colonel Wood, had pushed forward from Utrecht, but heavy rains hampered their progress and they were only able to reach Bemba's Kop on the left bank of the Blood River by 13 January. Here they were compelled to halt for a few days, and it was only on the 18th that they could move on again. On the 20th they reached the White Umfolozi and camped in the vicinity of Tinta's kraal. On the arrival of the British forces this chief and his people surrendered without offering any resistance; they were marched off, under guard, to Utrecht. A stone laager was then erected on the banks of this river and utilized as a supply depot. From here it was decided to reconnoitre in the direction of the Zunguin Range, which extends east and west for about twenty miles and has at its centre a mountain named Hlobane.

About midnight on 21 January a column, divided into three sections, rode to the Hlobane mountain, reaching its summit about 6 a.m. A few isolated Zulus were spotted guarding their

* A. F. Hattersley, *Later Annals of Natal*, p. 162.
† Rider Haggard, *The Days of My Life*, p. 117.

cattle; the men were quickly dispersed and their cattle seized. As the column advanced to the eastern extremity of the mountain about 4,000 Zulus were observed drilling on the northern slopes away in the distance. Colonel Wood, deeming it wiser not to attack on that day, returned to his camp, which he reached about 7 p.m.

On the morning of the 24th the column again set out towards Hlobane, this time taking a northerly direction. After an advance of about eight miles a small force of Zulus was encountered, but was dispersed without difficulty. During this skirmish news of the Isandhlwana disaster reached Colonel Wood, who immediately withdrew his column back to its entrenched position at Tinta's kraal on the White Umfolozi.

Thus all the British forces were more or less halted as Chelmsford had decided that he must await further reinforcements from England before proceeding with his general advance on Ulundi. Pearson was bottled up at Eshowe; Glyn's forces, so sadly depleted at Isandhlwana, were at Rorke's Drift; and Wood's column had drawn back to the White Umfolozi.

It was during this break in hostilities that Cetshwayo sent messages to Chelmsford requesting the opening up of negotiations with a view to ending the conflict. His requests were treated with scant courtesy, for Chelmsford was in disgrace and, smarting under the lash of bitter criticism of his generalship, was in no mood to consider peace terms until he had had his revenge on the Zulus. Consequently Cetshwayo adopted the only possible course of action in the interests of his people – he began to build up another army, for after Isandhlwana most of his warriors had returned to their kraals and were now busy attending to their harvests.

CHAPTER 13

The Battle of Kambula and the Relief of Eshowe

Frere is reprimanded by the British Government; another blow to British arms; mistakes and blunders; a decisive British victory; relief of Eshowe

WHILE these events had been taking place in Zululand Sir Bartle Frere had been rebuked by his superiors in London for precipitating a war which the British Government had explicitly forbidden. As late as 13 December, two days after the presentation of the Ultimatum to the Zulus, he had received a dispatch from Hicks Beach in which the sentence 'We cannot now have a Zulu war in addition to other greater and too possible troubles,' was heavily underlined to make the veto doubly emphatic.* Frere had acted in such a highhanded fashion that he did not even write to the Colonial Secretary informing him of the terms of the Ultimatum until 16 December, and this dispatch did not arrive in London till 2 January, only nine days before actual hostilities began.

The documents of this period also show that the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Henry Bulwer, and the Government of Natal were strongly opposed to Frere's policy. Fifteen months after the war began, when a careful assessment of the whole situation had been made, Bulwer still maintained that a Zulu invasion of Natal had never been even remotely contemplated. This is clear from his dispatch of 4 April 1880 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

> The views of H.E. the Lieutenant-General [Chelmsford] and also of H.E. the High Commissioner were both based on the assumption of an invasion of Natal by the Zulus, a contingency which, though it was

* Lady Victoria Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, 2 vols., London, 1932, p. 104.

> of course a *possibility*,* as it had been a possibility for the last thirty years, was in the opinion of this Government in the highest degree improbable, unless indeed it should be brought about by compromising action on our part.
>
> The Annexation of the Transvaal has indeed, as I have always admitted and pointed out, essentially altered the relations between English authority in South Africa and the Zulus; and as by that Annexation the English inherited questions and disputes which might bring them at any moment into collision with the Zulus, so the situation of Natal, as a neighbouring country and a British Colony, became necessarily much affected thereby. But, so far as regards the chances of an invasion of Natal territory by the Zulus I believed then, and I believe now, that such a movement had never so much as entered into the counsels of the Zulu King and Chiefs, and that it would have been utterly repugnant to the views of the greater portion of the Zulu nation. I believed then, as I believe now, that unless we ourselves provoked a quarrel or otherwise greatly changed the temper of the Zulu nation towards Natal, or unless on other accounts, British authority in South Africa went to war with the Zulus, an attack by them upon Natal was to the very last degree improbable.†

The British Government were therefore fully justified in issuing the following reprimand to Frere, through the Colonial Secretary:

> In order to afford protection to the lives and property of the colonists the reinforcements you asked for were supplied and in informing you of the decision of H.M. Government I took the opportunity of impressing upon you the importance of using every effort to avoid war. But the terms which you have dictated to the Zulu King, however necessary to relieve the Colony in future from an impending and increasing danger, are evidently such as he may not improbably refuse, even at the risk of war; and I regret that the necessity for immediate action should have appeared to you so imperative as to preclude you from incurring the delay which would have been involved in consulting H.M. Government upon a subject of so much importance as the terms which Cetshwayo should be required to accept before those terms were actually presented to the Zulu King.‡

* Bulwer's italics.
† Blue Book C2676, p. 19.
‡ Blue Book C2222, pp. 187–8.

To add to the discomfiture of the British Government no sooner had an unwanted war been foisted upon them when the news was received of the crushing defeat at Isandhlwana. Nor was this all, for other disasters followed in rapid succession.

The Left Column under Colonel Wood had remained at the White Umfolozi River till 31 January, when they moved to Kambula Hill, where a fort was erected and occupied on 13 February. From this fort sundry raids were carried out in the surrounding district as far as Luneberg, where some months earlier Fort Clery had been established and occupied by Schermbruicker's companies of Kaffrarian Rifles. These later were transferred to Kambula, their place being taken by five companies of the 80th Regiment under Major Tucker. It was here that Uhamu, a half-brother of Cetshwayo, surrendered with about 950 of his followers.

Early in March a convoy with supplies set out from Derby in the Transvaal for Fort Clery, taking the route via the Intombi Drift. Captain Moriarty with a company of the 80th Regiment was instructed to meet it at the Drift and escort it into the fort. On 7 March the first seven wagons were met and were drawn up in a V-shaped enclosure on the farther, or left, bank of the stream to await the arrival of the remainder of the convoy. As these appeared they were piloted across the Drift, but while the operation was proceeding the river, owing to very heavy rains, rose in flood. Moriarty with the majority of the wagons and seventy-one of his men were stranded on the far side, for only a few of the vehicles, with thirty-five men under Lieutenant Harward, had been able to get across. Guards were then placed on each bank, but no further precautions were taken.

At about 4.30 on the morning of the 12th, when officers and men were asleep, undressed, a shot was fired by one of the sentries on the left bank. This alerted the men on the right bank, who quickly stood to arms. The men on the left bank, however, were much more dilatory and by 5.15 were still rolled in their blankets. Meanwhile, silently and unobserved in the early morning mists, close on 4,000 Zulu warriors had crept up under the command of the redoubtable Umbilini, a freebooter whose headquarters

were in some local caves. When only seventy yards from the wagons they sprang upon their foes, stabbing with their assegais as the soldiers, still only half awake, tried to grab their arms. Moriarty himself, emerging from his tent, came face to face with a Zulu warrior who plunged his spear into his body, killing him instantly.

Following up their victory on the left bank the Zulus jumped into the swiftly flowing stream to attack the other and smaller party on the right bank. These, being warned of their danger and much more on the alert than their comrades over the river, had seized their arms and now made a strenuous attempt to defend themselves by taking cover behind the wagons. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Harward, their commander (later court martialled for his conduct in this action), having handed over his little force to Sergeant Booth, mounted his horse and galloped away to Luneberg for reinforcements. The sergeant, after bravely trying to cover the retreat of the few survivors from the farther bank, was forced to fall back in order to avoid being surrounded. He and his little band held the Zulus in check for nearly three miles, halting from time to time to fire a volley. Their valour and determination saved not only their own lives, but the lives of the few fugitives from the left bank, who were all without arms and most without clothes.

On the arrival of Major Tucker with reinforcements some hours later a sad spectacle met their eyes; scattered all around were the dead bodies of their comrades; every wagon had been looted, all the oxen taken, stores, rifles, ammunition, blankets all plundered and the Zulu *impi* far away in the distance, hastily retreating after having inflicted another serious blow upon British arms.

Of the seventy-one men of the 80th Regiment who were on the farther bank only twelve escaped; among those on the right bank three more fell, as well as two European drivers and fifteen men of the Native contingent.

Towards the end of March Colonel Wood received a dispatch from Chelmsford informing him that he was about to set out with a force for the relief of the beleaguered garrison at Eshowe. He therefore suggested that he (Wood) should attempt some sort of

an attack upon the Zulu forces in his vicinity in order to create a diversion and so prevent any additional pressure being brought to bear on the relieving column. Consequently Wood decided to send out a force to reconnoitre the Hlobane Mountain. This force was to be divided into two portions; one, under Colonel Buller, was to ascend the eastern slope and would constitute the main attacking party; the other, under Colonel Russell, was to climb the western slope and thus create a diversion, but if serious resistance was encountered their attack must not be pressed forward. Both officers were further instructed to send out scouts to keep a sharp look-out for a large Zulu army which was reported to be advancing on Kambula.

The two forces set out from Kambula on 27 March, Buller reaching a point some five miles south-east of the mountain, Russell a point about four miles from the western extremity; here each of them bivouacked for the night. Russell was later joined by Colonel Wood and his staff, who, early on the morning of the 28th, pushed forward in an easterly direction and, rather surprisingly, came across Colonel Weatherley with fifty-four men of the Border Horse, who, owing no doubt to the very heavy mist, had become detached from Buller's troop, which by this time was well on its way up the mountain. No opposition was encountered, but on reaching the summit they were met with sharp fire from the few Zulus who were guarding a herd of some 2,000 cattle. Here three men were killed and many horses were lost. Wood, who was following on behind, on hearing the firing immediately ordered Weatherley to hasten up the steep slope to Buller's assistance. As they approached the summit a severe and accurate fire was directed against them from certain caves and boulders which afforded excellent cover for the Zulu marksmen; several casualties were sustained including an officer.

As soon as these Zulus were driven off Wood and his escort descended to a lower slope, where the officer and the other casualties were buried, while Weatherley and his men pushed on in their attempt to join Buller. Meanwhile, Buller's force, having dispersed the cattle guards, was busy rounding up the animals, while he himself with Piet Uys, one of the very few Boers who had

linked up with the British forces, was busy examining the plateau for tracks by which they could make a descent. There were only two of these down the western face, both steep and dangerous, but one was selected as affording some protection from flanking fire.

It was now nine o'clock in the morning, and Buller, returning to the eastern end of the plateau, ordered Captain Barton, his second-in-command, to take thirty men and bury those who had fallen on scaling the summit. Having completed this task he must find Weatherley and return with him to Kambula.

Shortly after Barton's departure Buller was horrified to see, not more than six miles away, approximately 20,000 Zulus approaching the mountain from the south-east; thus Barton and Weatherley, marching back to Kambula on the southern side of Hlobane, would almost certainly come face to face with this army. Buller immediately sent two troopers after Barton ordering him to return 'by the right of the mountain', meaning that he must alter his route from the southern to the *northern* side.

Meanwhile Russell and his force had advanced up the western slope of the mountain as arranged and by 7 a.m. had taken up a position on a smaller plateau about 150 feet below that which Buller had occupied. Viewing the track which led up to the higher plateau Russell thought it far too precipitous for any horsemen, so decided not to attempt it; he would rather await Buller's arrival; meanwhile his men were kept busy rounding up all the stray cattle. However, in order to acquaint Buller of his whereabouts he sent a party of twenty men on foot up the slope; they returned in due course and reported that all was quiet on the summit.

About 10.30 a.m. Wood, reaching the foot of the mountain, also became aware of the approach of the Zulu army, and sent a dispatch to Russell stating 'There is a large army coming this way from the south. Get into position on the Zunguin Neck,'* adding that he himself would move to this spot. But long before this, about 9 a.m., Russell had seen this army, noted its rapid approach

* Zunguin Neck lies to the west of Hlobane mountain and between it and the Zunguin mountain.

and had issued orders to abandon all cattle and retreat as quickly as possible down the mountain.

This was accomplished without incident, and after sending his native troops back to Kambula he drew his men into position to cover Buller's retreat. It was then that he received Wood's instruction to proceed to Zunguin Neck, but, not being sure of its position, after consultation with his men he came to the conclusion that it was where the track from Kambula crosses the *western* portion of the Zunguin mountain, in which direction he accordingly set forth. This was another mistake, due to lack of knowledge of the locality, for the place to which Wood had referred was at the *eastern* end of the Zunguin mountain.

Meanwhile the Zulus hiding on the mountain had also seen the approach of their fellow warriors, to whom there is little doubt they signalled the presence not only of themselves, but of the respective British forces. Realizing the precarious position of Buller and his men these Zulus came out from their hiding-places and concentrated their attack on him. Sheltering behind rocks close to the line of descent, they poured a heavy fire into the men struggling down the dangerous and precipitous slope. The result was disastrous and many lives were lost, including that of Piet Uys. The remnants of this force reached the lower plateau before the Zulu army was able to close in on them; otherwise not a man would have escaped alive.

Yet worse was to befall. As already stated Captain Barton had been instructed to withdraw 'by the right of the mountain', but when this message was received, as he was facing due east he came to the erroneous conclusion that this meant his retreat was to be by the *south* of the mountain. Accordingly, being now joined by Weatherley and his men, they set out along this route only to be met by the full force of the Zulus. From this desperate situation they attempted to extricate themselves by turning about and endeavouring to cross the Iteyenka Neck in order to reach the safe line of retreat on the north side of Hlobane. To add to the difficulties of their situation, not only were they pursued from below by a portion of the Zulu army, but the Zulus from above now poured down the mountain and barred the pass over the

Ityenka Neck. Thus, vastly outnumbered, their position became hopeless, and though fighting to the last, practically every man was slain, only eight managing to fight their way to safety. These were later rescued by Buller.

It had been a disastrous day – mistakes and blunders on every hand. Ninety-two Europeans were killed, many more wounded and scores of natives – an unknown number – perished. A direct result of the action was the wholesale desertion of the Native Contingent.

In the early hours of the following morning, 29 March, Colonel Wood was roused from his sleep and informed that a friendly Zulu, Umbangulana by name, had arrived in the camp with important information. The Colonel learnt from him that the Zulus intended to attack Kambula that day shortly after noon; that their army was in much better fettle than it had been at Isandhlwana, for now they were well fed as a result of having harvested their crops; that the renowned Mnyamana was in command and his army numbered about 20,000 warriors. These facts, Umbangulana stated, he had ascertained from talks with Cetshwayo's warriors; later he had been able to slip through the Zulu lines and had made his way to the British camp.

This timely warning was of immense assistance, and Colonel Wood immediately prepared for the onslaught. The Kambula camp was admirably sited for defence: it consisted of two laagers and a redoubt, or fort, situated on a ridge and forming a rough triangle, the three positions being from 200 to 300 yards apart. The base of this triangle faced due north, at one end of which was the redoubt, which occupied the highest and most central point of the ridge, while the other end was taken up by a large wagon laager in which the majority of the troops were camped. Behind these, facing south and forming the apex of the triangle, was the second laager, also constructed of wagons and used as a kraal in which the oxen were kept. To the north the ground sloped gently away, but to the south there were some abrupt ledges of rock affording considerable cover for an enemy force, thus leaving a large area, fairly close to the cattle kraal, which could neither be seen nor covered by the defenders.

About eleven o'clock that morning a large Zulu army was seen away in the distance advancing in five columns from the direction of the Zunguin mountain. Colonel Wood had taken every precaution; boxes of reserve ammunition had been opened and placed in convenient spots, and the men themselves were eager to avenge the serious reverse they had suffered the previous day.

It was nearly 1 p.m. when the Zulus approached and from their line of advance – almost due west – it appeared at first as though they were about to by-pass the camp and march right on to Utrecht, but on reaching a point almost due south of the laager they changed direction. Adopting their usual tactics, they now formed up into chest and two horns, their right horn circling round toward the east, while their left swept on and wheeled toward the western side of the camp, the chest remaining in the south, where they were afforded considerable cover by the line of rocky ledges. For a while the forces halted, except the right horn, which continued its movement till it had reached a position north of the camp. The whole army was well out of range of rifle fire.

At about 1.30 p.m. Wood ordered a column of about 100 mounted men under Buller and Russell to move out against the right horn, which, incidentally, consisted of the crack Ngobamakosi Regiment, which, having been excluded from most of the fighting at Isandhlwana, were now only too anxious to show their mettle. Riding forward till they were within range, they jumped off their horses and opened up a steady fire on the enemy, causing the whole Ngobamakosi Regiment of 2,000 men to charge so furiously that they were compelled to remount and retire to the laager. The Ngobamakosi now lost their heads; racing after the British column they not merely winded themselves but came within 300 yards of the camp, where they met the full blast of fire from both artillery and infantry and were forced to retire to the shelter of some rocky ground in the north-east, from which point they then kept up a steady fire on the camp.

At about 2.15 the chest and left horn swept in to the attack. Here the Zulus had the advantage of being able to advance under cover of the various ledges of rock, and the defenders of the cattle

kraal, after suffering heavy losses, were compelled to retire. The Zulus attempted to press home their temporary advantage, both chest and left horn fighting with unparalleled bravery. Wood ordered a counter-attack, sending out two companies of the 90th Regiment under Major Hackett, who forced the Zulus back. But the check was only temporary, for the warriors again surged forward and drove them back again into the laager, Major Hackett himself having been gravely wounded. The Zulus now occupied the cattle kraal and from this advantageous position were thus able not only to obtain fuller protection for themselves but also to pour a more concentrated fire on the laager at a closer range. But the British were also able to fire into the Zulus with greater effect, and in time their superior training in the use of firearms took effect. Further, the Zulus began to realize that to reach the laager and the redoubt was an utter impossibility, for once they left the protection of the kraal or the rocky ledges they would have to face a withering fire that would practically annihilate them.

The bitter struggle went on till 5.30 p.m., by which time the Zulus' losses had been exceedingly heavy and they were beginning to lose heart. As soon as Wood sensed a slackening in their fire he ordered a company of the 1/13th to re-take the cattle kraal and a company of the 90th to advance against the rocky ridges behind which so many Zulus were taking cover. Pouring volley after volley into them as they swept forward, they forced the Zulus back and when the mounted men were ordered out the retreat became a complete rout, the enemy fleeing in all directions, relentlessly pursued by Buller for about seven miles, till darkness put an end to the conflict.

The British lost eighteen killed and sixty-five seriously wounded, of whom ten died later, but the Zulus lost close on 2,000 – many more than fell at Isandhlwana. It was by far the most important and decisive battle of the Zulu War, for after this action the Zulu armies realized that they could not hope for any future success against the superiority of British arms. Great numbers of the warriors, thoroughly disheartened, returned to their kraals and took no further part in the war.

Cetshwayo was very angry when he heard the result, for he had staked everything upon the Kambula battle and it was the general opinion among the Zulus that they would have succeeded in taking the camp had not the Ngobamakosi acted foolishly by rushing into the conflict and thus bringing their encircling movement to disaster early in the fight.

While these events had been taking place Chelmsford had been busy organizing a force for the relief of the garrison at Eshowe, and on 23 March he proceeded to Fort Pearson and took over its command. Where previously he had shown extreme carelessness in underestimating the prowess of the Zulus and in ridiculing all attempts at laagering, he now went to the other extreme and hardly moved a mile or two without entrenching and laagering all points at which a halt was made.

A large force had been built up consisting of the 57th and 91st Regiments, six companies of the 3/60th, five companies of the 99th, two companies of the Buffs, a Naval Brigade of men from the *Shah*, *Tenedos* and *Boadicea*, Mounted Infantry and Volunteers together with the 4th and 5th Battalions of the Native Contingent, in all 3,390 Europeans and 2,280 Natives, along with two 9-pounder guns, four 24-pounder rocket tubes and two Gatlings; with these there also went a convoy of 122 carts and wagons.

Setting out from Fort Tenedos at 6 a.m. on 29 March Chelmsford crossed the Inyoni and Amatikulu Rivers. Arriving about a mile from the Inyezane River by 1 April he halted the whole column on rising ground which commanded a fairly extensive view of the area. Here a strongly entrenched laager was formed, close to the place where the Gingindhlovu military cemetery is now situated. The surrounding country, though free of bush, was covered with long grass, affording ample protection for an enemy such as the Zulus; a good supply of water was available, for the Gingindhlovu stream ran close by and less than a mile in front of them was the Inyezane River.

Soon large parties of Zulus were seen in the distance, and that night numerous camp fires were spotted on the surrounding hills. Early on the following day a body of mounted men sent to reconnoitre returned with the information that a large Zulu army was

approaching. Soon two Zulu columns appeared on the farther bank of the Inyezane. After crossing the river they separated, one advancing in an almost direct line to the front (north) face of the laager, the other veering to their right to attack its eastern face. These two columns formed one horn of the Zulu force and almost simultaneously the other horn appeared, coming through the thick bush which clothed the Umisi Hill away to the west. As the latter advanced they too split up into sections, moving rapidly forward to assault the western and southern faces of the laager.

They were met by a withering fire from the defenders, which they faced unflinchingly till within about twenty yards of the shelter trenches. Their warriors were falling by the score, till soon their dead lay piled around. As they realized that they had no hope of getting to close quarters they began to waver, and Major Barrow charged from the laager with his mounted troops. The Zulu ranks broke and scattered, leaving behind about 1,200 dead. The struggle was short and sharp, all being over in an hour and a half. The British suffered a loss of nine killed and fifty-two wounded.

The Zulu army had numbered close on 10,000 men and was under the command of Dabulamanzi. There can be little doubt that he had greatly underestimated the strength of the British force, and though, as John Dunn (who was present during the fight) states, the British rifle fire was poor and inaccurate, the Zulus received a severe and humiliating defeat.

The remainder of that day was spent by the British forces in burying their dead and in strengthening the defences of their camp, for Chelmsford had decided to leave many of his men there and use only a flying column to relieve Eshowe.

Contact was now made with Eshowe by heliograph, and the garrison were informed of the Zulu defeat and of the plans for their relief.*

* Some weeks earlier helio contact between Eshowe and Fort Pearson had been established by using small shaving mirrors. After official messages had been put through private messages were allowed. Colonel Pearson's wife was expecting a baby, and the first private message flashed to Fort Pearson was 'How is Mrs Pearson?' Back came the reply, 'Mrs Pearson is——'. At that moment heavy clouds prevented further signalling. After several hours

At 8 a.m. on 3 April the flying column, under Lord Chelmsford, set out. This consisted of troops from the 57th, 60th and 91st Regiments and a part of the Naval Brigade, with a convoy of fifty-eight wagons carrying stores and medical supplies for the garrison. They were preceded by Mounted Infantry and Volunteers under Major Barrow, and along with them went John Dunn and his Scouts who knew every inch of the terrain. The march was uneventful, but although the distance to be covered was only fifteen miles much delay was caused by the difficulties of the track and the muddiness of the route. The Mounted Infantry and Volunteers reached Eshowe at 6 p.m., but it was close on midnight before the heavy transport arrived.

The garrison were found to be in good heart, although the blockade had lasted for ten weeks and since the end of February there had been much sickness; all had had to live on reduced rations; medical supplies had been used up; thirty-one men had died during the siege and on the day of the relief 120 were sick. Consequently it was decided to evacuate the place next day. By 1.30 p.m. on 4 April the head of the column moved off, but it was not till late in the evening that all the 120 wagons had managed to get away. They reached Fort Tenedos on 7 April, where Chelmsford left them to go on to Durban to supervise the reinforcements which were pouring in.

the sun came out, and the completed message ran: 'Mrs Pearson is well and delivered of a baby daughter.' The infant is now an elderly lady living in Rhodesia.

CHAPTER 14

The Battle of Ulundi

Arrival of British reinforcements; Cetshwayo rejects peace terms; he is defeated at Ulundi and goes into hiding; Cetshwayo is captured

FRESH plans had now to be drawn up for the march on Ulundi and all the forces had to be completely reorganized, for many of the old regiments had suffered heavy losses and thousands of reinforcements had arrived in response to Chelmsford's urgent appeals.

Under the new arrangement there were to be two main divisions, known as No. 1 and No. 2 South African Field Force.

No. 1 Division, which was to advance along the coast of Zululand, was placed under the command of Major-General Crealock and had its main depot at Fort Pearson. A strong permanent forward post was also to be constructed at Fort Chelmsford on the right bank of the Inyezane River, to act as an advance supply base housing stores to last the whole Division for at least two months. A smaller intermediate post, Fort Crealock, was also to be erected on the farther bank of the Amatikulu River.

One of the first tasks of this Division was the destruction and burning of Cetshwayo's military kraals at Mangweni and Ondini, near the Umhlatuzi River. It was later to establish a base at Port Durnford for the landing of supplies and men from the sea. This base, when constructed, became known as Fort Richards.

No. 2 Division, under the command of General Newdigate, with its main supply depot at Dundee, was to advance into Zululand from Koppie Allein, near the Blood River. Its main task was to march direct to Cetshwayo's Great Kraal at Ulundi, to seize the King and smash any opposition. It had ample strength, for it consisted of 3,364 infantry, 1,303 cavalry, 300 artillery (two

batteries) and fifty-eight engineers. It was also to be joined by the flying column under Sir Evelyn Wood, who since Kambula had been promoted to the rank of General. Under him was a force of 2,278 infantry, 807 cavalry, 194 artillery and ninety-five engineers. Thus the total strength of the invading army was now 8,399 men of all ranks.

Towards the end of May the whole of the 2nd Division had converged on Koppie Allein, and on the 31st they crossed the Blood River at that point and encamped on its left bank. The country ahead of them had been reconnoitred for some distance and it had been decided to follow a route north of the Itelezi Hill to a spot between the Tombokala and Ityotyosi Rivers, where a camping site had yet to be selected. This task naturally fell to the Quartermaster-General's department, to which the Prince Imperial of France* had recently been attached.

Some months previously this young man had asked to serve with the British troops in Zululand, but his application had been refused; he had then persuaded the authorities to allow him to join Lord Chelmsford's staff as a spectator. When this new camping site had to be selected he readily undertook the duty, and as no Zulus had been sighted in that area for some time past it was considered quite safe for the Prince to make the trip. On Sunday 1 June he set out with six troopers of Bettington's Horse under Lieutenant Carey and a Zulu guide. Reaching Itelezi Hill soon after ten o'clock he met Colonel Harrison, with whom he discussed the question of water supplies. Moving forward again, at about 12.30 the party reached a flat-topped hill, where all dismounted and the Prince made a sketch of the surrounding country. Remounting, they proceeded along a ridge between the Tombokala and the Ityotyosi Rivers and about 2.30 descended towards a kraal some 200 yards from the Ityotyosi stream.

This kraal consisted of five huts and a small stone enclosure; all were unoccupied, but as dogs were prowling around and fresh remains of food were seen scattered about, it was obvious that natives must have been there very recently. The area around

* Only son of Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie, who was then living in exile at Chislehurst in Kent.

the kraal was covered with long grass and mealies to a height of five or six feet, with the exception of the northern side, where the ground was open and sloped gradually for a distance of about 200 yards to a donga, which was from six to eight feet deep.

Reaching this kraal about 3 p.m. the Prince called a halt and ordered his escort to off-saddle, knee-halter the horses and make coffee. After about an hour's rest the Zulu guide reported that he had seen a hostile Zulu coming over the hill; consequently the horses were caught and the Prince gave the order to mount, but in their haste to get away the vital order to load rifles was forgotten.

Suddenly a volley was poured into the little band by a number of Zulus who had crept silently and unobserved through the long grass to within fifteen yards of the huts. No one was hit, but the yelling Zulus and the sudden rifle fire so terrified the horses that they became almost uncontrollable. Mounting as best they could, all galloped across the open ground for the shelter of the donga, except the Prince, who, having failed to get into his saddle, was running alongside his horse making desperate efforts to mount. These proving unsuccessful, as a last resort he tried to vault upon his animal's back, grasping the saddlebag to give himself leverage; but the sudden strain caused the leather strap to snap, and while his horse careered madly forward he himself fell crashing to earth. All this time the Zulus had kept up a steady fire on the fugitives, killing one of the troopers and the Zulu guide. It was evident from where the bodies were found later that the Prince and a second trooper managed to reach the donga, but here both were slain.

In the meantime Carey and the four remaining troopers had crossed the donga and galloped on for several hundred yards; then Carey discovered that the Prince was missing, but he felt that to go back at that moment was to invite certain death for every one of his little party. Hurrying forward in the direction of Itelezi, they fell in with Wood and Buller, and Carey reported the tragic news. The following morning the body of the Prince was brought back to camp. From there it was sent on to Durban and

eventually conveyed to England by H.M.S. *Orontes*. Burial took place at Chislehurst on 12 July 1879.*

The 2nd Division at the Ityotyosi River was joined by Wood's Flying Column, from whom it was learnt that there was a trader's wagon track from Babanango right on to Ulundi; it was decided to use this route, and the army now proceeded to the right bank of the Nodweni, where an advance supply depot was erected, guarded by two stone forts, which were named Fort Newdigate.

On 4 June three Zulu chiefs presented themselves to Lord Chelmsford with a view to negotiating terms of peace. After considerable discussion they were informed that the following conditions must be complied with:

1. The restoration of the oxen at the King's kraal and of the two 7-pounder guns captured at Isandhlwana.
2. A promise should be given by Cetshwayo that all arms taken during the war should be collected and surrendered.
3. One Zulu regiment, to be named by Lord Chelmsford, should come under a flag of truce and lay down its arms at a distance of 1,000 yards from the British camp.

* The following extract from a letter written by Sir W. Wyndham to Mrs V. G. M. Robinson (daughter of the late Sir Charles Saunders), by whose permission it is quoted, throws light on the Prince's death: 'I went to Zululand with the British Resident, then Mr Melmoth Osborn, in January 1882. On his arrival at Rorke's Drift the local chief of the district (I think it was Tshingwayo), deputed his son Sityityili to act as a bodyguard to the Resident. We visited the site of the Prince's death and Sityityili personally related to us exactly what occurred. There was a deep donga a short distance from his kraal along which he took a hidden body of men and suddenly sprang out on the patrol which had dismounted near the bank. Taken by surprise Carey [?] ordered the party to mount and get away as quickly as possible. In the excitement the Prince's horse reared as he tried to mount and while he made a second attempt Sityityili rushed in and stabbed him to death. Meanwhile the patrol had galloped away so could do nothing to save the Prince, whose body was soon after recovered.

I may say that Sityityili was one of the finest Zulus that I ever met. He succeeded his father as Chief and met his death in action during the Bambata Rebellion when loyally fighting for the Government. I have no hesitation in believing that his account is a strictly true version of the tragedy and he told me that when he realized later that he had killed a member of our Royal House he always deeply regretted the incident.'

The official War Office Record states explicitly that it was *the Prince* who gave the order to mount.

The Battle of Ulundi: sketches made on the spot by Lt.-Col. Fairlie

The x shows the position of the remote kraal in Ngome Forest where Cetshwayo was taken prisoner

The captive Cetshwayo is brought to Sir Garnet Wolseley's camp, 31 August 1879

A written statement of these conditions was given to the envoys who were then dismissed.

The army now moved slowly forward to the Upoko River, where another halt was made from 7 June to 17 June, and yet another fort – Fort Marshall — was constructed, five miles in front of Fort Newdigate. Here news reached Chelmsford that he had been superseded by Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had been placed in supreme command of all troops in South Africa. The British Government felt that this was a necessary move owing to Chelmsford's dawdling tactics, his utter incompetence and his disagreement with the civil authorities in Natal, for there was much friction between the Lieutenant-Governor and himself.

But Chelmsford was determined to have his revenge for Isandhlwana and so try to save himself from utter disgrace before returning to England. Consequently another move forward was made, but always at the pace of the oxen, for every lumbering advance was regulated by the 660 wagons that accompanied the army. Babanango was passed and the Umhlatuzi crossed (where further delay was occasioned by the erection of still another fort, Fort Evelyn). At last the Emtonjaneni heights were scaled, and there in the valley below them was the White Umfolozi; once that river was crossed it was but a few miles to Ulundi – their final objective.

On 27 June while Buller was out reconnoitring with a small party near the Umfolozi they came upon three messengers from Cetshwayo carrying between them two large elephant tusks; with them was a herd of some 150 cattle. On being taken to the camp they handed Chelmsford a letter written on behalf of Cetshwayo by a Dutch trader named Vijn, who was living among the Zulus. This letter, in reply to Chelmsford's peace terms of 5 June, stated that the cattle accompanying the messengers were all that could be collected as the rest had died of lung-sickness; that the surrender of the arms could not be complied with as they were not in the King's possession; that the two guns were on their way and that the British troops should now retire.

The following day the messengers were sent back to Cetshwayo, as were the elephant tusks; Cetshwayo was informed that as he

had not complied with the conditions the army would still advance, but as *some* cattle had been surrendered this advance would be delayed till the evening of the following day (29 June) to allow time for the fulfilment of the remaining conditions. Chelmsford also modified the earlier conditions by stating that the surrender of such arms captured at Isandhlwana as were in the possession of Zulus now with the King would be accepted, and instead of a named regiment the British would be prepared to accept the surrender of any 1,000 of Cetshwayo's warriors.

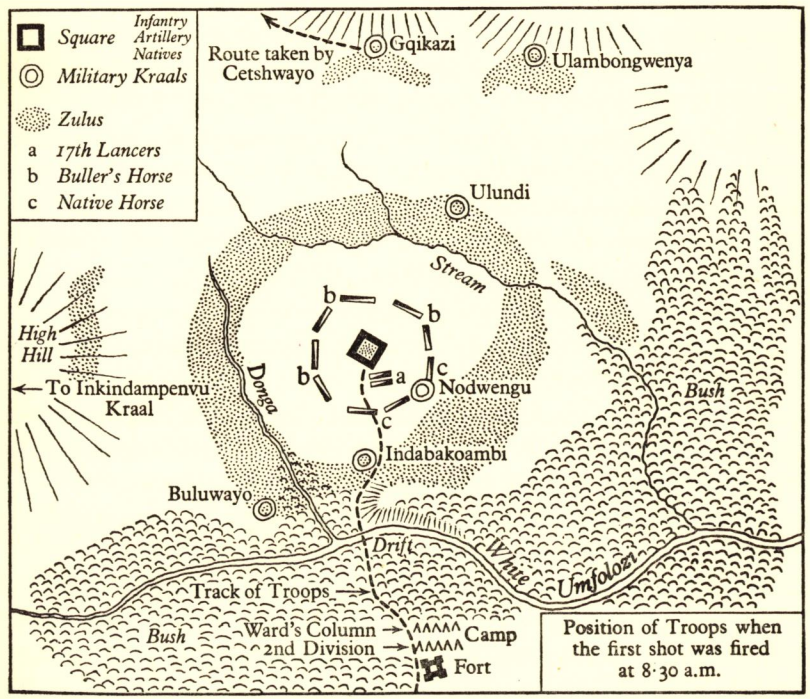
The whole army remained halted at Emtonjaneni for the 28th and 29th June, but as no further word was received from Cetshwayo it advanced into the White Umfolozi valley. Then two more messengers turned up bringing with them the Prince Imperial's sword and another letter from Cetshwayo promising that the two guns and more cattle would be sent to the camp the following morning. Chelmsford replied that if the two guns and more cattle reached him by next day (3 July) he was willing to accept the surrender of a thousand *rifles* in lieu of the thousand warriors as previously stipulated. Further, his troops would not advance beyond the White Umfolozi, nor would any more Zulu kraals be burned before noon of 3 July in order to give Cetshwayo time to fulfil these conditions.

Meanwhile the columns pushed forward to the banks of the White Umfolozi and as they took up their position a large Zulu force was seen advancing on the opposite side of the river, but they made no attempt to attack and disappeared shortly afterwards. However, in view of the close proximity of this hostile force it was thought necessary to construct a strong laager; while the men were busy on this task a large herd of beautiful white cattle were seen advancing from the King's kraal, evidently sent by him as a peace offering, but the Zulu troops, angered that so valued a national asset should be surrendered, drove them back.

And so 3 July dawned. As the day advanced to noon and no reply had been received from the Zulu King it became obvious that the terms of peace had been rejected. As if to emphasize this fact, small parties of Zulus, who had secreted themselves on some hills along the opposite bank of the river, now began firing on any

watering party that approached the stream. Negotiations being regarded as at an end, the 150 cattle which had been surrendered on 27 June were now driven back across the river, and Buller and the mounted men of the Flying Column rode out to reconnoitre the ground around Ulundi itself.

Crossing the river and driving the skirmishers from the nearby hills, they had gone about three miles when they suddenly came



The Battle of Ulundi

under heavy fire from an *impi* of about 5,000 men concealed in the valley of a small stream known as the MBilane. Other warriors sprang from their hiding-places to form the customary right and left horns with which they hoped to encircle the British force. Buller swiftly withdrew his men, but not before three had been killed and four wounded. Retiring in good order they reached the camp without further casualties.

Plans were now drawn up for an immediate advance on Ulundi, and at 6 a.m. on 4 July the mounted men of the Flying Column crossed the Umfolozi and occupied the hill which commanded the Drift. A combined force consisting of the greater part of Wood's Column and the 2nd Division – with a total strength of 4,166 Europeans, 958 Native troops with twelve guns and two Gatlings – also crossed the Drift. A force of about 650 men under Colonel Bellairs was left behind to guard the camp.

The mounted men under Buller now pushed ahead of the main force, which followed on in the shape of a hollow rectangle, the interior of which was occupied by the Native Contingent and the ammunition wagons. In this formation the troops moved forward in a north-easterly direction towards the military kraal of Nodwengu; having passed it, the whole rectangle wheeled round and took up a favourable position, previously reported on by Buller, with its front facing the Royal Kraal of Ulundi, almost due east of them and about a mile and a half away.

Meanwhile the Zulus who had assembled on the surrounding hills began to advance and at about 8.45 a.m. came into collision with the mounted troops of the Flying Column, who were compelled to retire within the rectangle. The artillery caused great havoc in the Zulu ranks, yet they continued to press forward at a rapid pace, completely encircling the rectangle. As they drew nearer, their circle contracted till soon all were within range of the British rifles, which now opened up in full blast. Undaunted, the Zulus surged forward, firing wildly and attempting to get to close quarters; had their aim been more accurate the British losses would have been serious, but much of their fire passed harmlessly over the heads of the troops and few casualties occurred. When they were unable to get nearer than thirty yards they began to lose heart. Immediately (9.25 a.m.) Chelmsford ordered the Lancers out from the rear of the rectangle and the Flying Column from its front. Soon the circle was broken and the Zulus fled, pursued by the cavalry.

Ulundi was over; the Zulus were irretrievably defeated, leaving 1,500 dead. Today the beautiful Ulundi Monument marks the spot: 'In memory of the brave warriors who fell here in 1879 in defence of the old Zulu order.'

Once the battle was over the troops advanced on Ulundi and the surrounding kraals, setting aflame what was once the heart of the proud Zulu nation. The British troops returned that evening to their camp at the Umfolozi. Hereafter the army was gradually reduced from a fighting force to an army of occupation. Lord Chelmsford resigned his command on 8 July and set off for England, followed by Wood and Buller, who had both been laid low by illness.

What had happened to Cetshwayo? He himself states* that he witnessed the cavalry fight on the day before the battle and though his generals thought that this was to be a serious conflict, he disagreed with them, stating emphatically that this was but a small force sent out to test the strength of their army and to select a suitable site for the battle which he knew was imminent. Warning them against engaging the British troops on the open plains, where they were bound to suffer defeat, he urged them rather to adopt guerrilla tactics in the difficult and broken country around the valleys of the Black and White Umfolozi Rivers and in the rugged regions of the Ngome Forest. Had his advice been taken there is little doubt that the British armies would have had a most difficult and prolonged task ahead of them, but Cetshwayo was overruled by his generals, who in turn were overruled by the 'young bloods' in their ranks. Seeing that they were determined upon their line of action he gave them the best advice he could as to the disposition of their forces.

Meanwhile, in order that he should not witness the final humiliation of his army, he retired to a spot some seven or eight miles distant from Ulundi and from there on the following day he heard the roar of the guns and the din of battle. All too soon the news that he expected, yet dreaded, was brought to him. Some of the scattered remnants of his army later assembled before him at the Black Umfolozi, and when asked why they appeared so crestfallen they replied that it was no use fighting against the English for they put corrugated iron around them and when the Zulus fired they heard their bullets striking harmlessly against

* In *The Story of the Capture of Cetshwayo*, by W. H. Longcast, first published in *Cape Times* of 11 September 1879 and later reproduced as a pamphlet.

the iron! The fact is that the rays of the sun glinting on the bayonets of the soldiers drawn up in the rectangle gave the impression that the men were protected by a wall of steel.

In spite of the disaster Cetshwayo urged the survivors to adopt guerrilla tactics, but, realizing the hopelessness of carrying on the struggle any longer, they quietly melted away and returned to their kraals. Seeing his own danger Cetshwayo made for the kraal of his Prime Minister, Mnyamana, where he remained for the best part of a month. Here it was brought home to him that his military strength was irretrievably smashed, his authority over his warriors was gone; no longer would the nation bow to his will, for his people were scattered and the few great military kraals that remained unburnt stood silent and deserted. That once proud monarch, accustomed to being surrounded by his great *indunas*, accompanied wherever he went by a splendid bodyguard of highly trained warriors, now stood almost alone, except for a handful of his aged and faithful followers and a few of his women-folk – a tragic figure, yet even in defeat still defiant, still conscious that in his veins there ran the blood of his proud ancestor, Shaka the Great.

Had Chelmsford followed up his victory by a speedy pursuit, Cetshwayo could have been captured with ease within a day or two, but the General had had his revenge, and was anxious to get back to England as quickly as possible. This failure to pursue the Zulu King, together with the speedy retirement of the British forces, led Cetshwayo to believe that the English were now content with the punishment they had inflicted and that no further steps would be taken against him. He was soon to be disillusioned.

Shortly after Chelmsford's withdrawal Sir Garnet Wolseley decided that Ulundi must be reoccupied and Cetshwayo captured, should he still refuse to surrender. The troops that were to carry out these measures were drawn from Colonel Crealock's Division ('Crealock's Crawlers', as they were nicknamed), for so far these troops had seen little real active service, having been mainly occupied in crawling along the coastal belt, building forts and unloading supplies and men at Port Durnford. Accordingly, on 11 August, more than a month after the battle, Ulundi was

re-occupied by a column under the command of Colonel Clarke, Wolseley himself having reached there the day before.

As soon as Cetshwayo had received news of the British re-occupation he sent a message by three of his chiefs to Wolseley stating that Mnyamana, his Prime Minister, together with Tshingwayo, his commander at Isandhlwana, were on their way to him bringing with them the King's cattle and having his authority to negotiate terms of peace. They were accompanied by Vijn, the Dutchman, who was to act as interpreter and whose duty it was to report progress to Cetshwayo.

On their arrival Wolseley pointed out to them the futility of attempting to continue the struggle, and having offered them honourable terms as prisoners of war persuaded them to surrender. Vijn meanwhile tried to improve his own finances by bargaining with the General to bring in Cetshwayo on condition that he be paid a sum of £200 as a reward. A consideration being promised if he accomplished his mission, he was sent back to the King with a message urging him to give himself up without further delay, assuring him of personal safety and good treatment as a prisoner of war; should he refuse to do so, the British would send their soldiers to arrest and bring him in, by force if necessary.

While the envoys had made their way to the British camp Cetshwayo had discreetly removed to another kraal, where he received a warning from Dabulamanzi, another of his generals, that the English meant to kill him when they caught him; consequently, he should not surrender but rather wait till Mnyamana had been able to make terms with Wolseley, Dabulamanzi of course being unaware that the Prime Minister had already surrendered. Cetshwayo naturally took the advice of his old and trusted general, and Vijn on his arrival was sent back to Wolseley with a message stating that the King refused to give himself up.

Vijn reached Ulundi about noon on 13 August, and Wolseley immediately ordered a force to hunt down and capture the Zulu King. By 3 p.m. of the same day about 300 mounted men under the command of Major Barrow, with Vijn acting as guide, were on their way to the kraal where the King had been the day before.

A message was also despatched to Uhamu ordering his tribe to advance from Luneberg and occupy the district between the Pongola and the Black Umfolozi, while Captain MacLeod,* the Border Agent at Derbe in the Transvaal, was instructed to guard the northern boundary with his Swazi warriors, and so prevent Cetshwayo's escape to the Tongas, should he attempt to flee to their country.

Riding hard Barrow's company reached the Black Umfolozi at midnight, where a short halt was made. Within the hour they were off again and by 1 p.m. the next day, 14 August, had reached and surrounded the kraal where the King had been on the 12th, only to find that their quarry had given them the slip. Leaving the greater portion of his force to guard the kraal, the Major soon reached the spot where the King had slept the previous night. Once again they met with disappointment, for the place was now deserted.

Cetshwayo, alive to the dangers of his situation, was kept fully informed by his own faithful people of all movements of the pursuing troops and was thus able to evade them at every turn. On the third morning of the pursuit he narrowly escaped capture. Having spent the night in the thick bush on the banks of the Black Umfolozi, in the early morning his followers had killed two head of cattle for food when, just as they had finished skinning the beasts, an urgent message was brought to them that the troops were making direct for the spot where they were concealed. Cetshwayo told his followers to scatter and make their escape as best they could, while he himself with five or six of his retinue emerged from the bush and made for a mound overlooking the drift, where they hid themselves in the long grass. So near to their pursuers were they that they could hear the men laughing and talking as they passed by and scrambled through the stream. On reaching the other side the force split up into two companies, one going in one direction and the other taking a different route, but both parties riding right away from the place where the King and his men lay concealed.

* Appointed as political Agent to the Swazis in October 1878 by Sir Bartle Frere.

This was where the troops completely lost the trail, Major Barrow taking the route back to Ulundi while his second-in-command, Lord Gifford, moved in an easterly direction down the Umfolozi Valley, where for several days he carried out an intensive search, questioning everybody he met. On one occasion he encountered a party of seven girls, a young man and a boy, who informed him that Cetshwayo had been captured a few days earlier. Gifford ascertained that these girls had been members of the King's party at the Black Umfolozi Drift, and, on being ordered by him to make good their escape, had fled into the dense bush and so evaded capture. Gifford's chagrin may be imagined on learning that Cetshwayo was in hiding only a few yards away as his troops splashed across the river.

Shortly after this incident Major Barrow rejoined Lord Gifford, and in order that their search could cover a wider area they split into two parties during the day, meeting again each evening at an appointed rendezvous.

So the hunt went on. Longcast, who accompanied Gifford as his interpreter, says:*

> We could get nothing from the Zulus. We were treated the same at every kraal. I had been a long time in Zululand. I knew the people and their habits and although I believed they would be true to their King, I never expected such devotion. Nothing would move them. Neither the loss of their cattle, the fear of death, or the offering of large bribes would make them false to their King.

Meanwhile Cetshwayo had doubled back for a distance of about ten miles. He took refuge at a small kraal belonging to his brother Siwedu and remained there for several days. On 26 August Colonel Clarke (at Ulundi) received information from one of his spies that Cetshwayo was making for the dense bush of the Ngome Forest. He ordered Major Marter to set out early the next morning to make a reconnaissance in that direction with a squadron of Dragoon Guards, a company of the Native Contingent, ten men of Lonsdale's Horse, and a young man named

* In his *The Story of the Capture of Cetshwayo.*

Martin Oftebro as interpreter.* Proceeding along the Ivuna valley they climbed to the top of the Ngenge mountain and that evening encamped near Umgojana's kraal.

Barrow and Gifford were also moving in a similar direction, though by quite a different route. On the evening of 27 August, when returning to their rendezvous, they suddenly came upon a woman in the bush who, frightened by the appearance of so many troops, told them that the King had slept but two nights ago at a near-by kraal. A company was promptly sent off to surround the place and bring in any men they could capture. Some time later three brothers were led in who when questioned denied most solemnly that they knew anything about the King. They were cajoled, they were threatened, they were even told that they would be shot unless they divulged the whereabouts of Cetshwayo; but calm, fearless, undaunted, their answer was ever the same – they knew nothing. Finally the order was given that one of the brothers should be blindfolded and led away into the bush where a rifle was to be fired off to make the other two men believe that their brother had been put to death. These two were now separated and each of them was blindfolded in turn. One of them was then told, 'You saw your brother blindfolded and led away. We have shot him. Now we shall shoot you. You had better tell the truth.' After much coaxing he eventually divulged the fact that the King had slept at a kraal about fifteen miles away on the previous night and he had seen him that very morning. The other man, on being informed that they now knew where the King was, corroborated his brother's statement.

It was now 11 p.m., but in spite of the late hour Gifford ordered his men to saddle up and with the two brothers acting as guides the party set off. The one brother was purposely left behind to keep up the pretence of his being shot. The guides led them along a most difficult, rough and rugged track and just as day was breaking they reached the kraal. Once again Gifford

* He was the son of a Norwegian missionary who had come to Natal in 1849 and eventually had established a mission at Eshowe, becoming a great friend of Cetshwayo. At the beginning of the Zulu War he enlisted in the Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards.

was doomed to disappointment, for the King had left twelve hours earlier. However, being told the direction that he had taken, Gifford and his men galloped on and reached a small kraal belonging to Mnyamana, where they ascertained that Cetshwayo was only five miles away at Kwa Dwasa, a small secluded kraal in the dense bush of the Ngome Forest. Here they would find him, for he intended to halt for a while.

At last they felt that their arduous pursuit was to be crowned with success. Urging their tired horses on, they came at last near to the spot where their quarry was hiding. Here they had to observe extreme caution, for it was broad daylight. It was therefore decided to off-saddle and hide in the bush till darkness fell; then, unobserved, they could creep up, surround the kraal and pounce upon their victim.

In the meantime Major Marter's party, leaving Umgojana's kraal, on top of the Ngenge mountain, had arrived by ten o'clock at a small stream, where a short halt was called. Here they met a native who, questioned as to the King's whereabouts replied, 'I have heard the wind blows from this side today,' pointing to the Ngome Forest, 'but you should take that road until you come to Nisaka's kraal.' At Nisaka's kraal they managed to pick up two guides, and after an extremely steep climb they arrived at the kraal of Umbulungu, Nisaka's brother, almost at the summit of a mountain ridge. Here Oftebro, their interpreter, had a talk with some of the natives and asked where the King could be found. Without answering two natives quietly got up and beckoned him to follow. On nearing the top of the mountain ridge they reached an open space where the guides stopped and, followed by Marter and Oftebro, first crawled on their hands and knees, then, lying flat, wriggled on their bellies to the edge of the precipice and pointed to a spot some 2,000 feet below, where a small stockaded kraal of some twenty huts could be seen on a slight rise in the middle of a semi-circular glade. This was the Kwa Dwasa kraal where Cetshwayo had taken refuge. The kraal itself was surrounded on three sides by dense bush and huge boulders, the fourth side only being somewhat exposed. Guards, watchful and alert, could be seen posted all around, but it was

noticed that no attention was given to the precipitous slopes on top of which Marter and Oftebro were perched.

After surveying the scene the Major soon decided upon his course of action. For mounted men to descend the precipice at that particular spot was out of the question, as for several hundred feet the drop was almost sheer. Consequently a descent less steep must be found, but, first of all, all accoutrements that were likely to rattle and so rouse the attention of the guards must be discarded. Casting aside their scabbards and all other such equipment, which was left in charge of a small detachment, the others rode along the top of the ridge until a ravine down the mountain side was discovered. It was now 1.45 p.m.

First of all the Native Contingent, stripped of everything except their arms, were sent down with orders to get as near as possible to the kraal without being seen and then to remain concealed in the forest until they saw the cavalry approach from the head of the glade.

Now Marter, Oftebro and the Dragoon Guards began their perilous descent. Leading their horses they slowly made their way down over boulders and ledges of rock which often necessitated a clean drop of many feet, slashing their way through trees thickly interlaced with creepers. By 3 p.m. they had reached the bottom, but not before several of the men had been injured and two of the horses had been killed.

Remounting in a hollow out of sight of the kraal, the Dragoons now charged at full gallop, one half of the force deploying to the right while the other debouched to the left. At the same instant the Native Contingent sprang from their hiding-places and raced forward, arriving first at the kraal and taking up their position on the open ground facing its entrance. In a few minutes the place was completely surrounded.

Several Zulus were encountered, all armed with guns and assegais, but they were taken so completely by surprise that not a shot was fired, not an assegai was hurled. Warning was given that if any arms were used the kraal would be set alight and the men shot down mercilessly, but everyone was so utterly taken aback at the suddenness of the onslaught from so unexpected a quarter that no attempt at resistance was made.

Marter and Oftebro, with a small bodyguard, now dismounted and entering the kraal requested to be led to the King. At this Umkozana, the old chief who had stood loyally by the side of his master to the bitter end, pointed to the top of the kraal. Hurrying over, Marter and Oftebro reached the hut, where the Major in a loud voice demanded the immediate surrender of the King. Cetshwayo asked the rank of the officer who made this demand. Marter replied and was invited to come in and shoot him, but the major stated explicitly that life and good treatment were assured him. Stooping low the two men now entered the dark hut, and Cetshwayo rose up to greet them.

Oftebro himself reported the story of that tragic scene:*

The King must have recognized me immediately for he said 'Was your father a friend of mine for so long that you should do this to me?' I must admit I felt somewhat embarrassed and attempted to explain to him that I was merely doing my duty. At any rate he made no further comments and followed me out of the hut to where the other men were waiting, and was promptly ordered by the officer in charge to prepare to travel.

It was pitiful to see this once great man as he was on that day. He looked utterly exhausted and could hardly walk. Always a stout man, the insides of his thighs were chafed raw with walking and running. This was pointed out to the officer and he ordered a horse to be saddled for Cetshwayo to ride, but when the huge charger was brought up Cetshwayo shook his head and said 'I would sooner die here where I stand than ride that great horse.'

It was now just past 4 p.m. on Thursday, 28 August 1879. The last great King of the Zulu nation was a captive in the hands of the British.

* Extract from a document in the library of Dr Killie Campbell.

CHAPTER 15

Cetshwayo in Captivity

Cetshwayo imprisoned; Zululand divided up; unrest amongst the Zulu people; a petition for Cetshwayo's return is drawn up; the chiefs meet the British; Cetshwayo plans to lay his case before the British Government; he sails for England

WITH Cetshwayo and Umkozana there were only nine men and a boy, five women and a girl. After these had been warned that any attempt to escape would mean certain death, the whole party set off on the return to Ulundi. Though progress was slow, as Cetshwayo was unable to walk quickly, the march was continued until an hour after dusk, when a small kraal was reached. The King and his party were accommodated in the huts while the troops bivouacked close at hand for the night. Early the following morning they were on their way again and at about 11 a.m. Lord Gifford and his company were encountered. As soon as Gifford had obtained particulars from Marter he set out for Ulundi and by that evening had reported the capture of the King to Wolseley. A request was also conveyed to Colonel Clarke for a mule cart to be sent out for Cetshwayo and the women to enable the convoy to make more rapid progress.

Meanwhile Marter himself pushed forward, arriving that evening at 'Ndaza's kraal. Just before reaching this place three men and one woman of the King's party made a sudden dash for freedom; the escort fired on the fugitives, killing two of the men, but the woman and the third man managed to escape.

The following morning the party again moved forward and towards late afternoon reached the camp at the Black Umfolozi, where they were met by two companies of the 60th Regiment and the mule cart. That night was spent at the camp, and on 31 August the last lap of the journey to Ulundi was undertaken. Progress was now more rapid; by about ten o'clock that morning their destination was reached.

The arrival of the party at Wolseley's camp was an impressive spectacle.* Having dismounted from the cart the King was escorted to the General's tent, flanking parties having been duly drawn up for 100 yards on either side. At the head of the procession was Major Marter, attended by his trumpeter and orderly, and accompanied by a body of officers, all with drawn swords. Following them was a company of Dragoon Guards, with accoutrements flashing in the brilliant sunlight. Then between Captains Gibbins and Godsden, with swords at the salute, marched the King, duly 'ringed', carrying in his right hand a long stick, the symbol of his chieftainship; a fine, intelligent-looking man, with high forehead, regular features, small hands; though a cloak was thrown loosely over his shoulders it could not hide his splendid and massive physique. As he marched slowly forward, erect and stately, between files of men drawn from the 3/60th Rifles, all with fixed bayonets, he presented a strikingly impressive figure and as some of those present stated, looked 'every inch a king'. Immediately following him was his party, surrounded by a company of the Native Contingent, while yet another company of Dragoon Guards brought up the rear.

Thus escorted, the King made his way to the tent of Sir Garnet Wolseley, where he and his *indunas* were addressed by the General. Cetshwayo was informed that owing to his having broken his coronation pledges he was now deposed, his kingdom would be split up and divided amongst his chiefs, and he himself, though well cared for, would be held a prisoner for such time as Her Majesty the Queen pleased to keep him captive.

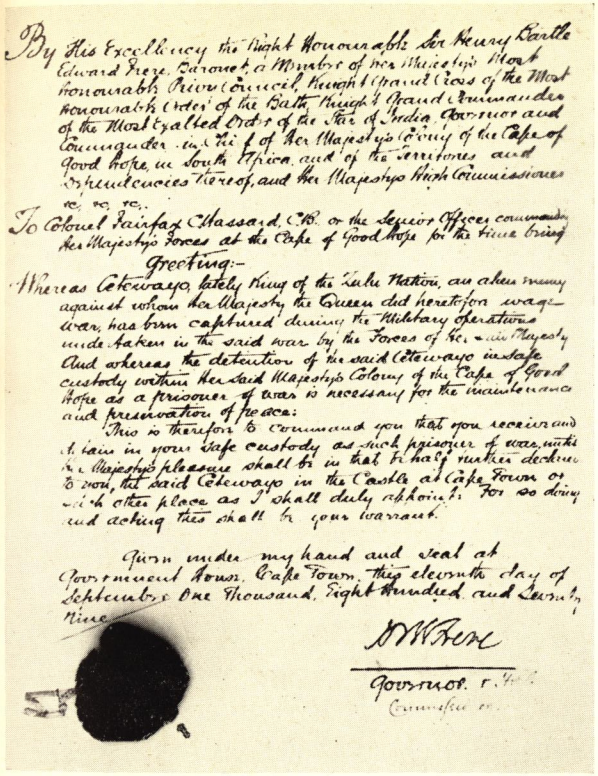
He was now led away to a tent over which a double guard was placed, and after having been given a liberal allowance of meat and Kaffir beer was informed that he must prepare himself for further travel, for Wolseley wished to get his important prisoner away without delay and thus frustrate any attempt that might be made to rescue him.

Accordingly about 2 p.m. that same afternoon an ambulance

* The author is indebted to Clement's *Glamour and Tragedy of the Zulu War* for the main facts in the story of Cetshwayo's arrival at Ulundi and his journey to the coast.

drawn by ten mules pulled up in front of the King's tent and into this Cetshwayo was trundled together with his four womenfolk and the young girl. Grass had been strewn over the floor of the vehicle in an endeavour to make the journey over the bumpy roads as comfortable as possible, and on this the passengers all squatted. The escort consisted of two companies of soldiers, one drawn from the Natal Horse under Captain de Berg, the other from Lonsdale's Horse under Captain Poole.

The route taken was over the Emtonjaneni Heights to Kwa Magwaza; thence on to St Paul's, across the Mhlatuze River and the Nkwaleni Valley. Skirting the ruins of Cetshwayo's great military kraal at Ondini, they reached the famous Cowards Bush (now a National Monument), where Cetshwayo requested that a halt be made in order that he could relate its history to his escort. Captain Poole regretfully had to refuse this appeal, for he had been expressly commanded not to halt at any but certain specified stops *en route*. However, he stated that he had made a note of the tree and would ask the King to tell them its story that evening when they were encamped for the night. Accordingly, while they were seated around the camp fire that evening Cetshwayo told how in days gone by his uncle, the great Shaka, used to sit under the shade of that bush and pass judgment on any of his warriors who were accused of cowardice. In front of him would be ranged row upon row of warriors, while between Shaka and his soldiers stood those accused of a crime which according to Zulu law carried with it but one punishment – death. Beginning with the man on the King's left the accused must step forward while those who had laid the charge against him gave their evidence as to when, where and how he had disgraced himself. The culprit would then be cross-examined by Shaka himself, and if his guilt was proved the King would say, 'Let him die the coward's death.' The prisoner was then seized and compelled to hold his left arm high above his head whilst the executioner, holding aloft his razor-sharp assegai brought it down with a very slow movement, piercing the quivering flesh under the armpit, and so deeper and deeper till it sank into his victim's heart. Should the accused show such stoicism that he did



By His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere, Baronet, a Member of her Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Knight Grand Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of her Majesty's Colony of the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, and of the Territories and Dependencies thereof, and her Majesty's High Commissioner &c &c &c.

To Colonel Fairfax Massard C.B. or the Senior Officer commanding her Majesty's Forces at the Cape of Good Hope for the time being

Greeting:-

Whereas Cetewayo, lately King of the Zulu Nation, an alien enemy against whom her Majesty the Queen did heretofore wage war, has been captured during the Military Operations undertaken in the said war by the Forces of Her said Majesty And whereas the detention of the said Cetewayo in safe custody within the said Majesty's Colony of the Cape of Good Hope as a prisoner of war is necessary for the maintenance and preservation of peace:

This is therefore to command you that you receive and detain in your safe custody as such prisoner of war, until Her Majesty's pleasure shall be in that behalf further declared to you, the said Cetewayo in the Castle at Cape Town or such other place as I shall duly appoint: For so doing and acting this shall be your warrant.

Given under my hand and seal at Government House, Cape Town, this eleventh day of September One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Seventy Nine

H W Frere

Governor &c &c

The Warrant for Cetshwayo's detention

Cetshwayo in European dress

The silver cup presented to Cetshwayo by Queen Victoria

A recent photograph by the author showing a warden watching over Cetshwayo's grave, which lies between the tree trunks behind him. Upon it can be seen the iron parts of the wagon on which Cetshwayo's body was brought to the grave.

not wince, then Shaka would raise his hand and exclaim, 'Enough! He has shown his bravery: Let him go free,' for Shaka always admired and rewarded a brave warrior.

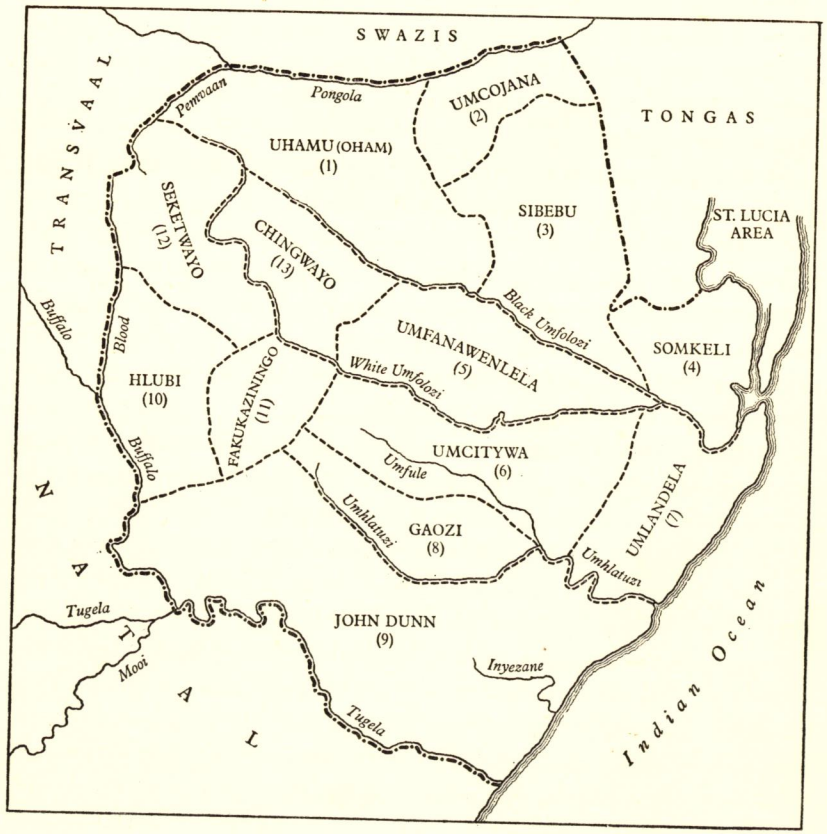
As the cavalcade moved on, Cetshwayo began to display considerable uneasiness, for they were proceeding not in the direction of Natal but towards the sea. As yet his destination had been kept secret from him, but he became more and more dejected and when Fort Richards was reached his worst fears were realized, for half a mile away, at Port Durnford, the ship *Natal* was waiting.

It was now 4 September 1879; the journey from Ulundi had taken them five days' hard travelling, but Cetshwayo had got on well with the soldiers and he spoke in glowing terms of their behaviour to him and they in turn had learned to admire and respect their Royal captive. After a brief halt at Fort Richards the ambulance was driven right down on to the shore at Port Durnford, where a surf boat was waiting to convey the King to the *Natal* and so on to Cape Town. When he stepped out of his conveyance to walk the short distance to the boat every man present, though all were seasoned soldiers, felt a wave of pity as the King bade farewell to the land he loved and had fought so bravely to retain.

On 15 September Cape Town was reached, and from the ship he was driven in a carriage to the Castle, the whole route being lined by an eager crowd of sightseers who cheered him as he passed, thus affording him considerable amusement. At the Castle he was taken into custody by Colonel Hassard, the Commander of the Forces at the Cape. The quarters which were allotted to him commanded a magnificent view of Cape Town and of Table Bay, and as the King looked out upon it he remarked sadly, 'I am a very old man,' conveying figuratively the idea that he was a wise man at last.

The King was placed under the immediate charge of Captain Poole, assisted by Longcast, who acted as interpreter. Longcast was not only a fluent Zulu linguist, but also possessed a wide understanding of the Zulu people, their customs and general mode of life, for he had lived as a wagon-driver in their country for twenty years. Consequently, during many of those long, dreary

hours of Cetshwayo's captivity Captain Poole and he endeavoured to lighten the burden of the exiled King by obtaining from him the story of his life and something of the history and traditions of the Zulu nation. As there were but few written records, and these only from the days of Shaka (written by H. F. Fynn, Nathaniel



Map showing the thirteen districts and their kinglets.

Isaacs, etc.), practically everything was handed down by word of mouth, mainly by the various Kings and *indunas*. Thus these two men rendered a great service to posterity, for their record was later published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1880.*

* Unfortunately copies of this magazine are very rare.

Meanwhile momentous events were taking place in Zululand.

On 1 September Sir Garnet Wolseley held a most important meeting at Ulundi with all the principal chiefs of Zululand. About 200 men were present, including two of Cetshwayo's brothers and his Prime Minister, Mnyamana. Speaking through John Shepstone (Misjan, successor to his elder brother Theophilus), who acted as interpreter, Wolseley told the assembly that but six years before Cetshwayo had been crowned their King amidst great rejoicing, but in consequence of his having broken his coronation pledges and having violated the laws which he had promised to keep, his kingdom had been taken from him and he had been carried away into exile, never to return. But the Queen had no intention of depriving the Zulus of their land nor of annexing any portion of it, so it had been decided that their kingdom should be split up into thirteen separate districts and over each district he (Wolseley) would appoint a chief who would be expected to rule with justice and mercy. In future no one was to be put to death without a fair trial; trivial offences were to be punished by the imposition of fines; no standing army would be allowed and no one would be permitted to possess either firearms or ammunition; all young men who wished to do so must be allowed to marry the girl of their choice, provided they had sufficient means to support her and had obtained the consent of her parents; the practice of smelling-out for witchcraft would be absolutely forbidden; they were not to encourage the settlement of missionaries, and grants of land by former Kings would not be recognized by the British Government; the land would remain theirs, and they were sternly forbidden to give any away to any white man whatsoever. An English officer would be appointed as Resident to see that these commands were obeyed, 'to be the eyes and ears of England to watch over the people, to see that these laws are observed and that the chiefs ruled with justice and equity'.

At the conclusion of this harangue Wolseley nominated the thirteen chiefs who were to rule over the various districts, and there and then each had to put his mark to a carefully prepared

document, promising to rule his district under the terms and conditions therein set forth.*

The selection of these chiefs had been most carelessly undertaken, and the whole of this so-called settlement was a disgrace to England, as later events were to prove. Instead of appointing their hereditary chiefs, whom the Zulus would have respected and obeyed, men were selected who had little or no authority among their people, while one or two favoured ones were granted large tracts of country and no sooner had the British forces been withdrawn from Zululand than they, disregarding all the promises made on accepting their chieftainship, began a systematic plundering and slaughtering of the smaller and less powerful peoples by whom they were surrounded. A glaring case was that of John Dunn, who, after having received such generous treatment at the hands of Cetshwayo, yet fought against him in the war and now was awarded by far the largest tract of all.

That many of these men were able to get away with such shocking conduct was due to two causes. The first was the fact that Sir Theophilus Shepstone no longer held the position of Secretary for Native Affairs. Had he still occupied this post, at the very outset Wolseley would never have been allowed to make so unwise a selection of the thirteen kinglets, and once that selection had been made Sir Theophilus would have exerted all the weight of his authority and influence to see that each chief carried out the terms of his appointment to the full. Unfortunately for all concerned, at this most critical juncture there was only an *Acting* Secretary, who, though a fine Zulu linguist and bearing the magic name of Shepstone, was new to his office and had not the commanding personality, the enormous influence, nor the wide and deep experience of Native Affairs which his elder brother possessed.

The second reason was the blunder of appointing a British Resident with no troops at his disposal to enforce obedience to his decisions. With a mere handful of about fifty armed Native attendants, most of whom were very unreliable, he was supposed to be able to keep the peace among a proud warrior nation who

* See Appendix C.

were soon fighting bitterly among themselves. The result was utter chaos within a few months.

A further cause of grave unrest was the way in which members of the Royal Household were treated. Among the Zulus Royal blood was always deeply venerated, even as it is today; this veneration was bred in the nation, and though Cetshwayo himself may have been cruel and tyrannical at times and was now an exile, yet this gave no justification for the shameful treatment suffered by other members of the Royal Family. Ndabuko and Siwedu, brothers of Cetshwayo, and Dinizulu his son, were left under the authority of Sibebu, a powerful chief, who insisted on their performing the most menial tasks, working for him like his lowliest servants, milking his cattle and building his kraals. The cattle which should have provided sustenance for their children were also seized the children being left almost destitute. When the matter was brought to the notice of the Resident, he placed them under the authority of John Dunn, who plundered them even further and showed a bitter antagonism to that Royal House that had raised him from poverty to opulence. Thus were sown the seeds of a deep and bitter hatred which later flared up into a disastrous struggle in which the flower of the Zulu nation perished.

Wolseley's high-handed and autocratic action was condemned on every hand. Though Britain had unjustly forced the war upon the Zulus her action might have been justified in that she could not allow so warlike a nation to live on her borders, maintaining so great an army of splendid warriors and thus proving a constant menace to peaceful settlement; yet now that the war was over, Cetshwayo exiled and the Zulu military power for ever broken, it was Britain's duty to have ensured that a just and honourable settlement was drawn up. It had been repeatedly asserted that the conflict was against Cetshwayo and *not* the Zulu nation, who had always been the friends of Britain. Their welfare was now placed in the hands of a man who treated them with callous indifference, disregarding all their appeals for justice. Wolseley, with a woeful ignorance of the conquered people, dictated the terms of his so-called settlement, and retired to the Transvaal, leaving the Zulus, bewildered and angry, to a Resident who had no power to

enforce his authority and to an Acting Secretary who as yet was unversed in the intricacies of his difficult task.

Undoubtedly it was the duty of Britain, once the war was over, to have brought Zululand under her direct rule and to have made that country a Protectorate without delay. By retaining a small mobile force and by dotting her magistrates throughout the land she could have enforced the terms of settlement, quelled any attempt at rebellion and so saved the nation from the bloodshed and devastation which followed, a disaster which resulted in the finest native race of Africa being reduced to the humiliating position of serfs and labourers to white men who in many cases were unworthy to be their masters. As Sir Henry Bulwer stated in his report on the settlement of the Zulu Country, dated 25 August 1882:*

> The Zulu people, there is little doubt, would have gladly come under the direct rule of the British Government. They would have accepted that rule without question and without misgiving. They would have accepted it for all reasons, not only because it was the rule of the Government that had conquered them, but because they knew it to be a just and merciful rule. 'The Government conquered us (they say); we belong to the Government.'

Within six months matters had reached such a pass that a national petition was drawn up advocating the return of the King, and many others followed during the next two years. True, a few chiefs, notably Sibebu, John Dunn and Uhamu, bitterly opposed this action, but their attitude was based primarily on personal motives, for each of them stood to lose much in both money and prestige.

The petitioners were treated with scant courtesy. On interviewing the Resident they were informed that he was not there to hear their complaints but to see that the terms of Wolseley's settlement were carried out. When they obtained the required passes to Maritzburg and walked the hundred miles to that town they were referred back again to the Resident, who was often conveniently absent from his office. When inquiries were made

* Blue Book C3466, 1883, p. 139.

from England the answer was that the petitioners were not representative of the Zulu nation but only of a small and turbulent faction, though on occasion the deputations consisted of as many as 2,000 men, including several of the important chiefs.

By 1881 the whole country was seething with such unrest that a meeting became imperative, and Sir Evelyn Wood (Lukuni) was appointed to inquire into the general state of affairs with particular reference to the numerous complaints of undue severity and of the predatoriness of some of the appointed chiefs – again notably John Dunn, Sibebu and Uhamu.

This meeting was arranged for 31 August at Inhlazatshe, but had to be postponed for a couple of days owing to the 'extraordinary severity of the weather'. It was not only bitterly cold with days of pouring rain, but the heaviest fall of snow for many years occurred. Several chiefs coming from long distances were unable to arrive on time.

About 1,000 men were present, with many chiefs, several of Cetshwayo's brothers and his Prime Minister, now much broken in health. Sir Evelyn Wood reported to the assembly that the Transvaal had been handed back to the Boers, but the Zululand frontier was the same as that beaconed off at the conclusion of the Zulu War and all titles to land outside the boundary of the Transvaal state were invalid and the Transvaal Government would have to compensate its owners. Swaziland was declared independent and the boundary line beaconed off in 1880 must now be recognized.

The following propositions were then put forward to the chiefs:*

1. A Hut Tax to be levied at a uniform rate of 10*s*. per hut.
2. Such chiefs as desire it should have the assistance of an officer as an adviser, such officer to be nominated by the Resident.
3. Out of the proceeds of the Hut Tax a certain proportion shall be given by every chief for the salary of the Resident, sub-Resident and other necessary expenditure.
4. That expenditure for Border and Police services be paid out of this revenue.

* Blue Book C3182.

5. That chiefs make and maintain roads and levy reasonable tolls thereon.
6. That chiefs be invited to establish industrial schools.
7. That all chiefs combine to prevent importation of liquor for sale, barter or gift.
8. That a periodical assembly of chiefs be convened.
9. That all chiefs combine to suppress rebellion or other serious disturbance.

Two important cases then came up for consideration. The first was between Sibebu and Cetshwayo's brothers Ndabuko and Siwedu, Wood's judgment was that as these two had intrigued in favour of the deposed dynasty and had resisted the authority of Sibebu, they, with Cetshwayo's son Dinizulu, must leave Sibebu's territory and reside in future in the territory of John Dunn. Further, that as Sibebu had acted in an unduly harsh manner in seizing so many of Ndabuko's and Siwedu's cattle he must, on their departure to Dunn's territory, restore to them one-third of the number so seized. Should Ndabuko and Siwedu refuse to go and live under John Dunn, no cattle should be handed back by Sibebu.

The second case was between Uhamu and the Prime Minister, Mnyamana. The verdict was that as Mnyamana and his people had ignored the authority of Chief Uhamu whom the British Government had set over them they should forfeit to Uhamu 600 of the 1,300 head of cattle taken from them, and Uhamu was warned not to exceed his authority in future by acting in an unduly harsh manner to his subjects.

These decisions gave great offence to the assembled chiefs and their followers, for to place the King's brothers under the suzerainty of John Dunn was the height of folly, no man being more deeply hated by members of the Royal Household, and when Cetshwayo's brothers asked leave to reply they were told: 'You are always saying that you want the return of that scoundrel [*ishinga*] whom we have done away with. You are always saying that you are going to pray the authorities about that. We forbid you that road. . . . We do not wish you to reply; we are laying down the law to you. We will not have your answer.'

The result of this meeting was that it immediately acted as a spur to the growing tyranny and insolence against the relatives of Cetshwayo. Sibebu hurried home and sent an *impi* to seize all their cattle before Dunn could lay his hands on them. A fight took place, the *impi* was driven off and the cattle rescued.

The whole country was now in an uproar, and throughout the land the cry went up for their exiled King to be given back to them so that a central authority could once again be established.

Cetshwayo had been removed from his grim prison at the Castle in Cape Town to rather more congenial surroundings at Oude Moulen on 15 January. True, it was a place without any pretensions either to beauty or to comfort, but it was a vast improvement on the Castle and its surroundings, and much more liberty could be allowed to the King and his fellow prisoners. It was a rough farm building of the type put up by the early settlers, and was situated on the Cape Flats. At the same time a new interpreter was appointed in the person of a young man named R. C. Samuelson, who came of a missionary family which had lived for many years in Zululand and was consequently well known to Cetshwayo. That he was not at all favourably impressed by the appointment and only stayed on out of consideration for the King is obvious from his own account of conditions as he found them at Oude Moulen. He states:

> Had I an inkling of the life I would have to live there and the society into which I was to be thrown, I would not have accepted the billet for less than five hundred. The chief warder was a cynical Irishman with an impudent and quarrelsome character and his wife was quite his equal in those characteristics and they had both been inhabitants of soldiers' barracks. The second warder was a decent Englishman but his wife of Dutch extraction who, though a very handsome woman, possessed a blazing temper, and the third warder was a sneaking German soldier.
>
> What made matters worse was that the Custodian, who was supposed to call every day to see that all was in order, often was kept away by other calls to such an extent that he would sometimes call only once or twice a month. I sometimes left in the evenings and visited friends. My appointment did not lay down that I should have to be there the whole twenty-four hours but the Custodian read that condition into it

and friction followed for I would not be turned into an abject prisoner. Within six months I had had enough and decided to send in my resignation but before doing so told Cetshwayo of my determination. On hearing this he was very distressed and appealed to me to change my mind and stay with him till he should get released, reminding me of his and my father's great friendship while he was Prince and King in Zululand.*

During his imprisonment at Oude Moulen Cetshwayo had many visitors, among whom were the two sons of the Prince of Wales, Prince Albert and Prince George (later King George V), who called in to see him while they were on their world tour as midshipmen on the *Bacchante*. On this occasion Cetshwayo took the liberty of requesting the Princes to plead with the Queen for his return to Zululand, and though no promises were made there is little doubt that the message was conveyed to her.

Another interesting visitor was Selous, the great hunter and scout. He ventured to ask Cetshwayo his opinion of John Dunn, and the reply was not only illuminating but very touching. Before answering, the King thought deeply for a few minutes and then said:

> One very cold and stormy night in winter I was seated before a large fire in my hut when there was a noise without as if someone was arriving. I asked the cause from my attendants, and they told me a white man in a miserable state of destitution had just arrived and claimed my hospitality. I ordered the servants to bring him in, and a tall, splendidly made man appeared. He was dressed in rags, for his clothes had been torn to pieces in fighting through the bush, and he was shivering from fever and ague. I drew my cloak aside and asked him to sit by the fire, and told the servants to bring food and clothing. I loved this white man as a brother and made him one of my head Indunas, giving him lands and wives, the daughters of my chiefs. Now *Shaunele* [the sun has gone down], and John Dunn is sitting by the fire but he does not draw his cloak aside. †

Cetshwayo had made several applications to his captors for permission to go to England to lay his case for returning to Zululand before the Home Government, but each time his request had been refused. Of course all communications with the

* *Long, Long Ago*, p. 97. † Millais, *Life of Frederick Courtenay Selous*, p. 129.

outside world were most carefully vetted, and nothing was permitted to go out that did not fall in line with Natal's policy. Yet much information had reached England regarding the injustice of the settlement and Cetshwayo's prolonged incarceration.

Samuelson now took the matter in hand and after much hard work set out the King's defence in detail and sent it along to the Cape officials for transmission to the British Government. Two months later, on 26 September 1881, Sir Hercules Robinson, the then Governor of the Cape, arrived at Oude Moulen with the news that the King's application had been granted; he would be allowed to visit England the following May to present his case and in the meantime he was to be regarded as a free man, able to do as he pleased, *except return to Zululand.* Cetshwayo drew himself up and said: 'You warn me not to try and get back to Zululand. Do you think that I am an *umthakathi* [witch-doctor] that will run about in unbeaten ways and hide about? I was the King of the Zulus, had my country invaded by the Queen's troops, tried to defend my country but was beaten, taken captive and brought down here by the Queen's orders. Here I intend to remain until the Queen restores me to Zululand.'*

There was no further discussion on the matter.

Both Cetshwayo and Samuelson, quite naturally, regarded this announcement as meaning that as the King was now a free man he would be allowed to correspond freely with his friends. They were soon to be disillusioned. After certain letters (later published in the English press) had passed between the King and Lady Florence Dixie, who had previously visited him during his imprisonment and was a staunch supporter of his cause, the Cape authorities came down like a thunderbolt on Samuelson for allowing such letters to go through uncensored, and he was dismissed and a new interpreter appointed in the person of Robert Dunn (no relation of John Dunn). However, Samuelson was not unduly worried, for he was glad to be relieved of so irksome a post and felt that as Cetshwayo was now definitely going to England he had fulfilled his promise to stand by him till the dawn of better days.

* R. C. Samuelson, *Long, Long Ago*, p. 105.

CHAPTER 16

Cetshwayo in England

Cetshwayo is received by Queen Victoria; interviews at the Colonial Office; the Government's decisions; Zululand divided by lack of authority; controversy over boundaries; Cetshwayo returns to Zululand

AFTER several delays Cetshwayo left Cape Town for England on 12 July 1882 in the Union Company's steamer *Arab*. He was accompanied by the three chiefs, Umkozana, Umgobazana and Ngcongcwana, two attendants, his new interpreter, Robert Dunn, and Henrique Shepstone (son of Sir Theophilus Shepstone) who was his custodian on the voyage and during his stay in England. The carriages bearing the party to the docks were escorted by a Guard of Honour supplied by the Cavalry Volunteers.

The *Arab* arrived in Plymouth Sound about 5 a.m. on 5 August after an uneventful voyage which Cetshwayo had thoroughly enjoyed. He was delighted to be in England and told the numerous newspaper correspondents who met him at the boat that there never should have been a war between England and the Zulus and never would have been but for 'that little grey-headed man Frere'. His people wanted him back, he said, and if he were not restored there would be a civil war which would spell the ruin of Zululand. Nevertheless he had full confidence that once he had stated his case to the British Government justice would be done and he would return to his rightful place as King.

After these interviews Cetshwayo was taken at once to London where a house had been prepared for him in Melbury Road, Kensington. His arrival aroused much curiosity, for many were eager to see the King of the nation which had inflicted such a disastrous defeat on British arms, and whenever he looked out of the windows crowds would gather to get a glimpse of him.

This curiosity was not limited to the common folk. In a letter to a friend, dated 13 August 1882, Lady Wolseley writes:

Fancy my waiting at Grivy's balcony in Bond Street for an hour to see Cetshwayo come out of Bassano's. The crowd was so great I was afraid to venture out into the street. I saw him capitally. He *rolled* majestically across the pavement with a good deal of 'Side on'. A boy in the crowd said rather wisely, 'His name ain't Geta-wayo for he can't Getaway,' which was quite true. They had to send for more police and hustle him off through Benson's shop to dodge the mob at Bassano's door.*

On a visit to Lord Granville a rather amusing incident took place. Having passed the statue of Achilles in Hyde Park Cetshwayo asked Lord Granville whom it represented; on learning that it had been erected in honour of the great Duke of Wellington he turned to one of the chiefs accompanying him and remarked, 'You see it was not so very long ago since they fought as we do, without clothes.'†

Nevertheless Cetshwayo regarded his visit to England very seriously. Several official calls had to be made, two of which were of outstanding importance. The first was to the Prince and Princess of Wales at Marlborough House. Here he was graciously received and in remembrance of the occasion when the two Princes, Albert and George, visited him at Oude Moulen he presented each of them with a handsome stick made from wood grown in Zululand (probably the red *umzimbiti* which was reserved for Royalty). In return Cetshwayo was given a silver-headed stick from the Prince and Princess.

The other visit, and one to which he had been looking forward with anxiety, was to Queen Victoria. The special train with Lord Kimberley, Cetshwayo, Shepstone and the three Zulu chiefs arrived in Portsmouth Dockyard at 11.15 a.m., where a large crowd was gathered on the jetty. The party was received by Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar and Admiral Ryder. The Commander-in-Chief's yacht was in readiness to ferry them across to the Isle of Wight, where the Queen was in residence. Arriving at Cowes about 12.15 Cetshwayo was driven to Osborne where he was cordially received by Her Majesty and during the quarter of an hour or

* *Letters of Lord and Lady Wolseley, 1870–1911.*

† Sir Algernon West, *Recollections, 1832–86*, Vol. 2, p. 202.

so that the interview lasted she conversed with him freely through his interpreter. Cetshwayo was then shown over the house and gardens and later the party had lunch.

On his return to Melbury Road the King was in high spirits, for his visit to the Queen had made a deep impression upon him and he was particularly gratified when some time later she sent her own artist, Carl Sohn, to paint a picture of him in his national dress.*

After Cetshwayo had been shown around the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, he remarked to General Gage, who was acting as his guide: 'I feel that I have grown up, so to speak, in a day; that from the childhood of understanding I have suddenly sprung to manhood. I shall have a great deal to report to my nation when I return for which I shall hardly be able to find words, but I have seen the might of England and the goodness and kindness of the English nation.'†

Now followed Cetshwayo's three all-important interviews‡ with Lord Kimberley at the Colonial Office. At the first, on 7 August 1882, he was accompanied by his three chiefs, Shepstone and Dunn (the latter as interpreter). Lord Kimberley then invited him to state his case with perfect freedom. Cetshwayo replied that he was anxious to know in what respect he had done wrong and why he had been punished; he had had no intention of attacking the British; his armies had acted only on the defensive, never having raided Natal although they had had the opportunity; finally he had been captured in his own country.

Kimberley answered that it was useless dwelling on the past, but the Queen could not allow great Zulu armies to threaten the peace and security of British colonists. To this Cetshwayo replied that he was willing to disband his armed forces as requested, with the exception of a few regiments to attend to his personal needs. Regarding the present condition of Zululand, he said that only

* This picture, kindly sent out to South Africa by King George VI on permanent loan, is now hung temporarily in the Old Town House at Durban. Later, when a Museum for the Bantu is established it will hang, by Royal Command, in this building.

† Colenso, *Ruin of Zululand*, Vol. 2, p. 72.

‡ The subject matter of these interviews is taken from Blue Book C3466.

four of the appointed chiefs were unfavourable to his return, John Dunn, Umfanawendhlela, Uhamu and Sibebu, Dunn in particular having adopted most repressive measures. As to his indiscriminate killings, the King indignantly stated that such reports were highly exaggerated and impossible to prove.

On 15 August he was informed that Her Majesty's Government, after due consideration, had arrived at the following decisions:

1. They would consider the possibility of making immediate arrange- for his return to Zululand.
2. A portion of his country, to be defined later, would be reserved for any of his people who did not wish to come under his rule.
3. A Resident would be appointed to act as his adviser and to report to the British Government.
4. He must sign a declaration similiar to that signed by the thirteen chiefs previous to their assuming authority.*

Cetshwayo immediately assented to these decisions with the exception of the one that provided for cutting off a portion of his country. Regarding this he stated that a very large portion of his country had been already cut off (alluding to the Disputed Territory, decided by the Commissioners of 1878 to be rightfully part of Zululand, but handed back by Wolseley to the Boers at the end of the Zulu War), and that now he had very little country left to him.

After lengthy discussion, Kimberley advised him to wait and see how much country would be reserved; meanwhile he must consider all the conditions regarding his return to Zululand and later he would be granted another interview.

This took place on 17 August when Fynney was also present as an additional interpreter. Argument centred on two points, the question of the Reserve and the hostility of Dunn towards the King and his family; the other conditions Cetshwayo regarded as satisfactory.

In his reply Kimberley emphasized that the reservation of a part of the country must not be regarded as a punishment and *no more would be reserved than was, in the opinion of the Government,*

* See Appendix D.

absolutely necessary.* Cetshwayo could be sure that he would be treated in a friendly way as far as the necessity of the case would permit.

When questioned regarding Dunn's hostility, the King replied.

Who was Dunn? What was Dunn? Who would he have been if I had not raised him up? The English would never have heard of him and I feel that it is placing an assegai by my side to let Dunn be near me. He took my property and my cattle away from my children and caused them to suffer hunger. . . . I picked up Dunn walking with empty hands. He was not sent to me by the Government nor was he a man holding any position whatever. . . . I took care of him and he grew great under my fostering care and I permitted him to live there as my subject. He came to me as I thought as my friend, took my words, got at the feeling of my heart and turned my words on their back. The words also of the Government he turned on their back to me. . . . When my people have expressed the wish for my return he has seized and eaten up their cattle and has constantly represented to the Government that it is not the wish of the people that I should return; any person who wished for my return has been ill-treated by Dunn. Whilst I was a fugitive, going from place to place, I caught some of Dunn's messengers going to Sibebu saying 'Help me to turn out the King and the Royal family and I will be instrumental in getting you placed as one of the chiefs over the country.' . . . Who would stay with a rat in his hut that ate his food?

Concluding, Cetshwayo said:

The English Nation stands in the light of a father to me. . . . Therefore I cannot – I dare not – reserve my feelings and I say that it is utterly impossible for Dunn to live near me; if he does, then it simply means further trouble.

Kimberley replied that all the Government required of Cetshwayo was to keep within his own borders and to keep the peace. There would be some delay before he could return to Zululand but arrangements would be made as quickly as possible and he could rest assured that as long as he held to the terms of the settlement he could regard the English as his friends.

Cetshwayo left with high hopes, trusting in the fairness of the

* Author's italics.

British Government. Before leaving England he was presented with an inscribed silver cup from the Queen.* In addition, she had personally given him a photograph of herself, remarking: 'I respect you as a brave enemy who will, I trust, become a firm future friend.'

Cetshwayo and his party landed once more in Cape Town on 24 September and were taken to Oude Moulen, where they expected to stay for a very short time, until the Natal authorities had arranged for Cetshwayo's return to Zululand. But week after week passed without any move. The official excuse for this protracted delay was that it was the summer season and therefore unsafe (owing to malaria, dysentery, etc.) for any expedition to set out for the official installation ceremony. The real reason was that every possible obstacle was being put in the way of his reassuming power, and constant attempts were being made to cut down the area over which he should rule to a mere fraction of what had been promised by Lord Kimberley. As soon as the British Government had decided upon his restoration the Natal authorities had forwarded dispatch after dispatch to London stating that the *majority* of the Zulus were bitterly opposed to the return of their King. This was undoubtedly a grave overstatement as was proved not only by the requests of numerous delegations appealing for the return of Cetshwayo, but also by later events.

Zululand was at this time split by various factions, but two parties were gradually emerging, the one strongly in favour of Cetshwayo, the other as strongly opposed to him.

The first of these parties was headed by Ndabuko, brother of Cetshwayo, and Mnyamana, his former Prime Minister. Ndabuko was regarded by most of the Zulus as the representative of the Throne in the absence of the King, yet he had been subjected to harsh and contemptuous treatment by Sibebu, under whose suzerainty he had unwisely been placed. Mnyamana also had been placed under the chief Uhamu, a man who commanded little respect among the Zulus, for it was he who had so readily surrendered to the British forces at the beginning of the war.

* Now in Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg.

These two, Ndabuko and Mnyamana, had joined forces and had led repeated delegations to Maritzburg pleading for the return of their King, only to be met with brusque refusals. None the less, a large portion of the Zulu nation had rallied to them, though their action had roused the wrath of those who were opposed to them. Sibebu, in retaliation for what he regarded as contempt of his authority, had seized Ndabuko's cattle, burnt his kraals and driven him from his territory. Uhamu had also acted in a similar manner to Mnyamana and when some of his subjects, the Abaqulusi, had joined Mnyamana in his petition for Cetshwayo's return, he had massacred them, seized their cattle, burnt their kraals and driven the few survivors over his borders.

In yet another part of the country rebellion had broken out. Among the Mtetwas an impostor named Sitimela had represented himself as the grandson of their great chief, Dingiswayo, and claimed to be the rightful chief of these people. So successful was his campaign that the appointed chief, Mlandela, had had to flee and had taken refuge with John Dunn. Dunn, always anxious to increase his power, went to his assistance, marched his forces against Sitimela and his followers and slaughtered them without mercy.

The Resident, Osborn, was powerless to act, for under Wolseley's settlement all he was empowered to do was to give advice. The whole country had now become completely demoralized for lack of a central authority by which the actions of *all* the chiefs could be controlled.

John Dunn was jockeying for this position, but his appointment would have increased the confusion, for the majority of those who had fought in the recent war regarded him as a traitor.

A solution to the major causes of dissension might have been reached if a round-table conference of the leaders of the various factions had been called, including Cetshwayo himself, under the chairmanship of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, whose prestige was still high and whose judgment would undoubtedly have been accepted by the majority of the Zulus, for now it was a question not of arbitrating in a border dispute but of settling internecine feuds, and no one had a better grasp of the situation than he.

There was much justification for reserving a *part* of the country for those who did not wish to come under the jurisdiction of the restored King, for the Natal authorities rightly felt that some consideration should be shown to the disgruntled chiefs who were now to be dispossessed of their chieftainship, particularly as they had been told by Wolseley that Cetshwayo would never return; but to suggest, as was the case, that two-thirds of the country should be granted them as a Reserve merely angered the majority of the nation.

The proposition was to make the White Umfolozi River the southern boundary of Cetshwayo's kingdom and to leave Sibebu in possession of his territory in the north, with slightly altered boundaries. Already the Disputed Territory had been taken over by the Boer Government of the Transvaal and what then remained of the country was to be handed back to the King. Fortunately, the British Government rejected this plan, and made the Umhlatuzi River the southern boundary, but in view of Natal's strong representations Sibebu was allowed to retain his territory and chieftainship, yet with altered boundaries which were never clearly indicated to Cetshwayo, with the result that bitter disputes ensued which soon brought ruin to Zululand.

Meanwhile Cetshwayo had been pining at Oude Moulen; four weary months had passed since he left England. At last on 11 December he was visited by Sir Hercules Robinson, the Governor of the Cape, acting on behalf of the Natal Government, and was informed that 'Orders have come for you to go on your home journey', but new terms had been decided upon between Natal and England, and it was necessary for Cetshwayo to accept them or remain in exile at Oude Moulen.

These additional conditions stipulated that Cetshwayo must observe the newly amended boundaries of both Sibebu's territory and the Government Reserve and that he must not interfere in any way with the people living there. He must also promise not to take action against any girls of the Royal House who had contracted marriage during his exile, nor could any person be punished for acts committed during the King's absence from Zululand.

The King's reaction to these conditions can be told in his own words:*

I was sure they were not London, because they were quite new to me and I attributed them to Bulwer [Natal Governor], acted on by Misjan (J. W. Shepstone) who bears no love to either me or my people. We, myself and companions, were astonished at the new proposal and we cried out to Robinson against them. I heartily agreed to the non-revival of the old military system and also that about the non-collecting of my former *isigodhlo* [harem]. But when Robinson told me that south of the Umhlatuzi was taken from me and that Sibebu was confirmed in his command, I cried out and asked 'Whence these laws? They were never given in London. You say you will take all my south lands; you will also give Sibebu lands in the north. Where then is the country I am being returned to? You elevate Sibebu and give him my once subject lands. Why is he singled out from the thirteen and all the others debarred?' Robinson replied 'Sibebu positively declined to be with you or under you so we arranged the matter by separating you.' I said, 'Well, if Sibebu is thus my enemy why should he be given a portion of Zululand and made my neighbour? Referring to the Umhlatuzi, I am dumbfounded; there is the very portion of the lands where my father's headmen, and my own mostly live: it is my chief cattle country: cut off that territory and you cut off my best possession: you leave me nothing: you remove the old Tugela landmarks and you put new ones in the heart of the very country the Queen gave me.'

All this was taken, silently and unrecorded. At last Robinson interposed, 'Well, this talk opens up a new discussion. I had made arrangements with General Smyth for an escort but now your attitude will necessitate my countermanding them and you will have to stay here.' I reported that this was an unfair way of dealing with me. Here was I alone and being saddled with *umtetwa* [laws] applying not only to myself but to the Zulu nation at large. The nation's heads were not present; they were ignorant of all this and when I went to them with it they would be surprised indeed. Robinson replied, 'I have nothing to say to all this. As the matter stands you have an agreement with

* Extract from a rare pamphlet in library of Dr Killie Campbell (published by P. Davis and Sons, Maritzburg, 1883) written by W. Y. Campbell, who was Special Correspondent for the *Natal Advertiser*. In September 1883 he was sent to find and interview Cetshwayo personally while he was a fugitive in the Nkandla Forest. He was instructed (1) to find out the truth about the King (2) to ascertain the true feeling of the Zulus in the Reserve.

London and it looks as if you were unwishful to fulfil it. This will look bad.' I replied, 'I have an agreement with London but this is not it and I must be allowed to protest against this new thing.' I protested because I knew it meant mischief. I knew things could not go naturally and I must be allowed to speak my protest and not be silenced or accept in silence. We had a long discussion about the land and Robinson eventually said, 'Well, we must end this matter. You must accept the conditions laid before you.' I then said I wished him clearly to understand that I protested against these conditions and if mischief arose in the country it would not be my fault. Also that on my return I should still ask that the London agreement should be carried out as I knew nothing of these Natal-made conditions. I only knew those given me by the Queen through Kimberley. I told Robinson that I had never heard till now that I was to be shorn of my lands and people. Robinson said, 'No, we take no people: we only take a portion of your land and we will not interfere with your people.' Mr Saul Solomon at the Cape was a friend of mine and he advised me to accept under protest and get back to my country and that constitutional means would be found to set things right. So the day before leaving the Cape Robinson said to me, 'Sign, or you will not be allowed to return to Zululand.' I said, 'Yes, Sir, I will sign, but let us clearly understand that my signing does not imply acceptance of your boundary cutting and we shall talk it over and discuss it from Zululand and try to understand each other.'

Campbell adds: 'So much for the King's contention that conditions were imposed upon him at Cape Town from Pietermaritzburg, which completely departed from those sketched out in Downing Street, and unless the King's version can be proved false the glaring fact will be that whoever caused the great alteration to be made is largely responsible for the present state of affairs.'

A few days later Cetshwayo was escorted aboard the *Briton* and sailed for Port Durnford, arriving there on the morning of Wednesday, 10 January 1883. Although supplies had been landed here during the Zulu War the place could only be used on extremely calm days, for there was no harbour, but only a wide, sandy beach. No wonder the official record speaks of Cetshwayo's landing as 'inconvenient and disconcerting'. Early in the afternoon the *Briton* lowered one of her lifeboats and Cetshwayo and his party were transhipped over the open sea to a waiting

surfboat, which conveyed them to the shore. It was impossible to draw up on the beach owing to the heavy rollers, so a contingent of soldiers waded out and assisted Cetshwayo and his party to land, all of them getting a thorough soaking in the process.

As the King once again stepped upon the shores of his native land he was disappointed to find that practically all those who were assembled to meet him were white men. Sir Theophilus Shepstone was there with his escort to give him an official welcome, but where were his family, his old Prime Minister, Mnyamana, the chiefs whom he knew were loyal to him, his friends and followers?

Their absence is explained by the fact that no official notice of the date of the King's landing had been given to any of the chiefs or headmen. In fact, every precaution had been taken to keep this secret till the last moment in order to prevent any large gathering of Zulus, whose excitement might have reached such a pitch that they would have become uncontrollable.

A couple of mule wagons had been drawn up on the beach to convey the King to the camp which had been prepared at the old Fort Richards, but after greeting Sir Theophilus and attending to the loading of his numerous boxes, Cetshwayo set off to walk the mile or so to the camp, glad to stretch his legs after being cramped in the small boat.

It had been decided that Cetshwayo's Installation should take place at Emtonjaneni. The following morning the whole party set out for this destination, Cetshwayo travelling in a covered spring wagon. It was a slow and tedious journey, for January is one of the hottest months of the year and travelling across the humid lowlands was a trying experience; consequently it was a relief to reach the hilly country around St Paul's Mission on 14 January, where a couple of days' halt was made.

It was at St Paul's that Cetshwayo had his first important interview with Sir Theophilus about his resettlement in Zululand and the conditions under which he was to take over were read to him clause by clause. After each condition he was asked by Shepstone whether that was what he had understood in England or Cape Town, and to each he replied in the affirmative; but when it came to the two new clauses which had been placed before him in

Cape Town and against which he had so vigorously protested to Sir Hercules Robinson, Cetshwayo strongly reaffirmed his opposition.

At this interview Shepstone laid it down as an essential 'that the Zulus, and especially the young men, should not approach the camp, or be present at the ceremony of Installation, armed.' He further stated that he would prefer the young men to be kept away altogether.

From the King's point of view he was undoubtedly justified in opposing the new clauses, for they placed him in such a situation that a peaceful settlement appeared quite out of the question. The London conditions had stated that a certain form of government was to be followed in Zululand under the King and they had spoken of a small piece of territory being cut off from his domain for any malcontents. Cetshwayo was told: 'Govern the country according to the laws we have given you and with the exception of the *indawana* [small piece] you are restored to Zululand with the Queen as your Suzerain.'

In striking contrast, the Cape Town conditions more or less stated: 'Govern the country according to the laws we have given you. We have placed Sibebu as an independent Chief over Northern Zululand. We have retained all Zululand south of the Umhlatuzi and you are to be King over the intervening territory with the Queen as your Suzerain.'

The London terms offered a workable solution of the intricate Zulu problem, for they provided for *one* authority and a strip of country for any malcontents. The Cape Town terms were inherently unworkable, for they accentuated and perpetuated the various factions in the land. They bewildered the Zulu nation, giving under Imperial Seal large tracts of territory north and south as a vantage ground to the conspirators Dunn and Sibebu. Even neutral traders, who cared neither for King nor Sibebu, were unanimous in their condemnation of this arrangement, stating explicitly: 'It was folly to restore the King. The country ought to have been annexed. But when he was to be restored it was iniquitous folly to restore him to divided honours with Sibebu and Dunn. There could not possibly be peace. The Government ought to have restored him altogether or not at all.'

CHAPTER 17

Restoration, Disaster and Death

Cetshwayo's Installation; terms of his restoration; an outbreak of rebellion; war between Cetshwayo and Sibebu; Cetshwayo's defeat; he is promised Government support if he will go to Eshowe; his arrival and sudden death; suspicion of poisoning; Cetshwayo's burial

DURING the brief halt at St Paul's Zulus were coming in from every direction in response to the call which had gone out summoning the nation to the Installation. One of the first to welcome Cetshwayo home was his old commander, Dabulamanzi. Told of what had happened, Dabulamanzi went back to rally his brother *indunas* to Cetshwayo's standard and gain their co-operation in facing the difficult situation in which they had been placed.

The cavalcade arrived at Emtonjaneni, where the Installation was to take place, on 17 January. Shepstone wished to hurry this ceremony forward, for he was anxious to return to Maritzburg without further delay, but it could not take place without Mnyamana, Cetshwayo's Prime Minister, who had not yet put in an appearance. This was partly Shepstone's own fault, for it was only on 12 January, three days after the King had landed, that messengers had been sent out to summon him. These runners, though faced with a long journey over broken country and in heavy rain, had managed to reach their destination on 16 January. Orders had then been sent to the surrounding kraals gathering the people together – no small task – for food had to be prepared for the journey and it was the 22nd before they were able to set out for Emtonjaneni. Progress was slow because not only was Mnyamana an old man, but with him were more than 200 women and children. Moreover, Sibebu, trying to prevent his going to the Installation, had spread a report that in their absence he intended to send his *impis* to attack their homes. Mnyamana, hearing this report when well on his way, hurried back to his kraal only

to find that it was a false alarm. So it was not until the 26th that they reached their destination.

By this time Shepstone was showing signs of irritation, possibly attributing their dilatoriness to sinister motives – that they were arming themselves for a conflict – but though the men certainly carried weapons owing to the unsettled state of the country, yet on approaching Emtonjaneni these were left behind, for Cetshwayo had explicitly ordered that 'they were not to come armed *to the camp*'.

On the 27th an incident occurred which accentuated the feud between the followers of Sibebu and those of Cetshwayo. A company of fully-armed warriors, headed by Sibebu, rode into the camp, and completely disregarding Cetshwayo made their way, amid taunts and jeers, to Sir Theophilus Shepstone. After paying him their respects they left again, indicating clearly their contempt for the ceremony that was about to take place. In spite of this flagrant disobedience of Shepstone's order that no arms were to be brought to the camp, Sibebu was not reprimanded.

By the 28th approximately 6,000 Zulus had assembled, so Shepstone decided to proceed with the Installation on the following day. Accordingly, next morning Fynn, the newly-appointed Resident to Cetshwayo, marshalled the Zulus on a circular grassy ridge. A flagstaff had been erected, and behind this the troops were drawn up. When all was ready Sir Theophilus, his secretary and Osborn (the Resident appointed for the Reserve), proceeded to the site. Here they were met by Cetshwayo, who was accompanied by Fynn, Robert Dunn (his interpreter) and his *indunas*. All took their seats under the flagstaff, Cetshwayo sitting on Shepstone's right with the Zulus forming a semicircle in front.

Sir Theophilus then read out the conditions under which the King was restored: It was not to the same seat that he had occupied before; it did not empower him to kill without full and fair trial or upon the irresponsible declarations of witch-doctors, or to interfere with the girls marrying or being given in marriage, or to exact military service in any way. He was prohibited from going behind the event of his restoration; what took place during his absence was not to be the subject of blame or punishment.

The additional Cape Town conditions were then read out, and

though Cetshwayo endeavoured to record his protest he was not allowed to speak. The assembled chiefs, however, asserted their right to do so and many of them spoke in the strongest terms, demanding to know why the several chiefs who had caused so much trouble had not been brought to book, particular reference being made to Sibebu, for, as Shepstone states in his Report, 'they accused him of every kind of violence and atrocity and of being a persistent disturber of the peace of the country. Some speakers described the position in which Sibebu had been placed as intended to be a trap to cause Cetshwayo's downfall.'*

The general feeling of the Zulus present was summed up in the speech made by Dabulamanzi:

> We thank you, Sir, for bringing him [Cetshwayo] back. But since it is we of the Reserve who came down to the Authorities in Maritzburg praying for him and saying 'This chief and that chief are troubling us, but we cannot fight them because they too are Cetshwayo's people,' tell us now who are these 'dissatisfied ones' for whom you are cutting off the land? Do you say that you are restoring him, this son of the Queen, while all the time you are destroying him, just as you did formerly? Sir, you are killing him still as you did before when you first made him King and then killed him. Show us these 'dissatisfied ones' for whom you are cutting off our land, who do not wish for the King. Do you say that we are to move? Where will you put us since you are eating up all Cetshwayo's land? Tell us where you fix Sibebu's boundaries. Why do you give the land to the very people who have been killing us? Do you approve of their bloodshedding? You have come to kill him, not restore him.†

In the end Cetshwayo himself put a stop to the wrangling by saying 'We have not come here to try cases but to hear the law from Somtseu.'

Mnyamana, as Prime Minister, thanked Sir Theophilus for the restoration and begged him 'not to be angry with them for speaking out their minds'. The ceremony was then concluded by Shepstone remarking. 'Very well, Mnyamana, I have now put the King in your hands,' and without further ado he and his escort departed.

* Blue Book C3616, p. 54. † Colenso, *Ruin of Zululand*, Vol. 2, p. 396.

Shepstone's report, written on the evening of that day, recorded, 'The Installation was carried out this afternoon successfully and most satisfactorily.'

It was anything but satisfactory, particularly from the standpoint of Cetshwayo and his followers, for the general feeling was one of bewilderment and uncertainty as to the future. The ceremony, instead of clarifying the situation, had added to the confusion. Sibebu, in spite of his ill-treatment of the Royal Family, his flagrant breaches of the terms under which he had undertaken to govern his territory and his defiance of Shepstone's order not to come armed into the camp, had been confirmed in his chieftainship without the slightest remonstrance at his insubordination; and his boundaries had again been altered, but no intimation given to Cetshwayo as to where the new borders were sited. Uhamu, a treacherous and much discredited chief, had not only absented himself from the Installation, but had stated quite openly that although living in Cetshwayo's territory he and his followers would not submit to his authority. Yet the Natal Government had taken no steps to insist upon his allegiance.

Again, many of Cetshwayo's loyal supporters living in the Reserve had been told that they now came under the Natal Government and must obey their laws; should they wish to visit the King a special pass must first be obtained; failure to comply with this regulation would incur heavy punishment. To check such visits the borders of the Reserve would be guarded by the newly formed Zululand Native Police (the Nongqai).

As a special inducement to the Zulus to live in the Reserve the Natal Government had stated explicitly that British authority and British protection would be established in that part of Zululand, yet when this came to the notice of the Colonial Secretary British protection was immediately repudiated, and the Reserve Zulus were informed that they would have to protect themselves by means of native levies who would come directly under the newly appointed Native Commissioner (Osborn), whose authority over them consisted merely in giving advice.

In addition, there was John Dunn, smarting at the loss of a fat

income through being deprived of his chieftainship,* stirring up trouble and sending exaggerated reports to the Natal authorities, who, without sifting the evidence, included such reports in their despatches to London.

It was an impossible situation for Cetshwayo and his *indunas*. Britain had reinstated the King with the injunction to maintain good order in his territory, yet forthwith she washed her hands of all responsibility for his future welfare and the direction of affairs in his kingdom, leaving him sandwiched between Sibebu on the north – an implacable enemy – and the Reserve on the south, controlled by the Natal Government which had strongly opposed his return, and with hostile elements even in his own small kingdom.

An explosion was inevitable. Hardly had Cetshwayo arrived at his old capital, Ulundi, when trouble started. The Abaqulusi, encouraged by the return of their King and thirsting to avenge the uncalled-for attack of Uhamu which was still fresh in their memories, gathered together their forces and turned the tables upon their former aggressors, plundered their cattle, burnt their kraals and killed all who put up any opposition. This added to Cetshwayo's burdens, for as the Abaqulusi were among his staunchest supporters he could not afford to alienate their good will by reprimanding or punishing them. In an attempt to exonerate himself he stated that this outburst was but a continuance of the disorder which had taken place during his absence.

Though in itself an insignificant outbreak, this marked the beginning of an upheaval which shook Zululand to its foundations, brought about the downfall of the King and ended in the ruin of a proud nation.

It has already been stated that new boundaries had been

* On Cetshwayo's restoration, Dunn, along with all the other kinglets, except Sibebu, was deposed and his territory became a part of the Reserve under the British Resident (Osborn). Dunn, however, still remained in the Mangete district, over which he retained but a very limited jurisdiction and, though the great majority of the Zulus were bitterly hostile to him, he yet managed to retain the loyalty of many of his own clan. When trouble broke out later with Dinuzulu (Cetshwayo's son), he rallied about two thousand of his followers who fought side by side with the Government forces.

decided upon to limit the territory of Sibebu. At the Installation ceremony Sir Theophilus Shepstone had told the people vaguely that there was a line of Sibebu's which was to be respected, but that line had not been indicated to Cetshwayo though it was known to Sibebu, and when Cetshwayo's *indunas* requested Fynn, their Resident Commissioner, to point it out to them his reply was that he was unable to do so as he did not know the new boundaries himself.

This vagueness was a further source of trouble, for had the boundary as suggested by Sir Henry Bulwer (Lieutenant-Governor of Natal) been adopted and pointed out to both parties a conflict might possibly have been averted. It must be remembered that not only did Ndabuko and Siwedu (Cetshwayo's brothers) have their kraals within the area originally granted to Sibebu, but in the same district (north of the Ivuna River), there was also a large number of Cetshwayo's most devoted followers. In fact, these were referred to by Bulwer as the Ultra-Usutu party, the Usutu party being those loyal to the King. Bulwer's plan was to include *all* these kraals within Cetshwayo's territory, instead of which, under the new delimitation, only the kraals of Ndabuko and Siwedu were brought directly under his rule.

Sibebu, acting within his rights as chief over the area allotted to him, now demanded the allegiance of all his subjects, including the Ultra-Usuto party. This was fiercely resented by those loyal to Cetshwayo, with the result that both sides armed themselves for a conflict. Clashes soon occurred, cattle were raided, kraals were burnt, men were killed.

Cetshwayo was again in a quandary. It was impossible for him to punish his bravest and most loyal followers; had he attempted to do so they would have turned in wrath against him. Yet immediate action had to be taken to stamp out such rebellion before it was too late. Sending for those who had taken up arms on his behalf the King sternly rebuked them saying: 'You are only doing me an injury. You are doing what my enemies want you to do – giving them a chance of accusing me to the Queen.'

An urgent appeal was made to the Resident Commissioner begging him to intervene, but Fynn had neither the authority nor

the power. As Cetshwayo himself stated at a later date: 'Fynn was helpless; he could do nothing. He had to send to Maritzburg and before my cry could have got there and be answered I should have been killed.'

The Natal Government stood idly by, Britain refused to intervene. The result was inevitable. Both the Usutus and the Mandhlakazi (Sibebu's party) prepared for war.

It came on 30 March 1883.

The forces of Cetshwayo, numbering about 5,000, from the beginning showed a complete lack of discipline. Sibebu, on the other hand, though mustering only about 2,000 fighting men, showed brilliant generalship throughout the fight. Steadily retreating before the advancing Usutus, sacrificing even his chief kraal at 'Nkungwini to the flames, he lured his foes into the Umsebe Valley, a valley of ridges and dongas where the grass was long and the sloping hills thickly covered with bush and mimosa trees. Here his warriors concealed themselves and deep into this valley Cetshwayo's army, whose scouting was reprehensibly careless, plunged regardless of the consequences. Then Sibebu struck; the Mandhlakazi sprang from their hiding places and swept down upon the Usutus. Taken completely by surprise Cetshwayo's army, stricken with panic, fled in confusion and was mercilessly pursued. It was not merely a defeat, it was an utter rout and the slaughter went on till darkness. Years after, the course that the fleeing Usutus had taken could be traced by the whitened bones of the slain. It was a disaster of the first magnitude to Cetshwayo, yet only about ten of Sibebu's men had been killed and a small number wounded. For Sibebu it was a brilliant victory, adding greatly to his prestige and making him a power in the land.

It now became urgently necessary for the King to gather around himself every available man, for Sibebu could no longer be regarded merely as a nuisance; by his victory he had become a dangerous rival.

A new menace now loomed on the horizon. Uhamu, trading on Sibebu's success, openly defied Cetshwayo, burnt several kraals and plundered the cattle of those loyal to the King. Mnyamana

set out with a force to reduce him to submission. This proved more difficult than was anticipated, for Uhamu and his warriors retreated to the mountainous fastnesses that abounded in that part of the country, and could not be dislodged.

Meanwhile Sibebu in spite of his recent victory, found it impossible to subdue the tribes in his country that were loyal to the King. Moreover, trouble threatened on his borders, for he was surrounded by the Amatongas, the Swazis and the powerful Mpukunyoni tribe, all of whom he suspected of being in league with Cetshwayo. His position was precarious, for should these tribes decide upon a combined attack his forces would have little hope of survival, let alone of success. Yet these adverse circumstances stimulated him to even greater effort. He was undoubtedly assisted by Cetshwayo's bitterest enemy, John Dunn, who for some time had acted as his adviser. He was also joined by about half a dozen European freebooters who had contrived to smuggle arms into the country for Sibebu's warriors, of course at considerable profit to themselves.

Cetshwayo was trying by every means to gain the support of those living in the Reserve, so that he would be in a strong position to demand the return of that territory to his jurisdiction, particularly as he understood that England would be glad to be free of Zululand, and Natal had no wish to own any part of it. His efforts had already met with a certain measure of success, for a number of powerful chiefs had left the Reserve and joined the King at Ulundi in spite of the Commissioner's protests. If Sibebu and Uhamu could be crushed, the country might settle down.

Immediate action was therefore decided upon by Cetshwayo and his *indunas*, and on 14 July 1883, their armies set out on what was to be a campaign to establish the King as the one and only ruler of Zululand. Mnyamana's force, which was still engaged against Uhamu, was ordered to meet Cetshwayo's army at the Itokazi Hill, deep within Sibebu's territory. On the junction of the forces they were to sweep through this territory. The armies met, the invasion began, but once again Sibebu proved too clever for them. Anticipating such a move, he had withdrawn his forces to the slopes of the Nongoma Ridge, where he was joined by a

contingent of Uhamu's warriors, and from here, during the night of 20 July, he marched twenty miles over unoccupied country to the Black Umfolozi River.

After crossing the river, they reached the heights overlooking the King's kraal at Ulundi just as dawn was breaking. Here Sibebu arranged his forces in battle formation and the encircling movement began. This clever strategist knew well that as Cetshwayo's armies were away the Royal Kraal would be practically unguarded, and it was not until his forces were almost at the gates of Ulundi that they were detected. Snatching up their arms the few defenders attempted to make a stand but the situation was hopeless. The Mandhlakazi swept forward, leaving a trail of destruction and death. The Royal Kraal of a thousand huts was soon a mass of flame and the dead lay around in heaps.

Reporting on this tragedy Gibson writes:

> In the wake of the victorious invaders there remained nothing but blackness and desolation; the flames of grass fires sped over the hills; the homes of the people were burnt, wherever found; their cattle and food taken and their women made captives.*

Cetshwayo had fled early in the conflict and mounted on a somewhat sorry horse, took refuge in a clump of trees. He was soon discovered by Sibebu's men, one of whom hurled an assegai at him, severely wounding him in the thigh. Remonstrating with his assailants for attacking their King – an offence punishable by death – Cetshwayo was allowed to escape. To all others neither respect nor mercy was shown and many of the oldest and ablest Zulu councillors were ruthlessly slain and the proud kingdom which Shaka had founded lay in complete ruin.

It was not until 6 August that it became known that the King had sought refuge with the chief Sigananda Cube in the Nkandhla Forest. In those beautiful woods, overlooking the Mome Valley and within 300 yards of its waterfall, the stricken King had secreted himself with a handful of faithful followers in a small kraal known as eNhlweni.

Osborn, the Resident Commissioner of the Reserve, set out

* J. Y. Gibson, *The Story of the Zulus*, p. 259.

with a bodyguard in an attempt to remove him to Eshowe, the seat of Government. But he was unsuccessful, for Cetshwayo, fearing a trap, refused to be enticed from his hiding-place.

At a later date considerable capital was made out of this incident by the anti-Cetshwayo party who maintained that the King sent an insolent reply to the Commissioner. W. Y. Campbell, in his pamphlet,* has given us a different story, for when visiting Cetshwayo in the Forest he questioned him closely on this matter. Campbell reports Cetshwayo as saying:

> Malemate [Osborn] did come to me when I was lying in this hole. He came to me, a wretched, wounded man, with a long line of armed men, men armed with breech-loaders, amongst whom my people saw two of Sibebu's warriors. Malemate sent me a message to come and speak to him. I was to crawl out to all those men armed with breech-loaders. I was alone and not knowing what they wanted with me and why they brought such a force and some of Sibebu's men if Malemate really only wanted to condole with me in my death. I said 'No, I cannot come' and in truth I could not, my thigh wounds were still open and my foot was swollen. I said 'No, Malemate, if you really wish to see me only, come here to me; my people will bring you. I cannot go to you and would not go if I could; I fear your large armament; it is out of keeping with your quest. I long to see you if you will only come to me alone and leave all your great force behind you.' Malemate insisted that I must come to him. I could not, for I feared his force. So he rode away.'

After the Commissioner's visit a further accusation was laid against the King – that he was hiding in the Nkandhla with a large body of armed men.

Campbell, who was an eye-witness of the actual conditions under which Cetshwayo was living gives the lie to the charge:

> He [Cetshwayo] has three of his faithful old headmen who have cleaved to him despite British fines and re-fines for their loyalty. There are also a number of men and boys there, but taken altogether they do not number over fifty. This is the whole population and of men and boys who could throw an assegai, there are not over thirty. The King never has had an *impi* or armed following in the Nkandhla, though such has been repeatedly asserted by his detractors.

* See p. 196.

Campbell sums up the tragic story as follows:

The King has blundered on as best he could. He was tied up with conditions that denied him defence, that fomented war, that weakened and humiliated him at every point. He was continually the victim of his enemies. Vilifying reports were sent to Headquarters and were always read with avidity and unsifting credulousness. His appeals and outcries were ignored, the only reply being charge and counter-charge. He was discountenanced by Government in the eyes of his people, who became demoralized. Through it all he hugged the delusion that the Queen and her headmen would yet come to the rescue and put things on a fair footing. He did try to keep his conditions and all ended as it only could end, in the chaos of Ulundi and his miserable flight as a wounded outcast. No one can deny he had overwhelming odds against him. The Natal Government, Natal colonists, a section of the Natal Press, Zulu missionaries, the bitter John Dunn and Sibebu, were all bitterly opposed to his return. His detractors ignore the odds and both heartily and piously damn the man for sinking. Fair play is a jewel which has been utterly lacking in the treatment Cetshwayo has received since his restoration.

This is confirmed by Cetshwayo's old headmen who stated:

We are not killed so much by Sibebu's as by your White House. You have placed our section of the Zulu nation aside. You have taken into your special favour Sibebu and his people. With you Sibebu can do no wrong. Our King may not fight nor lift a hand. Sibebu may do as he likes, it is winked at; an official reprimand is made to him as a matter of routine but he suffers no real check. Had we of Cetshwayo had the same tolerance, the same freedom, as Sibebu has had we could long ere this have settled matters. But we are in ill favour with the Natal Authorities who are against us and if Cetshwayo dared to do what Sibebu has done Government would at once cry out loudly and say 'There he is killing and breaking his words to the Queen.'

After Osborn's failure to get Cetshwayo to Eshowe, Fynn (Resident to Cetshwayo), adopting different tactics, set out for the Nkandhla on a similar mission. Travelling only with his guides, he persuaded the King and his few faithful *indunas* to go to Eshowe, where he promised Government support. Accordingly, on 15 October Cetshwayo and his little band of followers moved to the Gqikazi kraal close to the present Eshowe Police Station.

But he was not destined to enjoy the peace and quiet of his new home for long. On 8 February 1884, the last King of the Zulus died suddenly.

There are several accounts of his death which, though differing in detail, agree over the main facts.

In the late afternoon of 8 February, Osborn received an urgent call stating that Cetshwayo was desperately ill. Summoning the senior medical officer he hurried over to Gqikazi, but before their arrival they were told that the King was dead. Entering the hut they found Cetshwayo lying stretched out on his back and, much to the doctor's surprise, it was discovered on closer examination that he had been dead for several hours, for the body was almost cold.

The doctor's suspicions were aroused, for Cetashwyo had been seen taking his usual walk only that morning when he had appeared to be in normal health; within an hour or two he was dead, yet the first intimation that anything was wrong did not reach the authorities till evening and even then he was only desperately ill, whilst in fact he had been dead for several hours.

Knowing well that Cetshwayo had many enemies the doctor made as careful an investigation as was possible under the circumstances and found that the King had every symptom of having been poisoned. (See Appendix E.)

The administration of poisons concocted by witch-doctors was not uncommon amongst the Zulus and some of these men had an uncanny knowledge of such substances which they used quite freely on their victims when it suited their purpose – or more frequently, when they were adequately rewarded for such services.

Two methods were adopted to administer these drugs which were usually pulverized into a fine powder; they were either introduced surreptitiously in the beer or mixed with the snuff, which is used frequently by all Zulus. Both methods were equally deadly and could rarely be detected except by post-mortem examination.

The doctor suggested such an examination should be made, but when this was interpreted to the native doctor and the relatives

of the deceased they became antagonistic and eventually told him 'If you cut our Chief we will cut you.'' Fearing that grave trouble might result should he pursue the matter further, the doctor certified death as due to 'syncope, the result of disease of the heart.' However, the manner of Cetshwayo's death must remain something of a mystery. (See Appendix E.)

After the doctor had left Gqikazi, the late King's attendants, following the ancient custom of the Zulus, took the body and placed it in a sitting position, tying it to the centre pole of the hut which was then sealed up to the accompaniment of the wails of the womenfolk which carried on for many hours. Owing to the divided state of the nation, the loss of most of her outstanding *indunas* and the circumstances of Cetshwayo's death, much of the ancient ritual on the death of a monarch was omitted.

In due course a huge coffin was made locally and in this the body of the dead King, still in a sitting position, was placed. Later it was conveyed by an ox wagon along a track over the rolling hills, down the steep valleys and across numerous mountainous streams to the Nkandhla, as near as possible to its destination. Here, owing to the precipitous nature of the country, the wagon had to halt and for the last two or three miles the huge coffin was dragged by rough sledge to the grave which had been prepared in one of the most beautiful, peaceful and secluded spots in Zululand – a deep valley below the great rolling grass-covered slopes of the Bhope Ridge. For miles around the hills are clothed with the dense forest of the Nkandhla whilst in the opposite direction, through a break in the range, can be seen the purple mountains which form the precipitous banks of the Tugela River, whilst towering 3,000 feet above it Kranskop keeps vigil over the grave of that last great King of the Zulus.

No European witnessed the interment or the last funeral rites, but when the body had been finally laid to rest the wagon which had conveyed it was completely dismantled and all its parts piled on and around the grave – wheels, axles, the long-handled brake, everything, in fact, down to the last nut and bolt – and there they lie today after many years, and though the wood has long since rotted away, the rusting metal remains, the only

monument to the King who witnessed the downfall and ruin of a great and brave people.*

With regard to the character of Cetshwayo, many of the official statements are most unreliable. Bartle Frere spoke of him as a 'bloodthirsty tyrant' but this assessment must be disregarded, for it was built up on untrustworthy hearsay, not on personal knowledge, and it is completely without foundation. Fortunately we have the written record of several Europeans who knew the Zulu King intimately.

R. C. Samuelson devotes a chapter of his book *Long, Long Ago* to the character of Cetshwayo and he possibly more than anyone else should be reliable, for not only had he known the Zulu King for many years, but later lived with him and acted as his interpreter at Cape Town for twelve months. Writing of Cetshwayo he states 'He was kind and liberal to a degree', illustrating this fact by several incidents of a personal nature; 'He was a faithful and true friend. . . . He had a wonderfully clever and retentive brain. . . . Was brave in fighting . . . was very majestic and dignified and knew his position as King.' Like many other men he had his weaknesses; 'His greatest fault being his autocratic disposition.'

Regarding the killings due to witchcraft, Samuelson stresses a point that is often overlooked:

> He [Cetshwayo] was responsible for a very limited number of cases, and of these cases he was overruled by his advisers who were strong enough if he had not given way, to have ended his kingdom. It must be remembered that the Zulu people were a barbarous people who required to be ruled with an iron hand and it must also be remembered that the King was only part of the power of the country.†

Again, we have the record of Martin Oftebro, the son of one of those remarkable Norwegian missionaries. Martin, from his earliest years had known Cetshwayo well, for he was a close personal friend of his father's. He relates:

> I remember Cetshwayo as a fine man having all the qualities of a gentleman. He was highly intelligent, handsome and dignified, and above all, seemed eager to learn.

* See Appendix F for Author's visit to the Grave.

† R. C. Samuelson, *Long, Long Ago*, p. 229.

Neither was he a cruel man. On one occasion when he was but a Prince to King Mpande my father had occasion to reproach him for allowing a native warrior to be impaled to death for some trifling offence. It was with quite a sad note in his voice that he replied to my father: 'My dear friend, I have no more lust for bloodshed than you have. But you must remember that in this kingdom I must kill or be killed.'*

Gibson, for many years a Magistrate in Zululand, a fluent Zulu linguist and a man with a deep knowledge of, and love for, the Zulu people writes:

By the people he ruled Cetshwayo was generally considered to be a good King. . . . He was proud of his people and the people were proud of him and loyal to him.†

Finally, Bishop Colenso, a great scholar and a man of outstanding integrity, who knew Cetshwayo thoroughly and supported him, wrote of the King:

'He ruled his people well according to his lights.'

* Extract from a document in the library of Dr Killie Campbell.
† J. Y. Gibson, *The Story of the Zulus*, p. 126.

APPENDIX A

The Feast of First-fruits

THIS great Feast, now a thing of the past, can be traced back to the earliest days of the Nguni people, from whom the Zulu nation sprang.

The actual *Ukunyatela* (Feast of First-Fruits) lasted for four days, and on each day different ceremonies took place. At least a month before the event the King used to send a party of four men and two boys to the sea coast to look for a certain type of marrow which grows wild on the beach. They had to stay there until the marrow was ripe enough to pick and on no account could they return without it, for much of the ceremonial centred on this vegetable – in fact, the feast could not begin without it.

The ceremony began with the driving of a big black bull into the cattle kraal, the arena in which all important events took place. It was the task of the regiment specially selected by the King as the best and strongest in his army* to wrestle with this animal, using only their bare hands; they had to throw it to the ground, twist its neck, and then tear it limb from limb. The dismembered beast was then presented to the witch-doctors, who smeared it all over with a mixture compounded from magic medicines, of which the King must first have partaken.

Meanwhile another specially favoured regiment† was collecting wood and preparing a fire. When the witch-doctors had finished their work the warriors cut the flesh into long strips, which they roasted till they became quite black. Each officer then took a strip and, having bitten off a small piece, sucked what little juice was in it, spat out the chewed morsel and flung the rest of the strip to his men, each of whom went through the same process, till all had partaken and the whole of the flesh was consumed; after which the bones and horns of the beast were burnt to ashes.

* The Mbonambi was selected in 1877 as the 'crack' regiment.
† The Ngobamakosi at the Feast of 1877.

This part of the ceremony was supposed to make the warriors brave and strong and give them courage in battle.

On the second day of the Feast the King and his councillors arose very early in the morning and entered the cattle kraal, where again his regiments were assembled. The marrow from the sea-shore was now presented to the King, who, taking it in his hands, scrutinized it carefully and muttered an incantation over it in a low voice. He then threw it five or six times into the air, catching it like a ball; then, suddenly facing the warriors, he hurled the marrow at them. It invariably broke in pieces as it fell, and there was a scramble to pick up the fragments. The men who were successful in securing a piece flung it away among their fellow warriors. Bits of the marrow were soon flying in every direction, but the ceremony could not end until every man had touched a fragment, however small.

Another black bull was then led into the kraal, bigger and fiercer than the one killed on the first day, and the same proceedings were carried out. Usually this ceremony was over by noon, and the King then declared the Ukunyatela ended.

Now the *umkosi* (the actual feast) commenced. It was heralded by the playing of the reed instruments, the *umtshingo* and the *ivenge*.* These instruments must not be played till the King had given his permission, the penalty for the infringement of this rule being death. Once Royal consent had been granted musicians would run from kraal to kraal throughout the land. The sound of the instruments was the signal for rejoicing, for not until their notes were heard was anyone permitted to eat the fresh fruits and vegetables from his fields and gardens without fear of punishment.

About three o'clock in the afternoon the dance began, every warrior being in full uniform and every woman decked in her finest beads. It was an imposing though barbaric spectacle: each regiment with its distinctive coloured head-plumes swaying gracefully as they danced, the deep voices of thousands of warriors rising and falling in unison as they chanted their national songs. The climax was the Salutation of the Monarch – regiment after

* The *umtshingo* is a long hollow reed of several notes, played like a flute. The *ivenge* is a much shorter reed and has only two notes.

regiment, marching in step to the steady throb of knobkerries beaten against shields, took its place in the arena; then at a given signal there came a sudden silence, followed a moment later by a deafening roar as the vast assembly hailed its King with the Royal salute, *Bayete!*

On the third day everybody relaxed and spent the time in feasting and drinking. On the King's orders a certain number of cattle were handed over to each regiment in the early hours of the morning to be slaughtered, cut up and cooked with fresh vegetables. Meanwhile the women were busy bringing in pots of beer.

At midday the men sat down in circles and devoured the meat. This was followed by copious draughts of beer and, as was the invariable custom, those who served had first to taste in front of everybody to show that the liquor had not been poisoned. The earthen pot was handed from man to man, and was frequently refilled.

At such feasts it was the custom for the King's *imbhongi* (praise-singer) to come forward and, dancing wildly with high leaps, sing the praises of his monarch amid loud applause. The celebrations would go on till all were overcome by exhaustion.

The fourth and last day of the Feast was not so happy, for every man in every regiment had to take a mixture of medicines, compounded by the witch-doctors. Early in the morning each regiment had to dig a deep trench in an allotted place in preparation for the effects of the medicine, which acted as a powerful emetic. One of the ingredients was probably *dagga* (hemp), for many of those who drank of it said that 'it made their hearts feel very bad indeed, full of cruelty and daring'.

After the purging the men were summoned to stand before their King and hear from him any new laws that had been enacted during the past year. Lads who were due to be enrolled in the army were then formed into regiments, the names of which were chosen and announced. Rewards were given to those who merited them, punishments inflicted on those who had been fighting among themselves and generally causing trouble. Finally, the King addressed the whole nation, invoking their loyalty and urging them to carry out their duties faithfully.*

* For this account of the Feast the Author is indebted to Miss L. H. Samuelson's *Zululand, its Customs and Folk-lore.*

APPENDIX B

List of Zulu Regiments which took part in the Battle of Isandhlwana, together with their Uniforms, etc.

Taken from the following sources:

Sir Reginald Coupland's *Zulu Battlepiece.*
R. C. Samuelson's *Long, Long Ago.*
Extracts from contemporary issues of the *Natal Witness.*

THE UNDI and the TULWANA regiments formed the extreme right of the Zulu army; they swept round the back of the mountain and cut off the retreat to Rorke's Drift.

The NODWENGU regiment formed the right horn.

The NOKENKE and the Ukhandempemvu (UMCITYU) formed the right centre.

The UDHLOKO and another section of the UMCITYU formed the left centre.

The NGOBAMAKOSI formed the right of the left horn whilst the UVE and the MBONAMBI made up the other section of the left horn.

REGIMENTAL UNIFORMS were, generally speaking, all alike except for minor features, usually in the head-dress, which distinguished one regiment from another.

All warriors wore a long fringe of white cow tails hanging down, in front and behind, from their necks. These completely covered the upper part of their bodies. Around their loins was worn the *umuTsha* (girdle) of dressed calf skin. Fringes of white cow tails also adorned their arms and legs.

Around the forehead was a band of skin, either leopard or otter, known as the *umqele.* To this the ear-flaps (*amabheqe*) were attached, made of blue monkey, leopard or otter skin.

A bunch of *sakabula* (black finch) feathers, standing erect on the forehead, was worn by the unmarried regiments, whilst the

married regiments were adorned with a bunch of *inDwa* (blue crane) plumes. The side of the head was decorated with ostrich feathers, pointing backwards.

The Mbonambi regiment were permitted to use plumes of the Laurie bird (*Gwalagwala*), a decoration usually reserved for Royalty.

All warriors went barefoot; no sandals had been allowed since the days of Shaka.

The shield was held in the left hand; assegais in the right. Each regiment had its own distinctive markings on their shields.

The TULWANA (also called the AMASOKA, meaning the Select Ones)

The best dressed regiment of all as it contained the Princes and the nobility of Zululand. This was Cetshwayo's regiment. Their headquarters were at the King's kraal at Ulundi. Shields: white (?).

The UNDI (not the name of an original regiment but the designation given to a corps by Cetshwayo, which included the Royal Regiment of the Tulwanas and several others (Ngobamakosi, Uve, Udhloko)

Headquarters of the corps was at Ondini, about six miles east of the ford over the White Umfolozi.

The NODWENGU

This is properly the name of Mpande's chief kraal where the battle of Ulundi was fought. Later the name was used for the regiment. Shields: white with large black spots.

The NOKENKE

Headquarters about six miles north-east of Emtonjaneni. Shields: black.

The UMCITYU or the UKHANDEMPEMVU (the Redheads)

Headquarters on left bank of the Umfolozi, about four miles north-west of Old Ondini. Shields: black.

The UDHLOKO (named after *idhlokolo*, a plume formed of a single large bunch of *sakabula* feathers, worn on the top of the head)

A regiment of married men, all wearing the head-ring (*isicoco*). Headquarters at Gqikazi, north of Ondini. Shields: red, with white spots.

The UVE (named after the Fly-catcher bird)

Headquarters about twelve miles south-south-east of Ondini. This regiment was amalgamated with the Ngobamakosi at the time of the Zulu War (1879). Regimental dress as the Ngobamakosi.

The NGOBAMAKOSI (meaning the Bender of Kings)

Headquarters at Old Ondini on the right bank of the Umhlatuzi. Shields: black, red and spotted. One of the 'crack' regiments.

The MBONAMBI (meaning the Evil-Seers)

Headquarters at Umbonambi, about fifteen miles south of the entrance to St Lucia Bay. Shields: black with white spots.

APPENDIX C

Terms, Conditions and Limitations laid down by Sir Garnet Wolseley to the Thirteen Kinglets

1. I WILL observe and respect whatever boundaries shall be assigned to my territory by the British Government, through the Resident of the division in which my territory is situated.

2. I will not permit the existence of the Zulu military system, or the existence of any military system or organization whatsoever within my territory; and I will proclaim and make it a rule that all men should be allowed to marry when they choose, according to the good and ancient customs of my people, known and followed in the days preceding the establishment by Shaka of the system known as the military system; and I will allow and encourage all men living within my territory to go and come freely for peaceful purposes and to work in Natal, or the Transvaal, or elsewhere, for themselves or for hire.

3. I will not import or allow to be imported into my territory, by any person upon any pretence or for any object whatsoever, any arms or ammunition from any part whatsoever, or any goods or merchandise by the sea coast of Zululand, without the express sanction of the Resident of the division in which my territory is situated; and I will not encourage or promote, or take part in or countenance in any way whatsoever the importation into any part of Zululand of arms or ammunition from any part whatsoever, or of goods or merchandise by the sea coast of Zululand, without such sanction; and I will confiscate and hand over to the Natal Government all arms and ammunition, and goods and merchandise so imported into my territory, and I will punish by fine or other sufficient punishment any person guilty of, or concerned in such unsanctioned importation, and any person found

possessing arms, or ammunition, or goods, or merchandise, knowingly obtained thereby.

4. I will not allow the life of any of my people to be taken for any cause, except after sentence passed in a council of the chief men of my territory, and after fair and impartial trial in my presence, and after the hearing of witnesses; and I will not tolerate the employment of witch-doctors, or the practice known as 'smelling out', or any practices of witchcraft.

5. The surrender of all persons fugitives in my territory from justice, when demanded by the Government of any British colony, territory, or province in the interests of justice, shall be readily and promptly made to such Government; and the escape into my territory of persons accused or convicted of offences against British laws shall be prevented by all possible means, and every exertion shall be used to seize and deliver up such persons to British authority.

6. I will not make war upon any chief or chiefs, or people, without the sanction of the British Government, and in any unsettled dispute with any chief or people, I will appeal to the arbitration of the British Government, through the Resident of the division in which my territory is situated.

7. The succession to the Chieftainship of my territory shall be according to the ancient laws and customs of my people, and the nomination of each successor shall be subject to the approval of the British Government.

8. I will not sell, or in any way alienate, or permit or countenance any sale or alienation of any part of the land in my territory.

9. I will permit all people now residing within my territory to there remain, upon the condition that they recognize my authority as chief, and any persons not wishing to recognize my authority as chief, and desiring to quit my territory, I will permit to quit it, and to pass unmolested elsewhere.

10. In all cases of dispute in which British subjects are involved I will appeal to and abide by the decision of the British Resident of the division in which my territory is situated; and in all cases where accusations of offences or crimes committed in my territory are brought against British subjects, I will hold no trial and pass

no sentence, except with the approval of such British Resident.

11. In all matters not included within these terms, conditions, and limitations, and in all cases unprovided for herein, and in all cases where there may be doubt or uncertainty as to the laws, rules, or stipulations applicable to matters to be dealt with, I will govern, order and decide in accordance with ancient laws and usage of my people.

These terms, conditions, and limitations I engage, and I solemnly pledge my faith to abide by and respect in letter and in spirit, without qualifications or reserve.

APPENDIX D

Terms, Conditions and Limitations of Cetshwayo's Restoration as Assented to by him in England, August 1882

1. I WILL observe and respect the boundaries assigned to my territory by the British Government.

Clauses 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 are all identical with the Terms and Conditions as set before the thirteen Kinglets. (See Appendix C.)

6. I will not make any treaty or agreement with any chief, people, or government outside my territory without the consent and approval of the British Government. I will not make war upon any chief, or chiefs, or people, without the sanction of the British Government; and in any unsettled dispute with any chief, people or government, I will appeal to the arbitration of the British Government, through the British Resident.

7. The nomination of my successor, and of all future successors, shall be according to the ancient laws and customs of my people, and shall be subject to the approval of the British Government.

These terms, conditions and limitations, I engage, and I solemnly pledge my faith to abide by and respect in letter and in spirit, without qualification or reserve.

APPENDIX E

The Death of Cetshwayo - By One Who was There

Copy of Portion of Original Document in the library of Dr Killie Campbell, Durban

ALTHOUGH Cetshwayo not being well on the day of his death walked out in the morning and during a conversation with him he told me of this and said he intended to have his head doctor to administer an enema during the afternoon.

Having been invited to the Officer's Mess by the Colonel Commanding, I went and just after the soup had been served an orderly came to request the presence of the doctor and said the Chief was dead. The Colonel said 'Better go down and see.' So we went down to see what was the matter. Arriving at the house the Chief was lying on his back, dead, and every symptom of having been poisoned. On seeing this the doctor said that it was evidently a poisoning case and proposed that a post-mortem be held. On interpreting this to the native doctor and relations they said that could not be, 'He was our Chief; no one would have poisoned him.' On again being told he must be cut, they said 'If you cut our Chief, we will cut you.' This being said so emphatically, no post-mortem was held.

AUTHOR'S NOTE ON THE DEATH OF CETSHWAYO

That considerable doubt as to the official report existed in the minds of many Europeans is obvious from an extract which appeared in the *Natal Mercury* of 3 April 1884, in which it is stated that so august a paper as the *British Medical Journal* supported the theory that Cetshwayo had no heart disease. Further, it is a somewhat remarkable fact that heart disease is extremely rare amongst the Zulus.

Even amongst Zulu historians there is a diversity of opinion as to the actual cause, some accepting the verdict of 'Death due to fatty degeneration of the heart,' whilst others support the theory of poisoning.

The general opinion amongst the Zulus themselves is somewhat divided. Whilst some believe that Cetshwayo died of a broken heart there are many others who assert very definitely that 'he was killed by Sibebu,' (meaning by his agency). Dinizulu, his son, was firmly convinced that his father's death was brought about by Sibebu.

NOTE: Two of those who accept the heart theory are: Dr A. T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, p. 680; H. C. Lugg, *Historic Natal and Zululand*, p. 121.

Two of those who accept the poison theory are: Rider Haggard, *Cetshawyo and His White Neighbours*, p. xxix; J. Y. Gibson, *Story of the Zulus*, p. 126.

APPENDIX F

The Author's Visit to Cetshwayo's Grave

AFTER numerous attempts I managed to reach the grave of Cetshwayo on 6 September 1961. It is situated in a remote and almost inaccessible part of Zululand although it can be viewed with good field-glasses from the Bhope Ridge.

Leaving the Nkandhla–Eshowe road one travels many miles along a bumpy and hilly route to an isolated native trading station. Here the car must be left behind and the rest of the journey taken on foot. It is a long and arduous walk over mountainous country but eventually the last hill is climbed and one sees, lying deep below, the wooded glade in which the grave is situated. Scrambling down I was glad to rest awhile under the shade of a tree and view the landscape.

Nearby was the sacred grove covering several acres, a hallowed spot to every Zulu, while all around for a wide area the grass had been closely cut to keep away the disastrous veld fires which sometimes ravage these hills and valleys. No more peaceful or secluded spot could have been selected in the whole of Zululand and the views from every angle, as already pointed out in the text, are magnificent.

My ruminations were quickly disturbed, for within a few moments Zulus were bobbing up from every direction and soon a circle of about thirty men were gathered around, the guardians of the grave, for none must enter that sacred grove without the permission of the chief who is appointed by the Royal House of the nation.

A message having been sent over to his kraal, which is situated on a near-by hill overlooking the spot, he soon appeared on the scene, but when I said that I had come to pay my respects to

Cetshwayo and begged permission to enter the enclosure and photograph the grave, I was promptly refused. Indicating with his closed fist (to point with the finger is forbidden as being disrespectful), that *there* was the grave and I could photograph that from where I was, he persisted in refusing entry. A lengthy discussion ensued during which my guide – an African orderly kindly loaned by the Native Commissioner of Nkandhla – also endeavoured to persuade the chief to relax his restriction as I was there purely in the interests of history.

To and fro the discussion swayed for quite an hour when, to my great relief, a Zulu was seen approaching with a large *khamba* (native clay pot) of beer. This was a good sign, indicating hospitality. After the bearer had taken the first drink at my request (the Zulu custom; bearer must take first drink, indicating that beer is not poisoned), I imbibed long and deeply, for the beer was excellent and I was thirsty. After exclamations of 'He's a man!' and the beer having been handed round, the ice was broken and a more reasonable attitude adopted. Returning the compliment by giving the chief a *bonsella* (gift) with which to purchase some *inyama* (meat) for himself and his men, the path was opened up and I was allowed just to *enter* the sacred grove, but not to penetrate its depths.

Taking advantage of this permission I set forth surrounded by a bodyguard of the chief and his men, all showing great reverence as they approached the hallowed spot. After proceeding a short distance the escort halted and it was obvious that no further advance must be made in that direction, but from this approach it was impossible to view the grave. I then decided to walk around the outskirts of the grove and see if the grave could be detected hidden among the trees. I purposely proceeded very slowly, thus allowing the chief and his followers to get ahead, all but one grand old white-haired *induna* who walked silently by my side. A few moments later he whispered, 'Look for the red patch of earth, *Numzane*' (chief). This was a valuable clue and after walking some distance further there it was, clearly visible in the heart of the glade.

Now the problem was how to get there without the chief and

his numerous bodyguard offering resistance. Walking slowly in circles, each time drawing nearer to the goal, the patch of red soil was eventually reached without opposition, and there, right ahead, was the grave. On it rested the iron rims of the wagon wheels; near by, lying just as they had been placed in 1884, were the axle, the brake and numerous nuts, bolts and pieces of iron.

Intent on taking photographs I had not noticed that the chief had also drawn near and now was standing silently at my side with his bodyguard forming a semicircle around me. The moment the photos were taken the chief said very quietly 'Have you finished *Numzane*?' and on replying in the affirmative the old man, very reverently, with right hand upraised, taking a few steps forward, intoned a prayer to the departed spirits of his ancestors (*amadlozi*), followed by a part of the *Isibonga* (praise song) of Cetshwayo. At its conclusion he and all his men with hands upraised, roared out the Royal salute, *Bayete!*

It was not merely deeply impressive, it was magnificent, a genuine flash-back to the Zululand of old.

Walking backwards in silence for some distance – for to turn one's back on the grave is disrespectful – the party quietly dispersed and I set off on the return journey to Nkandhla.

I was later informed that I was the first white man to visit that sacred spot for close on forty years. No wonder; the trip had taken nearly thirteen hours and had involved a rough motor tour of close on a hundred miles rounded off by a walk of eighteen miles over rugged mountainous country, but it was worth it all.

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