

ANTEL, MR

11.7.1900. Impendhle.

File 73, pp. 54a-54b.

54a The story of Nomanzi. In conversation with a Mr Antel, a man of about 60, a few minutes ago, I elicited the following: That he was living at Nonoti in the Lower Tugela Division as Captain Walmesley's clerk at the time of the battle between Mbuyazi and Cetshwayo (Ndondakusuka, 1856).¹ He was for five years Walmesley's clerk and remained with him till his death. He assisted D.B. Scott, the executor, in regard to Walmesley's affairs, especially in regard to a large number of cattle (20 head, with increase 12 = 32) previously received by Walmesley under the following circumstances.

Prior to the battle referred to, John Dunn² came as a boy to Captain Walmesley and was taken care of by him. (Dunn was a regular white kaffir and used as a boy to go about in native dress.) When the battle was coming on, Walmesley directed Dunn to cross the river and to take part in it with a number of Walmesley's trained, armed men (armed with guns). Dunn complied. Walmesley himself remained on the Natal side of the river (Pearson's Drift) and made bullets for the force he had sent across. Mbuyazi was beaten. After Cetshwayo's army had gone off, Walmesley crossed over, and as he was being rowed back by one of his Hottentot servants, he saw a very young kaffir (Zulu) baby, about one year old, clinging to the reeds and in the water. The river was in flood at the time. The baby was a little girl. Walmesley directed the Hottentot to take the child into the boat. The Hottentot at first demurred, asking what could be the use of saving such rubbish, and suggested its being allowed to drown. Walmesley insisted and furthermore ordered the Hottentot to take off his coat and wrap the child in it, which the man did. It was seen that the child had a wound (gash) in its arm (left) as well as in the thigh (left).

Walmesley saved the girl's life and, having no children of his own, he practically adopted it and called her by the name of Nomanzi in memory of her perilous predicament. He and Mrs Walmesley then took great care in the bringing up of the little girl. She was taught everything in the house; she could play the piano, cook and, though treated as a menial to some extent, she wore European clothing and was treated exactly as a European and lived in and with the Walmesleys. She was in every way thoroughly educated.

Now Captain Walmesley was subject to epileptic fits. One morning, many years after 1856, fearing another attack was coming

ANTEL

on, he went to, or stayed in, his house. Mr Antel, the clerk, was at the office. When he was at the office, the native *induna*, Walmesley's *induna*, a Zulu, came in and stood for some time without saying anything. His name was Sifile or Sofile. Antel then asked what he wanted. He said there was something on his mind which he wanted to tell Captain Walmesley about, but he was afraid to do so. Antel asked once more what it was. He said, 'I like Nomanzi and Nomanzi likes me.' Antel was much surprised, because the *induna* was a raw Zulu, but when Antel told Captain Walmesley, the latter was very much more surprised. He stamped and stormed. Then for two days he considered what should be done. He and Mrs Walmesley questioned Nomanzi. They asked her if she liked Sifile; she said yes, she wanted to marry him. 'But will you go and live at Sifile's like ordinary Zulu women in spite of all your careful bringing up, discard your dress, and forget the new manners and customs you have learnt?' 'I do not mind having to do this,' she said. 'Since you say this, then you like Sifile and no longer care for us.' 'I like you, all of you, but I like Sifile too,' replied the girl.

Sifile offered to pay 15 head of cattle as *lobola* for Nomanzi, a number well in excess of what was ordinarily claimed. After the two days' consideration, Captain Walmesley came to Antel and said he had decided that the girl was to be married off at once to Sifile. The marriage was to take place forthwith. Moreover, he demanded of Sifile 20 head of cattle as Nomanzi's *lobola*. The increased number was intended by Walmesley to show Sifile what a high value he (Walmesley) placed on Nomanzi. He knew it was the custom among natives that the greater the number of cattle given as *lobola*, the greater the respect that would afterwards be paid to the woman. Within three weeks Sifile brought the 20 head and the marriage between Nomanzi and Sifile was duly consummated.

Some years afterwards Captain Walmesley died. He left a will 15 years old which of course did not refer to the cattle (and increase) received by him from Sifile, but Antel says he was plainly told by Walmesley that the whole of the cattle received by him and their increase were Nomanzi's property. When Scott was winding up the estate, Antel told him about this, to which matter the old Dingley was also a witness, and although Mrs Walmesley remonstrated, yet Scott felt bound by what Antel said, and the whole 32 head of cattle were accordingly handed over to Nomanzi, much to Sifile's delight.

Antel fancies Sifile and Nomanzi are both still alive and live near where Captain Walmesley had his office. Antel told me this story as showing how impossible it was so to civilize a person as to cause him or her to forget their nationality. I do not think Antel could have been Walmesley's clerk at the time of the battle of Ndondakusuka, for he said he was clerk only for five years and remained at Nonoti a further two years after Walmesley's death.

12.7.1900

File 73, pp. 54b-54c.

I saw Mr Antel again this morning. He says that he was not with Walmesley at the time of the battle of Ndondakusuka but

ANTEL

about 17 or 18 years afterwards. Nomanzi, for instance, was about 20 years old when she married, and this occurred when Antel was with Walmesley. The preceding incidents were told him by Walmesley. He was with Walmesley in 1873, just before the coronation of Cetshwayo, when Dunn came to ask for a permit to convey 500 guns into Zululand.

54c Antel went on to say that many years ago, perhaps 40 to 42, Walmesley, Cockburn and Harry Milner, the last-named of Durban, went to Zululand on a hunting trip. They crossed the Tugela and pitched their camp near the banks of the Matikulu. Whilst there, Walmesley drew the attention of the others to the fact that he had seen going about in that locality a boy (white) and apparently a European, dressed exactly like a kaffir (Zulu). Harry Milner examined the boy and said at once his name was John or Jack Dunn, and that he had been missing for several years, no one knowing what had become of him. Upon hearing Milner say he was absolutely certain it was J. Dunn of Durban, Walmesley decided to catch him. (Walmesley was always catching something or somebody.) After a little trouble, Dunn, having tried somewhat to resist, was duly caught. Walmesley then said to him in English, for Dunn had not forgotten his mother tongue, that he would have to do one of two things: (a) consent to live at Nonoti with Walmesley, where he would be properly cared for, or (b) be sent straight back to Durban. Dunn chose the former alternative. He afterwards lived about six years with Walmesley, who educated him in every way.

Walmesley had a windfall about this time of £80,000, which Dunn helped him to spend. Walmesley got many Hottentots to come and work for him; he had some 80 (?) horses, and made Dunn thoroughly drill and train these men. Dunn always looked on Walmesley as his benefactor and was thankful for having been reclaimed by him.

Antel knew Dunn well. I believe Dunn died late in 1893 or early in 1894; he was aged about 56 when he died. I know he had a Hottentot mistress who was his chief wife.

I notice by referring to the Natal Civil Service List, 1897, under heading 'Services of Officers - Shepstone, J.W.', that Mr Shepstone was appointed 'Government Agent, Nonoti, and Justice of the Peace, 30th August, 1852; resigned June, 1853'. Mr Antel says Walmesley was appointed at Nonoti about six months after Mr Shepstone left. Walmesley, Mr Antel says, bought a farm at Nonoti called Chantilly, also, I think, one named Sans Souci. The office was off the main road, more on the coast, but on a road leading from New Guelderland. Mr Antel says a Dr Pierce was one of the first white people to go to Zululand. I know there are Pierces, Tooheys, Gielinks etc. living near Dunn's place at Inyezane and close to the Matikulu river, and Green lives at Ngoye. Some of these have married J. Dunn's daughters, a number being very good-looking.

Notes

¹Walmsley was Natal Border Agent on the lower Thukela.

²For a sketch of Dunn's career see Lugg, Historic Natal, pp. 131-4.