

FALAZA

19.12.1898

File 74, p. 53.

- 53 *Ilanga li ka Mbethe* - this is the name of a great famine which occurred in Zululand about the year 1861. It got its name because of people leaving their homes and going to pick and feed on figs etc. They used to be discovered by the marks they left in the dewy grass [dew - *umbete*],¹ and after the men were killed off their women and children were taken away and appropriated by the murderers.

[In Swaziland (per John Gama²) the same famine was known as *indhlala ka ngongoni*. *Ngongoni* is a grass of the *umsingizane* type, which was ground to powder and eaten.]

Notes

¹Mbethe was also the name of a noted rainmaker: see Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 43-4. *Ilanga li ka Mbethe* means 'the sun (i.e. the drought) of Mbethe'.

²Another of Stuart's informants.