

STATEMENTS

Respecting

D I N G A A N,

KING OF THE ZOO LAHS,

WITH SOME PARTICULARS

Relative to the

M A S S A C R E S

O f

MESSRS. RETIEF AND BIGGARS,

AND THEIR PARTIES.

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By

WILLIAM WOOD,  
INTERPRETER to DINGAAN.

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STATEMENTS, &c.

In the year 1830 my mother and I embarked on board the Cutter "Circe," Captain Blinkenstock, bound to Port Natal, to join my father, Richard Wood, who was in the employment of Mr. Collis, at that Port.

The day after the vessel left Algoa Bay she was overtaken by a gale of wind, and the captain and crew (with the exception of one man,) being in a state of intoxication, there was nothing but confusion on board; the vessel shipped a sea which carried away her bulwarks and stove a cask of oil, which spread over the deck, and rendered it so slippery that, if the crew had been sober, they would have been incapacitated from working the ship in a proper way. They kept her before the wind until the next day, when the weather moderated, and they continued their voyage; and having succeeded in getting over the bar, dropped anchor in Natal Bay.

The captain, my mother, and myself having landed, we proceeded towards a Zoolah kraal, where we were treated kindly. We then set off for Mr. Collis's, and got there without any accident.

I had been living there about six months, during which time I endeavoured to pick up as much of the Zoolah language as possible, when a party of about 100 Zoolahs arrived, the captain of whom told my father, through an interpreter, that the king, Dingaan, had heard of his having a dog that could dance, which he requested should be sent to him, and for which he would give a remuneration. The captain also informed my father that the king wished to see his son, as he had never seen an English boy so young, and promised that he should be safely returned.

My father, having considered the matter, decided upon complying with Dingaan's request; and the next day I was delivered into the charge of these men, as was also the dog, and we proceeded on our journey. The following are the principal rivers which we crossed: the Togala, Misenvootie, Métougaas, Melute, and Klectemcool. We were about eight days on our journey, and were abundantly supplied with provisions at every kraal where we rested. I was taken great care of, and carried through the different streams and rivers which we passed, a warm hut being provided for me at night.. At last we reached the king's kraal, named Megoonloof, where a hut was provided for me, and I was told I must not go to the king until he sent for me, but that I might walk about the kraal.

I was not long there when Dingaan sent me some of his own food, in token of friendship. It consisted of boiled beef and mutton, and some dumplings, and with it came what is there termed a letter, viz:

an elephant's tooth. I remained in the hut until next morning, when I walked about the kraal, and my attention was arrested by two men, whom I perceived bound and lying close to the entrance of the kraal. I went up to them and questioned them in reference to their present condition, through an interpreter, and ascertained that the crime of which they had been guilty was their having spoken to some of the king's wives when they had gone to bathe. The punishment for such crimes being death, they were shortly after taken to execution.

A short time after, a Zoolah came to me and conducted me to the hut of Inlellah, who was captain over all the king's armies. Tamboozie was sitting with him. There were about 250 women collected about them, whom I found to be Inlellah's wives, and who crowded around me and examined me with great attention. On being called to come into the hut I did so, and immediately the last-mentioned captain commenced questioning me in reference to the English, as to their numbers, &c. I told him I could not tell how many soldiers the English had. He said if the Zoolah warriors were placed back to back in a line, they would reach from that spot to the Togala river, and asked me if I thought our troops were equally numerous. On my replying that I thought them twice as numerous, he said—"It is not true; for Graham's Town is only part of a nation, and here we have a whole nation."—Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a messenger from Dingaan requiring my presence, and I went to have my first interview with him.

When I got within sight of the king the men who accompanied me threw themselves on the ground, and crawled forwards. The interpreter told me to do the same, which I refused, saying it was not English fashion so to do. When we came to within about 200 yards of Dingaan the men would proceed no farther, and I walked up to him. As I approached, I was rather astonished to find that which way soever I turned, to avoid something that was dazzling and perplexing me, still the annoyance continued; but when I got nearer I perceived a looking-glass in the king's hand, which he had used as a source of amusement, in casting the sun's rays in the faces of those who happened to come towards him. Dingaan shook hands with me; he seemed quite pleased, and laughed heartily at me for not being aware at first at the cause of my being dazzled. On either hand of him stood a servant, but at a respectful distance. To one of these he handed the looking-glass, and from the other he took a spy-glass, and occupied himself for some time by looking through it at distant objects, and to the no small astonishment of his captains, occasionally mentioned to them that in a short time such and such a chief would arrive; describing also their dresses, &c. He would never allow any man to look through this glass but himself, although he was often requested so to do.

The dog being brought forward, he told me to make him dance, which I did, when he appeared greatly excited, and repeatedly directed the attention of his captains to it. He then had the whole kraal summoned, and their acclamations were loud on beholding what to them appeared a most wonderful performance. After many inquiries as to what food he should give the dog, he told his wives to take it under their care.

When the people had dispersed, he caused chullah, or beer, to be brought, and his wives, to the number of about 1,000, together with his captains, drank until they were drunk, which he also did himself. He handed me a vessel with beer, of which I partook, and he had it filled again, and pressed me to drink, but I refused, saying it would intoxicate me. He would, however, take no refusal, so I dropped the vessel, as if by accident, and it was broken; but he did not appear angry, and ceased to importune me further.

After the people had danced some time, the king went to his house, and some of his wives took me and showed me their huts, as also two huts where Dingaan kept his ivory. We then went to the king, and found him sitting on a mat by himself, some of his wives being at a distance from him in the same hut; he called me in, and after he and his wives had drunk some beer and sang together, some servants entered and set before the women a mat, on which were laid a number of dumplings. Whilst the women were eating, Dingaan conversed with me, and tried by every means in his power to induce me to remain with him; but I objected, saying I was too young, and should like to go back to my parents.. When he found that he could not prevail on me to consent, he told me I could retire to my hut, which I did.

The next day I sent a messenger to the king, to acquaint him with my intention of starting for Port Natal, and to request his permission to leave. He sent back an answer that I might depart, but must first bid him farewell. I immediately went to him; he shook hands with me, and gave me a present of two elephant's teeth.

Having got ready, we left Magoonloof, and it being rather late when we commenced our journey, we had only gone a few miles when we were overtaken by evening, and rested at a small kraal for the night.

Early in the morning, taking a small gun which my grand-father had given me some time before, I went a little distance from the kraal, and amused myself by shooting guinea fowls, which were in great numbers. When some of the Zoolahs saw this, they were greatly astonished, and begged of me to kill as many as possible, as they set a great value upon the feathers; and the captain of the party sent a messenger to Dingaan to tell him I could shoot birds; the consequence of which was that we had to go back to the king.

When I came before him, he asked me if it was true that I could shoot birds in the air? I said "Yes." "Well then," said he, "shoot that vulture now flying towards us." I immediately loaded with shot, and having waited till the bird came within shot, I fired and wounded it in the wing, and it fell on a tree; on which Dingaan expressed his surprise that the English were so clever as to be able to make guns, while his people were so stupid.

We then left Megoonloof and commenced our journey to Natal. Nothing very particular occurred on this occasion; we were treated well at the kraals where we rested at night, had an abundance of food, and at last arrived safely at Natal.

I remained with my father about six months, during which time I tried my utmost to get a more perfect knowledge of the Zoolah language; and my father having packed up some goods, sent me with some of his Zoolah servants to trade for cattle. After being absent for two months we returned, having been successful. I then took a trip with Thos. Carden, a trader, which occupied me some months. I acted in the capacity of interpreter, although my acquaintance with the language was very limited.

My father having advanced me a little money to commence trading, with his consent I entered into partnership with Mr. Robert Russell, and we set off for the Zoolah country, but were much disappointed on arriving at the Togala river, for we there ascertained that the Zoolahs would not trade with us, in consequence, as they said, of Dingaan's intention of going to war with the people of Port Natal. Although nothing occurred of a hostile nature for a considerable time after, we had to go back to Natal without having made any purchases of cattle.

Having remained about three months at Natal, Mr. ———, a trader, asked permission of my father to allow me to go with him into the Zoolah country, as a companion; and having obtained it, we travelled as far as the Togala river, where we were met by Mabeyantee, Dingaan's principal messenger, who acquainted us that it was the king's orders that the English at Natal should arm themselves and come to him at Megoonloof, as he wished to send them against an enemy who had robbed him, but who had placed himself in such a situation that the king's troops were of no avail in capturing him, as spears could not be thrown by the hand to reach him, and fire-arms alone could be effectual.

Thomas Holstead, an Englishman, being at the place at the time, volunteered to carry Dingaan's message to the people of Port Natal, and immediately set off for that purpose.

When the residents at Port Natal were acquainted with Dingaan's orders, they made preparation for fulfilling them; and when they had mustered as many as they could bring together, their strength

consisted of about 30 English and residents, amongst whom were John Cane, (who commanded the party,) Thomas Holstead, Richard Wood, (my father,) Richard King, Robert Russell, Thomas Garden, Richard Lovedale, and Wm. Kew; also about 40 Zoolabs, all of whom were armed with guns.

John Broer and I waited for them at the Togala river, and when they arrived we joined company, and travelled until we came to the Mloote River, where we halted, and the rest proceeded on their journey to Megoonloof. We remained at the river until the king sent for us. As it may not be uninteresting to my readers to hear how this affair terminated, I shall, previously to closing this Narrative, give a true account of it.

We had been about a fortnight at the Mloote river, when a messenger arrived from Dingaan, who told us that the king wished to see us; we immediately set off, and after travelling for some days, arrived safely at Megoonloof.

On appearing before the king, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ presented him a pair of pocket pistols and a lamp. After he had minutely examined the pistols, he told me to load one of them with powder only, and to fire it off; which when I had done, he told me to load again with a ball, and to fire at a tree to which he pointed, and which was about a musket shot off; of course I obeyed him. Immediately after the pistol was discharged, he enquired if the ball had taken effect, and on my answering in the affirmative he exclaimed, "Yes, William's ball struck the tree, and I saw some of the leaves fall off;" and on his appealing to his chiefs for a confirmation of the assertion, they all cried out it was true, for they had seen what the king said he had seen.

Both pistols were then ordered to be loaded, and the king challenged me to try a shot with him at the same tree, saying that he whose ball first reached it should receive a cow from the loser. A signal being given, we both fired, and the king called aloud to his chiefs, "Did not my ball reach the tree first?" on which they unanimously exclaimed, "O yes; we saw your ball get there first; William's was a long time going." He then told me that he would not require the cow that I had lost, and requested me to load the pistols with ball, which I did, and he sent them by a servant to his house.

The next day he sent for us, and when we came to him, he gave Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ a present of 12 cows and 12 calves, and to me 4 cows and 5 calves. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ promised to bring him a great many things the next time he should come to see him; amongst these were a large and a small steam carriage, the latter to be in the form of a chair in which the king could ride by himself; he also promised the king a cloak bound with gold lace, and a brass cannon. He added that the

steam carriages were very heavy, and that he had no oxen to draw his wagon, therefore if the king wished to have them he must give him some oxen. On hearing this the king gave orders for 9 oxen to be given him. He then begged two good-sized elephants' teeth, to send to his mother as a present, which he also obtained. It need scarcely be observed that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ never had an intention of fulfilling his promise, and that he never did.

We then started for Natal, where, after a pleasant journey, we arrived; and Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ having disposed of the cattle and ivory which had been given him by Dingaan, prepared to visit him again; and having taken a stock of articles to trade with, amongst which were a number of elephant guns, he travelled to Megoonloof, and having gone boldly up to the king, told him it was utterly impossible for him to bring the articles which he had promised him, in consequence of the weakness of the few oxen which the king had given him; and that no fewer than twenty-two oxen were required to draw the wagon containing the steam carriage, &c. The king gave immediate orders for the required number to be delivered to him. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ remained a few days trading; sold his guns with a great profit; and departed — never to visit Dingaan again.

I did not accompany Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ on his last trip, but remained some time at Port Natal, and then went with John Broer to the Togala river, where he was engaged in hunting the sea-cow and the buffalo which frequent its banks.

When John Broer had hunted sufficiently long on the Togala, we proceeded as far as the Mloote river, where I remained about a fortnight; and my mother having arrived in search of me, we returned to Natal, and procured a stock of clothes, &c. I was informed by my mother that she had entered into an agreement with the Rev. Mr. Owen concerning me, in consequence of which I was to set off immediately for Megoonloof, and there act in the capacity of interpreter between the king and Mr. Owen.

As soon as arrangements had been made for my journey, two letters were given me, addressed to Dingaan, from the governor, and I commenced my journey.

Nothing worth mentioning occurred between my departure from Port Natal and my arrival at the king's kraal.

As soon as I arrived, I sent a messenger to the king to acquaint him with my arrival, and to state that I had letters for him; which when he heard, he ordered me to come immediately to him. I obeyed the summons; and on presenting him with the letter, he examined the writing of the address with, apparently, great attention, and then said, "Does not this writing say 'To King Dingaan?'" I said "yes." "You see," said he, "that I can read too."

From this time I remained fixed at Megoonloof.



As I kept no journal of the daily occurrences which took place at the king's kraal, I cannot remember every circumstance that happened during my stay; but I shall now proceed to mention several anecdotes of the Zoolah tyrant, whereby the public will be enabled to form a pretty correct opinion of his character.

Dingaan was an exceedingly robust, fat man; yet well-proportioned, and with regular features. He had a smiling countenance, and nothing at all forbidding in his appearance. He had an abhorrence to wearing hair on his head, and therefore caused it to be shaved every day; which operation was always performed by one of his wives, with an exceedingly sharp axe. His dress consisted of an English blanket, which he wore in a loose manner over his shoulders. He bathed regularly every morning; after which he caused himself to be anointed with fat; and having an aversion to exercise of any description, he spent most of the day sitting in an arm chair in front of his huts, within his kraal, where he used to converse with his captains, drink beer, look through a telescope, &c. He generally took a nap in the afternoon; and when it got dark retired into his hut where his wives were assembled, and seating himself on his mat, at a good distance from them, he occasionally joined in their songs and conversed with them. A substitute for candles was found in thin strips of lighted wood, which his servants held in their hand, and replaced from small bundles which they had with them. The king retired to rest at about 9 o'clock. He lay on his mat with no other covering than the blanket which he had worn during the day; his pillow being a small wooden stool.

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#### ANECDOTES, &c.

Passing one day through a village named "Kougala," Dingaan encountered some children who were at play, and observed one of them laugh as he went by. He supposed the child laughed at him, and apparently took very little notice of the circumstance at the time; but as soon as he arrived at his kraal, he sent a party to put the whole of these children to death, which was done accordingly.

An English trader having remained some time at a small kraal, or village, consisting of about 150 souls, took one of the Zoolah girls as his concubine, and, some time after his departure, she was delivered of a white child; of which circumstance Dingaan obtained information, and it so excited his anger, that he had the village surrounded and set on fire by his warriors; and when the wretched inhabitants endeavoured to escape, they were thrust back into the fire.



Dingaan had located about two thousand people on this side of the Togatla river, with the intention that they should act as a defence on the borders of his territory. These people derived a principal part of their subsistence from the flesh of the hippopotamus, or sea-cow; and were termed, by way of reproach, (as the Zoolahs generally would not on any account eat the flesh of that animal,) the Amapeace, or wolves. Having taken some dislike to the people of this border settlement, he formed the intention of destroying them, root and branch. He accordingly sent a large force against them, and the people being taken by surprise, he effected his purpose, with the exception that about 200 fled to Port Natal, and there formed themselves into a little village.

Two of the king's wives having had repeated quarrels with each other, were threatened with death in case they renewed their altercations; but a short peace only ensued, and they again commenced hostilities, even in the presence of the king; when he very coolly told them that they were incorrigible, and must die to end their disputes. He then ordered them away to be executed; and previously to being taken away they commenced scolding him, using the most opprobrious language, and telling him that it did not astonish them in the least to be sentenced to death, as it was the general fate of all his wives, and that a few days sooner or later made no difference to them. A stop was put to their scolding by the entrance of the executioners, who (as no persons are put to death in the king's presence, or even in his kraal) led them to the regular place of execution, where they were first struck on the head with sticks, and then impaled on stakes. A few days after the king was told that some of his dogs were then gnawing the bodies, on which he ordered the dogs to be killed.

Two of Dingaan's captains were conversing together, and one of them observed that he thought it hard that a captain was prohibited from wearing as good beads as the king. This observation was overheard by one of the king's servants, who immediately carried him information of it; and the king having called the captains before him, asked them if he was not the master; and if he could not do as he liked. The matter ended in the death of the captain who had so freely expressed his opinion.

The king having captured a quantity of cattle from Passilikats, had them kept in the vicinity of his kraal, where a sickness got amongst them, and great numbers died. Holding the opinion that almost every such disaster is the effect of witchcraft, he assembled the whole kraal, called his three doctors (or professors of witchcraft) before him, and having intimated to them that he believed some one had a spite against him, and bewitched his cattle, he commanded them to go amongst the crowd then assembled, and pick out

the man who had done so. The principal doctor having had a considerable dislike to a favorite captain of Dingaan, thought this a desirable opportunity to destroy him; he therefore went amongst the people with a very serious face, and kept turning his head from side to side, and smelling all that he passed until he came to the captain, whom he struck a pretty hard blow on the head with a stick which he had in his hand, and cried out, "This is the man!" The other two doctors went round in like manner, and, as might be expected, pronounced the same individual guilty. The king was much annoyed at this result, but as the doctors had proceeded on his own orders, he submitted to their decision, and had the captain executed. Having taken possession of his cattle, he sent each of the doctors a present of a few head, but at the same time formed the resolution of entrapping them and being an exceeding crafty man, he soon fixed upon a plan which effectually accomplished his ends. He suffered about a week to elapse, and then sent one of his servants to fetch him the skull of one of his own dogs, (the king's dogs being buried in a spot by themselves,) and having received it, he despatched the man to bring him two skulls of other dogs, which he did; Dingaan then summoned the whole kraal, and when they had assembled, he called for the three doctors, and informed them that he had considerable doubt as to the correctness of their decision in the case of the captain whom they had induced him to put to death, and asked them if they were still quite certain that it was the captain who had bewitched the cattle. They told him they were quite certain. "Well, then," said Dingaan, "as you can make such wonderful discoveries, no doubt you could discover whether the skull of a dog which I shall show you belonged to one of my dogs or to a common dog," they said "certainly." By his orders the doctors were then removed to some distance, and re-called one at a time to examine the skulls. Only one of them succeeded in guessing the right skull, and Dingaan showed him great favor, appointing him head doctor to the kraal, and bestowing upon him a considerable portion of the property of the other two, whom he caused to be removed immediately and executed. He appealed to his captains as to the justice of the sentence he had then pronounced, and they, of course fully agreed with him in the matter, as death would have been the result to any one who expressed a contrary opinion.

Dingaan had an unlimited number of wives. Every year his captains brought great numbers of the best looking girls they could find, when the king selected the handsomest, having them placed in the huts of his wives, and dismissing those he deemed ugly. His wives were not all living in his kraal, but were scattered about in different kraals. One of them, who lived near his mother, had a child which she endeavoured to preserve from destruction; and know-

-ing that all the king's children are put to death as soon as born, she prevailed upon Dingaan's mother to endeavour to secrete the infant, which she managed to do, and kept it a secret from the king for some time. He used often to come to her kraal, but his mother had always intimation of his approach, and conveyed the child away. It is likely, however, that some person gave him information of the circumstance, for he one day came to the kraal quite unexpectedly, and walked into the hut, where he found his mother with the child in her arms. He asked, "Whose child is that?" but she, being taken by surprise, gave him no answer; on which he repeated his question, and at length she answered, "It is your child." "Did I not tell you <sup>never</sup> to save any of my children?" said he; and immediately raised a sharp pointed stick which he had in his hand, and stabbed her mortally in the breast; he then went out of the hut, and ordered his attendants to fasten the door, and tell the people that his mother was sick, and that they must not enter. When he came to his own kraal, he sent some of his people to kill the child with its mother, and to bury his own mother.

The king once gave orders that three alligators should be taken alive and brought to him. His orders were immediately executed, at the expense of some lives; for the people having to go into the river and bring them out, the animals wounded numbers of them and killed several, before they succeeded in securing them. When brought to Dingaan, he just looked at them and said, "They are ugly beasts, let them go." When loosed, they ran off, and plunged into a stream that runs at one side of the king's kraal.

On another occasion, he gave orders that an elephant should be hunted up to his kraal, that he might see him in his wild state; this order was complied with, also at the expense of some lives, several of the people having been trampled upon in the course of the hunt. When he had satisfied his curiosity, he told them to kill it.

Dingaan had his cattle divided, according to their colour, into herds, one of which was kept at the kraal of a captain, named Tonguns. One of the herdsmen at this kraal stole a piece of a hide belonging to the king, and made a shield of it; but the colour of the hide being recognised, Dingaan obtained information of the theft, and caused the chief, with all his people to be put to death.

John Cane being present when a woman was fastened to a stake, previously to execution, the king said to him, "Take this assegai, and thrust it into the woman's breast, and you will see how curiously she will turn her eyes." Cane, willing to save the woman, begged Dingaan to give her to him, and he would be responsible for her future good behaviour. The king at first refused, but at length granted his request, and she obtained her liberty. Strange to say,

the same woman, some time after, came to the wagon of her deliverer, and was detected in the act of stealing an ox's head.

The following is an account of the commando from Port Natal, which went against Sapooza, at the command of Dingaan as referred to in page 5 :-

When the inhabitants of Port Natal received the king's orders to come and assist him to capture Sapooza, a chief who had captured a great quantity of cattle from him, the commando set off immediately. It consisted of about 30 English and about 40 Zoolahs, all armed with guns. Having arrived at a small hill which rises at the back of Dingaan's kraal, they fired a salute, upon which the king was greatly alarmed, and sent a messenger to ask them what they meant by firing. They said, it was customary for all kings and great men to receive such tokens of respect from those who carried arms. This answer dissipated the king's fears, and he sent them an invitation to come into his kraal and refresh themselves, which they did. Next day, they started in search of the enemy, reinforced by a large body of Dingaan's troops, commanded by Inlellah. Having travelled some days, they arrived in the vicinity of the Umpongoolah mountains, where a party of Sapooza's people were posted; and, lest these should discover that Inlellah had Europeans with him, they covered the English with their shields while ascending the mountain.

Sapooza's people had taken up a very good position on the top of a hill, immediately over and commanding the entrance to a natural cavern, in which they had placed the cattle they had captured from Dingaan; by rolling down large stones they had for some days prevented the approach of a party of Dingaan's troops, who had before attempted to recapture the cattle.

The nearest approach which could be made to them with safety, was by ascending a small hill opposite. This the party did, and found themselves separated from Sapooza's people by a deep gulph, at the bottom of which ran the Umpongoolah river. As they were within speaking distance, John Cane, who commanded the Europeans, spoke to them, and told them to deliver up the cattle which they had taken from the king, or he would fire upon them; adding, that it was useless for them to resist, for that Dingaan himself had taken the trouble to come so far to get his cattle, and was determined to have them.

On hearing this Sapooza's people made no answer, but turned their backs to them in token of contempt. John Cane's party then fired a volley over their heads, and he again begged of them to agree to his demand, and told them that if they delivered up the cattle he would allow them and their wives and children who were with them to depart unharmed.. They still returned no answer, and

he then fired at them, and shot three or four. Cane repeated his demand, but they treated him in the same manner, upon which his party again fired, and shot some more of them. A Zoolah woman was then seen to approach the brink of the precipice, leading a boy of about 12 or 13 years of age by the hand, and having an infant fastened on her back; looking towards the Europeans, she cried out, "I will not be killed by the thunder, but will kill myself;" saying which she pushed the boy over the precipice, and jumped after him herself.

The firing still continued, until the party cried out for mercy, and promised to give up the cattle, which John Cane sent a number of them round to receive. He then distributed a few head amongst them, and commenced his journey to Megoonloof (Dingaan's kraal). On the way he met with an old Zoolah woman, to whom he gave a few sheep, which some of Dingaan's men seeing, they lagged behind, with the intention of killing her to become possessed of them; but this Cane prevented by ordering the men forward, and closely watching them.

When the party had arrived at the king's, and John Cane had delivered up the cattle, Dingaan formed the resolution of destroying the party; that he might become possessed of their arms, and avoid the necessity of remunerating them. Having made known his intention to his captains, preparations were made accordingly. A large number of men were placed in readiness and Dingaan sent a message to John Cane to bring all his people before him, and fire a salute for him; but John Cane, knowing the man he had to deal with, gave proper orders to his men, and then they came before Dingaan.

Having drawn up in a line, and the word being given to fire, only one man fired, and he commenced loading again; then the next man fired, and so on; each man had also, according to Cane's directions, taken the precaution to hold a cartridge by the bullet-end between his teeth. When Dingaan perceived them to be on their guard he affected to be displeased, and told them that was not what he wanted, but that he wished them to fire all together. John Cane told him, however, that salutes were always fired in this manner, and that the English people could thus always keep up a constant fire. Dingaan gave each man only three head of cattle, notwithstanding their having performed such services, and travelled such a distance for him. It need scarcely be observed that the party were not at ease until they found themselves on the road to Natal, where they arrived safely in four or five days.

The form of Dingaan's kraal was a circle; it was strongly fenced with bushes, and had two entrances. The principal one faced the king's huts, which were placed at the farthest extremity of the

kraal, behind which were his wives' huts. On the right hand side of the principal entrance, were placed the huts of Inlellah (Dingaan's captain) and his warriors; and on the left, those of Lamboosa (another of his captains) with his men. The kraal contained four cattle kraals which were also strongly fenced, and four huts erected on poles which contained the arms of the troops. At a short distance from the entrance was the trunk of a large tree which was in a state of decay, and which no person was allowed to touch, being the tree under which Dingaan's father died, and which he valued very highly. Near this tree grew two other trees, which are called by the Zoolahs milk trees. The other entrance was from that part of the kraal behind Dingaan's wives' huts; and this was considered private.

There is a small hill, called "Kloma Amaboota," which is situated very near the king's kraal; it is exceedingly barren, being covered with loose stones, and here and there a few stunted bushes. On this hill criminals were executed; and in consequence of the bodies of all criminals being left there to decay above ground, it was the constant place of resort for vultures, which used to congregate there in great numbers, and were unmolested, as the king threatened death to any person who should kill one. Whenever he perceived that those birds in any considerable number left the hill, it was his constant observation, "The birds want food, send for the doctors." When they arrived they were always asked who was the last to goate, or witch, and they immediately fixed upon some one, who was at once taken to Kloma Amaboota, beaten to death with sticks, and left as a repast for the birds of prey.

There were several pathways leading across this hill, and it was the custom of every person who came to a spot where one path crossed another to throw a stone on that place, as they thought an omission of this practice would subject them to bad luck; and it is astonishing to see what immense heaps of stones have thus been collected. For several years human bones lay scattered all over the hill, until Dingaan gave orders that they should be gathered into heaps, where they remain to this day.

The huts in which the Rev. Mr. Owen and myself resided, were without the kraal, and facing this hill which had been the grave of thousands.

About sixty farmers, at the head of whom was Mr. Peter Retief accompanied by forty of their servants, all well armed, with the intention of convincing Dingaan that they meant him no harm, attacked a chief who was an enemy of the king, and defeated him, taking from him about seven thousand head of cattle, which he had captured from him on a former occasion. With these cattle they approached the kraal of Dingaan, to whom they delivered them; and, at the same time,



expressed their earnest desire that peace might exist between the king and the emigrant farmers, whom they now represented.

Dingaan gladly received the cattle, but his attention was arrested by 60 horses and 11 guns which the farmers had taken from the enemy, and he told them he must also have them. Retief, however, told him he could not comply with this demand, as the cattle were his property, but not the guns and horses. With this Dingaan appeared satisfied; and, shortly after, told them that the cattle should likewise be theirs, promising them also a piece of land extending from the Togala to the Wisenwoobo. Retief accepted his offers; and a treaty was signed between Dingaan on the one hand and the emigrant farmers on the other.

The farmers had been at Tegoonloof about two days, during which they walked about the kraal unarmed, but had taken the precaution of placing their arms under the protection of their servants or after-riders, who had taken up their quarter under the two milk trees without the kraal. On the morning of the third day, I perceived from Dingaan's manner that he intended some mischief; although from his conversation with his captains, I could not perceive that he had given them any orders prejudicial to the farmers; I, however, watched my opportunity to warn them to be on their guard. This occurred when some of the farmers strolled into the kraal, and having come near the place where I was standing, I told them I did not think all was right, and recommended them to be on their guard; upon which they smiled and said, "We are sure the king's heart is right with us, and there is no cause for fear."

A short time after this, Dingaan came out of his hut, and having seated himself in front of it, in his arm chair, ordered out two regiments, one was called the Umklanga Umklopa, or white shields, and the other the Umklanga Umyana, or black shields; the former were his best men, and wore rings on their heads, formed of the bark of a tree, and stitched through the scalp; and the latter regiment was composed entirely of young men. These troops he caused to form in a circle, and having placed his two principal captains on his right and left hand, respectively, he sent a message to Retief, inviting him to bring his men, and wish the king farewell, previously to starting. Retief, a short time after this, entered the kraal, accompanied by the other farmers, and all their servants, with the exception of one or two who were sent out to fetch the horses; their arms being left unguarded under the two milk trees without the kraal.

On Retief approaching Dingaan, the latter told him to acquaint the farmers at Natal, as soon as he arrived there, of the king's desire that they should soon come and possess the land he had given them, also to remember him to them. He then wished the party an agreeable journey to Natal and invited them to sit down and drink some chuallah



with him, and his people, which invitation they unfortunately accepted.

Retief sat by the king; but the farmers and their servants sat in a place by themselves, at a short distance from the king and his captains. After drinking some beer together, Dingaan ordered his troops to amuse the farmers by dancing and singing, which they immediately commenced doing. The farmers had not been sitting longer than a quarter of an hour when Dingaan called out, "Seize them!" upon which an overwhelming rush was made upon the party before they could get on their feet. Thomas Halstead then cried out, "We are done for!" and added, in the Zoolah language "Let me speak to the king!" which Dingaan heard, but motioned them away with his hand. Halstead then drew his knife and ripped up one Zoolah, and cut another's throat before he was secured; and a farmer also succeeded in ripping up another Zoolah.

The farmers were then dragged, with their feet trailing along the ground, each man being held by as many Zoolahs as could get to him, from the presence of Dingaan, who still continued sitting and calling out, "Blala ma tagate!" or, "Kill the wizards!" He then said, "Take the heart and the liver of the king of the farmers, and place them in the road of the farmers." When they had dragged them to the hill Kloma Amaboota, they commenced the work of death by striking them on the head with knobbed sticks; Retief being held and forced to witness the deaths of his comrades before they despatched him. It was a most awful occurrence, and will never be effaced from my memory. The Rev. Mr. Owen and myself witnessed it, standing at the doors of our huts, which faced the place of execution.

Retief's heart and liver were taken out, wrapped in a piece of cloth, and brought to Dingaan. His two captains, Inlellah and Tamboozza, then came and sat down by Dingaan, with whom they conversed for some time. About two hours after the massacre, orders were issued that a large party were to set off with all speed, and attack the wagons that contained the wives and children of the murdered farmers, which were at a considerable distance from Megoonloof as Retief and his party had left them there, not wishing to bring their families into any danger.

A large body of men were immediately in readiness, and the captains previously to starting, approached Dingaan singly, and made a mock attack on him, thrusting their shields and then their spears close to his face, and going through a variety of movements. At the same time giving him various titles and praising him, as all his people who approach him must do, and occasionally calling out, "We will go and kill the white dogs!" A short time afterwards the party set off with great speed in the direction of the wagons. The result of that attack is well known; — the farmers who were guarding the wagons

were taken by surprise, when many of them fell, and some hundreds of women and children were inhumanly murdered; but not without retribution, as a great number of the enemy were slain, and the remainder obliged to retreat with precipitation.

After the murder of the farmers, Dingaan sent a messenger, named Goomboo, to the Rev. Mr. Owen and me, to tell us not to fear, as no harm should happen to us; informing us at the same time that the farmers were togates or wizards, and that that was the king's motive for killing them. Mr. Owen told me to tell him that he had nothing at all to do with the transaction, and could not help what had transpired. He then turned round and walked off. Knowing Dingaan's jealous and treacherous disposition, I did not give the messenger the answer of Mr. Owen, feeling assured that it would have caused our deaths; but I told Goomboo to tell the king, that we considered he had acted perfectly right in killing the farmers, as no doubt they would otherwise have killed us as well as him and his people.

This answer pleased the king, and he sent us a present of an ox. Not long after, we saw between 50 and 60 men approaching the house, and it need scarcely be observed that this circumstance caused us not a little fear. When they came up to the hut, they acquainted us that Dingaan wished to see us, and repeated the promise of the king that no injury would happen to us. We went immediately to him, and his first question was, "Are you afraid?" upon which I said that the opinion which we had formed of the king left no room for fear. He then laughed, and said that we had acted as we should do. He then asked, "Do you wish to return to Natal?" but we answered "No." He then dismissed us to our huts.

The next day we waited on the king, when Mr. Owen asked permission to go to Natal, but was refused. A messenger came, however, the same afternoon, bringing the king's permission for us to depart, but not to take our cattle or servants with us. On the following day he informed us that we might take both.

We remained four days longer, without making any arrangements for our journey, in order to show Dingaan that we did not expect any violence from him, and were therefore free from fear on that account, and not over anxious to leave his kraal. Mr. Owen, who had two wagons then commenced packing up his things; but in the midst of his work was interrupted by the arrival of a messenger from Dingaan, who told him that he must leave the best wagon, together with his cattle and servants, behind, to which orders Mr. Owen thought fit to submit; and, everything being in readiness, we went and bade the king farewell, when he shook hands with us, and wished us a pleasant journey. I must here observe that Dingaan was averse to my going, and told me that during the time I had been with him I had received nothing but kindness; that I had been allowed to do as I liked; that he had given me

a herd of cattle, and a number of boys as companions; and he then asked why I wished to go away from him, telling me at the same time I could just do as I liked, but he would much rather that I should stay. I told him, that having seen the farmers killed, I was so filled with fear, that now I could not be happy any longer, and wished much to go to my father at Natal. "Well," said he, "I am sorry you are going; but if you are not happy, I will not detain you."

A small party of Zoolahs was sent with us to drive the wagon, and take care of the oxen; and a messenger was sent before us to the different villages through which our journey lay, with orders that we should be supplied with everything we needed; and that every assistance we might require should be granted to us.

When we had got about four miles from Megoonloof, Dingaan sent a messenger to Mr. Owen that he should come to him, and immediately afterwards another came, and said we might proceed. Having continued our journey to Natal, and not meeting with any further interruption, we rested for two days at one of the missionary stations, and then resumed our journey, being sharply watched by two spies whom we supposed Dingaan had sent after us. We rested at several villages on our way, where we were treated with great kindness; and in due time arrived safely at Port Natal, where we found the news of the massacre had preceded us, and active measures were being taken for the defence of the place against any attack which Dingaan might meditate against it.

A fortnight after our arrival, the English at Port Natal came to the determination of attacking Dingaan, and revenging the deaths of Thomas Halstead and George Biggars, who had formed part of Retief's party, and who were their particular friends; and for this purpose immediate preparations were made accordingly.

When they were ready to start, they numbered their forces, which consisted of about 30 Europeans, a few Hottentots, and 1,500 Zoolahs. The latter had fled from Dingaan at different times, and had settled at Port Natal; therefore the Natal people could depend upon their doing their best, as they well knew what awaited them if they should fall into Dingaan's hands. The Europeans, Hottentots, and about 200 of the Zoolahs had guns, but the other Zoolahs had only their country arms. Previously to starting the Zoolahs danced, sang, and went through a variety of manoeuvres, boasting of what they intended to do with their enemies. One of their songs was something in this style :-  
 "We are now going to kill the elephant who killed our forefathers, fathers, mothers, wives, and children, and who deprived us of our cattle. Now we are going to kill him and eat his cattle, and if we catch him we will cut him in pieces."

The following persons formed part of this commando :-  
 Robt. Biggars, who was the leader of this expedition; Thos. Carden,  
 Wm. Bottomy, Rich. King, John Cane, Rich. Duffy, Robt. Russell,  
 Rich. Wood (my father), Wm. Wood (my uncle), and Messrs. Blankenberg  
 and Lovedale.

Having started from Port Natal, they travelled cautiously into Dingaan's country, in the direction of Nagoonloof, and had been only four days on their journey when they fell in with a party of Zoolahs, having about seven thousand head of cattle. On seeing the party, the Zoolahs fled, and left the cattle in the hands of the English; who then returned to Port Natal, where the cattle were distributed amongst the captors.

It appeared that, during their absence, the Zoolahs whom they had left at Natal to protect their property, etc., had taken prisoner a Zoolah spy. He had appeared amongst them dressed in farmers' clothes; and upon their questioning him, told them he had come from Graham's Town; but unfortunately for him, he was recognised by one of the people as one of Dingaan's best spies, and therefore they proceeded to put him to death. When he found that there was no chance of escape, he confessed he was what they had pronounced him to be, and said, "I have deserved death long ago; for I have been the cause of the destruction of great numbers of people. It will not be long before you will have Dingaan amongst you." When Robt. Biggars' party had arrived with the cattle, the above was the information which they received from the Natal Zoolahs of what had transpired during their absence; and the reason they gave for not keeping the spy until the party was, that they were afraid the English would save his life, and they thought it better to be rid of such a dangerous subject.

Some eight or ten days had elapsed when the same commando again started from Port Natal, in search of Dingaan, and proceeded as far as the Mavootie river, without meeting with any opposition. Having crossed this river, they ascended a hill on the other side, and from thence discovered a party of about 150 men on the brow of a hill further on; on which three spies were dispatched to reconnoitre. Those spies having stolen upon them, fired a few shots, which, apparently, so alarmed them, that they fled, leaving their food on their fires, and a few assegais and shields which they had dropped in their haste to escape.

The spies having returned, a stronger party was sent to watch the enemy, and came up with them in the ruined huts of the Amapiece, on this side of the Togala river. On firing amongst them, the enemy fled, as on the former occasion, and the spies returned to the main body, who were advancing.

When they had arrived at the Togala river, they sent forward some spies, who soon returned with the information that they had observed

the same party of Zoolahs who had fled from them twice before, lying asleep in the village of a captain named Zooloo.

It being late in the evening, the party did not cross the river until the next morning, when they advanced upon the above-named village, where they found the Zoolahs mentioned by the spies, and, commencing an attack upon them, they immediately fled. Biggars had taken one of them prisoner, and was in the act of questioning him, when he observed large bodies of Zoolahs closing him in, and found retreat was impossible. In a short time the battle commenced, and the English had succeeded in driving them off three times in succession, when another large body of Zoolahs was seen advancing on their rear. It was then a step was taken by the leader of the party, which involved the whole in ruin; for he divided his force, and sent part of it to oppose this body that was advancing; which induced the enemy to make a desperate rush, by which they succeeded in getting between the divisions, and destroying the whole party, with the exception of four Englishmen, and about five hundred Zoolahs, who succeeded in making their escape to Port Natal.

There were two of the Natal Zoolahs who, when they saw the imminent danger in which they were placed, threw themselves upon the slair and counterfeited death. One was quite a young man, and the other of a more advanced age. In this situation they heard a spy of Dingaan's, who had arrived when the battle was over, say to the captains, "The farmers are approaching from that mountain," and their reply was, "What is the use of going up to them? the white dogs have nearly killed us all, and if we go to the other dogs they will finish us." The dead and wounded were then examined; and some of the enemy coming near the spot where the two men were lying, one of them said, "some of those are not dead, let us cut them open," upon which the young man sprung up, and was immediately killed, but the other lay still and escaped to tell the story.

When we who were at Port Natal received intelligence of this shocking occurrence, we kept a sharp look-out, and had our spies on every hill, one of which at length brought us information of the near approach of a large body of Dingaan's men, who seemed to take their time, and did not travel quickly. When the spy had left, they had lit their fires, and it appeared had encamped for the night on the banks of the Umgani river.

Providentially, the "Comet," brig, Capt. Rodham, was then lying in Natal Bay, within the bar; and on board of that vessel all the Europeans got that evening; leaving the Natal Zoolahs, many of whom had guns, to make for themselves the best shift they could. The following are amongst those who got on board the brig :-

The Rev. Mr. Owen, Mrs. Owen, and Miss Owen; Mrs. Champion, Mrs.

Adams, Rev. Mr. Grout, Dr. Adams, Capt. Gardiner, Rev. Mr. Champion, Mrs. Rodham, Mr. Biggars, sen., Mrs. Gardiner, Dr. and Mrs. Towie and child, Chas. Adams, Jane Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Dunn and children, Mr. and Mrs. Miller, Mr. and Mrs. Pitman, Mr. and Mrs. Heyward and children, Mr. and Mrs. Hull and children, Mrs. Wood (my mother) Mr. Rich. King, Mr. Ogle, George Duffy, Jas. Brown, and myself.

The next morning, several of us went towards the shore in a boat, and perceived that the Zoolahs were occupying Natal. Having approached very near the shore, one of the captains called out to us and said, "We have killed the principal people of Natal, and now we only want Mr. Ogle." Upon which Mr. Ogle, who was in the boat, stood up, and said, "Do you want me?" and on being answered in the affirmative, he replied, "Then you shan't get me." The same captain then, addressing me, said, "Who are you?" "Do you not know William," said I, "who was so long with the king?" "Yes," he replied, "come here, I want to speak to you." To which I answered, "I am not quite such a fool as that yet." We then rowed back to the ship.

The Zoolahs kept possession of the place for nine days; and then returned to Dingaan, after having destroyed everything that came in their way. Some of our party having landed, sent out spies, and found that the enemy had left the place in earnest. Only eight or nine of us remained at Port Natal; and others thinking fit to proceed with the "Comet" to Delagoa Bay, whither she was bound, and from thence to the Cape in the same vessel.

When we landed, we discovered that our Zoolahs had shot numbers of the enemy. Two we found lying dead, dressed in my mother's gowns, with full sleeves, and in stockings, without shoes. Others had shawls on; some had blankets; others sheets rolled round them; while some had ladies' waist-bands tied round their heads, &c. &c. Sundry articles of provision, such as flour, coffee, sugar, fat, and plums, were taken from Mr. Ogle's house, and thrown on the ground, into which they had poured a keg of French brandy, and having stamped it well with their feet, left it for him.

We remained but a fortnight longer at Natal, and then my mother and I left it in company with Mr. and Mrs. Edwards and family, for Graham's Town; and in consequence of Mr. Edwards having but one wagon, and that being filled with the remains of the property, we had all to travel on foot, Mrs. Edwards and my mother having each to carry one of Mrs. Edward's children, who were too young to walk. Having endured innumerable privations, and excessive fatigue, we at length arrived at King William's Town, where Mr. Edwards and family remained, and where my mother procured a wagon to carry us to Graham's Town, at which place we arrived safely, after having been four months on the road from Natal.

Sir George Napier being in Graham's Town, when we arrived, we waited on him, and having had some conversation with him, he present-



ed us with £5.

Having remained but a short time at Graham's Town, we proceeded to Algoa Bay; and from thence, in the "Comet" to Cape Town.

I shall now mention a few particulars with reference to the Zoolahs, which may not be uninteresting to my readers.

The following method is universally adopted amongst them in order to ascertain if there are any alligators in a river, at a point where they intend to cross over; and to remove them if there :-

When a party arrive at a drift which they wish to cross, their first care is to procure as large a calabash as they can find; and having filled up every crack and aperture, they throw it with violence into the stream, which causes any alligators that may be in the river to raise their heads, in order to ascertain what has caused the splash; and on discovering the calabash they make for it, most likely taking it for the body of a dog, or some other small animal, and pursue it down the stream, vainly endeavouring to seize it in their jaws, as it, being round, eludes their bite. When they have pursued it to some distance, the Zoolahs embrace the opportunity of crossing the river.

Many people have lost their lives in crossing rivers, by these animals.

On one occasion, a Zoolah was engaged working, on a very hot day, in his garden, which was situated on the banks of a river, finding himself much oppressed by heat, he walked into the river to refresh himself, and did not perceive an alligator which was near at hand, among some reeds, but which soon made him aware of its presence by seizing his arm, and dragging him farther into the stream. The alligator swam, with his arm in its mouth, to the opposite bank; the man making no resistance, as he knew he could not draw his arm away from the animal; but immediately on its getting amongst the reeds which grew by the side of the bank, he broke off one with the hand he had at liberty, and thrust it into the animal's mouth, through the space between the teeth formed by his arm. When the point of the reed got into the alligator's throat, it let go the arm, and endeavoured, by walking backwards, to get out the source of annoyance; which gave the Zoolah time to effect his escape.

All persons who approached Dingaan were obliged to give him various titles, and flatter him. The following are a few of the common expressions which were made use of in approaching him :-

"You are great. You are great as the mountains. You are white. You are as great as the skies. You are a lion. You are as strong as God. You are as large as an elephant. You are not afraid at the firing of a gun. You rule all the nations. You rule the English white people."



The Zoolahs attribute almost all evils to witch-craft; consequently, when one of them dies, some person is fixed upon by the doctors as having occasioned the death of the individual, and permission is granted by the king to have the person killed. Executions are thus of constant occurrence. The Rev. Mr. Owen and myself kept an account of those whom we saw put to death, and the number was, on an average, fourteen per week. This only refers to Dingaan's kraal.

When a Zoolah under the rank of captain dies, his nearest relative lays hold of the body by an arm or leg, and drags it to some distance without the kraal, into the bush, where it is left as a prey to the wolves or tigers. When a woman dies, leaving a very young child, the latter is taken and placed on one of the hills, under a bush, where it is left to perish; often becoming a prey to the vultures while yet alive.

When a captain dies, he is wrapped in his kaross; and a grave being dug, he is placed in it in a sitting posture.

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