

Book Reviews and Notices

GUARDIAN OF THE LIGHT: TRIBUTES TO ARCHBISHOP DENIS HURLEY OMI ON THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF HIS PRIESTLY ORDINATION 1939–1989.

Durban, Archdiocese of Durban, 1989. R6,00.

Guardian of the Light is an 80-page book, accurately, elegantly but modestly produced by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Durban. (The title phrase comes from a tribute to Archbishop Hurley paid by Alan Paton in 1985.) The book opens with messages of congratulation and appreciation from Pope John Paul II, from the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference and from the South African Council of Churches. The main body of the work consists of accounts of various aspects of Archbishop Hurley's life and work by Desmond Fisher, the former editor of the British *Catholic Herald*, by Monsignor Paul Nadal, Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Durban, by Cardinal Owen McCann, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, by Frederick Amooore, retired Anglican Bishop of Bloemfontein, by Dr Beyers Naudé, the well-known former Director of the Christian Institute and General Secretary of the SACC, and by Paddy Kearney, the Director of Diakonia in Durban.

The book succeeds admirably in what it sets out to do. It pays tribute to an extremely distinguished member of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and — through the mosaic of the six main chapters — it offers an informative and appreciative picture of the main features of his life, of his clear and often original thinking, and of his remarkably wide range of creative, generous and forward-looking activities and initiatives. Denis Hurley's distinction lies in the intelligence, energy and spirituality with which he has approached both the ugly challenge of apartheid and of the white group mentality which has accompanied it, and also (the two subjects overlap to some extent) the unfolding problems and opportunities offered by the communal life of the Catholic Church and of Christianity more generally within South Africa and in the world at large. The great Vatican Council called by Pope John XXIII not only excited and inspired Denis Hurley, but also provided the opportunity for him to be seen as one of the outstanding Catholic bishops of the world. (Incidentally, apart from the distinction that he has earned, his episcopate stands out in other ways: when he became a bishop in 1947 at the age of 31, he was the youngest Catholic bishop in the world, and now he is the world's longest serving bishop.) For all his ecclesiastical status and prestige, one must add, he is known, liked and admired by many people who are members of other faiths or of no faith: with his easy manner, his broad sympathies and his intellectual sharpness, he is in some respects the least churchy of churchmen.

One's final assessment of *Guardian of the Light*, however, has to be a somewhat ambivalent one. The little book is so effective in giving a sense of Denis Hurley's life and work that it whets one's appetite for more than it has attempted to offer — for a distinctly more probing, intimate and analytical study. For Denis Hurley, humble as he is personally, emerges in the end as too big for his book. The volume, as I have said, is handsome and modest, as befits a dedicated and unshowy servant of God. But what we need is a major biography of the kind that Alan Paton produced for Archbishop Clayton or that Colleen Ryan has just done for Denis Hurley's friend and Christian comrade, Beyers Naudé.

Denis Hurley is one of the great Natalians. He seems to belong in the company of those people who have lived in this part of the country and whose example and work will live on as an inspiration to future generations: Bishop Colenso, Mahatma Gandhi, John Dube, Albert Luthuli, Alan Paton. (In offering this list I don't wish to underestimate the importance of the many less well-known and perhaps less privileged people who have been and are influential in numerous ways.) Again and again one is struck — in reading about Denis Hurley, in reading what he has written, in meeting him — by the *size* of the man. (The fact that he is physically tall provides a useful metaphor; the outward and the inward don't usually go together so poetically.) And his human and spiritual size is manifested not merely and, perhaps not mainly, in the magnitude of his achievements — in the rich impact that he has had in the Catholic Church and on the ecumenical and the secular scenes — but also in the weightiness of his mental struggles, of his philosophical, socio-political and theological explorations. In all this he is in some ways reminiscent of Natal's other great ecclesiastic, John William Colenso (whose life has been boldly probed by Jeff Guy in his book *The Heretic*.)

Denis Hurley has worked hard at discerning and deciding what directions South African society should take, what directions the Church should take (not only in its social thinking and acting but also in religious education, in the training of priests and in the liturgy — all topics upon which he has done important work). But for him one of the great problems has been how to persuade and change people, how to move and lead them away from the positions in which they have become entrenched by the fierce pressures exercised by upbringing and by their immediate community:

The community instinct is probably the strongest one in human nature. People can be induced to do practically anything for their community, especially their ethnic community. An ethnic community and particularly one with a religious dimension is a very tough proposition indeed, as witness the dominant group in Northern Ireland and Iran and to a certain extent the Afrikaner nation. Here you have a complex of social attitudes held together by two of mankind's deepest and most powerful bonds. It is not easy for the individual to step out of that tangle of steel wires and look at his society through other eyes. (p. 66)

This statement, quoted by Paddy Kearney, makes clear Hurley's awareness that often religious commitment, so far from accelerating movement, contributes to the fixedness, the fixation What makes people change? How can white South Africans be made to recognize the un wisdom of their traditional ways? How can the Catholic Church in South Africa translate its pastoral letters (so often in the past inspired if not actually written by Denis

Hurley) into the practice of people's hearts and lives?

In recent years the thinking of some people has moved to a greater or lesser extent in the direction of a materialist interpretation. Such people now stress the importance of material realities, of the physical and psychological conditions in which individuals live, on their capacity for thought and decision-making. In his chapter of this book Beyers Naudé tells us that the Archbishop would sometimes ask him if a certain recent event was an indication of a possible change in DRC thinking. Naudé confesses that he usually had to say no. He adds this:

I also emphasised that although the churches' primary task was to stress the moral incentive of justice and love for all, the change in the Afrikaners' thinking would in all probability only come when apartheid was seriously affecting the economic interest of the rank and file of the Afrikaner people. (p. 44)

The passage that I quoted earlier suggests that Hurley's thinking had been moving in this way too. Paul Nadal tells us:

As a priest and more especially as a bishop and leader of the Christian community, he has time and time again appealed to Christian conscience. Only late in life has he found out that in matters of social life and politics, it is not conscience that counts. It is power, and power is not the Church's field! (p. 34)

Albie Sachs, one of the ANC's constitutional experts, said some months ago that as a means of altering the status quo Nelson Mandela's smile was worth more than a thousand AK-47 rifles. Perhaps that smile has also been more immediately effective than ten episcopal pastoral letters What does this mean? That the pastoral letters were a waste of time? That many of Archbishop Hurley's thoughts and teachings and actions have been unnecessary? Not at all, surely. Nothing happens in a vacuum. White people's ability to react to change, to new circumstances when they are thrust upon them, depends to a large extent on what they have heard, how they have been prepared. One could perhaps say that often political events precipitate change, but that mental, psychological and spiritual realities determine how change will be accepted, understood, consolidated. And what has often looked like failure in Denis Hurley's wrestling with the problems of intransigence and conversion — his at times almost tragic sense of the human inability to achieve freedom from societal pressures — could perhaps turn out in the end to be the beginning of a certain success. For most people change, conversion, needs a combination of political and inward events. In South Africa until very recently the political events have always tended to march in the wrong direction. Now perhaps, in 1990, a certain integration and integrity may be able to be achieved. And the work and struggle of Denis Hurley — and of Beyers Naudé, Desmond Tutu and many others — will be seen to have been worthwhile and fruitful.

I have suggested that Hurley's greatness lies in the ways in which he has confronted the phenomenon of apartheid. But of course there are many other ways in which he has expanded his immense stores of intellectual and spiritual energy. He has developed over the years a powerful vision of transcendence: the world, all of nature — he now feels — is destined not to be destroyed (as in the older theology) but to be transfigured. Some of the implications of this

vision — which has much in common of course with the ideas of many progressive Christian thinkers — have been spelled out in sermons, speeches, papers and graduation addresses. (He has received, incidentally, eight honorary degrees, two of them from the Universities of Natal and Cape Town, most of the rest from universities in the USA.)

Another feature of Denis Hurley's make-up is the restlessness of his thinking, his tendency to criticize some aspects of his previous views and to attempt again and again a clearer, more imaginative, more theologically satisfying, more thoroughly honest interpretation of human beings, society and the universe. This restlessness goes hand-in-hand with his personal qualities: his openness, his humility and his disarming tendency to be self-critical (for example, his belief that he is too reserved in human relationships). Yet all these varied elements exist within an overall steadiness, a general consistency of demeanour, a wisdom and alertness and good-humoured patience, which mean that, for all the inward agonies and excitements, he has managed always to remain the pastor, the bishop, the guide of people and the guardian of the light.

The news that he will retire in 1991 is sad indeed. But we trust that not only his life but some of the important aspects of his work will continue.

Perhaps I might conclude with a further quotation from Beyers Naudé:

Now that I look back on this period, knowing something of the ecumenical involvement of this man of God and of his sacrifice of time, energy, love and concern for all the people of South Africa and especially his longing that the Christian Church be obedient to God in its witness for justice and peace, I become more convinced than ever that Archbishop Hurley has laid the foundation for an ecumenical relationship in our country, the eventual positive effect of which will only be seen and experienced after his death.

Here is a man of God who, out of deep love for Christ and concern for all Christ's creatures, has constantly called on the Church to give expression to this love and concern. This has made an indelible impression not only on the priests and members of his own church, but on all Christians who during his long period of ministry have come to know him and to appreciate his leadership, his vision and his humanity. (p. 45)

COLIN GARDNER

AN UNOFFICIAL WAR: INSIDE THE CONFLICT IN PIETERMARITZBURG

by MATTHEW KENTRIDGE

Cape Town, David Philip, 1990. 244 pp. R29.95.

An Unofficial War is the first book to be published which deals exclusively with the conflict in the greater Pietermaritzburg region. This being so, it can expect to find a market among those seeking to understand the nature of the conflict. However, it is not a definitive text, either in terms of attempts to explain the origins of the conflict, or in terms of a synthesis of others' efforts to do so. It is an impressionistic narrative which provides the reader with some

vivid images of the conflict itself, and of some of the social and political dynamics at work.

The blurb on the back cover claims that the book is 'highly readable'. Kentridge has clear literary abilities. His descriptions are vivid and entertaining, and his comments often reveal perceptive insights about situations and the people he chooses as his subjects. However, this is not a rigorous academic study, and it was not intended as one. Its intention was to provide a study of the Pietermaritzburg conflict for a non-specialized audience. In this, it succeeds.

The narrative is made up of a stream of descriptions and anecdotes which centre on the author's travels through the strife-torn areas of the Natal midlands. Sometimes these derive from interviews he himself conducted, sometimes from dramatic and very vivid reconstructions of events from secondary source material.

His evidence is drawn from an impressive range of affidavits, newspapers, academic articles, as well as from interviews which include Inkatha members and officials, as well as the ex-chief of the Pietermaritzburg security police, Jacques Buchner. In terms of his diverse use of sources, and the range of interviews he conducted, Kentridge appears to have been both thorough and fair.

However, the academic reader will undoubtedly be disappointed by the fact that these sources are not catalogued or documented anywhere in the book. He acknowledges the work of John Aitchison of the Centre for Adult Education at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, whose extensive research the book uses as its information baseline. Kentridge also clearly makes use of the affidavits and legal papers prepared by attorneys at the Pietermaritzburg office of Cheadle, Thompson and Hayson. This is not acknowledged. Apart from a passing reference in the text, no reference is made to the newspaper (and television) sources that he evidently makes extensive use of. Kentridge also conducted a variety of interviews. Again, the details of these are not provided. What someone said in 1987 might be considerably different from what the same person said in 1990. What was the context of the interview? Readers need to know these details.

In attempting to understand the conflict, no truthseeker can afford to take a leap of faith and simply decide to trust a writer's version of events. Evidence must be subject to criticism and close scrutiny. As readers, we have to be able to decide for ourselves whether Kentridge is a reliable narrator. With a subject so politically sensitive as the Pietermaritzburg conflict, and with constant accusations and counter-accusations being made between Inkatha and UDF, we need to be able to decide where Kentridge stands. A problem with this book is that this task is made difficult by the fact that he has not opened himself and his sources up to scrutiny by the simple act of providing them. This is not to suggest that the writer is a partisan or unreliable narrator. As already noted, his use of sources is diverse and balanced. However, one feels that Kentridge's energies have gone into writing a racy best-seller, rather than into explaining the conflict. Unless familiar with the conflict, the reader has no hope of verifying Kentridge's claims other than by engaging in a detailed study of the conflict itself.

Kentridge might be able to sidestep these criticisms by legitimately claiming that the book was not intended for an academic audience. However, without detracting from its pacy narrative, he could have constructed a valuable

source list for other researchers by providing details of these at the end of the book. In this respect the details of the interviews he conducted would have been useful. The ones with Inkatha members, V.V. Mvelase and V.B. Ndlovu, and with ex-security chief, Jacques Buchner, are significant since they have not generally been interviewed by researchers dealing with contemporary political conflict. Although these interviews do not expose any new evidence concerning the conflict, they do provide insights into the characters of key personalities behind it, and in this way they are valuable.

Kentridge makes little progress in providing new analyses of the conflict, or in unearthing new evidence in explanation of the underlying causes of the conflict. He admits that he was bewildered by the sheer volume of evidence relating to the conflict in Pietermaritzburg. He therefore settled for a more personalized, and ultimately an impressionistic and anecdotal account of the conflict.

The subtitle *Inside the conflict in Pietermaritzburg* is somewhat misleading. One certainly does get the impression of being there, so vivid are Kentridge's descriptions. He toured afflicted areas. He was there in the sense that he passed through. However, the title implies that the author has profound personal experiences of what it is like to live in the context of the war in Pietermaritzburg. This is clearly not true. His experiences of the conflict are vicarious. His points of entry into the conflict are through secondary source materials and interviews, and through his guide and interpreter, Nhlanhla. What Kentridge has been able to do is to give a voice to both actors in, and victims of, the violence.

While he provides illuminating impressions of aspects of the conflict, what is unsettling about his narrative is the lack of a clear chronology within the text itself. The book is arranged around themes: 'The Setting', 'War Zones', 'Places', 'Casualties', 'Inkatha and the Police' in relation to the Pietermaritzburg conflict. These fit together well and provide an informative picture of the political geography of the region. Although he does provide a most useful chronology of the killings at the end of the book, what Kentridge has not been able to do is recreate a contextual history of the conflict. He begins in 1987. This was the time at which the Pietermaritzburg killings intensified, but this was not the beginning of the conflict. The general political background of Natal in the early and mid-1980s would have provided an essential context which would have gone some considerable distance towards analyzing the causes and origins of the Pietermaritzburg war. Instead, Kentridge simply describes the immediate context and present realities.

Although one does get a general impression of the progress of the conflict, it is dominated by descriptions of the author's own personal progress as he tours the area. In terms of the chronology of the text itself, the narrative tends to become a Kentridge travelogue. However, his personal impressions, particularly of the people he meets and talks to, are most entertaining. He has the ability to recreate scenes and capture the essence of a situation, often in a humorously dry, off-handed way. His writing, however, is anything but dry, and his narrative style makes for compelling reading rather than a tedious catalogue of political theory and analysis.

The stated aim of the book is to examine the 'ongoing conflict in the Pietermaritzburg region'. His concerns are apparently not with the political implications of the conflict, but with 'the groups and individuals involved in and affected by the war'. These are modest claims about what the author seeks

to achieve. Kentridge 'examines the ongoing conflict in the Pietermaritzburg region. He argues that a state of war exists'. He describes rather than argues, and the points he makes are truisms which can hardly be disputed. The reader understands that thousands of people have been killed, and that the killing is a nasty business involving supporters and members of Inkatha, and the UDF and the ANC.

An Unofficial War provides little in the way of new analysis of the political conflict and violence in Natal. However, it is an informative book which graphically describes rather than analyses the conflict. For this reason it will be useful for those uninformed on the subject.

PAUL FORSYTH

NATAL AND ZULULAND FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO 1910: A NEW HISTORY

Edited by ANDREW DUMINY and BILL GUEST

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press and Shuter & Shooter, 1989, xxix + 489 pp., illus., maps, index, bibl. R69,95 (boards); R49,95 (paper).

It is now a quarter of a century since Brookes and Webb's history of Natal was published. Since then, not only has more research been done, but the way in which South African history is written has changed significantly under the influence of Africanist and materialist approaches. There is thus a need for a new synthesis.

The book under review, however, is more in the nature of a report on the work that has been done since 1965 than such a synthesis. Unlike Brookes and Webb, which was written jointly by the two co-authors, this is a compilation of 16 essays written by 14 different scholars; and the editors' eight-page (six without the illustrations) conclusion is by way of filling in certain gaps rather than providing any coherent view of the subject as a whole.

Probably the field in which the greatest advance has been made in the last 25 years is that of archaeology, and the first two chapters, on the Stone Age and Iron Age peoples of the Natal region by Aron Mazel and Tim Maggs respectively, provide the greatest contrast with the equivalent chapter in Brookes and Webb. Oral tradition and documents are the main sources of information for the subsequent chapter on the area in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by John Wright and Carolyn Hamilton; here the advance has been achieved by a more critical use of old evidence rather than the discovery of new. Subsequent contributions include Norman Etherington on missions and on the Shepstone system, including its effects beyond the colonial borders, John Laband and Paul Thompson on the Anglo-Zulu war and its aftermath, Joy Brain on Natal's Indians, and John Lambert on the economic and social decline of the African population after 1880, amongst others too numerous to itemize.

Although it is useful to have this post-1965 scholarship within the covers of one volume, it should be pointed out that many of these authors have previously published much of the substance of their chapters in other forms.

The fact that history is a seamless web and that everything is connected with everything else creates problems even for a single author who can deal with only one thing at a time. It creates particular problems for a book written by 14 different authors. It is, for example, impossible for Peter Colenbrander to

discuss 'the Zulu kingdom 1828–1879' without reference to the Zulu's dealings with the white settlers south of the Thukela. It is equally impossible for Charles Ballard to discuss the white settlers in the same period without reference to their dealings with the Zulu. The result is duplication. Avoiding duplication also creates problems. Etherington's treatment of the Langalibalele affair in the context of the Shepstone system seems rather skimmed. This is presumably because it has already been dealt with by Bill Guest in the context of constitutional change.

These problems are inherent in a publication of this kind, and reinforce the view that, useful though this book is, it is not a substitute for the sustained and coherent product of a single mind.

R.L. COPE

NATALIANS FIRST — SEPARATISM IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1909–1961

by P.S. THOMPSON

Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers, 1990, 231 pp. illus.

Paul Thompson modestly calls his *Natalians First* an 'interim history', a 'synthesis of the finished research of many scholars' and it is just that. It does not attempt an analysis of social or economic forces which may have fashioned the kaleidoscopic resistance movements in Natal from Union to the declaration of the Republic. But it does draw on an extraordinarily wide range of dissertations, theses, memoirs and other sources to provide an account of those movements. To make a coherent narrative of the rise and fall of leagues, groups, associations, parties, commandos and fronts which caught the attention of (white) Natalians, particularly in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, is no mean feat. And Thompson achieves this, though it sometimes makes for brittle reading. This is partly, perhaps, because the central theme, 'separatism' — even when combined with 'devolution' — does not provide a sufficiently convincing explanation of the succession of mass demonstrations of unity (some 15 000 in Durban in 1927, some 40 000 on two occasions in the 1950s) followed by fragmented or shifting opposition.

Thompson concludes that there is an 'intellectual integrity and consistency' in Natal's separatism. But there is also in his account a suggestion of political naïveté, stemming from the colonial experience of preferring political groupings within the colonial élite to political parties with a declared party policy. It showed itself, especially in the 1920s and 1930s in frequent jostling for limelight among leaders, failure to present clear policy limits and a reluctance to submit to party discipline (Heaton-Nicholls being a particularly maverick member of his party). Stable organization was therefore poor, even in the partial exceptions of the Torch Commando and the cellular structure of the Horticulturalists in the 1950s. Consequently, when it came to affecting policy through the ballot box, voters turned to the South African Party and United Party, whose interests were inescapably national. From Thompson's account it appears that, at least on the issue of the flag, status within the empire and threats to the provincial system, the leaders in Natal (whether in the press or on public platforms) proclaimed essentially a Natal rather than a national case with a strong imperialist accompaniment. Since all the national parties — including the Dominion Party — were unsympathetic to extending provincial authority, if not hostile to the system, it is perhaps not surprising

that provincial arguments were unpersuasive even to party colleagues in Cape Town.

The situation was somewhat different in the 1950s, when Natal (and others) rallied especially against the removal of coloured voters from the roll but also against an arsenal of other legislation of clearly national significance. For a short time the Torch Commando and other extra-parliamentary groups combined with the United and Labour parties in a nationally orientated opposition to the breaking of the constitution. The question of Natal's secession soon weakened the united front, but there was again a powerful campaign to oppose a republic in the referendum, a campaign in which the Horticulturalists played a significant part, fascinatingly described but necessarily tantalizing because of their secretive ways.

Dr Thompson provides a remarkably sympathetic account of the sequence of Natal stands. His focus is on the personalities involved — editors, politicians, professional men, ex-soldiers, and some cranks; some driven by sentiment, others by perceptive conviction. He depicts the uncertainties about how separate Natal's separatism should be and he draws attention to issues which provoked expression of that separatism, such as British symbols, political and financial control of the province, constitutional and social legislation to entrench apartheid. In this sense his 'interim history' indicates how 'Natal separatism has afforded a critique of South African politics throughout the Union'. It would take further volumes to elaborate on the substance of that critique and the contradictions within it: there is little here on education, for instance, and 'economic bogeys' are explicitly set aside. But the work is faithful to its title: it is indeed through the eyes of those who considered (white) Natalians first that one sees the politics of the time.

A.M. BARRETT

SETTING DOWN ROOTS: INDIAN MIGRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1860–1911

by SURENDRA BHANA and JOY BRAIN

Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1990. 241 pp., illus., maps. R34,95.

There is already an extensive body of literature on the early history of Indian South Africans in the form of books, articles and unpublished theses. In this easily readable volume Surendra Bhana and Joy Brain, former and current Professor of History at the University of Durban-Westville respectively, synthesize that earlier research (including their own) and explore hitherto neglected areas of the field. The authors, acknowledged experts on the history of Indian migrants in South Africa, trace the arrival and settlement of indentured and passenger Indians, the movement of ex-indentured workers into self-employment or the free labour market, and the activities of Indian hawkers and traders in the Natal colonial economy. In broad outline, that part of their story is fairly well-known, though it is illuminated with interesting details and some useful tables and maps.

In subsequent chapters Bhana and Brain break new ground by investigating the movement of ex-indentured or free Indians from Natal into other parts of southern Africa including the Transvaal, primarily the Witwatersrand and Pretoria, and the Cape, or more particularly Kimberley and the main ports.

They also make an original contribution in attempting to trace the migration of passenger Indians to South Africa, especially to the Transvaal, and shed further light on the various restrictions which were imposed on the geographical and socio-economic mobility of the Indian community by the various colonial authorities. A final chapter, dedicated to 'Pravasi' (immigrant) testimonies, provides fresh insights by examining the recollections of Indian immigrants themselves, as distinct from the generally unsympathetic statistically inclined evidence that is available in the official records.

This book is a credit to its authors and to its publisher. It is a neat, well-bound volume, clearly printed and generously illustrated with photographs, maps and tables at a remarkably modest retail price. Indian South Africans should own and read this book with pride, and the public at large will find it informative and moving. Students of history will be able to use it and its helpful Bibliographical Note as a basis for new avenues of research on the Indian community and its integration into a wider South African society.

BILL GUEST

THE BUILDING OF THE BERG: THE GEOLOGY OF THE DRAKENSBERG OF NATAL.

by A.R. WILLCOX.

Drakensberg Publications. 1989. 27 pages.

This slim volume will be welcomed by those with an interest in, but lacking a background to, geology and geomorphology. It is an ideal introduction to the evolution of the Drakensberg, and even contains a list of further reading for those wishing to move to a more advanced explanation.

The book contains three chapters. 'A Journey in Time' takes the reader back to the deposition of the oldest rock series. The scene is set in terms of current climate, relief, vegetation, and life forms (in this instance, an interesting account of dinosaurs of the time). In turn, the subsequent geological periods are explored, until the outpouring of volcanic basalts and the consequent breakup of Gondwanaland.

'Birth of the Proto-Drakensberg' explains the development of the various cycles of erosion, working their way inland from the 'newly' initiated Natal coastline to the level of the escarpment. This evolution of the Natal landscape is particularly well illustrated with simple, yet effective diagrams.

'The Berg Today' focuses on the typical geomorphology of the Drakensberg, with reference to the Champagne Castle/Cathkin Peak area. Many questions in the mind of the observant visitor may be answered in this chapter, as aspects such as larva flows, amygdales, cross bedding of sediments, and Bushmen paint pots, among others, are explained.

The language is simple and academic jargon kept to a minimum, with explanation of terms, where appropriate. Illustrations are clear and relevant to the text, and include a series of interesting colour photographs. It is a pity that a simple, illustrated guide to common rock identification was not included, as this is an activity eagerly pursued by many amateur geologists.

L.M. DE VILLIERS

BRITISH SETTLERS IN NATAL, 1824–1857: A BIOGRAPHICAL REGISTER. Volume 5. Coward-Dykes

by SHELAGH O'BYRNE SPENCER

Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1989, 274 pp. illus. R54,00.

Henry Dixon and James Hallet, owners of the 'location' depicted on the cover of the latest volume of *British Settlers in Natal* abandoned Natal in 1852 and left for Australia. Unlike them, Shelagh Spencer remains dedicated to her great Natal project, and the moment Volume 5 was sent to press she set to work to finalize Volume 6 which is now in production.

Dixon and Hallet must have been hard workers for their farm presents a picture of settled agriculture on a considerable scale. The hills have been cleared for crops — for vegetables, arrowroot or ginger — or perhaps for sugar cane which was already beginning to be a significant factor in Natal's agriculture; a road winds up towards the cattle kraal and the modest homestead with its separate kitchen placed at a distance because of the ever-present danger of fire; a cart drawn by eight oxen sets off down the hill and two men are busily at work in one of the fields. The whole scene suggests activity and enterprise — the keynotes of colonial settlement — no less than of colonial biography.

MARGERY MOBERLY

BRAVE MEN'S BLOOD: THE EPIC OF THE ZULU WAR, 1879

by IAN KNIGHT

London, Greenhill Books, 1990. 200 pp., illus., maps. R79,95.

The publishers of *Brave Men's Blood* state that it is the most comprehensive history of the Anglo-Zulu War yet published. For once, such a claim is largely justified. Ian Knight undoubtedly stands out above a field of popular competitors writing about the war, most of whom have been content to follow where Donald Morris has led, their eyes fixed on the conflict from a staunchly British perspective which effectively ignores the part played by Zulu and colonist alike. Knight succeeds in broadening his approach to encompass a wider dimension, though Zulu strategic planning and diplomatic responses still could have done with more attention, as could the consequences of mounting defeat on the political structure of the Zulu kingdom. Likewise, the situation in Natal itself, where a Zulu invasion was anticipated, should have received some coverage. Nevertheless, his full treatment of the Zulu at war, and his recognition of the low-intensity conflict along the frontiers, compensates in part for these omissions and makes the book far better balanced than any of its predecessors. It is also authoritative. Knight has the advantage of being thoroughly familiar with the terrain. His text and many excellent maps are firmly based on the latest work by scholars publishing in the field, and he has succeeded in presenting a most readable synthesis of their research. *Brave Men's Blood* is also by far the best illustrated book available on the war. Knight's informed search for photographs, drawings and paintings (many of them unfamiliar even to the experts) has been admirably exhaustive, and confirms that this book should be acquired by all those with an interest in the Anglo-Zulu War.

JOHN LABAND

FLOWERS OF THE NATAL DRAKENSBERG

by O.M. HILLIARD

With illustrations by L.S. DAVIS and photographs by B.L. BURTT.
Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1990. 85 pp. R16,50.

This is the fourth in the *Ukhahlamba Series* of field guides to the Natal Drakensberg, and the third to deal with plants: *Trees and Shrubs* are covered in No. 1, and *Grasses, Sedges, Restiads and Rushes* in No. 2. It is also the third one to be written by Dr Hilliard, from whom we have come to expect — and are getting — work which despite its high scientific value remains within reach of the non-specialist and in this case even the non-botanist, because it is written so simply and concisely. In this booklet, the author really does make everything seem easy.

Scientific terms are kept to a minimum, and those that are used in the keys and descriptions are explained in a short glossary, so that only a little basic pre-knowledge is needed. The keys take the user through to genus level only, and on each occasion I have found using these keys a smooth and painless procedure. No keys for species are included; instead, each genus is dealt with by way of a drawing of one species (occasionally more than one) and brief notes on the other species occurring in the given area.

The drawings are excellent and agreeably large for such a small publication. All essential details are very clearly shown. I would have liked to see drawings of more species in the larger genera such as *Moraea*, *Dieraura*, *Hesperantha* and *Disa*, even if colour differences cannot be shown. Alternatively, some short species keys could have been included in such cases — they would have been less time-consuming than the page and a half of closely written notes which are sometimes required reading. But perhaps the priority was space-saving rather than time-saving; certainly the booklet has been kept to a handy size, small enough to fit into the odd pocket during Berg hikes.

It is interesting to note the spelling: *Aloë*. The two dots of course indicate that the 'e' should be sounded: *Aloeh* is probably the more correct pronunciation.

To get to know the Drakensberg better is to love and appreciate it more; and since much of its fascination lies in its interesting vegetation and especially its wealth of flowers, this guide could go a long way towards creating more interest, appreciation and concern among Natalians and perhaps South Africans generally. One visualizes groups of 'ordinary' people out walking in the Berg, armed with the field guide and a hand lens, and deriving real enjoyment from finding and naming flowers. To get to know a plant is to make it one's own, in a way, and one's own is worth preserving. No common names are given in the book but the scientific names need not be a handicap and are much more reliable.

We really get our money's worth here, and we have reason to be grateful to the author for having once again given us that rare and precious thing: a set of foolproof keys! And talking of fools: This one expects to make extensive use of the booklet and hopes that there will be more such guides — on Composites for example? I would like to place my order now!

D.G. STIELAU