

A Zulu Boy's Recollections of the Zulu War

1979 will be a year of pilgrimage to the battlefields of Zululand. Visitors to Isandhlwana will hear of the 1 800 men of Chelmsford's centre column, whose fight for life against an encircling Zulu army left its imprint on the stark landscape. At nearby Rorke's Drift, they will be shown the site, marked out with stones, where 200 men of the invading force withstood the assault of 3 000 Zulu, and found amongst themselves such resources of courage that eleven of the beleaguered company were awarded the Victoria Cross. Moving on to Ulundi, the visitor will walk down paths hedged by Christ-thorn, and pace out the positions from which 5 000 British troops unleashed a storm of shot and shell that overwhelmed the Zulu army. And should the itinerary include visits to Fugitives' Drift, Inyezane, Intombe River, Kambula, Hlobane, Gingindhlovu, Eshowe, the tales of daring, folly and devotion will multiply.

From battlefield to battlefield the detail will differ. But always the action will be relived from the positions held by the British forces. The central figures in each case will be men bearing names such as Durnford, Pulleine, Chard, Bromhead, Melvill, Coghill, Pearson, Moriarty, Wood and Buller. There will be no comparable particularity about the course of the action as it unfolded within the Zulu lines; nor will there be much detail about the captains and heroes who filled the field on their side. Most of the listeners, engrossed in what they are hearing, probably will not notice. But some, perhaps, will. And if they do, they may recall the two engraved tablets which they were shown within the precincts of the monument at Ulundi—one recording the names, initials and ranks of the officers and men under Chelmsford's command who were killed in the action; the other, devoid of all detail, bearing the inscription: 'In memory of the brave warriors who fell here in 1879 in defence of the old Zulu order.'

This imbalance in what is known and recounted of the war of 1879 is, to some extent, unavoidable. In piecing together the story of the struggle, the historian has at his disposal vast quantities of documents that tell of the doings of the invaders—official despatches and memoranda, notes, diaries, memoirs, field-sketches, photographs, newspaper reports, private letters. But no comparably rich and varied resources are available for the other side. The imbalance, nevertheless, need not be as gross as it is: documentation about what was happening beyond the British lines survives, and does so in larger quantities than is commonly supposed. The controversy and interest which the war aroused led polemicists and publicists to gather information about it from every possible source; and in doing so, they recorded statements of Zulu participants ranging in rank from humble commoners to the exiled king himself.

Much of this material is less readily accessible, and also less easily

interpreted and synthesised, than the records of the invaders. But it is the historian's responsibility to seek it out; for the story of the war must remain unnecessarily distorted until *all* the available evidence, no matter how intractable, has been critically examined and assessed.

The little piece that follows is one of these 'forgotten' sources. Based on testimony gathered by George H. Swinny of the Kwa Magwaza mission, it was first published in 1884 along with a companion piece on Cetshwayo's restoration to Zululand in 1883. The publishers were George Bell and Sons of York Street, Covent Garden; and the title of the volume was *A Zulu Boy's Recollections of the Zulu War and of Cetshwayo's Return*. The book is now extremely rare. Only four copies have been traced in South Africa; and it is not listed in the bibliographies appended to any recently published works on Natal and Zulu history.

In itself it does not rank as a document of major historical importance; but very few individual items ever do. Its value lies in the insights which it provides into the impact of the war on the lives of ordinary Zulu. For while it tells, at second hand, of the major military engagements, it also tells of other things: of the disruption caused to family life; of the movements of refugee herd-boys, attempting to survive with their stock in a country in turmoil; and of some of the inner tensions and latent feuds within the Zulu body politic.

In the reprint that follows, editorial intervention has been limited to two activities: the revision of clumsy punctuation; and the provision of supplementary notes. The latter are indicated by raised numerals, whereas Swinny's notes are indicated, as in the original 1884 edition, by numerals in parentheses set on the line of print. One further change must be mentioned: in the original, the Zulu text recorded by Swinny was printed alongside his English translation; here, only the English version is given.

With these adjustments, Swinny's 'Zulu Boy' tells his story again as he did almost a hundred years ago.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

*The Zulu boy at home.—An unscrupulous trader.—A disagreeable
Surprise.—The biter bit.*

I was born at Isandhlwana, the people called my name Umsweanto (the beggar). I lived on there till I grew up. I herded the calves together with the other boys. They bullied me. On one occasion we went out to steal something to eat, sweet cane (1). We feasted continuously, I and Umdeni and the big boys. On another occasion we reported this, I and Umdeni. We reported it at home. The big boys thrashed us at the watercourse. They said we were never to 'sneak' again. We, I can tell you, let it alone; we never reported it any more. Thus we robbed the gardens of the people.

After a time I ceased to herd the calves; I herded very many sheep and goats. Once, as we were sitting by the watercourse, early in the afternoon, it became quite dark; it grew light, however, again very soon. We cried, I and Umdeni. As soon as it grew light we went home, and stayed there. I herded the sheep at all times, and Umdeni herded the cattle. The sheep gave me much trouble; I cried heartily. Thus I herded them, some being killed and others remaining (with these cattle were bought), until it was said that the white men were coming. Our people said, 'O! what do the little bits of a rag(2) think to do? We shall do for it utterly!'

I went [one day] to the sheep; we saw a wagon outspanned by the roadside; we sat there. Forthwith the white man seized me, and, mounting into the wagon, bound me with the whip. I wriggled out, however, and ran away. Next he seized our brother. Our brother (his name is Ungwemu) seized *him*, and just scratched his hands till they were red. He was a low fellow that white man. He was confounded; he lamented a little. Presently his people [lit. the people of their father] cooked their food—it was porridge, poor stuff, too; they ate and the white man ate with them—he grabbed like fun. [Our people] all laughed at him, crying, 'Just look at this low fellow, eating with his Kafirs!' (3) I fled for my part. He gave chase to me. I distanced him. I abused him to the utmost of my power. Then I turned homewards; I went to get something to eat. I got home. I just ate. I remained at home. We stayed there; we slept.

At early dawn Umdeni and I went out with the cattle. We went out also to them at midday. But the sheep ate up a garden. We collected a lot of stones. We said, 'These are our cattle.' We just herded them, rejoicing. All of a sudden appeared Matuta, Umdeni's father, armed with a stick. We

fled at top speed. I yelled when he was yet a long way off. I cried, 'Mayè babò!' there being no one to warn a fellow and sing out, 'You're dead!' He chased Umdeni. I ran, for my part, as hard as I could pelt. He came up with Umdeni; he thrashed him. Umdeni howled heartily. He shouted after me did Matuta, crying, 'I say, you little barrel-headed rascal!(4) Come and have a look at me!' I left him in the rear, and fled on continually.

At another time we played with the water belonging to an old woman. The old woman drove us away. We said, 'O! *You* are not swift enough to overtake us!' We frisked about, kicking up our heels; we waggled our heads; we made various noises with our mouths. We said, 'Run! Let's see you!' Said the old woman, 'Eventide will gather ye together, children of my child! Look you!' That was because I had my meals there. I returned in the afternoon. The girls called to me, saying, 'Come and eat, Umsweanto!' I sat down. I ate, I ate. I then took the kids, and tied them up. Then I ate the flesh of other kids that had been killed (Umdeni being in his mother's hut). I was satisfied; I was completely filled. The old woman was just there in her hut, and I, not considering that a while ago I had troubled her, entered, together with Umdeni. We sat down; we just played in her hut. Suddenly the old woman seized me. Umdeni bolted and fled. She pinched me continuously. The girls laughed. I besought her. I besought her, saying, 'Never will I do it any more!' I made a solemn promise. She let me go. But the next day, early in the morning, many boys arrived. I was stimulated by them. We played at home. We took the old woman's dry mud(5) [for cooking]. She was furious. She said, 'I'll lay it into you!' We said, 'O! So you're possessed of speed, are you?' Said the old woman, 'You shall see me (6) with your eyes — you, I mean, who carry those little ears of yours so bravely!' We ran away. We returned in the afternoon. I went again to the hut of the old woman, carrying a kid. I put it down and tied it up. I entered into her hut. At once the old woman seized me, I no longer thinking any more about the matter. I yelled with a loud voice, I cried, 'Mayè babò!' I then betook me to laughing a little before she laid into me. She then closed the doorway. She took a blanket. She made me 'the wild beast of the blanket.'(7) She put my head into the blanket. She bit my head [all over]. I besought her; I besought her. She let me go, and gave me some food. I laughed at her. She hunted me out saying, 'Off with you! Go home!' I went out. I went home, and stayed there. I gave it over; never again did I trouble her any more. I was very civil to her, and she for her part was very civil to me. The matter of the old woman is now ended.

CHAPTER I

Invasion of Zululand.—Affair with Sihayo's people.—Flight of Zulu women and children from Isandhlwana.—A Zulu regiment on the march.—Defeat of Matshana's people.

The news came [one day] that the white men had already arrived. It was then said that they were at Mr Fynn's.(8) Our people were somewhat alarmed. They said, 'Let the youngsters run away and go to Emahlabatini.'¹ The white men reached the Buffalo River. It was said that they had come to fight with the Zulus.

Soon they fought with the people of Sihayo, who were few in number. These were all killed; some however survived. They for their part killed a few white men and [black] men too.²

O! We scampered away, [we young ones]. We went to Malagata.³ It was next said that the white men were coming to Malagata. Some said, 'It is good that homage be paid to the white men.' Said our father, 'Whosoever desires to do homage, it is good that he be off, and go and do homage [to them].' Our father went away with his men. Others deserted him and did homage. We pushed on, [we children and women]. We came to Esipezi and halted there.⁴ We stayed there for a few days. Then went forth the spies and Mtembu with them, having seen some soldiers in our neighbourhood. We made off as fast as we could. We rested for a short time, we boys. Umali was lost. O! We lamented, we boys. We said, 'Perhaps we shall be killed [i.e. thrashed] because we have left him behind!' All of a sudden he was found. We pushed on continually. We reached the Umhlatusi river.

It was rumoured that the Usutus(9) were coming up, and [sure enough] in the afternoon there appeared through the fog the Bongoza regiment.⁵ They saw the many sheep belonging to our father and other people. Up came the 'horned'(10) Usutus and said, 'A bit of food for us, this, master!' They stabbed some of the sheep; they drained our calabashes; they took the [dead] sheep away with them. Suddenly one of the warriors espied an exceedingly fine kid. He seized it. Our father [uncle] seized it, and the warrior seized it too. The next moment up came the indunas [officers] and scolded the regiment. The men ran off and continued their march. We went on. We came to a kraal and stayed there. We happened upon five warriors. They were just starting off in the early morning, it being very cold indeed. One of them was chilled with the cold; he had no longer any power to get along quickly. [When] he arrived at the kraal he was exceedingly cold. He warmed himself at the fire. The others derided him. They said, 'It is not(11) a young man of any worth. It is just cold for no reason at all!' With that they killed many sheep. We started early in the morning; we removed from thence and came to a[nother] kraal. We stayed there one day. We left at dawn, and went on to Equdeni.⁶

All the warriors had by that time gone off to the army. We came to a kraal; we stayed there a long time. We heard it said that the people of Matshana, the son of Mondisa, had just been slaughtered, every one of them.⁷

CHAPTER II

The eclipse of January 22, 1879.—The commencement of the battle of Isandhlwana.—Colonel Durnford's natives stir up the Zulu army.—Usikota, a refugee brother of Cetshwayo and his tribe, allies of the English.—The English camp rushed.—Individual acts of heroism on the British side.

After a few days it came to pass that the sun was darkened; there was silence—an utter silence—throughout the land. Nevertheless the army was fighting at Isandhlwana. Then, after a day or so, there arrived some of our

people who had come out from the host, being sent by our father to fetch away the cattle and the folk that they might return home. They said, 'There have died many white men and Iziqosa [Natal Zulus] also.'⁸

They told us that the army had been encamped on the Ingqutu range, the moon being dead and they not wishing to fight. (When the moon is dead, it is called a black day, there is no fighting.) Up came the Amangwana [Durnford's natives];⁹ and opened fire upon the host, stirring them up. At once they [*i.e.* Durnford's natives] found themselves in the close embrace of the Kandempemvu [a Zulu regiment]¹⁰ even as tobacco [is united] with aloes(12). The Zulu generals forbade [an advance], seeking to help the white men. But the regimental officers simply mutinied. They marched forward; they went into the battle. They [*i.e.* the combatants] were rolled along together towards Isandhlwana. They [*i.e.* the Zulus] killed some [of Durnford's natives]; the rest fled. Yes indeed, and the soldiers too were alarmed; they endeavoured to concert some plan, but they were unable to do anything to any purpose, being now in a state of nervous apprehension, and powerless to know what they should do. They lay down upon the ground. They fired terribly. They fired terribly, until they were weary. The Zulus lay down for a little time, then started up [and ran forward], lying down again according to their custom. Then shouted Undhlaka from the Amatutshane hill(13) and cried, 'Never did his Majesty the King give you this command, to wit, "Lie down upon the ground!"' His words were: 'Go! and toss them into Maritzburg!' Up started the warriors, but again they lay down, being endangered by the bullets. The soldiers hoped and said, 'Perhaps we have now killed them all.' But again the warriors arose, seeking to approach closely to the wagons. (The cannon were useless in their fire upon an enemy that was now close at hand.)

There fought also the Iziqosa tribe—long ago the Iziqosa were vanquished(14). There was present too Usikota,¹¹ brother of Cetshwayo(15); he saw the Zulu army coming up and cried, 'O! Not for me! I'm off! I know those fellows over there. It is just "Coming, come" with them. They are not to be turned aside by any man, and here are we sitting still for all the world like a lot of turkeys!' Then he called to his brother, 'Away! let's away, Ungabangaye, let's make a run for it!' Said Ungabangaye, 'Oh stop a moment just till I see them tackled by the white men!' 'O!' cried Usikota, 'A pleasant stay to you!' He seized his horse and bolted. He escaped through the 'neck,' before the 'impi' encircled the [camp].¹² Up came the Zulu army and made an end of Ungabangaye. And the soldiers themselves were overpowered.

Some seized their rifles and smashing them upon the rocks hurled them [at their foes]. They helped one another too; they stabbed with the bayonet those who sought to kill their comrades. Some covered their faces with their hands [lit. closed their eyes], not wishing to see death. Some ran away. Some entered into the tents. Others were indignant; although badly wounded they died where they stood, at their post.

We were told also that there was a soldier at Isandhlwana who carried a flag. He just waved it backwards and forwards. He fought not; he feared not (perhaps he put his trust in other soldiers). They killed him. We were told also that there was present a son of Someu(16). He fought very bravely. He killed [some of] our people. The others feared to approach

him. Suddenly there dashed in our brother Umtweni before he could load, and killed him.¹³ But that young fellow died at Hlobane. Our father too fought at Isandhlwana, carrying a black and white shield(17). They shot at him; they hit it. He cast it away from him; he just fought on with assegais and rifle only.

CHAPTER III

The return of Lord Chelmsford to the camp.—An unseen spectator.—Bivouac of the troops on the battlefield.—An unexpected rencontre in the morning with a detachment of the Zulu army.—The fight at Rorke's Drift.—Zulu opinions of the action.—Why the Zulus did not invade Natal.

By occasion of the battle our father obtained some sheep at Isandhlwana. He killed them; he cooked for his mother at home, for his kraal was close at hand. Forthwith he climbed up a hill: he saw some white men, greatly dejected, marching towards Isandhlwana. They were silent, utterly silent. They were marching in line.

Presently they fired in the direction of Isandhlwana (father being just hidden you see, close to them). They fired, they fired—all was still. They drew near to Isandhlwana. They saw a large flag beneath the hill: it just stood there, hanging from its staff. They shouted aloud. They said 'Hurrah!' They took it away. They lay there at Isandhlwana for the night; but they did not lie asleep.¹⁴

At dawn, rising very early, they encountered a band of Zulus, just a few in number. Forthwith the [people] who served the white men shouted to them (the soldiers uttering not a word) saying, 'Where do you come from?' They replied, 'We come from the other side of the river there-away.' 'You are telling lies!' (18) said the others. The black men wanted to fight with them—those Zulus; but the commander of the troops forbade it. So they just went on their way.¹⁵

On the day of the fight at Isandhlwana the sun was darkened until it declined. The Zulus thought much of the soldiers who fought at Isandhlwana: they fought bravely; they did not burrow to enter within and hide. As for the Mbozankomo regiment¹⁶ they merely remained at the Ingwebini river(19). They danced, they just ate meat merrily. Presently they said, 'O! Let's go and have a fight at Jim's!' (20) The white men had by this time made their preparations; they were quite ready. The Zulus arrived at Jim's house. They fought, they yelled, they shouted, 'It dies at the entrance! (21) It dies in the doorway! It dies at the entrance! It dies in the doorway!' They stabbed the sacks; they dug with their assegais. They were struck; they died. They set fire to the house. It was no longer fighting: they were now exchanging salutations merely. (We were told this by Umunyu who was present.)

The Mbozankomo regiment was finished up at Jim's—shocking cowards they were too. Our people laughed at them, some said, 'You! You're no men! You're just women, seeing that you ran away for no reason at all, like the wind!' Others jeered and said, 'You marched off. You went to dig

little bits with your assegais out of the house of Jim, that had never done you any harm!’

The Zulus had no desire to go to Maritzburg. They said, ‘There are strongholds there.’ They thought that they should perish and come utterly to an end if they went there.

CHAPTER IV

The author, in company with other Zulu boys, visits the field of Isandhlwana four days after the battle.—The captured cannon are removed from the field.—Drawn battle between Sihayo's army and General Wood's column at Ezungeni.—Surprise of the Prince Imperial and his party.—The affair at the Hlobane mountain.—Defeat of the English.—The battle of Hlobane (Kambula).—The trooper Grandier in the hands of the Zulus.—Cetshwayo asks a hard question.

We started; we returned to Isandhlwana. We arrived early in the morning. We saw the soil that it was red, the sun shining very brightly. We walked out after a short time. We went to see the dead people at Isandhlwana. We saw a single warrior dead, staring in our direction, with his war shield in his hand. We ran away. We came back again. We saw countless things dead. Dead was the horse, dead too, the mule, dead was the dog, dead was the monkey, dead were the wagons, dead were the tents, dead were the boxes, dead was everything, even to the very metals. We took some thread for sewing and a black pocket-book; we played with the boxes; we took the tent ropes and played with them. We thought to return home. As for Umdeni he took some biscuit, but I and my brother declined. We said, ‘We don't like them.’ We went off, they carrying them. We moved out of sight of the place where *they*(2) were. We asked for some. Said Umdeni, ‘O! we don't choose, for you said you didn't like them.’ We retorted, ‘O! sit there, if you please, with your little bits of bread smelling of people's blood!’ This we said, being with envy. We then returned home.

At daylight we came back again. We saw some boys who had died in a tree, [lying] underneath it. They were dressed in black clothes. We saw white men dead (they had taken off their boots, all of them), and the people also who had served them, and fought with them, and some Zulus, but not many. We saw Mtembu's wagon, laden with the cannon, going to the kraal of his father, Klass. We went home again.

Once more we returned, I and my brother, the two of us. I took some boots for my part, and a sachel. I put on the black boots. Our brother also took some boots. He sat in a wagon and put them on. But no sooner had we put on the boots, than the people shouted from home and cried, ‘You're dead! Look at the army there away!’ We undid the boots; they refused. We burst them. We flung away our satchels. Our brother threw his [boots] away in a moment. I—I was a long time in taking mine off; he forsook me. I got mine off after a short time. I tore along with the utmost speed; I overtook our brother, and leaving him behind in my turn, arrived first at home. The people said, ‘There is no army.’ I took a new pair of brown

trousers; I went away with them. We set off; we fled on without stopping. The men, however, remained at home. Once some white men arrived at Isandhlwana. The men shouted out, seeing people at Isandhlwana, saying, 'You will be trodden under foot!' (23) The white men fled. There were four of them. We went on to the Umhlatusi.

The white men tried very hard to cross [the Buffalo] near Jim's house, but the people of Sihayo would not have it, and prevented them. Hereupon the white men crossed higher up at Encome.¹⁷ It was now decided that the army of Sihayo should fight at Ezungeni.¹⁸ So the Ubisi tribe fought.¹⁹ It fought for a long time, but it was beaten, and the white men were beaten too. The armies just looked at one another. A few white men died; there died of the Zulus a few also.²⁰

Now, as we were told it, the story goes that while some Zulus were lying in ambush in the long grass near Ezungeni (they were but few) some white men arrived at the kraal, there being no one there. They put their guns down under [the wall of] the cattle kraal. Some of them went into a hut, the sun being scorchingly hot; others sat in the doorway. One went off to water the horses. The officer sat in the doorway armed with a long sword. Suddenly the Zulus sprang into view. The white men sung out, 'Good day, (24) young fellow!' but the Zulus took not the least notice of that. The white men made a rush, seeking to get hold of their guns, but their strength failed them. They were killed. There escaped only one, the one who was with the horses. The horses galloped away. They followed the man who was mounted. He saved his life. Our people took the officer's sword and carried it to Cetshwayo. They said, 'A beautiful sword, indeed.'

We remained at the Umhlatusi river until the fighting (25) at Ezungeni came to an end and a march was made to Hlobane.²¹ A very large [Zulu] army was lying in the vicinity of Hlobane. The white men climbed to the top of Hlobane in the afternoon during the rain.²² Then came one of Umzila's (26) men by night to the army,²³ and cried, 'To arms! The white men have even now climbed up to the summit of Hlobane!' Then Usihayo, too, called out, 'To arms!' With that he went off to speak with the great captains, Untshingwayo and Umnyamana.²⁴ They, seeking to assist the white men, said, 'O! Not a bit of it! The army shall fight to-morrow.' Accordingly orders were given that the Abaqulusi²⁵ (*i.e.* Umzila's army) be told to sit still, the [great] captains being unwilling.

But the Abaqulusi mutinied, and uniting with the Kandempevu regiment (the hail-catchers), surrounded the mountain. They got at a few white men; the rest ran away and escaped.

The white men captured many cattle and sent them off immediately into Natal. The warriors were on the point of putting Umnyamana to death, because he helped the white men and did not love Cetshwayo. But almost immediately the Zulus were defeated. Thus they let Umnyamana alone.

The next day a battle was fought at the stronghold.²⁶ A good number of white men died, but the Zulus were beaten; great numbers of them perished. So the Zulus marched away and returned to Emahlabatini. They say that the [English] soldiers were greatly assisted by two monkeys at Hlobane; they [*i.e.* the monkeys] shot down numbers of people.

It is said that a white man was taken prisoner at Hlobane at the time of the engagement and carried off to Cetshwayo. Sihayo spoke with him in the

white men's tongue, for Sihayo was slightly acquainted with the white men's tongue.

Said Cetshwayo, 'What am I just being destroyed for?' The white man replied, 'I don't know.' Cetshwayo said, 'Don't let them kill him.' He had mercy on him. It was then ordered that he should be taken to Umzila, who was as clever as Sihayo.⁷²

CHAPTER V

The guerilla chief Umbelini.—British reverse at Intombi River(?)—Umbelini and two companions engage a party of British troops.—Death of Umbelini.—Dabulamanzi attacks a patrol at the White Umfolosi.—The Zulu generals Umnyamana and Untshingwayo play into the hands of the English.—The battle of Ulundi.—A Zulu hero.—The hedge of steel.

Now a son of Sihayo dwelt with Umzila (Umbokode was his name). They worried the white men; they worried terribly the soldiers who spied out the army. On one occasion Umzila went out with his army and worried the soldiers by night. He chased away some of them; he killed them; he took away their cattle.

His people went on ahead, driving the cattle [homewards]. The whole army went on ahead of him. Himself remained behind together with a son of Sihayo and one of the officers of his household. They thought to return home. They caught sight of some soldiers (there were a good many of them) lying down, holding their horses [*i.e.* bridles] with their arms, for they had by this time learned a device of the Zulu people, *viz.*, to lie down at the time of fighting. Umzila tried a shot; he fired. He hit a white man, and the white men they too opened a hot fire. Thus, it was said, he kept hitting the white men. He out with [a bullet] and in with it into the flesh; out with [a bullet] and in with it into the flesh—always.

But after a time the white men slew the son of Sihayo. Umzila fought on alone with his steward. They hit Umzila too. He fled, he and his steward mounting their horses. He went away home did Umzila, being badly wounded. He arrived. He died at home. His steward—he was uninjured.²⁸

We moved away for our part. We went to Emahlabatini, the troops being now at Emtonjaneni.²⁹ Some of the soldiers went forth. They went to scout. They reached the Umfolosi. They went [down] and began just to bathe in the river. Suddenly Dabulamanzi appeared and fired at them.³⁰ Those who had their clothes on drove him away. He fled. He left them in the rear, because his horse was fleetier than the horses of the soldiers. The soldiers were foiled because their horses do not understand how to travel among stones.

Now it came to pass after a short time, that the Zulus sought to surround the soldiers at Emtonjaneni. The great captains [however] forbid it, those, that is, of the highest rank, to wit, Umnyamana, and Untshingwayo the son of Maholi, the generals at Ondini, desiring above all things to help the white men.³¹ Orders were given that the warriors should just sit still, they [*i.e.* the great captains] saying, 'Let the spirits of our ancestors bring it [*i.e.*

the English army] here to us at home; they will be comfortably killed, the wretched creatures!'

So after a few days the soldiers arrived at Nodwengu very early in the morning with their cannon.³² They fired, and the Zulus too fought, and fired with might and main. The battle raged for a long time. But at the time of the climbing up of the sun the Zulu army fled.³³

Our father—they shot at him. He entered into a hole. He stayed there a little time. He arose and fled. Our brother too was present. He was an officer. He carried a breech-loading rifle that he had taken at Isandhlwana from his [rivals]. The Zulu army fled. He got tired of running away. He was a man too who understood well how to shoot. He shouted, 'Back again!' He turned and fired. He struck a horse; it fell among the stones and the white man with it. All the white men turned upon him. They fired at him. They killed him.

Report says (27) that there was metal—iron sheeting—which protected the white men. The Zulus hit it. It resounded with a sharp clang. The white soldiers kept continually just overflowing [from behind it] till they drew near and swept away with it [*i.e.* the Zulu army].³⁴

Also another brother of ours told me that they saw a white man (on foot) vanish into a water course. They ran; they pursued him, seeking to kill him. The white man however thought to keep to the water course. He stuck to the sandy bed, following its downward course. Soon they saw that it was now all up with him by reason of the bands of men that were below him. These presently began to shout, 'Aha! Our numbers! Now we have done for him!' They killed him. Some of the [beaten] Zulus entered into the water. The white men fired at them but failed to hit them, because they dived.

CHAPTER VI

Flight of Zulu women and children to Inhlazatshe.—Zulu boys playing at war in earnest.—English overtures of peace to the Zulus.—Termination of hostilities.—Cetshwayo taken prisoner.—Causes which led to his fall.—Amehlo kaZulu, son of Sihayo, gives himself up.—The author returns home with his people to Isandhlwana.

Soon we saw a very great smoke.³⁵ O! We flung away the clothes which we had taken at Isandhlwana. We thought, perhaps we shall be put in prison by the white men on account of the clothes which we are wearing! We went to Inhlazatshe.³⁶ We stayed there awhile. The people hated us because we dwelt with Sihayo,³⁷ that ferocious man; for once upon a certain occasion he destroyed them. They hated us cordially. They thought to kill us. But since we had a few warriors with us who guarded our cattle, they feared, saying, 'We are not able to destroy the people of Sihayo, for they will kill us every one!' They said we had better be off and go clean away. We departed. They captured some sheep belonging to certain of our people, but just the boys alone went for them, and taking them away returned with them. I was there too and the other small boys, all of us being armed with big stones. We went on. We reached the bush at Isihlungu, we entered

into a huge hyena's cave in the face of the rock; the kraals of our people were near.³⁸ Our party obtained food from thence. Now it came to pass after a few days that our boys fought with the boys of another place. They quarrelled with respect to water, for as one of our boys went to fetch some water, the [aforesaid] boys caught sight of him, and seizing him soused him with water. All our fellows were furious, but the other boys despised us, saying, 'O! [you're] only babies!' Our fellows marched up from the forest, but the big boys [of our party] were but three, together with us little fellows. They on the other hand were all biggish boys and many in number. Yes, and the young men of our place turned out. They said it was fitting that we should give them a tremendous thrashing. The young men too belonging to those boys came to behold, and the girls from those boys' place attended also to look on. We sat down we boys, our big fellows taking position on our flanks in order to repel the 'horns' [of the enemy's army]. Presently up they came, desiring to lay into us; but we for our parts had devised a stratagem, to wit that the little boys should raise a hullabaloo crying, 'Huzu! Huzu! Kweza yona! Kweza yona!' [Here it comes! Here it comes!] They arrived. We sprang to our feet simultaneously, and yelled, 'Huzu! Huzu! Kweza yona!' We kicked up a terrific row; they fled. They returned again, and we fought. But as for a certain boy whose name was Usanyongo, we got him into our midst. We thrashed him terribly, the small boys simply taking their fill of him and crying, 'Take that! And that! Here's into you!' He sang out, 'O! Are you just thrashing me, I being all alone, our fellows having already run away?' He broke away by a violent effort and fled. We drove them along [like cattle] by a single path. Their sisters wailed. There was present one of our boys, an exceedingly ferocious fellow. We called him 'He-that-bellows-and-all-fight, the little bull of Nomatukumezana.' O! We worried them finely! We went forward—our young men headed us back. We sang a triumph song proper to boys, to wit, 'We boys! We boys! Ah! just look out for us! We boys! We boys! Ah! just look out for us!' and, 'We are the Thrashers-till-their-sisters-cry!' We detested them heartily. On another occasion we sat down by the river from which they drew their water. We hindered them exceedingly. They feared to approach. And look you, from that day to this they have never begun with us. At another time we chased them like deer.

Now after a few days some white men arrived. They came to entreat the people kindly. They offered a letter to them, showing it while remaining some distance off. But our brother, arming himself with a huge assegai (Uzimvu, his name, is a mad-cap fellow of the Kandempevu regiment) just went to them carrying the assegai. O! but the white men didn't bargain for that. They retreated a little on seeing the assegai. They ran the finger(28) round and round the head, saying 'Come *man!*' Our people refused—the soldiers retreated and departed. Our people followed them till they reached the tents. There they talked with the officer in command of the troops ('The Bearded One' they called him). He gave them papers, telling them to go to their homes and live there peaceably.

We went home. Our father went to Isandhlwana and all his people. He returned again, our father did, to his kraal at the Umhlatusi. I and Umali and another of our brothers stayed there for a long time together with our father and the two girls who cooked our food.

We heard it said that they had just captured Cetshwayo, he having been betrayed by the people.³⁹ By this time the people were sick of war. And he too, Cetshwayo, having put numbers of them to death, they had no longer any appetite for him; [on the contrary] they were now regarding him with a dangerous [lit. red] eye.⁴⁰ He perished, remembering the saying of a young man of Sihayo's tribe—Umtwalo by name. Long ago he killed him. He was dancing, and Cetshwayo ordered them to leave off. But he—he went on dancing. Said the king, 'Let him be seized.' He was seized; his arms were twisted and bound behind his back. The order was given, 'Let him go away and be killed.' Then said he, 'Notwithstanding that you kill me, you shall see the white men—they will come.' And in very truth they came. And look you; now they have it all their own way. They marched away with Cetshwayo.

Next they proceeded to hunt Amehlo kaZulu (29), but Amehlo kaZulu delivered himself into their hands, carrying his gun. They sought to kill him, but they feared. The order was given, 'Let him be taken to Maritzburg to have his case tried.' They bound him, he being mounted on horseback. They arrived. They were beaten by Amehlo kaZulu's case. The order was given, 'Let him return and go to live at home with his own people.' So he lived happily.

We returned, we and our father to Isandhlwana. I returned first, travelling together with our brothers. I went with the many cattle of our people. Our father came up from the Umhlatusi. Umali was weary and our other brother too. They got home; both our brothers were tired out. Umali recovered. Our other brother was ill for a long time; after a while he died.

NOTES

1. 'sweet cane', a plant ('imfe') the stalk of which resembles that of Indian corn (mealies), and contains a sweet juice; the natives are very fond of chewing it.
2. "little bits of a rag", a playful allusion to the clothing of the white people.
3. 'Kafirs', a contemptuous term applied by the Zulus to the Natal natives.
4. 'barrel-headed'. The word translated here as 'barrel' really means 'a little milking vessel', which is shaped like an elongated barrel.
5. 'dry mud', *i.e.* dry manure, used for heating the earthen vessel in which the native beer ('utshwala') is brewed. This operation is always conducted out of doors. *Hinc illae lachrymae!* for the heap of convenient missiles is irresistible.
6. 'you shall see me', &c., a common Zulu threat.
7. 'the wild beast of the blanket', apparently a 'slang' phrase. Whether it means that the narrator was like a lion in the toils, or else that the blanket was *in loco leonis* to him, is not clear to the translator.
8. 'Mr Fynn's' then the magistrate at Umsinga in Natal, some twenty-five miles from Rorke's Drift by the waggon road.
9. 'The Usutus.' Generic name of the people of Cetshwayo. Hence the Zulu war cry 'Usutu!'
10. 'horned', referring to the 'horns' or wings of the Zulu army.
11. 'It is not,' &c. The impersonal pronoun expressing the greatest contempt.
12. 'even as tobacco,' &c. The Zulus mix burnt aloes ('umhlaba') with their snuff ('ugwai') to make it more pungent. Hence the similitude.
13. 'the Amatutshane hill', a conical hill standing alone in the plain, facing the English camp, and about a mile from Isandhlwana hill.
14. 'long ago,' &c. 'Iziqoza' is the tribal name of the people of Umkungo and Umbulazwi, Cetshwayo's brothers. The tribe was decimated in battle and driven out of Zululand by Cetshwayo, Umbulazwi being slain. This was 'long ago,' *i.e.* during the lifetime of Umpande, Cetshwayo's father.

15. 'Usikota.' This incident was related to Uzibana, father of the narrator, by Usikota himself, after the conclusion of the war.
16. 'Somseu', the name given by the Zulus to Sir T. Shepstone.
17. 'carrying a black and white shield.' Only certain privileged persons were allowed to carry shields of this colour.
18. 'you are telling lies', lit. 'you are *with* lies'.
19. 'the Ingwebini river,' close by Isandhlwana, on the Ingqutu range.
20. at 'Jim's'. The house at Rorke's Drift is called by the Zulus 'Kwa Jim' (at Jim's, after the original settler, 'Jim Rorke'.
21. 'it dies at the entrance', 'it', *i.e.* the regiment; at the entrance 'iguma', 'little spot fenced in with reeds before the entrance of a hut' (Colenso's Dict.).
22. they, *i.e.* the dead.
23. 'you will be trodden', lit. 'you have been trodden', &c.
24. 'Good day', the literal Zulu is 'We have seen you'.
25. 'the fighting', lit. 'the army'.
26. 'Umzila', better known, I think, to English readers as the 'robber-chief' Umbelini.
27. 'Report says', possibly referring to the 'hedge of steel'.
28. 'They ran the finger', &c., *i.e.* to signify that they wanted to speak with a 'head-ring' man, a grown-up warrior.
29. 'Amehlo kaZulu', a son of Sihayo, whose lawless conduct is said in a great measure to have brought on the war.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

- ¹ Emahlabatini (emaHlabatini), on the middle reaches of the White umFolozi, was where many of the principal royal homesteads and military settlements were established.
- ² Sihayo kaXongo, Qungebeni chief and one of Cetshwayo's principal *izinduna*, lived close to the Buffalo (umZinyathi) river near Rorke's Drift. A raid by certain of his sons to capture women who had fled into Natal was one of the 'incidents' for which the British High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, demanded reparation in the ultimatum presented to the Zulu on 11 December 1878. The fight at Sihayo's took place on 12 January 1879, and was the first engagement in which Chelmsford's centre column was involved after the commencement of hostilities on 11 January. About 30 of Sihayo's men were killed, and a large number of cattle seized by the invaders. Chelmsford lost three men of the Natal Native Contingent. (See: Sir Reginald Coupland, *Zulu Battle Piece*, London 1948, pp. 60-1)
- ³ Malagata (Malakatha) mountain lies south of Isandhlwana (isAndlwana), between the confluence of the emaNgeni and umZinyathi rivers.
- ⁴ Esipezi (isiPhezi) mountain lies to the east of isAndlwana.
- ⁵ This is the only known reference to the 'Bongoza' regiment. The name may be a corruption by Swinny of an expression referring to a contingent of armed men of the Mpungose people, who lived just to the south of the upper reaches of the umHlatuze river, *i.e.* in the locality to which the informant and his companions had moved.
- ⁶ The Equdeni (eQudeni) hills lie in the angle formed by the confluence of the umZinyathi and Thukela rivers.
- ⁷ Matshana (Matyana) kaMondise, Sithole chief, lived near umSinga on the Natal side of the umZinyathi until 1858, when he fled to the Zulu kingdom after resisting arrest by a force under J. W. Shepstone. In 1879 he was living in the emaNgeni valley south-east of isAndlwana. On January 21, the day before the battle of isAndlwana, Chelmsford gave orders for a reconnaissance in Matshana's territory, and a skirmish followed in which some 80 of Matshana's men were killed. It is probably this incident that is here referred to. (See: Donald R. Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, London 1966, p. 340)
- ⁸ Iziqosa (iziGqoza) was the name used to identify the supporters of Mbuyazi, Cetshwayo's half-brother and rival in the succession dispute that came to a head at the battle of enDondakusuka, fought near the Thukela mouth in 1856. The triumph of Cetshwayo's uSuthu forces in that struggle resulted in large numbers of iziGqoza fleeing to Natal. Thereafter, the name iziGqoza tended to be applied to any Zulu who had 'gone over' to the white people or had settled in Natal.
- ⁹ Amangwana may be a reference to the Natal Native mounted levy raised by the emaNgwaneni chief, Zikhali. Colonel A. W. Durnford of the Royal Engineers was given command of the 1st Regiment of the Natal Native Contingent, which included Zikhali's Native Horse.
- ¹⁰ The Kandempemvu (uKhandempemvu) was formed c. 1868 of men born c. 1848.
- ¹¹ Usikota (Sikhotha) kaMpande, a half-brother of Cetshwayo and a full brother of the latter's rival, Mbuyazi, was one of the Iziqoza who fled to Natal after the battle of enDondakusuka.

- ¹² The 'neck' refers to the col between isAndlwana and the stony hill to its south.
- ¹³ Capt. George Shepstone, fourth son of Sir T. Shepstone, was killed while trying to keep open a line of retreat for the troops surrounded at isAndlwana. (See: R. E. Gordon, *Shepstone*, Cape Town 1968, p. 279)
- ¹⁴ The incident here described is the return to isAndhlwana in the late evening of January 22 of Chelmsford and the troops who had been deployed to the south while the battle was being fought. (Cf. the descriptions of this incident in Coupland, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100, and in A. F. Hattersley, *Later Annals of Natal*, London 1938, pp. 148-9)
- ¹⁵ Cf. Coupland, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-01 and 111, and Hattersley, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
- ¹⁶ Mbozankomo appears to be a cognomen for the uThulwana or amaMboza regiment (formed c. 1854 of men born c. 1834) which was part of the uNdi corps at isAndlwana. The main body of the uNdi lagged behind the other Zulu regiments when the battle began. During the course of the fighting, they circled around isAndlwana and moved on to Rorke's Drift. (See: Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 363 and 399-400)
- ¹⁷ The Encome (iNcome) river was crossed on 10 January 1879 by the left flanking column under Brig. Gen. H. Evelyn Wood.
- ¹⁸ Ezungeni (eZungeni) is the most westerly of a chain of three prominent flat-topped mountains in north-western Zululand.
- ¹⁹ Ubisi may be a cognomen for the amaQungebe, whose name, according to A. T. Bryant, derived 'from the trick amongst their men of making their *amaSi* (sour curds) out of other people's milk'. (See: A. T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, London 1929, p. 130). *uBisi* is the Zulu word for milk.
- ²⁰ The action here referred to was probably the skirmishing of the left flanking column under Wood, which, after encamping at Nkambule hill some 25 kilometres south-west of Zungeni at the end of January 1879, spent much of its time harassing the Zulu in the neighbourhood.
- ²¹ Hlobane is one of the Zungeni chain of flat-topped hills. The 'march to Hlobane' probably refers to the advance of a large Zulu *impi* which Cetshwayo despatched against Wood's column towards the end of March 1879.
- ²² A force under the command of Major Redvers Buller ascended Hlobane on the night of 27-28 March. During the ascent there was a thunderstorm.
- ²³ Umzila (Mbilini) kaMswati, a Swazi prince, had settled south of the Phongolo in the reign of Mpande. From this position he raided his Boer and Swazi neighbours. One of Frere's demands in the ultimatum of 11 December 1879 was that Mbilini should be surrendered for trial by the British authorities. When the war commenced, Mbilini was joined by the sons of Sihayo, whose surrender had also been demanded in the ultimatum. On the night of 27-28 March, the Zulu army was encamped to the south-east of Hlobane, which was one of Mbilini's strongholds.
- ²⁴ Untshingwayo (Ntshingwayo) kaMahole, Khoza chief, was one of Cetshwayo's principal *izinduna*; Umnyamana (Mnyamana) kaNgqengelele, Buthelezi chief, was Cetshwayo's premier *induna*.
- ²⁵ During the reign of Shaka the lands in the vicinity of Hlobane had been placed under the authority of Shaka's aunt, Mnkabayi, whose homestead was named ebaQulusini. Thereafter, it was customary to refer to the people of the locality as the abaQulusi.
- ²⁶ The action here referred to was the battle fought at Wood's camp at Nkambule on 29 March 1879.
- ²⁷ Cf. the brief account of Trooper Henri Grandier's experiences in D. Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 504-5.
- ²⁸ The narrative in the preceding paragraphs seems to be based on a conflation of two separate incidents. The first occurred in the early hours of the morning of 12 March 1879, when a small British force encamped at Myer's Drift was attacked by Mbilini and suffered heavy losses. The second incident occurred four weeks later, on 5 April, when Mbilini and his men were surprised while raiding cattle near Luneberg. In the ensuing skirmish Mbilini was fatally wounded. According to C. Vijn, the son of Sihayo who was killed while fighting with Mbilini was Nkumbikazulu, but this is disputed by J. W. Colenso. (See: C. Vijn, *Cetshwayo's Dutchman*, London 1880, pp. 40 and 124)
- ²⁹ The Emtjonaneni (emThonjaneni) ridge lies to the south of the middle reaches of the White umFolozu. It was occupied by Chelmsford's 2nd Division on 28 June 1879.
- ³⁰ Dabulamanzi kaMpande was Cetshwayo's full brother.
- ³¹ Ondini (uluNdi), on the emaHlabathini plain north of the middle reaches of the White umFolozu, was Cetshwayo's principal residence.
- ³² Nodwengu, situated on the emaHlabathini plain about 5 kilometres from uluNdi, was one of Cetshwayo's major military settlements.
- ³³ The battle of uluNdi commenced at approximately 8.45 a.m. on 4 July 1879. By 10.00 a.m. the Zulu lines had broken, and a series of running battles were in progress in which the retreating Zulu were harried by Chelmsford's forces. By midday, the fighting was over.

- ³⁴ The legend that the British fought at uluNdi behind a fortress of sheet iron spread widely through Zululand after the war. It may derive from stories about the 'band of steel' that appeared to encircle the British lines after the order to fix bayonets had been given.
- ³⁵ uluNdi and the other principal royal homesteads and military settlements on the emaHlabathini plain were burnt by the British after the battle.
- ³⁶ Inhlazatshe (iNhlazatshe) mountain lies to the west of the emaHlabathini plain.
- ³⁷ *i.e.* had their homes at isAndlwana in Sihayo's area of jurisdiction.
- ³⁸ Isihlungu (isiHlungu) lies to the south-west of iNhlazatshe near the upper reaches of the umHlathuze river, and is within a day's walking distance of isAndlwana, where the informant's home was situated.
- ³⁹ Cetshwayo was captured in the eNgame forest on 28 August 1879.
- ⁴⁰ For a different assessment see J. Y. Gibson, *The Story of the Zulus*, Pietermaritzburg 1903, p. 128.