

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Mr. Allan Quatermain's story of the wicked and fascinating Mameena, a kind of Zulu Helen, has, it should be stated, a broad foundation in historical fact. Leaving Mameena and her wiles on one side, the tale of the struggle between the Princes Cetewayo and Umbelazi for succession to the throne of Zululand is true.

When the differences between these sons of his became intolerable, because of the tumult which they were causing in his country, King Panda, their father, the son of Senzangakona, and the brother of the great Chaka and of Dingaan, who had ruled before him, did say that "when two young bulls quarrel they had better fight it out." So, at least, I was told by the late Mr. F. B. Fynney, my colleague at the time of the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877, who, as Zulu Border Agent, with the exceptions of the late Sir Theophilus Shepstone and the late Sir Melmoth Osborn, perhaps knew more of that land and people than anyone else of his period.

As a result of this hint given by a maddened king, the great battle of the Tugela was fought at Endondakusuka in December, 1856, between the Usutu party, commanded by Cetewayo, and the adherents of Umbelazi the Handsome, his brother, who was known among the Zulus as

"Indhlovu-ene-Sihlonti," or the "Elephant with the tuft of hair," from a little lock of hair which grew low down upon his back.

My friend, Sir Melmoth Osborn, who died in or about the year 1897, was present at this battle, although not as a combatant. Well do I remember his thrilling story, told to me over thirty years ago, of the events of that awful day.

Early in the morning, or during the previous night, I forget which, he swam his horse across the Tugela and hid with it in a bush-clad kopje, blindfolding the animal with his coat lest it should betray him. As it chanced, the great fight of the day, that of the regiment of veterans, which Sir Melmoth informed me Panda had sent down at the last moment to the assistance of Umbelazi, his favourite son, took place almost at the foot of this kopje. Mr. Quatermain, in his narrative, calls this regiment the Amawombe, but my recollection is that the name Sir Melmoth Osborn gave them was "The Greys" or "Upunga."

Whatever their exact title may have been, however, they made a great stand. At least, he told me that when Umbelazi's impi, or army, began to give before the Usutu onslaught, these "Greys" moved forward above 3,000 strong, drawn up in a triple line, and were charged by one of Cetewayo's regiments.

The opposing forces met, and the noise of their clashing shields, said Sir Melmoth, was like the roll of heavy thunder. Then, while he watched,

the veteran "Greys" passed over the opposing regiment "as a wave passes over a rock"--these were his exact words--and, leaving about a third of their number dead or wounded among the bodies of the annihilated foe, charged on to meet a second regiment sent against them by Cetewayo. With these the struggle was repeated, but again the "Greys" conquered. Only now there were not more than five or six hundred of them left upon their feet.

These survivors ran to a mound, round which they formed a ring, and here for a long while withstood the attack of a third regiment, until at length they perished almost to a man, buried beneath heaps of their slain assailants, the Usutu.

Truly they made a noble end fighting thus against tremendous odds!

As for the number who fell at this battle of Endondakusuka, Mr. Fynney, in a pamphlet which he wrote, says that six of Umbelazi's brothers died, "whilst it is estimated that upwards of 100,000 of the people--men, women and children--were slain"--a high and indeed an impossible estimate.

That curious personage named John Dunn, an Englishman who became a Zulu chief, and who actually fought in this battle, as narrated by Mr. Quatermain, however, puts the number much lower. What the true total was will never be known; but Sir Melmoth Osborn told me that when he swam

his horse back across the Tugela that night it was black with bodies; and Sir Theophilus Shepstone also told me that when he visited the scene a day or two later the banks of the river were strewn with multitudes of them, male and female.

It was from Mr. Fynney that I heard the story of the execution by Cetewayo of the man who appeared before him with the ornaments of Umbelazi, announcing that he had killed the prince with his own hand. Of course, this tale, as Mr. Quatermain points out, bears a striking resemblance to that recorded in the Old Testament in connection with the death of King Saul.

It by no means follows, however, that it is therefore apocryphal; indeed, Mr. Fynney assured me that it was quite true, although, if he gave me his authorities, I cannot remember them after a lapse of more than thirty years.

The exact circumstances of Umbelazi's death are unknown, but the general report was that he died, not by the assegais of the Usutu, but of a broken heart. Another story declares that he was drowned. His body was never found, and it is therefore probable that it sank in the Tugela, as is suggested in the following pages.

I have only to add that it is quite in accordance with Zulu beliefs that a man should be haunted by the ghost of one whom he has murdered or betrayed, or, to be more accurate, that the spirit ("umoya") should

enter into the slayer and drive him mad. Or, in such a case, that spirit might bring misfortune upon him, his family, or his tribe.

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