CHAPTER XIII. UMBELAZI THE FALLEN

So I stayed on at Nodwengu, who, indeed, had no choice in the matter, and was very wretched and ill at ease. The place was almost deserted, except for a couple of regiments which were quartered there, the Sangqu and the Amawombe. This latter was the royal regiment, a kind of Household Guards, to which the Kings Chaka, Dingaan and Panda all belonged in turn. Most of the headmen had taken one side or the other, and were away raising forces to fight for Cetewayo or Umbelazi, and even the greater part of the women and children had gone to hide themselves in the bush or among the mountains, since none knew what would happen, or if the conquering army would not fall upon and destroy them.

A few councillors, however, remained with Panda, among whom was old Maputa, the general, who had once brought me the "message of the pills." Several times he visited me at night and told me the rumours that were flying about. From these I gathered that some skirmishes had taken place and the battle could not be long delayed; also that Umbelazi had chosen his fighting ground, a plain near the banks of the Tugela.

"Why has he done this," I asked, "seeing that then he will have a broad river behind him, and if he is defeated water can kill as well as spears?"

"I know not for certain," answered Maputa; "but it is said because of a

dream that Saduko, his general, has dreamed thrice, which dream declares that there and there alone Umbelazi will find honour. At any rate, he has chosen this place; and I am told that all the women and children of his army, by thousands, are hidden in the bush along the banks of the river, so that they may fly into Natal if there is need."

"Have they wings," I asked, "wherewith to fly over the Tugela 'in wrath,' as it well may be after the rains? Oh, surely his Spirit has turned from Umbelazi!"

"Aye, Macumazahn," he answered, "I, too, think that ufulatewe idhlozi [that is, his own Spirit] has turned its back on him. Also I think that Saduko is no good councillor. Indeed, were I the prince," added the old fellow shrewdly, "I would not keep him whose wife I had stolen as the whisperer in my ear."

"Nor I, Maputa," I answered as I bade him good-bye.

Two days later, early in the morning, Maputa came to me again and said that Panda wished to see me. I went to the head of the kraal, where I found the King seated and before him the captains of the royal Amawombe regiment.

"Watcher-by-Night," he said, "I have news that the great battle between my sons will take place within a few days. Therefore I am sending down this, my own royal regiment, under the command of Maputa the skilled in

war to spy out the battle, and I pray that you will go with it, that you may give to the General Maputa and to the captains the help of your wisdom. Now these are my orders to you, Maputa, and to you, O captains--that you take no part in the fight unless you should see that the Elephant, my son Umbelazi, is fallen into a pit, and that then you shall drag him out if you can and save him alive. Now repeat my words to me."

So they repeated the words, speaking with one voice.

"Your answer, O Macumazana," he said when they had spoken.

"O King, I have told you that I will go--though I do not like war--and I will keep my promise," I replied.

"Then make ready, Macumazahn, and be back here within an hour, for the regiment marches ere noon."

So I went up to my wagons and handed them over to the care of some men whom Panda had sent to take charge of them. Also Scowl and I saddled our horses, for this faithful fellow insisted upon accompanying me, although I advised him to stay behind, and got out our rifles and as much ammunition as we could possibly need, and with them a few other necessaries. These things done, we rode back to the gathering-place, taking farewell of the wagons with a sad heart, since I, for one, never expected to see them again.

As we went I saw that the regiment of the Amawombe, picked men every one of them, all fifty years of age or over, nearly four thousand strong, was marshalled on the dancing-ground, where they stood company by company. A magnificent sight they were, with their white fighting-shields, their gleaming spears, their otter-skin caps, their kilts and armlets of white bulls' tails, and the snowy egret plumes which they wore upon their brows. We rode to the head of them, where I saw Maputa, and as I came they greeted me with a cheer of welcome, for in those days a white man was a power in the land. Moreover, as I have said, the Zulus knew and liked me well. Also the fact that I was to watch, or perchance to fight with them, put a good heart into the Amawombe.

There we stood until the lads, several hundreds of them, who bore the mats and cooking vessels and drove the cattle that were to be our commissariat, had wended away in a long line. Then suddenly Panda appeared out of his hut, accompanied by a few servants, and seemed to utter some kind of prayer, as he did so throwing dust or powdered medicine towards us, though what this ceremony meant I did not understand.

When he had finished Maputa raised a spear, whereon the whole regiment, in perfect time, shouted out the royal salute, "Bayéte", with a sound like that of thunder. Thrice they repeated this tremendous and impressive salute, and then were silent. Again Maputa raised his spear,

and all the four thousand voices broke out into the Ingoma, or national chant, to which deep, awe-inspiring music we began our march. As I do not think it has ever been written down, I will quote the words. They ran thus:

"Ba ya m'zonda,
Ba ya m'loyisa,
Izizwe zonke,
Ba zond', Inkoosi."[*]

[*--Literally translated, this famous chant, now, I think, published for the first time, which, I suppose, will never again pass the lips of a Zulu impi, means:

"They [i.e. the enemy] bear him [i.e. the King] hatred,
They call down curses on his head,
All of them throughout this land
Abhor our King."

The Ingoma when sung by twenty or thirty thousand men rushing down to battle must, indeed, have been a song to hear.--EDITOR.]

The spirit of this fierce Ingoma, conveyed by sound, gesture and inflection of voice, not the exact words, remember, which are very rude and simple, leaving much to the imagination, may perhaps be rendered

somewhat as follows. An exact translation into English verse is almost impossible--at any rate, to me:

"Loud on their lips is lying,
Rebels their King defying.
There shall be dead and dying,

Red are their eyes with hate;
Lo! where our impis wait
Vengeance insatiate!"

It was early on the morning of the 2nd of December, a cold, miserable morning that came with wind and driving mist, that I found myself with the Amawombe at the place known as Endondakusuka, a plain with some kopjes in it that lies within six miles of the Natal border, from which it is separated by the Tugela river.

As the orders of the Amawombe were to keep out of the fray if that were possible, we had taken up a position about a mile to the right of what proved to be the actual battlefield, choosing as our camping ground a rising knoll that looked like a huge tumulus, and was fronted at a distance of about five hundred yards by another smaller knoll. Behind us stretched bushland, or rather broken land, where mimosa thorns grew in scattered groups, sloping down to the banks of the Tugela about four miles away.

Shortly after dawn I was roused from the place where I slept, wrapped up in some blankets, under a mimosa tree--for, of course, we had no tents--by a messenger, who said that the Prince Umbelazi and the white man, John Dunn, wished to see me. I rose and tidied myself as best I could, since, if I can avoid it, I never like to appear before natives in a dishevelled condition. I remember that I had just finished brushing my hair when Umbelazi arrived.

I can see him now, looking a veritable giant in that morning mist. Indeed, there was something quite unearthly about his appearance as he arose out of those rolling vapours, such light as there was being concentrated upon the blade of his big spear, which was well known as the broadest carried by any warrior in Zululand, and a copper torque he wore about his throat.

There he stood, rolling his eyes and hugging his kaross around him because of the cold, and something in his anxious, indeterminate expression told me at once that he knew himself to be a man in terrible danger. Just behind him, dark and brooding, his arms folded on his breast, his eyes fixed upon the ground, looking, to my moved imagination, like an evil genius, stood the stately and graceful Saduko. On his left was a young and sturdy white man carrying a rifle and smoking a pipe, whom I guessed to be John Dunn, a gentleman whom, as it chanced, I had never met, while behind were a force of Natal Government Zulus, clad in some kind of uniform and armed with guns, and with them a number of natives, also from Natal--"kraal Kafirs," who carried stabbing

assegais. One of these led John Dunn's horse.

Of those Government men there may have been thirty or forty, and of the "kraal Kafirs" anything between two and three hundred.

I shook Umbelazi's hand and gave him good-day.

"That is an ill day upon which no sun shines, O Macumazana," he answered--words that struck me as ominous. Then he introduced me to John
Dunn, who seemed glad to meet another white man. Next, not knowing what to say, I asked the exact object of their visit, whereon Dunn began to talk. He said that he had been sent over on the previous afternoon by Captain Walmsley, who was an officer of the Natal Government stationed across the border, to try to make peace between the Zulu factions, but that when he spoke of peace one of Umbelazi's brothers--I think it was Mantantashiya--had mocked at him, saying that they were quite strong enough to cope with the Usutu--that was Cetewayo's party. Also, he added, that when he suggested that the thousands of women and children and the cattle should be got across the Tugela drift during the previous night into safety in Natal, Mantantashiya would not listen, and Umbelazi being absent, seeking the aid of the Natal Government, he could do nothing.

"Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat" [whom God wishes to destroy, He first makes mad], quoted I to myself beneath my breath. This was one of

the Latin tags that my old father, who was a scholar, had taught me, and at that moment it came back to my mind. But as I suspected that John Dunn knew no Latin, I only said aloud:

"What an infernal fool!" (We were talking in English.) "Can't you get Umbelazi to do it now?" (I meant, to send the women and children across the river.)

"I fear it is too late, Mr. Quatermain," he answered. "The Usutu are in sight. Look for yourself." And he handed me a telescope which he had with him.

I climbed on to some rocks and scanned the plain in front of us, from which just then a puff of wind rolled away the mist. It was black with advancing men! As yet they were a considerable distance away--quite two miles, I should think--and coming on very slowly in a great half-moon with thin horns and a deep breast; but a ray from the sun glittered upon their countless spears. It seemed to me that there must be quite twenty or thirty thousand of them in this breast, which was in three divisions, commanded, as I learned afterwards, by Cetewayo, Uzimela, and by a young Boer named Groening.

"There they are, right enough," I said, climbing down from my rocks. "What are you going to do, Mr. Dunn?"

"Obey orders and try to make peace, if I can find anyone to make peace

with; and if I can't--well, fight, I suppose. And you, Mr. Quatermain?"

"Oh, obey orders and stop here, I suppose. Unless," I added doubtfully, "these Amawombe take the bit between their teeth and run away with me."

"They'll do that before nightfall, Mr. Quatermain, if I know anything of the Zulus. Look here, why don't you get on your horse and come off with me? This is a queer place for you."

"Because I promised not to," I answered with a groan, for really, as I looked at those savages round me, who were already fingering their spears in a disagreeable fashion, and those other thousands of savages advancing towards us, I felt such little courage as I possessed sinking into my boots.

"Very well, Mr. Quatermain, you know your own business best; but I hope you will come out of it safely, that is all."

"Same to you," I replied.

Then John Dunn turned, and in my hearing asked Umbelazi what he knew of
the movements of the Usutu and of their plan of battle.

The Prince replied, with a shrug of his shoulders:

"Nothing at present, Son of Mr. Dunn, but doubtless before the sun is high I shall know much."

As he spoke a sudden gust of wind struck us, and tore the nodding ostrich plume from its fastening on Umbelazi's head-ring. Whilst a murmur of dismay rose from all who saw what they considered this very ill-omened accident, away it floated into the air, to fall gently to the ground at the feet of Saduko. He stooped, picked it up, and reset it in its place, saying as he did so, with that ready wit for which some Kafirs are remarkable:

"So may I live, O Prince, to set the crown upon the head of Panda's favoured son!"

This apt speech served to dispel the general gloom caused by the incident, for those who heard it cheered, while Umbelazi thanked his captain with a nod and a smile. Only I noted that Saduko did not mention the name of "Panda's favoured son" upon whose head he hoped to live to set the crown. Now, Panda had many sons, and that day would show which of them was favoured.

A minute or two later John Dunn and his following departed, as he said, to try to make peace with the advancing Usutu. Umbelazi, Saduko and their escort departed also towards the main body of the host of the Isigqosa, which was massed to our left, "sitting on their spears," as the natives say, and awaiting the attack. As for me, I remained alone

with the Amawombe, drinking some coffee that Scowl had brewed for me, and forcing myself to swallow food.

I can say honestly that I do not ever remember partaking of a more unhappy meal. Not only did I believe that I was looking on the last sun I should ever see--though by the way, there was uncommonly little of that orb visible--but what made the matter worse was that, if so, I should be called upon to die alone among savages, with not a single white face near to comfort me. Oh, how I wished I had never allowed myself to be dragged into this dreadful business. Yes, and I was even mean enough to wish that I had broken my word to Panda and gone off with John Dunn when he invited me, although now I thank goodness that I did not yield to that temptation and thereby sacrifice my self-respect.

Soon, however, things grew so exciting that I forgot these and other melancholy reflections in watching the development of events from the summit of our tumulus-like knoll, whence I had a magnificent view of the whole battle. Here, after seeing that his regiment made a full meal, as a good general should, old Maputa joined me, whom I asked whether he thought there would be any fighting for him that day.

"I think so, I think so," he answered cheerfully. "It seems to me that the Usutu greatly outnumber Umbelazi and the Isigqosa, and, of course, as you know, Panda's orders are that if he is in danger we must help him. Oh, keep a good heart, Macumazahn, for I believe I can promise you that you will see our spears grow red to-day. You will not go hungry

from this battle to tell the white people that the Amawombe are cowards whom you could not flog into the fight. No, no, Macumazahn, my Spirit looks towards me this morning, and I who am old and who thought that I should die at length like a cow, shall see one more great fight--my twentieth, Macumazahn; for I fought with this same Amawombe in all the Black One's big battles, and for Panda against Dingaan also."

"Perhaps it will be your last," I suggested.

"I dare say, Macumazahn; but what does that matter if only I and the royal regiment can make an end that shall be spoken of? Oh, cheer up, cheer up, Macumazahn; your Spirit, too, looks towards you, as I promise that we all will do when the shields meet; for know, Macumazahn, that we poor black soldiers expect that you will show us how to fight this day, and, if need be, how to fall hidden in a heap of the foe."

"Oh!" I replied, "so this is what you Zulus mean by the 'giving of counsel,' is it?--you infernal, bloodthirsty old scoundrel," I added in English.

But I think Maputa never heard me. At any rate, he only seized my arm and pointed in front, a little to the left, where the horn of the great Usutu army was coming up fast, a long, thin line alive with twinkling spears; their moving arms and legs causing them to look like spiders, of which the bodies were formed by the great war shields.

"See their plan?" he said. "They would close on Umbelazi and gore him with their horns and then charge with their head. The horn will pass between us and the right flank of the Isigqosa. Oh! awake, awake, Elephant! Are you asleep with Mameena in a hut? Unloose your spears, Child of the King, and at them as they mount the slope. Behold!" he went on, "it is the Son of Dunn that begins the battle! Did I not tell you that we must look to the white men to show us the way? Peep through your tube, Macumazahn, and tell me what passes."

So I "peeped," and, the telescope which John Dunn had kindly left with me being good though small, saw everything clearly enough. He rode up almost to the point of the left horn of the Usutu, waving a white handkerchief and followed by his small force of police and Natal Kafirs. Then from somewhere among the Usutu rose a puff of smoke. Dunn had been
fired at.

He dropped the handkerchief and leapt to the ground. Now he and his police were firing rapidly in reply, and men fell fast among the Usutu. They raised their war shout and came on, though slowly, for they feared the bullets. Step by step John Dunn and his people were thrust back, fighting gallantly against overwhelming odds. They were level with us, not a quarter of a mile to our left. They were pushed past us. They vanished among the bush behind us, and a long while passed before ever I heard what became of them, for we met no more that day.

Now, the horns having done their work and wrapped themselves round Umbelazi's army as the nippers of a wasp close about a fly (why did not Umbelazi cut off those horns, I wondered), the Usutu bull began his charge. Twenty or thirty thousand strong, regiment after regiment, Cetewayo's men rushed up the slope, and there, near the crest of it, were met by Umbelazi's regiments springing forward to repel the onslaught and shouting their battle-cry of "Laba! Laba! Laba! Laba!"

The noise of their meeting shields came to our ears like that of the roll of thunder, and the sheen of their stabbing-spears shone as shines the broad summer lightning. They hung and wavered on the slope; then from the Amawombe ranks rose a roar of

"Umbelazi wins!"

Watching intently, we saw the Usutu giving back. Down the slope they went, leaving the ground in front of them covered with black spots which we knew to be dead or wounded men.

"Why does not the Elephant charge home?" said Maputa in a perplexed voice. "The Usutu bull is on his back! Why does he not trample him?"

"Because he is afraid, I suppose," I answered, and went on watching.

There was plenty to see, as it happened. Finding that they were not pursued, Cetewayo's impi reformed swiftly at the bottom of the slope,

in preparation for another charge. Among that of Umbelazi, above them, rapid movements took place of which I could not guess the meaning, which movements were accompanied by much noise of angry shouting. Then suddenly, from the midst of the Isigqosa army, emerged a great body of men, thousands strong, which ran swiftly, but in open order, down the slope towards the Usutu, holding their spears reversed. At first I thought that they were charging independently, till I saw the Usutu ranks open to receive them with a shout of welcome.

"Treachery!" I said. "Who is it?"

"Saduko, with the Amakoba and Amangwane soldiers and others. I know them
by their head-dresses," answered Maputa in a cold voice.

"Do you mean that Saduko has gone over to Cetewayo with all his following?" I asked excitedly.

"What else, Macumazahn? Saduko is a traitor: Umbelazi is finished," and he passed his hand swiftly across his mouth--a gesture that has only one meaning among the Zulus.

As for me, I sat down upon a stone and groaned, for now I understood everything.

Presently the Usutu raised fierce, triumphant shouts, and once again

their impi, swelled with Saduko's power, began to advance up the slope. Umbelazi, and those of the Isigqosa party who clung to him--now, I should judge, not more than eight thousand men--never stayed to wait the onslaught. They broke! They fled in a hideous rout, crashing through the thin, left horn of the Usutu by mere weight of numbers, and passing behind us obliquely on their road to the banks of the Tugela. A messenger rushed up to us, panting.

"These are the words of Umbelazi," he gasped. "O Watcher-by-Night and O Maputa, Indhlovu-ene-sihlonti prays that you will hold back the Usutu, as the King bade you do in case of need, and so give to him and those who cling to him time to escape with the women and children into Natal. His general, Saduko, has betrayed him, and gone over with three regiments to Cetewayo, and therefore we can no longer stand against the thousands of the Usutu."

"Go tell the prince that Macumazahn, Maputa, and the Amawombe regiment will do their best," answered Maputa calmly. "Still, this is our advice to him, that he should cross the Tugela swiftly with the women and the children, seeing that we are few and Cetewayo is many."

The messenger leapt away, but, as I heard afterwards, he never found Umbelazi, since the poor man was killed within five hundred yards of where we stood.

Then Maputa gave an order, and the Amawombe formed themselves into a

triple line, thirteen hundred men in the first line, thirteen hundred men in the second line, and about a thousand in the third, behind whom were the carrier boys, three or four hundred of them. The place assigned to me was in the exact centre of the second line, where, being mounted on a horse, it was thought, as I gathered, that I should serve as a convenient rallying-point.

In this formation we advanced a few hundred yards to our left, evidently with the object of interposing ourselves between the routed impi and the pursuing Usutu, or, if the latter should elect to go round us, with that of threatening their flank. Cetewayo's generals did not leave us long in doubt as to what they would do. The main body of their army bore away to the right in pursuit of the flying foe, but three regiments, each of about two thousand five hundred spears, halted. Five minutes passed perhaps while they marshalled, with a distance of some six hundred yards between them. Each regiment was in a triple line like our own.

To me that seemed a very long five minutes, but, reflecting that it was probably my last on earth, I tried to make the best of it in a fashion that can be guessed. Strange to say, however, I found it impossible to keep my mind fixed upon those matters with which it ought to have been filled. My eyes and thoughts would roam. I looked at the ranks of the veteran Amawombe, and noted that they were still and solemn as men about to die should be, although they showed no sign of fear. Indeed, I saw some of those near me passing their snuffboxes to each other. Two grey-haired men also, who evidently were old friends, shook hands as

people do who are parting before a journey, while two others discussed in a low voice the possibility of our wiping out most of the Usutu before we were wiped out ourselves.

"It depends," said one of them, "whether they attack us regiment by regiment or all together, as they will do if they are wise."

Then an officer bade them be silent, and conversation ceased. Maputa passed through the ranks giving orders to the captains. From a distance his withered old body, with a fighting shield held in front of it, looked like that of a huge black ant carrying something in its mouth. He came to where Scowl and I sat upon our horses.

"Ah! I see that you are ready, Macumazahn," he said in a cheerful voice. "I told you that you should not go away hungry, did I not?"

"Maputa," I said in remonstrance, "what is the use of this? Umbelazi is defeated, you are not of his impi, why send all these"--and I waved my hand--"down into the darkness? Why not go to the river and try to save the women and children?"

"Because we shall take many of those down into the darkness with us, Macumazahn," and he pointed to the dense masses of the Usutu. "Yet," he added, with a touch of compunction, "this is not your quarrel. You and your servant have horses. Slip out, if you will, and gallop hard to the lower drift. You may get away with your lives."

Then my white man's pride came to my aid.

"Nay," I answered, "I will not run while others stay to fight."

"I never thought you would, Macumazahn, who, I am sure, do not wish to earn a new and ugly name. Well, neither will the Amawombe run to become a mock among their people. The King's orders were that we should try to help Umbelazi, if the battle went against him. We obey the King's orders by dying where we stand. Macumazahn, do you think that you could hit that big fellow who is shouting insults at us there? If so, I should be obliged to you, as I dislike him very much," and he showed me a captain who was swaggering about in front of the lines of the first of the Usutu regiments, about six hundred yards away.

"I will try," I answered, "but it's a long shot." Dismounting, I climbed a pile of stones and, resting my rifle on the topmost of them, took a very full sight, aimed, held my breath, and pressed the trigger. A second afterwards the shouter of insults threw his arms wide, letting fall his spear, and pitched forward on to his face.

A roar of delight rose from the watching Amawombe, while old Maputa clapped his thin brown hands and grinned from ear to ear.

"Thank you, Macumazahn. A very good omen! Now I am sure that, whatever those Isigqosa dogs of Umbelazi's may do, we King's men shall make an

excellent end, which is all that we can hope. Oh, what a beautiful shot! It will be something to think of when I am an idhlozi, a spirit-snake, crawling about my own kraal. Farewell, Macumazahn," and he took my hand and pressed it. "The time has come. I go to lead the charge. The Amawombe have orders to defend you to the last, for I wish you to see the finish of this fight. Farewell."

Then off he hurried, followed by his orderlies and staff-officers.

I never saw him again alive, though I think that once in after years I did meet his idhlozi in his kraal under strange circumstances. But that has nothing to do with this history.

As for me, having reloaded, I mounted my horse again, being afraid lest, if I went on shooting, I should miss and spoil my reputation. Besides, what was the use of killing more men unless I was obliged? There were plenty ready to do that.

Another minute, and the regiment in front of us began to move, while the other two behind it ostentatiously sat themselves down in their ranks, to show that they did not mean to spoil sport. The fight was to begin with a duel between about six thousand men.

"Good!" muttered the warrior who was nearest me. "They are in our bag."

"Aye," answered another, "those little boys" (used as a term of

contempt) "are going to learn their last lesson."

For a few seconds there was silence, while the long ranks leant forward between the hedges of lean and cruel spears. A whisper went down the line; it sounded like the noise of wind among trees, and was the signal to prepare. Next a far-off voice shouted some word, which was repeated again and again by other voices before and behind me. I became aware that we were moving, quite slowly at first, then more quickly. Being lifted above the ranks upon my horse I could see the whole advance, and the general aspect of it was that of a triple black wave, each wave crowned with foam--the white plumes and shields of the Amawombe were the foam--and alive with sparkles of light--their broad spears were the light.

We were charging now--and oh! the awful and glorious excitement of that charge! Oh, the rush of the bending plumes and the dull thudding of eight thousand feet! The Usutu came up the slope to meet us. In silence we went, and in silence they came. We drew near to each other. Now we could see their faces peering over the tops of their mottled shields, and now we could see their fierce and rolling eyes.

Then a roar--a rolling roar such as at that time I had never heard: the thunder of the roar of the meeting shields--and a flash--a swift, simultaneous flash, the flash of the lightning of the stabbing spears. Up went the cry of:

"Kill, Amawombe, kill!" answered by another cry of:

"Toss, Usutu, toss!"

After that, what happened? Heaven knows alone--or at least I do not. But in later years Mr. Osborn, afterwards the resident magistrate at Newcastle, in Natal, who, being young and foolish in those days, had swum his horse over the Tugela and hidden in a little kopje quite near to us in order to see the battle, told me that it looked as though some huge breaker--that breaker being the splendid Amawombe--rolling in towards the shore with the weight of the ocean behind it, had suddenly struck a ridge of rock and, rearing itself up, submerged and hidden it.

At least, within three minutes that Usutu regiment was no more. We had killed them every one, and from all along our lines rose a fierce hissing sound of "S'gee, S'gee" ("Zhi" in the Zulu) uttered as the spears went home in the bodies of the conquered.

That regiment had gone, taking nearly a third of our number with it, for in such a battle as this the wounded were as good as dead. Practically our first line had vanished in a fray that did not last more than a few minutes. Before it was well over the second Usutu regiment sprang up and charged. With a yell of victory we rushed down the slope towards them. Again there was the roar of the meeting shields, but this time the fight was more prolonged, and, being in the front rank now, I had my share of it. I remember shooting two Usutu who stabbed at me, after which my gun

was wrenched from my hand. I remember the mêlée swinging backwards and

forwards, the groans of the wounded, the shouts of victory and despair,

and then Scowl's voice saying:

"We have beat them, Baas, but here come the others."

The third regiment was on our shattered lines. We closed up, we fought like devils, even the bearer boys rushed into the fray. From all sides they poured down upon us, for we had made a ring; every minute men died by hundreds, and, though their numbers grew few, not one of the Amawombe

yielded. I was fighting with a spear now, though how it came into my hand I cannot remember for certain. I think, however, I wrenched it from a man who rushed at me and was stabbed before he could strike. I killed a captain with this spear, for as he fell I recognised his face. It was that of one of Cetewayo's companions to whom I had sold some cloth at Nodwengu. The fallen were piled up quite thick around me--we were using them as a breastwork, friend and foe together. I saw Scowl's horse rear into the air and fall. He slipped over its tail, and next instant was fighting at my side, also with a spear, muttering Dutch and English oaths as he struck.

"Beetje varm! [a little hot] Beetje varm, Baas!" I heard him say. Then my horse screamed aloud and something hit me hard upon the head--I suppose it was a thrown kerry--after which I remember nothing for a

while, except a sensation of passing through the air.

I came to myself again, and found that I was still on the horse, which was ambling forward across the veld at a rate of about eight miles an hour, and that Scowl was clinging to my stirrup leather and running at my side. He was covered with blood, so was the horse, and so was I. It may have been our own blood, for all three were more or less wounded, or it may have been that of others; I am sure I do not know, but we were a terrible sight. I pulled upon the reins, and the horse stopped among some thorns. Scowl felt in the saddlebags and found a large flask of Hollands gin and water--half gin and half water--which he had placed there before the battle. He uncorked and gave it to me. I took a long pull at the stuff, that tasted like veritable nectar, then handed it to him, who did likewise. New life seemed to flow into my veins. Whatever teetotallers may say, alcohol is good at such a moment.

"Where are the Amawombe?" I asked.

"All dead by now, I think, Baas, as we should be had not your horse bolted. Wow! but they made a great fight--one that will be told of! They have carried those three regiments away upon their spears."

"That's good," I said. "But where are we going?"

"To Natal, I hope, Baas. I have had enough of the Zulus for the present. The Tugela is not far away, and we will swim it. Come on, before our

hurts grow stiff."

So we went on, till presently we reached the crest of a rise of ground overlooking the river, and there saw and heard dreadful things, for beneath us those devilish Usutu were massacring the fugitives and the camp-followers. These were being driven by the hundred to the edge of the water, there to perish on the banks or in the stream, which was black with drowned or drowning forms.

And oh! the sounds! Well, these I will not attempt to describe.

"Keep up stream," I said shortly, and we struggled across a kind of donga, where only a few wounded men were hidden, into a somewhat denser patch of bush that had scarcely been entered by the flying Isigqosa, perhaps because here the banks of the river were very steep and difficult; also, between them its waters ran swiftly, for this was above the drift.

For a while we went on in safety, then suddenly I heard a noise. A great man plunged past me, breaking through the bush like a buffalo, and came to a halt upon a rock which overhung the Tugela, for the floods had eaten away the soil beneath.

"Umbelazi!" said Scowl, and as he spoke we saw another man following as a wild dog follows a buck.

"Saduko!" said Scowl.

I rode on. I could not help riding on, although I knew it would be safer to keep away. I reached the edge of that big rock. Saduko and Umbelazi were fighting there.

In ordinary circumstances, strong and active as he was, Saduko would have had no chance against the most powerful Zulu living. But the prince was utterly exhausted; his sides were going like a blacksmith's bellows, or those of a fat eland bull that has been galloped to a standstill. Moreover, he seemed to me to be distraught with grief, and, lastly, he had no shield left, nothing but an assegai.

A stab from Saduko's spear, which he partially parried, wounded him slightly on the head, and cut loose the fillet of his ostrich plume, that same plume which I had seen blown off in the morning, so that it fell to the ground. Another stab pierced his right arm, making it helpless. He snatched the assegai with his left hand, striving to continue the fight, and just at that moment we came up.

"What are you doing, Saduko?" I cried. "Does a dog bite his own master?"

He turned and stared at me; both of them stared at me.

"Aye, Macumazahn," he answered in an icy voice, "sometimes when it is starving and that full-fed master has snatched away its bone. Nay, stand

aside, Macumazahn" (for, although I was quite unarmed, I had stepped between them), "lest you should share the fate of this woman-thief."

"Not I, Saduko," I cried, for this sight made me mad, "unless you murder me."

Then Umbelazi spoke in a hollow voice, sobbing out his words:

"I thank you, White Man, yet do as this snake bids you--this snake that has lived in my kraal and fed out of my cup. Let him have his fill of vengeance because of the woman who bewitched me--yes, because of the sorceress who has brought me and thousands to the dust. Have you heard, Macumazahn, of the great deed of this son of Matiwane? Have you heard that all the while he was a traitor in the pay of Cetewayo, and that he went over, with the regiments of his command, to the Usutu just when the battle hung upon the turn? Come, Traitor, here is my heart--the heart that loved and trusted you. Strike--strike hard!"

"Out of the way, Macumazahn!" hissed Saduko. But I would not stir.

He sprang at me, and, though I put up the best fight that I could in my injured state, got his hands about my throat and began to choke me. Scowl ran to help me, but his wound--for he was hurt--or his utter exhaustion took effect on him. Or perhaps it was excitement. At any rate, he fell down in a fit. I thought that all was over, when again I heard Umbelazi's voice, and felt Saduko's grip loosen at my throat, and

sat up.

"Dog," said the Prince, "where is your assegai?" And as he spoke he threw it from him into the river beneath, for he had picked it up while we struggled, but, as I noted, retained his own. "Now, dog, why do I not kill you, as would have been easy but now? I will tell you. Because I will not mix the blood of a traitor with my own. See!" He set the haft of his broad spear upon the rock and bent forward over the blade. "You and your witch-wife have brought me to nothing, O Saduko. My blood, and the blood of all who clung to me, is on your head. Your name shall stink for ever in the nostrils of all true men, and I whom you have betrayed--I, the Prince Umbelazi--will haunt you while you live; yes, my spirit shall enter into you, and when you die--ah! then we'll meet again. Tell this tale to the white men, Macumazahn, my friend, on whom be honour and blessings."

He paused, and I saw the tears gush from his eyes--tears mingled with blood from the wound in his head. Then suddenly he uttered the battle-cry of "Laba! Laba!" and let his weight fall upon the point of the spear.

It pierced him through and through. He fell on to his hands and knees. He looked up at us--oh, the piteousness of that look!--and then rolled sideways from the edge of the rock.

A heavy splash, and that was the end of Umbelazi the Fallen--Umbelazi,

about whom Mameena had cast her net.

A sad story in truth. Although it happened so many years ago I weep as I write it--I weep as Umbelazi wept.