

CHAPTER XII. THE TALE OF GALAZI THE WOLF

Now, my father, I will go back a little, for my tale is long and winds in and out like a river in a plain, and tell of the fate of Umslopogaas when the lion had taken him, as he told it to me in the after years.

The lioness bounded away, and in her mouth was Umslopogaas. Once he struggled, but she bit him hard, so he lay quiet in her mouth, and looking back he saw the face of Nada as she ran from the fence of thorns, crying "Save him!" He saw her face, he heard her words, then he saw and heard little more, for the world grew dark to him and he passed, as it were, into a deep sleep. Presently Umslopogaas awoke again, feeling pain in his thigh, where the lioness had bitten him, and heard a sound of shouting. He looked up; near to him stood the lioness that had loosed him from her jaws. She was snorting with rage, and in front of her was a lad long and strong, with a grim face, and a wolf's hide, black and grey, bound about his shoulders in such fashion that the upper jaw and teeth of the wolf rested on his head. He stood before the lioness, shouting, and in one hand he held a large war-shield, and in the other he grasped a heavy club shod with iron.

Now the lioness crouched herself to spring, growling terribly, but the lad with the club did not wait for her onset. He ran in upon her and struck her on the head with the club. He smote hard and well, but this did not kill her, for she reared herself upon her hind legs and struck at him heavily. He caught the blow upon his shield, but the shield was

driven against his breast so strongly that he fell backwards beneath it, and lay there howling like a wolf in pain. Then the lioness sprang upon him and worried him. Still, because of the shield, as yet she could not come at him to slay him; but Umslopogaas saw that this might not endure, for presently the shield would be torn aside and the stranger must be killed. Now in the breast of the lioness still stood the half of Umslopogaas's broken spear, and its blade was a span deep in her breast. Then this thought came into the mind of Umslopogaas, that he would drive the spear home or die. So he rose swiftly, for strength came back to him in his need, and ran to where the lioness worried at him who lay beneath the shield. She did not heed him, so he flung himself upon his knees before her, and, seizing the haft of the broken spear, drove it deep into her and wrenched it round. Now she saw Umslopogaas and turned roaring, and clawed at him, tearing his breast and arms. Then, as he lay, he heard a mighty howling, and, behold! grey wolves and black leaped upon the lioness and rent and worried her till she fell and was torn to pieces by them. After this the senses of Umslopogaas left him again, and the light went out of his eyes so that he was as one dead.

At length his mind came back to him, and with it his memory, and he remembered the lioness and looked up to find her. But he did not find her, and he saw that he lay in a cave upon a bed of grass, while all about him were the skins of beasts, and at his side was a pot filled with water. He put out his hand and, taking the pot, drank of the water, and then he saw that his arm was wasted as with sickness, and that his breast was thick with scars scarcely skinned over.

Now while he lay and wondered, the mouth of the cave was darkened, and through it entered that same lad who had done battle with the lioness and been overthrown by her, bearing a dead buck upon his shoulders. He put down the buck upon the ground, and, walking to where Umslopogaas lay, looked at him.

"Ou!" he said, "your eyes are open--do you, then, live, stranger?"

"I live," answered Umslopogaas, "and I am hungry."

"It is time," said the other, "since with toil I bore you here through the forest, for twelve days you have lain without sense, drinking water only. So deeply had the lion clawed you that I thought of you as dead. Twice I was near to killing you, that you might cease to suffer and I to be troubled; but I held my hand, because of a word which came to me from one who is dead. Now eat, that your strength may return to you. Afterwards, we will talk."

So Umslopogaas ate, and little by little his health returned to him--every day a little. And afterwards, as they sat at night by the fire in the cave they spoke together.

"How are you named?" asked Umslopogaas of the other.

"I am named Galazi the Wolf," he answered, "and I am of Zulu blood--ay,

of the blood of Chaka the king; for the father of Senzangacona, the father of Chaka, was my great-grandfather."

"Whence came you, Galazi?"

"I came from Swaziland--from the tribe of the Halakazi, which I should rule. This is the story: Siguyana, my grandfather, was a younger brother of Senzangacona, the father of Chaka. But he quarrelled with Senzangacona, and became a wanderer. With certain of the people of the Umtetwa he wandered into Swaziland, and sojourned with the Halakazi tribe in their great caves; and the end of it was that he killed the chief of the tribe and took his place. After he was dead, my father ruled in his place; but there was a great party in the tribe that hated his rule because he was of the Zulu race, and it would have set up a chief of the old Swazi blood in his place. Still, they could not do this, for my father's hand was heavy on the people. Now I was the only son of my father by his head wife, and born to be chief after him, and therefore those of the Swazi party, and they were many and great, hated me also. So matters stood till last year in the winter, and then my father set his heart on killing twenty of the headmen, with their wives and children, because he knew that they plotted against him. But the headmen learned what was to come, and they prevailed upon a wife of my father, a woman of their own blood, to poison him. So she poisoned him in the night and in the morning it was told me that my father lay sick and summoned me, and I went to him. In his hut I found him, and he was writhing with pain.

"What is it, my father?' I said. 'Who has done this evil?'

"It is this, my son,' he gasped, 'that I am poisoned, and she stands yonder who has done the deed.' And he pointed to the woman, who stood at the side of the hut near the door, her chin upon her breast, trembling as she looked upon the fruit of her wickedness.

"Now the girl was young and fair, and we had been friends, yet I say that I did not pause, for my heart was mad within me. I did not pause, but, seizing my spear, I ran at her, and, though she cried for mercy, I killed her with the spear.

"That was well done, Galazi!' said my father. 'But when I am gone, look to yourself, my son, for these Swazi dogs will drive you out and rob you of your place! But if they drive you out and you still live, swear this to me--that you will not rest till you have avenged me.'

"I swear it, my father,' I answered. 'I swear that I will stamp out the men of the tribe of Halakazi, every one of them, except those of my own blood, and bring their women to slavery and their children to bonds!'

"Big words for a young mouth,' said my father. 'Yet shall you live to bring these things about, Galazi. This I know of you now in my hour of death: you shall be a wanderer for a few years of your life, child of Siguyana, and wandering in another land you shall die a man's death, and

not such a death as yonder witch has given to me.' Then, having spoken thus, he lifted up his head, looked at me, and with a great groan he died.

"Now I passed out of the hut dragging the body of the dead girl after me. In front of the hut were gathered many headmen waiting for the end, and I saw that their looks were sullen.

"The chief, my father, is dead!' I cried in a loud voice, 'and I, Galazi, who am the chief, have slain her who murdered him!' And I rolled the body of the girl over on to her back so that they might look upon her face.

"Now the father of the girl was among those who stood before me, he who had persuaded her to the deed, and he was maddened at the sight.

"What, my brothers?' he cried. 'Shall we suffer that this young Zulu dog, this murderer of a girl, be chief over us? Never! The old lion is dead, now for the cub!' And he ran at me with spear aloft.

"Never!' shouted the others, and they, too, ran towards me, shaking their spears.

"I waited, I did not hasten, for I knew well that I should not die then, I knew it from my father's last words. I waited till the man was near me; he thrust, I sprang aside and drove my spear through him, and on the

daughter's body the father fell dead. Then I shouted aloud and rushed through them. None touched me; none could catch me; the man does not live who can overtake me when my feet are on the ground and I am away."

"Yet I might try," said Umslopogaas, smiling, for of all lads among the Zulus he was the swiftest of foot.

"First walk again, then run," answered Galazi.

"Take up the tale," quoth Umslopogaas; "it is a merry one."

"Something is left to tell, stranger. I fled from the country of the Halakazi, nor did I linger at all in the land of the Swazis, but came on swiftly into the Zulu. Now, it was in my mind to go to Chaka and tell him of my wrongs, asking that he would send an impi to make an end of the Halakazi. But while I journeyed, finding food and shelter as I might, I came one night to the kraal of an old man who knew Chaka, and had known Siguyana, my grandfather, and to him, when I had stayed there two days, I told my tale. But the old man counselled me against my plan, saying that Chaka, the king, did not love to welcome new shoots sprung from the royal stock, and would kill me; moreover, the man offered me a place in his kraal. Now, I held that there was wisdom in his words, and thought no more of standing before the king to cry for justice, for he who cries to kings for justice sometimes finds death. Still, I would not stay in the kraal of the old man, for he had sons to come after him who looked on me with no liking; moreover, I wished to be a chief myself,

even if I lived alone. So I left the kraal by night and walked on, not knowing where I should go.

"Now, on the third night, I came to a little kraal that stands on the farther side of the river at the foot of the mountain. In front of the kraal sat a very old woman basking in the rays of the setting sun. She saw me, and spoke to me, saying, 'Young man, you are tall and strong and swift of foot. Would you earn a famous weapon, a club, that destroys all who stand before it?'

"I said that I wished to have such a club, and asked what I should do to win it.

"'You shall do this,' said the old woman: 'to-morrow morning, at the first light, you shall go up to yonder mountain,' and she pointed to the mountain where you are now, stranger, on which the stone Witch sits forever waiting for the world to die. 'Two-thirds of the way up the mountain you will come to a path that is difficult to climb. You shall climb the path and enter a gloomy forest. It is very dark in the forest, but you must push through it till you come to an open place with a wall of rock behind it. In the wall of rock is a cave, and in the cave you will find the bones of a man. Bring down the bones in a bag, and I will give you the club!'

"While she spoke thus people came out of the kraal and listened.

"Do not heed her, young man,' they said, 'unless you are weary of life. Do not heed her: she is crazy. The mountain is haunted; it is a place of ghosts. Look at the stone Witch who sits upon it! Evil spirits live in that forest, and no man has walked there for many years. This woman's son was foolish: he went to wander in the forest, saying that he cared nothing for ghosts, and the Amatongo, the ghost-folk, killed him. That was many years ago, and none have dared to seek his bones. Ever she sits here and asks of the passers by that they should bring him to her, offering the great club for a reward; but they dare not!

"They lie!' said the old woman. 'There are no ghosts there. The ghosts live only in their cowardly hearts; there are but wolves. I know that the bones of my son lie in the cave, for I have seen them in a dream; but, alas! my old limbs are too weak to carry me up the mountain path, and all these are cowards; there is no man among them since the Zulus killed my husband, covering him with wounds!

"Now, I listened, answering nothing; but when all had done, I asked to see the club which should be given to him who dared to face the Amatongo, the spirits who lived in the forest upon the Ghost Mountain. Then the old woman rose, and creeping on her hands went into the hut. Presently she returned again, dragging the great club after her.

"Look at it, stranger! look at it! Was there ever such a club?" And Galazi held it up before the eyes of Umslopogaas.

In truth, my father, that was a club, for I, Mopo, saw it in after days.
It was great and knotty, black as iron that had been smoked in the fire,
and shod with metal that was worn smooth with smiting.

"I looked at it," went on Galazi, "and I tell you, stranger, a great
desire came into my heart to possess it.

"How is this club named?' I asked of the old woman.

"It is named Watcher of the Fords,' she answered, 'and it has
not watched in vain. Five men have held that club in war and a
hundred-and-seventy-three have given up their lives beneath its strokes.
He who held it last slew twenty before he was slain himself, for this
fortune goes with the club--that he who owns it shall die holding it,
but in a noble fashion. There is but one other weapon to match with
it in Zululand, and that is the great axe of Jikiza, the chief of
the People of the Axe, who dwells in the kraal yonder; the ancient
horn-hafted Imbubuzi, the Groan-Maker, that brings victory. Were axe,
Groan-Maker, and club, Watcher of the Fords, side by side, there are
no thirty men in Zululand who could stand before them. I have said.
Choose!' And the aged woman watched me cunningly through her horny eyes.

"She speaks truly now,' said one of those who stood near. 'Let the club
be, young man: he who owns it smites great blows indeed, but in the end
he dies by the assegai. None dare own the Watcher of the Fords.'

"A good death and a swift!" I answered. And pondered a time, while still the old woman watched me through her horny eyes. At length she rose, 'La!, la!' she said, 'the Watcher is not for this one. This is but a child, I must seek me a man, I must seek me a man!'

"Not so fast, old wife,' I said. 'Will you lend me this club to hold in my hand while I go to find the bones of your son and to snatch them from the people of the ghosts?'

"Lend you the Watcher, boy? Nay, nay! I should see little of you again or of the good club either.'

"I am no thief,' I answered. 'If the ghosts kill me, you will see me no more, or the club either; but if I live I will bring you back the bones, or, if I do not find them, I will render the Watcher into your hands again. At the least I say that if you will not lend me the club, then I will not go into the haunted place.'

"Boy, your eyes are honest,' she said, still peering at me. 'Take the Watcher, go seek the bones. If you die, let the club be lost with you; if you fail, bring it back to me; but if you win the bones, then it is yours, and it shall bring you glory and you shall die a man's death at last holding him aloft among the dead.'

"So on the morrow at dawn I took the club Watcher in my hand and a little dancing shield, and made ready to start. The old woman blessed me

and bade me farewell, but the other people of the kraal mocked, saying: 'A little man for so big a club! Beware, little man, lest the ghosts use the club on you!' So they spoke, but one girl in the kraal--she is a granddaughter of the old woman--led me aside, praying me not to go, for the forest on the Ghost Mountain had an evil name: none dared walk there, since it was certainly full of spirits, who howled like wolves. I thanked the girl, but to the others I said nothing, only I asked of the path to the Ghost Mountain.

"Now stranger, if you have strength, come to the mouth of the cave and look out, for the moon is bright."

So Umslopogaas rose and crept through the narrow mouth of the cave. There, above him, a great grey peak towered high into the air, shaped like a seated woman, her chin resting upon her breast, the place where the cave was being, as it were, on the lap of the woman. Below this place the rock sloped sharply, and was clothed with little bushes. Lower down yet was a forest, great and dense, that stretched to the top of a cliff, and at the foot of the cliff, beyond the waters of the river, lay the wide plains of Zululand.

"Yonder, stranger," said Galazi, pointing with the club Watcher of the Fords far away to the plain beneath; "yonder is the kraal where the aged woman dwelt. There is a cliff rising from the plain, up which I must climb; there is the forest where dwell the Amatongo, the people of the ghosts; there, on the hither side of the forest, runs the path to the

cave, and here is the cave itself. See this stone lying at the mouth of the cave, it turns thus, shutting up the entrance hole--it turns gently; though it is so large, a child may move it, for it rests upon a sharp point of rock. Only mark this, the stone must not be pushed too far; for, look! if it came to here," and he pointed to a mark in the mouth of the cave, "then that man need be strong who can draw it back again, though I have done it myself, who am not a man full grown. But if it pass beyond this mark, then, see, it will roll down the neck of the cave like a pebble down the neck of a gourd, and I think that two men, one striving from within and one dragging from without, scarcely could avail to push it clear. Look now, I close the stone, as is my custom of a night, so,"--and he grasped the rock and swung it round upon its pivot, on which it turned as a door turns. "Thus I leave it, and though, except those to whom the secret is know, none would guess that a cave was here, yet it can be rolled back again with a push of the hand. But enough of the stone. Enter again, wanderer, and I will go forward with my tale, for it is long and strange.

"I started from the kraal of the old woman, and the people of the kraal followed me to the brink of the river. It was in flood, and few had dared to cross it.

"'Ha! ha!' they cried, 'now your journey is done, little man; watch by the ford you who would win the Watcher of the Ford! Beat the water with the club, perhaps so it shall grow gentle that your feet may pass it!'

"I answered nothing to their mocking, only I bound the shield upon my shoulders with a string, and the bag that I had brought I made fast about my middle, and I held the great club in my teeth by the thong. Then I plunged into the river and swam. Twice, stranger, the current bore me under, and those on the bank shouted that I was lost; but I rose again, and in the end I won the farther shore.

"Now those on the bank mocked no more; they stood still wondering, and I walked on till I came to the foot of the cliff. That cliff is hard to climb, stranger; when you are strong upon your feet, I will show you the path. Yet I found a way up it, and by midday I came to the forest. Here, on the edge of the forest, I rested awhile, and ate a little food that I had brought with me in the bag, for now I must gather up my strength to meet the ghosts, if ghosts there were. Then I rose and plunged into the forest. The trees were great that grow there, stranger, and their leaves are so thick that in certain places the light is as that of night when the moon is young. Still, I wended on, often losing my path. But from time to time between the tops of the trees I saw the figure of the grey stone woman who sits on the top of Ghost Mountain, and shaped my course towards her knees. My heart beat as I travelled through the forest in dark and loneliness like that of the night, and ever I looked round searching for the eyes of the Amatongo. But I saw no spirits, though at times great spotted snakes crept from before my feet, and perhaps these were the Amatongo. At times, also, I caught glimpses of some grey wolf as he slunk from tree to tree watching me, and always high above my head the wind sighed in the great boughs with a sound like the sighing of

women.

"Still, I went on, singing to myself as I went, that my heart might not be faint with fear, and at length, towards the end of the second hour, the trees grew fewer, the ground sloped upwards, and the light poured down from the heavens again. But, stranger, you are weary, and the night wears on; sleep now, and to-morrow I will end the tale. Say, first, how are you named?"

"I am named Umslopogaas, son of Mopo," he answered, "and my tale shall be told when yours is done; let us sleep!"

Now when Galazi heard this name he started and was troubled, but said nothing. So they laid them down to sleep, and Galazi wrapped Umslopogaas with the skins of bucks.

But Galazi the Wolf was so hardy that he lay on the bare ground and had no covering. So they slept, and without the door of the cave the wolves howled, scenting the blood of men.