

## CHAPTER XIX. MASILO COMES TO THE KRAAL DUGUZA

That night the curse of Baleka fell upon Chaka, and he slept ill. So ill did he sleep that he summoned me to him, bidding me walk abroad with him. I went, and we walked alone and in silence, Chaka leading the way and I following after him. Now I saw that his feet led him towards the U'Donga-lu-ka-Tatiyana, that place where all my people lay dead, and with them Baleka, my sister. We climbed the slope of the hill slowly, and came to the mouth of the cleft, to that same spot where Chaka had stood when the people fell over the lips of the rock like water. Then there had been noise and crying, now there was silence, for the night was very still. The moon was full also, and lighted up the dead who lay near to us, so that I could see them all; yes, I could see even the face of Baleka, my sister--they had thrown her into the midst of the dead. Never had it looked so beautiful as in this hour, and yet as I gazed I grew afraid. Only the far end of the donga was hid in shadow.

"Thou wouldst not have won thy bet now, Mopo, my servant," said Chaka.

"See, they have sunk together! The donga is not full by the length of a stabbing-spear."

I did not answer, but at the sound of the king's voice jackals stirred and slunk away.

Presently he spoke again, laughing loudly as he spoke: "Thou shouldst sleep well this night, my mother, for I have sent many to hush thee to

rest. Ah, people of the Langeni tribe, you forgot, but I remembered! You forgot how a woman and a boy came to you seeking food and shelter, and you would give them none--no, not a gourd of milk. What did I promise you on that day, people of the Langeni tribe? Did I not promise you that for every drop the gourd I craved would hold I would take the life of a man? And have I not kept my promise? Do not men lie here more in number than the drops of water in a gourd, and with them woman and children countless as the leaves? O people of the Langeni tribe, who refused me milk when I was little, having grown great, I am avenged upon you! Having grown great! Ah! who is there so great as I? The earth shakes beneath my feet; when I speak the people tremble, when I frown they die--they die in thousands. I have grown great, and great I shall remain! The land is mine, far as the feet of man can travel the land is mine, and mine are those who dwell in it. And I shall grow greater yet--greater, ever greater. Is it thy face, Baleka, that stares upon me from among the faces of the thousands whom I have slain? Thou didst promise me that I should sleep ill henceforth. Baleka, I fear thee not--at the least, thou sleepest sound. Tell me, Baleka--rise from thy sleep and tell me whom there is that I should fear!"--and suddenly he ceased the ravings of his pride.

Now, my father, while Chaka the king spoke thus, it came into my mind to make an end of things and kill him, for my heart was made with rage and the thirst of vengeance. Already I stood behind him, already the stick in my hand was lifted to strike out his brains, when I stopped also, for I saw something. There, in the midst of the dead, I saw an arm stir. It

stirred, it lifted itself, it beckoned towards the shadow which hid the head of the cleft and the piled-up corpses that lay there, and it seemed to me that the arm was the arm of Baleka. Perchance it was not her arm, perchance it was but the arm of one who yet lived among the thousands of the dead, say you, my father! At the least, the arm rose at her side, and was ringed with such bracelets as Baleka wore, and it beckoned from her side, though her cold face changed not at all. Thrice the arm rose, thrice it stood awhile in air, thrice it beckoned with crooked finger, as though it summoned something from the depths of the shadow, and from the multitudes of the dead. Then it fell down, and in the utter silence I heard its fall and a clank of brazen bracelets. And as it fell there rose from the shadow a sound of singing, of singing wild and sweet, such as I had never heard. The words of that song came to me then, my father; but afterwards they passed from me, and I remember them no more. Only I know this, that the song was of the making of Things, and of the beginning and the end of Peoples. It told of how the black folk grew, and of how the white folk should eat them up, and wherefore they were and wherefore they should cease to be. It told of Evil and of Good, of Woman and of Man, and of how these war against each other, and why it is that they war, and what are the ends of the struggle. It told also of the people of the Zulu, and it spoke of a place of a Little Hand where they should conquer, and of a place where a White Hand should prevail against them, and how they shall melt away beneath the shadow of the White Hand and be forgotten, passing to a land where things do not die, but live on forever, the Good with the Good, the Evil with the Evil. It told of Life and of Death, of Joy and of Sorrow, of Time and of that sea

in which Time is but a floating leaf, and of why all these things are. Many names also came into the song, and I knew but a few of them, yet my own was there, and the name of Baleka and the name of Umslopogaas, and the name of Chaka the Lion. But a little while did the voice sing, yet all this was in the song--ay, and much more; but the meaning of the song is gone from me, though I knew it once, and shall know it again when all is done. The voice in the shadow sang on till the whole place was full of the sound of its singing, and even the dead seemed to listen. Chaka heard it and shook with fear, but his ears were deaf to its burden, though mine were open.

The voice came nearer, and now in the shadow there was a faint glow of light, like the glow that gathers on the six-days' dead. Slowly it drew nearer, through the shadow, and as it came I saw that the shape of the light was the shape of a woman. Now I could see it well, and I knew the face of glory. My father, it was the face of the Inkosazana-y-Zulu, the Queen of Heaven! She came towards us very slowly, gliding down the gulf that was full of dead, and the path she trod was paved with the dead; and as she came it seemed to me that shadows rose from the dead, following her, the Queen of the Dead--thousands upon thousands of them. And, ah! her glory, my father--the glory of her hair of molten gold--of her eyes, that were as the noonday sky--the flash of her arms and breast, that were like the driven snow, when it glows in the sunset. Her beauty was awful to look on, but I am glad to have lived to see it as it shone and changed in the shifting robe of light which was her garment.

Now she drew near to us, and Chaka sank upon the earth, huddled up in fear, hiding his face in his hands; but I was not afraid, my father--only the wicked need fear to look on the Queen of Heaven. Nay, I was not afraid: I stood upright and gazed upon her glory face to face. In her hand she held a little spear hafted with the royal wood: it was the shadow of the spear that Chaka held in his hand, the same with which he had slain his mother and wherewith he should himself be slain. Now she ceased her singing, and stood before the crouching king and before me, who was behind the king, so that the light of her glory shone upon us. She lifted the little spear, and with it touched Chaka, son of Senzangaona, on the brow, giving him to doom. Then she spoke; but, though Chaka felt the touch, he did not hear the words, that were for my ears alone.

"Mopo, son of Makedama," said the low voice, "stay thy hand, the cup of Chaka is not full. When, for the third time, thou seest me riding down the storm, then SMITE, Mopo, my child."

Thus she spoke, and a cloud swept over the face of the moon. When it passed she was gone, and once more I was alone with Chaka, with the night and the dead.

Chaka looked up, and his face was grey with the sweat of fear.

"Who was this, Mopo?" he said in a hollow voice.

"This was the Inkosazana of the Heavens, she who watches ever over the people of our race, O King, and who from time to time is seen of men ere great things shall befall."

"I have heard speak of this queen," said Chaka. "Wherefore came she now, what was the song she sang, and why did she touch me with a spear?"

"She came, O King, because the dead hand of Baleka summoned her, as thou sawest. The song she sang was of things too high for me; and why she touched thee on the forehead with the spear I do not know, O King! Perchance it was to crown thee chief of a yet greater realm."

"Yea, perchance to crown me chief of a realm of death."

"That thou art already, Black One," I answered, glancing at the silent multitude before us and the cold shape of Baleka.

Again Chaka shuddered. "Come, let us be going, Mopo," he said; "now I have learnt what it is to be afraid."

"Early or late, Fear is a guest that all must feast, even kings, O Earth-Shaker!" I answered; and we turned and went homewards in silence.

Now after this night Chaka gave it out that the kraal of Gibamaxegu was bewitched, and bewitched was the land of the Zulus, because he might sleep no more in peace, but woke ever crying out with fear, and

muttering the name of Baleka. Therefore, in the end he moved his kraal far away, and built the great town of Duguza here in Natal.

Look now, my father! There on the plain far away is a place of the white men--it is called Stanger. There, where is the white man's town, stood the great kraal Duguza. I cannot see, for my eyes are dark; but you can see. Where the gate of the kraal was built there is a house; it is the place where the white man gives out justice; that is the place of the gate of the kraal, through which Justice never walked. Behind is another house, where the white men who have sinned against Him pray to the King of Heaven for forgiveness; there on that spot have I seen many a one who had done no wrong pray to a king of men for mercy, but I have never seen but one who found it. Ou! the words of Chaka have come true: I will tell them to you presently, my father. The white man holds the land, he goes to and fro about his business of peace where impis ran forth to kill; his children laugh and gather flowers where men died in blood by hundreds; they bathe in the waters of the Imbozamo, where once the crocodiles were fed daily with human flesh; his young men woo the maidens where other maids have kissed the assegai. It is changed, nothing is the same, and of Chaka are left only a grave yonder and a name of fear.

Now, after Chaka had come to the Duguza kraal, for a while he sat quiet, then the old thirst of blood came on him, and he sent his impis against the people of the Pondos, and they destroyed that people, and brought back their cattle. But the warriors might not rest; again they

were doctored for war, and sent out by tens of thousands to conquer Sotyangana, chief of the people who live north of the Limpopo. They went singing, after the king had looked upon them and bidden them return victorious or not at all. Their number was so great that from the hour of dawn till the sun was high in the heavens they passed the gates of the kraal like countless herds of cattle--they the unconquered. Little did they know that victory smiled on them no more; that they must die by thousands of hunger and fever in the marshes of the Limpopo, and that those of them who returned should come with their shields in their bellies, having devoured their shields because of their ravenous hunger! But what of them? They were nothing. "Dust" was the name of one of the great regiments that went out against Sotyangana, and dust they were--dust to be driven to death by the breath of Chaka, Lion of the Zulu.

Now few men remained in the kraal Duguza, for nearly all had gone with the impi, and only women and aged people were left. Dingaan and Umhlangana, brothers of the king, were there, for Chaka would not suffer them to depart, fearing lest they should plot against him, and he looked on them always with an angry eye, so that they trembled for their lives, though they dared not show their fear lest fate should follow fear. But I guessed it, and like a snake I wound myself into their secrets, and we talked together darkly and in hints. But of that presently, my father, for I must tell of the coming of Masilo, he who would have wed Zinita, and whom Umslopogaas the Slaughterer had driven out from the kraals of the People of the Axe.



It was on the day after the impi had left that Masilo came to the kraal Duguza, craving leave to speak with the king. Chaka sat before his hut, and with him were Dingaan and Umhlangana, his royal brothers. I was there also, and certain of the indunas, councillors of the king. Chaka was weary that morning, for he had slept badly, as now he always did. Therefore, when one told him that a certain wanderer named Masilo would speak with him, he did not command that the man should be killed, but bade them bring him before him. Presently there was a sound of praising, and I saw a fat man, much worn with travel, who crawled through the dust towards us giving the sibonga, that is, naming the king by his royal names. Chaka bade him cease from praising and tell his business. Then the man sat up and told all that tale which you have heard, my father, of how a young man, great and strong, came to the place of the People of the Axe and conquered Jikiza, the holder of the axe, and become chief of that people, and of how he had taken the cattle of Masilo and driven him away. Now Chaka knew nothing of this People of the Axe, for the land was great in those days, my father, and there were many little tribes in it, living far away, of whom the king had not even heard; so he questioned Masilo about them, and of the number of their fighting-men, of their wealth in cattle, of the name of the young man who ruled them, and especially as to the tribute which they paid to the king.

Masilo answered, saying that the number of their fighting-men was perhaps the half of a full regiment, that their cattle were many, for they were rich, that they paid no tribute, and that the name of the

young man was Bulalio the Slaughterer--at the least, he was known by that name, and he had heard no other.

Then the king grew wroth. "Arise, Masilo," he said, "and run to this people, and speak in the ear of the people, and of him who is named the Slaughterer, saying: 'There is another Slaughterer, who sits in a kraal that is named Duguza, and this is his word to you, O People of the Axe, and to thee, thou who holdest the axe. Rise up with all the people, and with all the cattle of your people, and come before him who sits in the kraal Duguza, and lay in his hands the great axe Groan-Maker. Rise up swiftly and do this bidding, lest ye sit down shortly and for the last time of all.'" (1)

(1) The Zulu are buried sitting.

Masilo heard, and said that it should be so, though the way was far, and he feared greatly to appear before him who was called the Slaughterer, and who sat twenty days' journey to the north, beneath the shadow of the Witch Mountain.

"Begone," said the king, "and stand before me on the thirtieth day from now with the answer of this boy with an axe! If thou standest not before me, then some shall come to seek thee and the boy with an axe also."

So Masilo turned and fled swiftly to do the bidding of the king, and Chaka spoke no more of that matter. But I wondered in my heart who this

young man with an axe might be; for I thought that he had dealt with Jikiza and with the sons of Jikiza as Umslopogaas would have dealt with them had he come to the years of his manhood. But I also said nothing of the matter.

Now on this day also there came to me news that my wife Macrophia and my daughter Nada were dead among their people in Swaziland. It was said that the men of the chief of the Halakazi tribe had fallen on their kraal and put all in it to the assegai, and among them Macrophia and Nada. I heard the news, but I wept no tear, for, my father, I was so lost in sorrows that nothing could move me any more.