

CHAPTER XII

RACHEL SEES A VISION

That evening Ishmael was brought before the King. He was in evil case, for the captains, some of whom had grudges against him, when he tried to break away from them outside the gate, had beaten him with their spear shafts nearly all the way from the kraal to the Great Place, remarking that he fought and remonstrated, that the Inkosazana had forbidden them to kill him, but had said nothing as to giving him the flogging which he deserved. His clothes were torn, his hat and pipe were lost--indeed hours before Noie had thrown both of them into the fire--his eyes were black from the blow of a heavy stick and he was bruised all over.

Such was his appearance when he was thrust before Dingaan, seething with rage which he could scarcely suppress, even in that presence.

"Did you visit the Inkosazana to-day, White Man?" asked the King blandly, while the indunas stared at him with grim amusement.

Then Ishmael broke out into a recital of his wrongs, demanding that the captains who had beaten him, a white man, and a great person, should be killed.

"Silence," said Dingaan at length. "The question, Night-prowler, is

whether you should not be killed, you dog who dared to insult the Inkosazana by offering yourself to her as a husband. Had she commanded you to be speared, she would have done well, and if you trouble me with your shoutings, I will send you to sleep with the jackals to-night without waiting for her word."

Now, seeing his danger, Ishmael was silent, and the King went on:

"Did you discover, as I bade you, why it is that the Inkosazana desires to leave us?"

"Yes, King. It is because she would return to her own people, the old prayer-doctor and his wife."

"They are not her people!" exclaimed Dingaana. "We know that she came to them out of the storm, and that they are but the foster-parents chosen for her by the Heavens. You were the first to tell us that story, and how she caused the lightning to burn up my soldier yonder at Ramah. We are her people and no others. Can the Inkosazana have a father and a mother?"

"I don't know," answered Ishmael, "but she is a woman and I never knew a woman who was without them. At least I am sure that she looks upon them as her father and mother, obeying them in all things, and that she will never leave them while they live, unless they command her to do so."

Dingaana stared at him with his pig-like eyes, repeating after him--"while

they live, unless they command her to do so." Then he asked:

"If the Inkosazana desires to go, who is there that dares to stay her, and if she puts out her magic, who is there that has the power? If a hand is lifted against her, will she not lay a curse on us and bring destruction upon us?"

"I don't know," answered Ishmael again, "but if she goes back among the white folk and is angry, I think that she will bring the Boers upon you."

Now Dingaan's face grew very troubled, and bidding Ishmael stand back awhile, he consulted with his council. Then he said:

"Listen to me, White Man. It would be a very evil thing if the Inkosazana were to leave us, for with her would go the Spirit of our people, and their good luck, so say the witch-doctors with one voice, and I believe them. Further, it is our desire that she should remain with us a while. This day the Council of the Diviners has spoken, saying that the words of the Inkosazana which she uttered here are too hard for them, and that other doctors of a people who live far away, must be sent for and brought face to face with her. Therefore here at Umgugundhlovo she should abide until they come."

"Indeed," answered Ishmael indifferently.

In the doctors who dwell far away, and the council of the Diviners he had

no belief. But understanding the natives as he did he guessed correctly enough that the latter found themselves in a cleft stick. Worked on by their superstitions, which he had first awakened for his own ends, they had accepted Rachel as something more than human, as the incarnation of the Spirit of their people. This Mopo, who was said to have killed Chaka by command of that Spirit, had acknowledged her to be, and therefore they did not dare to declare that her words spoken as an oracle were empty words. But neither did they dare to interpret the saying that she meant that no attack must be made upon the Boers and should be obeyed.

To do this would be to fly in the face of the martial aspirations of the nation and the secret wishes of the King, and perhaps if war ultimately broke out, would cost them their lives. So it came about that they announced that they could not understand her sayings, and had decided to thrust off the responsibility on to the shoulders of some other diviners, though who these men might be Ishmael neither knew nor took the trouble to ask.

"But," went on the King, "who can force the dove to build in a tree that does not please it, seeing that it has wings and can fly away? Yet if its own tree, that in which it was reared from the nest, could be brought to it, it might be pleased to abide there. Do you understand, White Man?"

"No," answered Ishmael, though in fact he understood well enough that the King was playing upon Rachel's English name of Dove, and that he meant that her home might be moved into Zululand. "No, the Inkosazana is not a

bird, and who can carry trees about?"

"Have the spear-shafts knocked the wit out of you, Ibubesi," asked Dingaana, impatiently, "or are you drunk with beer? Learn then my meaning. The Inkosazana will not stay because her home is yonder, therefore it must be brought here and she will stay. At first I gave orders that if this old white teacher and his wife tried to accompany her, they should be killed. Now I eat up those words. They must come to Zululand."

"How will you persuade them to be such fools?" asked Ishmael.

"How did I persuade the Inkosazana herself to come? Was it not to seek one whom she loved?"

"They will think that you have killed her, and wish to kill them also."

"No, because you will go in command of an impi and show them otherwise."

"I cannot go; your brutes of captains have hurt my head, and lamed me; I cannot walk or ride."

"Then you can be carried in a litter, or," he added threateningly, "you can abide here with the vultures. The Inkosazana is merciful, but why should I not avenge her wrongs upon you, white dog, who have dared to scratch at the kraal gate of the Inkosazana-y-Zoola?"

Now Ishmael saw that he had no choice; also a dark thought rose dimly in his mind. He desired to win Rachel above everything on earth, he was mad with love--or what he understood as love--of her, and this business might be worked to his advantage. Moreover, to stay was death. So he fell to bargaining for a reward for his services, a large reward in cattle and ivory; half of it to be paid down at once, and it was promised to him. Then he took his instructions. These were that he was to travel to the mission station of Ramah in command of a small impi of three hundred men, whose only orders would be that they were to obey him in all things! That he was to tell the Umfundusi who was called Shouter, that if they wished to see her any more, he and his wife must come to dwell with the Inkosazana, in Zululand: that if they refused he was to bring them by force. If, perchance, the Inkosazana, choosing to exercise her authority, crossed the Tugela and reached Ramah before he could do this, he was still to bring them, for then she would follow. In the same way, if the Shouter and his wife met her on the road, they were to travel on, for then she would turn and, accompany them. He was to go at once and execute these orders.

"I hear," said Ishmael, "and will start as soon as the cattle have been delivered and sent on with the ivory to my kraal, Mafooti."

There was something in the man's voice, or in the look of low cunning which spread itself over his face, that attracted Dingaan's attention.

"The cattle and the ivory shall be sent," he said, sternly, "but ill shall

it be for you, Ibubesi, if you seek to trick me in this matter. You have grown rich on my bounty, and yonder at your place, Mafooti, you have many cows, many wives, many children--my spies have given me count of all of them. Now, if you play me false, or if you dare to lift a finger against the White One, know that I will burn that kraal and slay the inhabitants with the spear and take the cattle, and when I catch you, Ibubesi, I will kill you, slowly, slowly. I have spoken, go.

"I go, Great Elephant, Calf of the Black Cow, and I will obey in all things," answered Ishmael in a humble voice, for he was frightened. "The white people shall be brought, only I trust to you to protect me from the anger of the Inkosazana for all that I may do."

"You must make your own peace with the Inkosazana," answered Dingaan, and turning, he crept into his hut.

An hour later the great induna, Tamboosa, appeared at Rachel's kraal, and craved leave to speak with her.

"What is it?" asked Rachel when he had been admitted. "Have you come to lead me out of Zululand, Tamboosa?"

"Nay, White One," he answered, "the land needs you yet awhile. I have come to tell you that Dingaan would speak with your servant Noie, if it be your good pleasure to let her visit him. Fear not. No harm shall come to her, if it does you may order me to be put to death. You, yourself, could not

be safer than she shall be."

"Are you afraid to go?" asked Rachel of Noie.

"Not I," answered the girl, with a laugh. "I trust to the King's word and to your might."

"Depart then," said Rachel, "and come back as swiftly as you may. Tamboosa shall lead you."

So Noie went.

Two hours after sundown, while Rachel was eating her evening meal in her Great Hut, attended by the maidens, the door-board was drawn aside, and Noie entered, saluted, and sat down. Rachel signed to the women to clear away the food and depart. When they had gone she asked what the King's business was, eagerly enough, for she hoped that it had to do with her leaving Zululand.

"It is a long story, Zoola," answered Noie, "but here is the heart of it. I told you when first we met that I am not of this people, although my mother was a Zulu. I told you that I am of the Dream-people, the Ghost-people, the little Grey-people, who live away to the north beneath their trees, and worship their trees."

"Yes," answered Rachel, "and that is why you care nothing for men as other

women do, but dream dreams and talk with spirits. But what of it?"

"That is why I dream dreams and talk with spirits, as one day I hope that I shall teach you to do, you whose soul is sister to my soul," replied Noie, her large eyes shining strangely in her delicate face. "And this of it--the Ghost-people are diviners, they can read the future and see the hearts of men; there are no diviners like them. Therefore chiefs and peoples who dwell far away send to them with great gifts, and pray them come read their fate, but they will seldom listen or obey. Now Dingaan and his councillors are troubled about this matter of the Boers, and the meaning of the words you spoke as to their waging war on them, and of the omen of the falling star. The council of the doctors can interpret none of these things, nor dare they ask you to do so, since you bade them speak no more to you of that matter, and they know, that if they did, either you would not answer, or, worse still, say words that would displease them."

"They are right there," said Rachel. "To have to play the dark oracle once is enough for me. If I speak again, it shall be plainly."

"Therefore they have bethought them of the Dealers in Dreams and desire to bring you face to face with their prophets, the Ghost-Kings, that these may see your greatness and tell them the meaning of your words, and of the omen that you caused to travel through the skies."

"Do you mean that they wish me to visit these Ghost-Kings, Noie?"

"Not so, Zoola, for then they must part with your presence. They wish that the priests of the Ghost-Kings should visit you, bearing with them the word of the Mother of the Trees."

"Visit me! How can they? Who will bring them here?"

"They wish that I should bring them, for as they know, I am of their blood, and I alone can talk their language, which my father taught me from a child."

"But, Noie, that would mean that we must be separated," said Rachel, in alarm.

"Yes, it would mean that, still I think it best that you should humour them and let me go, for otherwise I do not know how you will ever escape from Zululand. Now I told the King that I thought you would permit it on one condition only--that after you had been brought face to face with the priests of the Ghost-Kings, and they had interpreted your riddle, you should be escorted whence you came, and he answered that it should be so, and that meanwhile you could abide here in honour, peace and safety. Moreover, he promised that a messenger should be sent to Ramah to explain the reason of your delay."

"But how long will you be on the journey, Noie, and what if these prophets of yours refuse to visit Dingaan?"

"I cannot tell you who have never travelled that road. But I will march fast, and if I tire, swift runners shall bear me in a litter. To those who have the secret of its gate that country is not so very far away. Also, the Old Mother of the Trees is my father's aunt, and I think that the prophets will come at my prayer, or at the least send the answer to the question. Indeed, I am sure of it--ask me not why."

Still for a long while Rachel reasoned against this separation, which she dreaded, while Noie reasoned for it. She pointed out that here at least none could harm her, as they had seen in the treatment meted out to Ishmael a white man whom the Zulus looked upon as their friend. Also she said with conviction that these mysterious Ghost-Kings were very powerful, and could free her from the clutches of the Zulus, and protect her from them afterwards, as they would do when they came to know her case.

The end of it was that Rachel gave way, not because Noie's arguments convinced her, but because she was sure that she had other reasons she did not choose to advance.

From that day when each of them tossed up a hair from her head at Ramah, notwithstanding the difference of their race and circumstances, these two had been as sisters. Rachel believed in Noie more, perhaps, than in any other living being, and thus also did Noie believe in Rachel. They knew that their destinies were intertwined, and were sure that not rivers or mountains or the will and violence of men, could keep them separate.

"I see," said Rachel, at length, "that you believe that my fate hangs upon this embassy of yours,"

"I do believe it," answered Noie, confidently.

"Then go, but come back as swiftly as you may, for, my sister, I know not how without you I shall live on in this lonely greatness," and she took her in her arms and kissed her lips.

Afterwards, as they were laying themselves down to sleep, Rachel asked her if she had heard anything about Ishmael. She answered that she learned at the Great Kraal that he had been brought before the King that afternoon, and then taken back to his hut, where he was under guard. One of her escort told her, too, that since he saw the King, Ibubesi had fallen very sick, it was thought from a blow that he had received at the house of Inkosazana, and that now he was out of his mind and being attended by the doctors. "I wish," added Noie viciously, "that he were out of his body also, for then much sorrow would be spared. But that cannot be before the time."

On the next day before noon, Noie departed upon her journey. Rachel sent for the captains of her escort and the Isanusis, or doctors, who were to accompany her, and in a few stern words gave her into their charge, saying that they should answer for her safety with their lives, to which they replied that they knew it, and would do so. If any harm came to the

daughter of Seyapi through their fault, they were prepared to die. Then she talked for a long while with Noie, telling her all she knew of the Boers and the purpose of their wanderings, that she might be able to repeat it to her people, and show them how dreadful would be a war between this white folk and the Zulus.

Noie answered that she would give her message, but that it was needless, since the Ghost-Kings could see all that passed "in the bowls of water beneath their trees, and doubtless knew already of her coming and of the cause of it," a reply of which Rachel had not time to inquire the meaning. After this they embraced and parted, not without some tears.

When the gate shut behind Noie, Rachel walked to the high ground at the back of her hut, whence she could see over the fence of the kraal, and watched her departure. She had an escort of a hundred picked soldiers, with whom went fifty or sixty strong bearers, who carried food, karosses, and a litter. Also there were three doctors of magic and medicine, and two women, widows of high rank who were to attend upon her. At the head of this procession, save for two guides, walked Noie herself, with sandals on her feet, a white robe about her shoulders, and in her hand a little bough on which grew shining leaves, whereof Rachel did not know the meaning. She watched them until they passed over the brow of the hill, on the crest of which Noie turned and waved the bough towards her. Then Rachel went back to her hut, and sat there alone and wept.

This was the beginning of many dreadful days, most of which she passed

wandering about within the circuit of the kraal fence, a space of some three or four acres, or seated under the shadow of certain beautiful trees, which overhung a deep, clear pool of the stream that ran through the kraal, a reed-fringed pool whereon floated blooming lilies. That quiet water, the happy birds that nested in the trees and the flowering lilies seemed to be her only friends. Of the last, indeed, she would count the buds, watching them open in the morning and close again for their sleep at night, until a day came when their loveliness turned to decay, and others appeared in their place.

On the morrow of Noie's departure, Tamboosa and other indunas visited her, and asked her if she would not descend to the kraal of the King, and help him and his council to try cases, since while she was in the land she was its first judge. She answered, "No, that place smelt too much of blood." If they had cases for her to try, let them be brought before her in her own house. This she said idly, thinking no more of it, but next day was astonished to learn that the plaintiff and defendant in a great suit, with their respective advocates, and from thirty to forty witnesses, were waiting without to know when it was her pleasure to attend to their business.

With characteristic courage Rachel answered, "Now." Her knowledge of law was, it is true, limited to what, for lack of anything more exciting, she had read in some handbooks belonging to her father, who had been a justice of the peace in the Cape Colony, and to a few cases which she had seen tried in a rough-and-ready fashion at Durban, to which must be added an

intimate acquaintance with Kaffir customs. Still, being possessed with a sincere desire to discover the truth and execute justice, she did very well. The matter in dispute was a large one, that of the ownership of a great herd of cattle which was claimed as an inheritance by each of the parties. Rachel soon discovered that both these men were very powerful chiefs, and that the reason of their cause being remitted to her was that the King knew that if he decided in favour of either of them he would mortally offend the other.

For a long while Rachel, seated on her stool, listened silently to the impassioned pleadings of the plaintiff's lawyers. Presently this plaintiff was called as a witness, and in the course of his evidence said something which convinced her that he was lying. Then breaking her silence for the first time, she asked him how he dared to give false witness before the Inkosazana-y-Zoola, to whom the truth was always open, and who was acquainted with every circumstance connected with the cattle in dispute. The man, seeing her eyes fixed upon him, and being convinced of her supernatural powers, grew afraid, broke down, and publicly confessed his attempted fraud, into which he said he had been led by envy of his cousin, the defendant's, riches.

Rachel gave judgment accordingly, commanding that he should pay the costs in cattle and a fine to the King, and warned him to be more upright in future. The result was that her fame as a judge spread throughout the land, and every day her gates were beset with suitors whose causes she dealt with to the best of her ability, and to their entire satisfaction.

Criminal prosecutions that involved the death-sentence or matters connected with witchcraft, however, she steadily refused to try, saying that the Inkosazana should not cause blood to flow. These things she left to the King and his Council, confining herself to such actions as in England would come before the Court of Chancery. Thus to her reputation as a spiritual queen, Rachel added that of an upright judge who could not be influenced by fear or bribes, the first, perhaps, that had ever been known in Zululand.

But she could not try such cases all day, the strain was too great, although in the end most of them partook of the nature of arbitrations, since the parties involved, having come to the conclusion that it was not possible to deceive one so wise, grew truthful and submitted their differences to the decision of her wisdom.

After they were dismissed, which was always at noon, for she opened her court at seven and would not sit more than five hours, Rachel was left in her solitary state until the next morning, and oh! the hours hung heavily upon her hands. A messenger was despatched to Ramah, but after ten days he returned saying that the Tugela was in flood, and he could not cross it. She sent him out again, and a week later was told that he had been killed by a lion on his journey. Then another messenger was chosen, but what became of him she never knew.

It was about this time that Rachel learned that Ishmael, having recovered from his sickness, had escaped from Umgugundhlovo by night, whither none

seemed to know. From that moment fears gathered thick upon the poor girl. She dreaded Ishmael and guessed that his departure without communicating with her boded her no good. Indeed, once or twice she almost wished that she had taken Noie's counsel and given him over to the justice of the King. Meanwhile of Noie herself nothing had been heard. She had vanished into the wilderness.

Living this strange and most unnatural life, Rachel's nerves began to give way. While she tried her cases she seemed stern and calm. But when the crowd of humble suitors had dispersed from the outer court in which she sat as a judge, and the shouts of the praisers rushing up and down beyond the fence and roaring out her titles had died away, and having dismissed the obsequious maidens who waited upon her, she retired to the solitude of her hut to rest--ah! then it was different. Then she lay down upon her bed of rich furs and at times burst into tears because she who seemed to be a supernatural queen, was really but a white girl deserted by God and man.

Now it was the season of thunderstorms, and almost every afternoon these dreadful tempests broke over her kraal, which shook in the roll and crash of the meeting clouds, while beyond the fence the jagged lightning struck and struck again upon the ironstone of the hillside.

She had never feared such storms before, but now they terrified her. She dreaded their advent, and the worst of it was that she must not show her dread, she who was supposed to rule and direct the lightning. Indeed, the bounteous rains which fell ensuring a full harvest after several years of

drought, were universally attributed to the good influence of her presence in the land. In the same way when a thunderbolt struck the hut of a doctor who but a day or two before had openly declared his disbelief in her powers, killing him and his principal wife, and destroying his kraal by fire, the accident was attributed to her vengeance, or to that of the Heavens, who were angry at this lack of faith. After this remarkable exhibition of supernatural strength, needless to say, the voice of adverse criticism was stayed; Rachel became supreme.

But the storms passed, and when they had rolled away at length, doing her no hurt, and the sun shone out again, she would go and sit beneath the trees at the edge of the beautiful pool until the closing lilies and the chill of the air told her that night drew on.

Oh! those long nights--how endless they seemed to Rachel in her loneliness. Now she who used to sleep so well, could not sleep, or when she slept she dreamed. She dreamed of her mother, always of her mother, that she was ill, and calling her, until she came to believe that in truth this was so. So much did this conviction work upon her mind, that she determined not to wait for the return of Noie, but at all costs to try to leave Zululand, and through Tamboosa declared her will to the King.

Next morning the answer came back that of course none could control her movements, but if she would go, she must fly, as all the rivers were in flood, as she might see if she would walk to the top of the mountain behind her kraal. Tamboosa added that a company of men who had been sent

to recapture Ishmael, were kept for a week upon the banks of the first of them, and at length, being unable to cross, had returned, as her messenger had done. Knowing from other sources that this was true, Rachel made no answer. What she did not know, however, was that Ishmael had crossed the smaller rivers before the flood came down, and gone on to meet the soldiers, who were ordered to await him on the banks of the Tugela.

Escape was evidently impossible at present, and if it had been otherwise, clearly the Zulus did not mean to let her go. She must abide here in the company of her terrors and her dreams.

At length, happily for her, these distressing dreams of Rachel's began to be varied by others of a pleasanter complexion, of which, although they were vivid enough, she could only remember upon waking that they had to do with Richard Darrien, the companion of her adventure in the river, of whom she had heard nothing for so many years. For aught she knew he might have died long ago, and yet she did not think that he was dead. Well, if he lived he might have forgotten her, and yet she did not believe that he had forgotten her, he who as a boy had wished to follow her all his life, and whom she had thought of day by day from that hour to this. Yes, she had thought of him, but not thus. Why, at such a time, did he arise in strength before her, seeming to occupy all her soul? Why was her mind never free of him? Could it be that they were about to meet again? She shivered as the hope took hold of her, shivered with joy, and remembered that her mother had always said that they would meet. Could it be that he of all men on the earth, for if he lived he was a man now, was coming to

rescue her? Oh! then she would fear nothing. Then in every peril she would feel safe as a child in its mother's arms. No, the thing was too happy to come about; her imagination played tricks with her, no more. And yet, and yet, why did he haunt her sleep?

The dreary days went on; a month had passed since Noie vanished over yonder ridge, and worst of all, for three nights the dreams of Richard had departed, while those of her mother remained.

Rachel was worn out; she was in despair. All that morning she had spent in trying a long and heavy case, which occupied but wearied her mind, one of those eternal cases about the inheritance of cattle which were claimed by three brothers, descendants of different wives of a grandfather who had owned the herd. Finally she had effected a compromise between the parties, and amidst their salutes and acclamations, retired to her hut. But she could not eat; the sameness of the food disgusted her. Neither could she rest, for the daily tempest was coming up, and the heavy atmosphere, or the electricity with which it was charged, and the overpowering heat, exasperated her nervous system and made sleep impossible. At length came the usual rush of icy wind and the bursting of the great storm. The thunder crashed and bellowed; the lightning flickered and flared; the rain fell in a torrent. It passed as it always did, and the sun shone out again. Gasping with relief, Rachel went out of the oven-like hut into the cool, sweet air, and sat down upon a tanned bull's hide which she had ordered her servants to spread for her by the pool of water upon the bank beneath the trees. It was very pleasant here, and the raindrops shaken

from the wet leaves fell upon her fevered face and hands and refreshed her.

She tried to forget her troubles for a little while, and began to think of Richard Darrien, her boy-lover of a long-past hour, wondering what he looked like now that he was grown to be a man.

"If only you would come to help me! Oh! Richard, if only you would come to help me," the poor, worn-out girl murmured to herself, and so murmuring fell asleep.

Suddenly it seemed to her that she was wide awake, and staring into a part of the pool beneath her where the bottom was of granite and the water clear. In this water she saw a picture. She saw a great laager of waggons, and outside of one of them a group of bearded, jovial-looking men smoking and talking. Presently another man of sturdy build and resolute carriage, who was followed by a weary Kaffir, walked up to them. His back was towards her so that she could not see his face, but now she was able to hear all that was said, although the voices seemed thin and far away.

"What is it, Nephew?" asked the oldest of the bearded men, speaking in Dutch. "Why are you in such a hurry?"

"This, Uncle," he answered, in the same language, and in a pleasant voice that sounded familiar to Rachel's ears. "That spy, Quabi, whom we sent out a long time ago and who was reported dead, reached Dingaan's kraal, and

has come back with a strange story."

"Almighty!" grunted the old man, "all these spies have strange stories, but let him tell it. Speak on, swartzel." [Footnote: Black-fellow.]

Then the tired spy began to talk, telling a long tale. He described how he had got into Zululand, and reached Umgugundhlovo and lodged there with a relative of his, and done his best to collect information as to the attitude of the King and indunas towards the Boers. While he was there the news came that the white Spirit, who was called Inkosazana-y-Zoola, was approaching the kraal from Natal, where she dwelt with her parents, who were teachers.

"Almighty!" interrupted the old man again, "What rubbish is this? How can a Spirit, white or black, have parents who are teachers?"

The weary-looking spy answered that he did not know, it was not for him to answer riddles, all he knew was that there was great excitement about the coming of this Queen of the Heavens, and he, being desirous of obtaining first-hand information, slipped out of the town with his relative, and walked more than a day's journey on the path that ran to the Tugela, till they came to a place where they hid themselves to see her pass. This place he described with minuteness, so minutely, indeed, that in her dream, Rachel recognised it well. It was the spot where the witch-doctress had died. He went on with his story; he told of her appearance riding on the white horse and surrounded by an impi. He described her beauty, her white

cloak, her hair hanging down her back, the rod of horn she carried in her hand, the colour of her eyes, the shape of her features, everything about her, as only a native can. Then he told of the incident of the cattle rushing across her path, of the death of the bull that charged her, of the appearance of the furious witch-doctress who seized the rein of the horse, of the pointing of the wand, and the instant execution of the woman.

He told of how he had followed the impi to the Great Place, of the story of Noie as he had heard it, and the reports that had reached him concerning the interview between the King and this white Inkosazana, who, it was said, advised him not to fight the Boers.

"And where is she now?" asked the old Dutchman.

"There, at Umgugundhlovo," he answered, "ruling the land as its head Isanuzi, though it is said that she desires to escape, only the Zulus will not let her go."

"I think that we should find out more about this woman, especially as she seems to be a friend to our people," said the old Boer. "Now, who dares to go and learn the truth?"

"I will go," said the young man who had brought in the spy, and as he spoke he turned, and lo! his face was the face of Richard Darrien, bearded and grown to manhood, but without doubt Richard Darrien and none

other.

"Why do you offer to undertake so dangerous a mission?" asked the Boer, looking at the young man kindly. "Is it because you wish to see this beautiful white witch of whom yonder Quabi tells us such lies, Nephew?"

The shadow of Richard nodded, and his face reddened, for the Boers around him were laughing at him.

"That is right, Uncle," he answered boldly. "You think me a fool, but I am not. Many years ago I knew a little maid who was the daughter of a teacher, and who, if she lives, must have grown into such a woman as Quabi describes. Well, I joined you Boers last year in order to look for that maid, and I am going to begin to look for her across the river yonder."

As the words reached whatever sense of Rachel's it was that heard them, of a sudden, in an instant, laager, Boers, and Richard vanished. In her sleep she tried to recreate them, at first without avail, then the curtain of darkness appeared to lift, and in the still water of the pool she saw another picture, that of Richard Darrien mounted on a black horse with one white foot, riding along a native path through a bush-clad country, while by his side trotted the spy whose name was Quabi.

They were talking together, and she heard, or, at any rate, knew their words.

"How far is it now to Umgugundhlovo?" asked Richard.

"Three days' journey, Inkosi, if we are not stopped by flooded rivers," answered Quabi.

For one second only Rachel saw and heard these things, then they, too, passed away, and she awoke to see in front of her the pool empty save for its lilies, and above to hear the whispering of the evening wind among the trees.