

NARRATIVE

OF

A JOURNEY TO

THE ZOOLU COUNTRY,

IN

SOUTH AFRICA.

BY

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UNDERTAKEN IN 1835.



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some within a few yards of the spot where we were seated. They all ran some little distance after receiving the spear, which is not thrown, but thrust into the side near the heart; and, on their falling, parties were despatched to make the necessary preparations for disposing of the meat. On returning to my hut I wrote to Port Natal, at the request of Dingarn, to inform the settlers that he had demanded, under the stipulations of the treaty, the children belonging to Nonha's party. As they had been allowed by the Numzāna, or head of the village, where they had taken refuge, to make their escape, it had been arranged, on my setting out for this place, that, in the event of their being demanded, either themselves or Umfazaguātu (the Numzāna) should be given up.

Friday, 29th.—Last night I had a long conversation with three of the Unguāni people, respecting their country and knowledge of a Supreme Being, &c. These were the persons pointed out by Dingarn, as having never before seen a white man. On being told yesterday that God had spoken words to men for the regulation of their conduct here, they had very anxiously inquired, “What has he said?” They, as well as the prisoners, were accordingly sent for this morning to attend the prayers in my hut, when an exposition of the Ten Commandments was given. On leaving I was surprised to hear from the prisoners, that they had tasted nothing since the last food we had given them on the road, which was about three o'clock on Wednesday. I immediately desired Umpondombeeni to boil some lupōko meal which I had by me; but he was

unable to borrow a vessel for the purpose, my own saucepan being too small. It now struck me that there must be some design in such unfeeling conduct; and, sending for Mambayendi, I informed him of what they had just said, desiring him to acquaint the King, and to say, that I felt convinced it could not be his intention to starve them. He was also desired to inform him, that I had continued to instruct them, but should not do so in future without his permission, as it was only in the Clomanthleen that he had allowed me to teach. This I deemed necessary, as he would not fail to hear every particular. Mambayendi soon returned with an answer, which quite weighed down my spirits. Dingarn's reply was, "You have done your utmost in bringing them bound to me, and then speaking for them; but as they have committed great offences you must not ask for them any more. *Their bonds must kill them!*" I was not again to teach them; and he had given orders that they should not be supplied with food. Inhuman wretch! The death they had so much dreaded would have been mercy compared with the torture of lingering out a few more days of painful existence, and at last falling the famished victims of hunger and want. Too true, indeed, were the last words that fell from them on leaving my hut. As it appeared by their statement that Mankanjāna alone had been informed that he was not to be killed, I endeavoured to quell their fears, by saying that the King had himself assured me that all their lives should be spared; on which Nonha, in a mournful voice, replied, "They are killing us now."

Had another long conversation with Umkolwāni, who is an inferior chief among the Unguāni, the substance of which I shall now relate:—

They belong to a tribe called Unguāni, situated, as far as I could collect, to the N. N. E. of Unkūnginglove, at a distance of nine days' journey. On the fifth day from Unkūnginglove, they reach the river Impongolo, and four days more bring them to Elāngāni, where their king, Sobūza, resides. Nearer to the Umpongola is another town, called Nobāmba; both are small compared to the Zoolu towns; are built in the same form, but without fences; and contain the whole population of the tribe, which is now greatly diminished. The male population does not exceed a hundred; but as each man has from five to ten wives, the whole, including children, may be estimated at about twelve hundred. They were formerly independent, but subjugated by Charka, who deprived them of all their cattle: they have neither sheep nor goats, and, as grain is but scantily cultivated, they are often necessitated to subsist entirely on roots. The flats are covered with very high grass, and these, as well as the mounds, produce large timber. Wild animals abound, and, besides those common in this part of the country, they have the rhinoceros and tiger: they appeared to know nothing either of the ostrich or cameleonard. The eyland is the only large animal they hunt, being fearful to approach the elephant, although aware of the value of its tusks. Alligators abound in the rivers, some of which they describe as large, but all fordable at certain times.

The Lesūta is the largest next to the Umpongola, which divides them from the Zoolu country, and after that the Motani: these are all much wider than the Tugăla. They have no canoes, and only first saw the sea when they came into this neighbourhood. They seem to be an insulated tribe, having no relation with any other people than their conquerors. All speak the Zoolu language; and, until they perceived us conversing in English, said that it was the first time they had heard a tongue differing from their own. Indeed, Umkolwāni was highly amused at my communicating with him through an interpreter, and shrewdly observed, " You speak to him, and then he speaks to me;" and, on the reason being explained, snapped his fingers * in evident surprise. In appearance and dress, or rather *undress*, they are similar to the Zoolus, and as they now generally wear the ring on the head, which has been adopted since they became tributary to Charka, they are scarcely to be distinguished from them. Their women also shave their heads, but wear the small tuft on the crown somewhat higher. The whole country to the north and west they describe as an arid desert, extending, especially to the northward, beyond their knowledge, and much broken with abrupt precipices. In the northern desert, which is entirely sand, there is a large river, to the banks of which they have been, but none have ever crossed it, nor have they ever heard of any

* A Zoolu can scarcely speak without snapping his fingers at every sentence; and when energetic, a double snap is often made, and that between every four or five words.

people living beyond them either north or west. On the east there is a tribe of Zoolus called Nobombas, from whom they obtain iron for heading their spears and assegais: they have heard of Sofala, but have never been there, or seen any of the people. Their houses are of a similar construction with these, but formed chiefly of mats and reeds. Their king, Sobūza, the same whom Charka subdued, has still the power of life and death. Malefactors, when capitally punished, are struck on the head with knobbed sticks, as is the practice here, but they are never impaled; with the exception of these, their dead are always interred, being first bound up in their clothes and mats. They describe the hot winds as sometimes so oppressive as to oblige them to leave their houses, and ascend the very tops of the mountains in order to obtain a gasp of air. The climate is so exceedingly unhealthy, and that at all times of the year, that Umkolwāni said he expected to find many ill on his return, although it was winter; that season, if any, being the most sickly. Rain is unknown, but the nightly dews are heavy. The prevailing sickness is of two kinds—one, an affection of the throat and lungs, from which they often recover; but the other is a seizure so sudden and fatal, that frequently in a few minutes, and generally in a quarter of an hour, from the first attack, life is extinct. On these occasions they complain of pains in the loins, back, and front of the head; and, after death, vomit a black liquid from the mouth. They have no knowledge of medicine, and invariably leave the sick to languish without attempt-