


***WILLIAM HENRY  
GILES KINGSTON***



***HENDRICKS  
THE HUNTER;  
OR, THE BORDER  
FARM: A TALE  
OF ZULULAND***

**William Henry Giles Kingston**

# **Hendricks the Hunter; Or, The Border Farm: A Tale of Zululand**

EAN 8596547209294

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: [DigiCat@okpublishing.info](mailto:DigiCat@okpublishing.info)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

[W.H.G. Kingston](#)

["Hendricks the Hunter"](#)

[Chapter One.](#)

[Chapter Two.](#)

[Chapter Three.](#)

[Chapter Four.](#)

[Chapter Five.](#)

[Chapter Six.](#)

[Chapter Seven.](#)

[Chapter Eight.](#)

[Chapter Nine.](#)

[Chapter Ten.](#)

[Chapter Eleven.](#)

[Chapter Twelve.](#)

[Chapter Thirteen.](#)

[Chapter Fourteen.](#)

[Chapter Fifteen.](#)

[Chapter Sixteen.](#)

[Chapter Seventeen.](#)

[Chapter Eighteen.](#)

[Chapter Nineteen.](#)

[Chapter Twenty.](#)

# **W.H.G. Kingston**

## **"Hendricks the Hunter"**

[Table of Contents](#)

---

### **Chapter One.**

[Table of Contents](#)

#### **The Trader in Zululand.**

Zululand is a wild region of mountain ranges, deep valleys and gorges, roaring torrents, rapidly flowing rivers, plains covered with mimosa bushes, meadows where cattle pasture and grow fat, and level plateaux extending for many miles across it, several hundred feet above the level of the ocean; while scattered here and there, in some parts pretty thickly, are to be seen the kraals or villages and the mealy grounds of the natives. Wild as is the country, and although roads, properly speaking, there are none, it is sufficiently practicable for waggons in various directions.

Some few years back, one of these vehicles, drawn by a span of twelve oxen, was seen slowly wending its way to the south-west, in the direction of Natal. It was a loosely yet strongly built machine on four wheels, fourteen feet long and four wide, formed of well-seasoned stink wood, the joints and bolts working all ways, so that, as occasionally happened, as it slowly rumbled and bumped onward, when the front wheel sank into a deep hole, the others remained perfectly upright. It was tilted over with thick canvas

impervious to rain, the goods or passengers inside being thus well sheltered from the hardest showers, and even from the hot rays of the sun.

The oxen pulled steadily together, as became animals long accustomed to work in company. On a board in front stood a Hottentot driver, his black visage surmounted by a broad-brimmed straw hat ornamented by a few ostrich feathers twined round the crown, while his hand held a whip of Brobdignagian proportions, the stock being fully fourteen feet, and the lash upwards of twenty-four feet in length, with which he occasionally urged on the leaders, or drew blood from the animals beneath his feet, as well as from those intermediate in the span, whenever a rise in the ground or its unusual roughness required an additional exertion of their strength.

Several black men, of tall sinewy forms and Kaffir features, each carrying a gun at his back, and a long pole in his hand, accompanied the waggon on foot. At some little distance ahead rode a florid, good-looking man, above the middle height, and of strongly built figure, dressed in a grey suit, with a broad-brimmed hat on his head. He also carried a gun at his back and a brace of pistols in a broad belt which he wore round his waist. Though his hair and beard were slightly grizzled, yet, by the expression of his countenance and his easy movements, he appeared to have lost none of the activity of youth, while his firm-set mouth and bright blue eyes betokened courage and energy. Some horses followed the waggon, secured by thongs of a length sufficient to enable them to pick their way. A glance into the interior of the waggon would have shown that it was fully

loaded, the chief contents being the skins of wild animals, the huge tusks of elephants, and other spoils of the chase, with which the proprietor was returning after a hunt of many months' duration, to dispose of them at Maritzburg or D'Urban.

The horseman was apparently one of those enterprising traders and hunters who roam over the southern parts of the dark continent to barter European goods for cattle, skins, ivory, and other produce of the country. As he was the owner of the waggon and the master of the men attending it, we will for the present designate him as the Trader. He generally rode on in silence, amusing himself with his own thoughts, but occasionally he turned to address a tall Kaffir by his side, whose leopard-skin robe and head-dress, the long rifle at his back, and the independent air with which he walked, betokened him to be a leading hunter, and the familiar way in which he was addressed and replied, showed that he was held in high esteem by his employer.

"We must look out for a camping-place before long, Umgolo," said the trader. "The beasts have had a rough journey, and will require plenty of time for feeding. Do you go on ahead, and select a spot where grass and water are to be found, and where we may watch them, and defend ourselves, should any of the people hereabouts take a fancy to the beasts or to the contents of our waggon."

"The master shall be obeyed," answered the Kaffir. "It may be as well, as he has said, to be on our guard, for the Zulus in these parts are arrant thieves, and will not scruple to steal if they have the chance."

The Kaffir, who had of course spoken in his native tongue, hurried ahead of the team. In a short time the waggon overtook him at a spot which he had chosen on the slope of a hill forming one side of a valley through which ran a sparkling stream, the ground in the neighbourhood of its banks being covered with rich grass. No more favourable spot could have been selected for the camp, as the stream served as a boundary on one side, and the hill on the other, so that a man stationed at either end could effectually prevent the cattle from straying.

Another valley opened into that along which the waggon was travelling, and on a level space some considerable way from the bottom could be distinguished in the distance a circular palisade forming a kraal, the dome-roofed huts just appearing above the enclosure. It was so far off, however, that the inhabitants were not likely to have discovered the waggon as it passed along.

At that period, it should be understood, the Zulus and their white neighbours were on tolerably good terms, though some of the former might occasionally have carried off a few horses or head of cattle belonging to the settlers, when they could do so without the risk of being caught. Sportsmen and traders therefore penetrated fearlessly into the country, the traders carrying cotton goods, blankets, cutlery, and not unfrequently firearms and powder and shot, which they exchanged for skins and oxen.

However, we will return to our friends. At a short distance from the spot selected by Umgolo for the camp was a wood from which fuel for the fires could be obtained, and which would have afforded materials for throwing up a

fortification, had such been considered necessary. But the sturdy owner of the waggon, with his band of expert marksmen, believed himself well able to cope with any natives who might venture to interfere with him.

Having outspanned, or in other words the oxen being unyoked, they hurried of their own accord down to the stream to drink, attended by two of the men, with their guns in hand, in case any lion or other savage beast should be lurking in the neighbourhood. The water was too shallow for crocodiles, which in many parts have to be guarded against. The rest of the men were engaged in collecting fuel for the fire, and cutting stakes and poles to form a temporary enclosure in which the oxen might be penned during the dark hours of night.

Meantime the trader, attended by Umgolo, set off in search of a springboc or a pallah, called also the rooyaboc, or a wild boar or a water-buck, whose flesh might serve the party for supper and breakfast. There was no fear of starving in a country where numberless varieties of animals abounded. They made their way towards a thicket which extended from some distance up the hill, across the valley, almost down to the river. Game of some sort was sure to be found within it, while at the same time they themselves would be concealed by the thick bushes, and be enabled to get sufficiently close to an animal to shoot it with certainty.

It was only, however, in some places that the thicket could be penetrated; for below the large mimosa trees there grew thorny creepers and bushes, among which it was impossible to force a passage without the certainty of having to emerge with garments torn to shreds, and legs



bleeding from lacerations innumerable. Here in wild profusion grew the creeper known as the "wait-a-bit," because its hooked thorns will catch the clothes of any person brushing by it, and compel him to wait a bit until he has released himself by drawing them out one by one. The natives give it the still more honourable title of "catch tiger," as they affirm that even that savage creature, who may unwarily leap into it, will find itself trapped in a way from which there is no escape. Then there was the cactus with spikes three inches in length, and the "Come and I'll kiss you," a bush armed with almost equally formidable thorns, and huge nettles, and numerous other vegetable productions, offering impracticable impediments to the progress, not only of human beings, but of every species of animal, with the exception of elephants and rhinoceroses, which might attempt to force a way through them.

The hunters had not gone far, when, as they were skirting the thicket, they came on a small herd of water-buck. The trader, raising his rifle, fired, and one of the graceful animals lay struggling on the grass. The rest bounded off like lightning, to escape the shot which the native discharged. Both hurrying forward, soon put the deer out of its misery. To follow the rest would have been useless, as they were away far out of range of their firearms. They therefore at once applied themselves to the task of cutting up the dead animal, so that they might carry back the best portions of the meat to the camp.

While they were thus employed, a crashing sound was heard coming from the thicket at no great distance, when springing to their feet they saw before them a black

rhinoceros, the most formidable inhabitant of those wild regions. It is more dangerous to encounter than even the lion or the elephant, because the only one which will deliberately chase a human being whenever it catches sight of him, and will never give up the pursuit, unless its intended victim can obtain concealment, or it is itself compelled to bite the dust. Its sight is, however, far from keen; so that if there are bushes or rocks near at hand, it can be easily avoided.

Such was, fortunately for the hunters, the case in the present instance. As on it came thundering over the ground, uttering a roar of displeasure, the Kaffir, shouting to his master, sprang behind a bush, near which the deer had fallen. The trader, however, stood firm, his weapon in his hand, ready to fire, although knowing full well that, should he miss, the next instant the savage brute would be upon him, and either gore or trample him to death.

Flight was out of the question with such a pursuer at his heels, while even should he now attempt to take refuge behind a bush, the rhinoceros, close as it was, would probably see him. Notwithstanding this, he remained motionless; not a limb shook, not a nerve quivered. As the ferocious monster, with its formidable horn lowered, came rushing on, the trader, raising his rifle, fired, and then, before the smoke had cleared off, with an agility which could scarcely have been expected in a man of his proportions, sprang on one side. Almost at the same moment a crack was heard from Umgolo's rifle, and the rhinoceros sank to the ground, uttering a loud scream

indicative of pain and also of anger at finding itself foiled in its onslaught.

In vain the brute attempted to rise. Umgolo sprang forward and plunged his assegai into its breast. The hunters' sharp knives soon cut through the tough skin, and several slices of the flesh were added to the store of meat with which they set off on their return to the camp. It was the leader's intention to send some of his people to bring in the horn and a further portion of the flesh, should it not in the meantime have been devoured by jackals, hyenas, and other scavengers of the wilds. Their arrival was greeted with a shout of satisfaction by the people. While some eagerly set to work to cook the meat brought to them, others went out to bring in a further supply. On their return, each man loaded with as much as he could carry, they reported that they had been only just in time to drive off a pack of wolves which would soon have left them the bare bones alone for their share.

Although they had performed a long and rough day's journey, they sat up round the fire late into the night, cooking and eating the rhinoceros and water-buck flesh, and relating to each other their oft-told adventures. As soon as darkness came on, the cattle were driven in and secured close to the waggon, and sentries, with muskets in their hands, were placed to watch them, as well as to serve as guards to the rest of the camp.

The trader's accustomed sleeping-place was inside his waggon, where, by the light of a lantern hung from the roof, he could sit and read or write when so disposed. After allowing his followers sufficient time to amuse themselves,

he shouted to them to cease their noise and go to sleep. To hear with his well-disciplined hunters and drivers was to obey, and at once rolling themselves up in their blankets or karosses they lay down round the fire, which had previously been made up, so as to last some hours without additional fuel. He then, before turning in himself, took a turn round the camp, stopping occasionally to listen for any sounds which might indicate that a lion was prowling in the neighbourhood. He was just about to return to the waggon, when he observed emerging from behind a clump of trees in the valley below him numerous dark figures moving slowly over the ground. He watched them attentively, and was convinced that they were a party of Zulus bent on a warlike expedition. Others followed, until a large number had assembled in the open. Whether or not their object was to attack his camp he could not tell; but he resolved, should they do so, to defend his property to the last. He at once called up Umgolo, and in a low voice ordered him to arouse his companions, but on no account to allow them to show themselves or to make the slightest noise. These orders were obeyed, and the trader retired to the shade of his waggon, where he could watch what was going forward without himself being seen. The fire, from which a few flames occasionally flickered up, must, he knew, have shown the Zulus the position of the camp.

Though he took these precautions for prudence' sake, he did not consider it likely that the Zulus, who had hitherto been friendly, would venture to attack him. His followers, however, appeared not to be so well satisfied on that point

as he was; for each man, as he lay on the ground, examined his arms to be sure that they were ready for instant action.

The dark figures moved slowly on, then halted.

“They are considering whether they shall venture to come against us,” whispered Umgolo. “If they do, we will give them a warmer welcome than they expect.”

Such might have been the interpretation of his remarks.

“I still doubt whether they will attack us,” answered his master. “They know too well the power of the white man’s powder and lead.”

At that time comparatively few firearms had been introduced among the Zulus, and they had but an imperfect knowledge of their use.

Again the black figures began to move, but instead of drawing nearer the camp, apparently supposing that they had not been observed, they directed their course towards the kraal which had been observed by the travellers on the hillside just before they unspanned.

“They are about to work no good to yonder kraal, or they would not be moving thus silently at this time of night,” observed Umgolo. “Before morning dawns, not a man, woman, or child will be left alive, and not a hoof remain inside.”

“I would then that we could give the inhabitants notice of their impending doom, or save the unhappy wretches by some means or other,” said the trader, more to himself than his follower, well aware that Umgolo would scarcely enter into his feelings on the subject.

“It cannot be done,” remarked Umgolo. “Any one approaching the kraal would be discovered by the warriors,

and put to death to a certainty.”

“Why do you think that the kraal is to be attacked?” asked his master.

“This I know, that yonder kraal is the abode of the brave young chief Mangaleesu, who possesses numerous head of cattle, and has under him a band of devoted followers. Perhaps Panda, the king of the Zulus, or some other great chief, covets Mangaleesu’s cattle, or fears his power, and this expedition has been sent out to destroy him and all his people. It may be that one of Panda’s wives has been ill, and the doctor, not knowing what else to say, having declared that she was bewitched, was ordered to go and smell out the culprit; the cunning rogue knowing full well how best to please the king; or, as I remarked, some other enemy of Mangaleesu has fixed on him.”

“How do you know, Umgolo, that such is the case?” inquired his master.

“I guess it,” answered Umgolo. “Perhaps I am wrong. The young chief may be an enemy of Cetchwayo, and he it is who has sent the army to destroy him. He knows the bravery and cleverness of Mangaleesu, who, had he gained an inkling of what is intended, would have made his escape into Natal. There may be some other cause for the intended attack, but I am not far wrong, master, you may depend upon that.”

“I fear, indeed, that you are right in your conjectures,” said the trader. “I am satisfied that the Zulus do not intend to attack us. Tell the people that they may again go to sleep, and that they will be summoned if they are required.”

While Umgolo went to execute this order, the trader stood leaning on his gun at a spot a short distance from the camp, to which he had made his way the better to watch the proceedings of the Zulu force. He was considering how he could manage to reach the kraal before the Zulu warriors had surrounded it, and were ready to commence their work of slaughter. He might, by following a different direction, and moving more rapidly over the ground, get to the rear of the kraal, and warn the doomed inhabitants to flee while there was yet time. Too probably, however, they would be seen escaping, and would be pursued and slaughtered before they had time to get to any distance. Still his generous feelings prompted him to make the attempt. There would be a considerable amount of risk to himself, though the Zulus at that time held white men in respect, and himself especially as he had so frequently traversed their country, and was known to many of them. Notwithstanding this, if found interfering with their proceedings, they might, in a sudden fit of anger, put him to death. Leaving the camp, therefore, he proceeded with rapid steps along the side of the hill, in the direction the Zulus had taken. Though the kraal was concealed from view by the shades of night, and no lights issued from it, he well knew its position. He soon gained a spot whence in daylight he could clearly have perceived it, when to his grief he saw what might have been mistaken for a dark shadow creeping over the ground and already ascending the hill on which the kraal stood. He was now convinced of the impossibility of getting to it in time to warn the inhabitants of their impending fate. Perfect stillness reigned around, broken occasionally by the distant

mutterings of a lion, or the melancholy cry of some beast or bird of prey. Unable to tear himself away from the spot, he waited, moved by a painful curiosity to learn what would happen, as he knew that the dusky warriors must have reached the kraal, though he was unable to see their movements. Still no cry reached his ear. Had the inhabitants got warning of the intended attack, and beaten a timely retreat? He hoped that such might have been the case.

A crescent moon and the bright stars shed a faint light over the scene. He could look far up and down the valley, but the part where the kraal stood was shrouded in gloom. Presently the silence was broken by a chorus of shouts and yells, borne by the night wind from the direction of the kraal, followed by shrieks and cries which continued without intermission for some minutes, and then he saw lights glimmering here and there, increasing in intensity, until a circle of flame burst forth, rising rapidly as the fire caught hold of the combustible material of which the kraal was composed. By this time all sounds had ceased, and he knew that the last of the unhappy inhabitants had been killed.

Wishing to avoid the risk of meeting any of the savage warriors, should they cross the hill, he hastened back to the camp. He found Umgolo, who had discovered his absence, looking out, wondering what had become of him.

The Kaffir had heard the yells and shrieks of the savages as they attacked the kraal, and fearing that his master might have been tempted to interfere, was proportionally glad to see him return safe.

They were still standing just outside the camp, when the sound of approaching footsteps reached their ears.



“Here come some of the savage Zulus. We must drive them back, if they intend to molest us,” said the trader.

“No fear of that,” replied the Kaffir. “There are but two pair of feet. See! there they come up the hill.”

The next instant the figure of a young warrior, with assegais in hand, supporting with his left arm a slight girl, came in sight. The flames from the fire lighted up their figures. Blood streamed from the side and right arm of the man. Both were panting for breath.

“Mangaleesu claims your protection, white chief, for her he loves, and for himself, that he may avenge the death of those he has lost. You will not refuse it?”

“I will gladly conceal you, and afford you all the help I can,” answered the trader. “Come on: there is not a moment to be lost. Your wife can get into the waggon, and you can lie in the hammock beneath it, where, even if your enemies come, they will not think of looking for you.”

This was said as the young chief and the girl were being conducted to the waggon. All was done so rapidly and silently, that none of the sleeping servants were awakened, and only those who had charge of the cattle could have observed what had happened, while the curtain which closed the front of the waggon was allowed to remain open, so as not to excite the suspicion of the Zulus, should they come to the camp.

The trader and Umgolo slowly paced up and down with their rifles in their hands, waiting the arrival of their pursuers. At length they began to hope that Mangaleesu had evaded them, and that they had gone off in a different direction. So satisfied were they that this was the case, that

the trader returned to the waggon to see what assistance he could render to the wounded chief. Mangaleesu, however, made light of his hurts, although they were such as any white man would have considered very serious.

He told his white friend that his wife was uninjured, notwithstanding the many assegais thrust at her.

“Have any more of your people escaped from your enemies?” asked the trader.

“No; few even fought for their lives,” answered the Zulu chief. “When I was first awakened out of sleep by the shouting around my kraal, I knew well what was about to happen; but I resolved for Kalinda’s sake, as well as my own, to struggle for life. To fight my way out and to save my wife, I knew was impossible, had I dashed out boldly as I at first thought of doing; but she whispered to me, ‘Let us make a figure; our enemies will stab at that, and we meantime may perchance get clear.’ The idea struck me as good. She brought me a mat, and we rolled it up round a thick stick. We then fastened a shield to it, and on the top a bundle of assegais, as if held in the hand of a warrior. It was much too dark for our enemies to discover the deceit. When all was ready, I held the figure in one hand, while I grasped my weapons in the other, Kalinda keeping close behind me. I then opened the door, and thrust out the figure in the midst of those standing near, thirsting for my blood. They instantly, as I knew they would, gathered round it, piercing it with their assegais. While they were thus employed, I sprang out, still holding the figure, and in a few bounds reached the inside of the outer fence, against which I placed my back, and kept my assailants at bay. As they drew away

from the door to attack me, Kalinda rushed out; and our enemies, who had supposed that there was only one person in the hut, seeing another appear, fancied that there might be more, and became confused, not knowing how to act; for many of them had already felt the point of my assegai. Kalinda, getting close to me without a wound, threw the figure over the fence, among those guarding the outside. They instantly rushed at it, leaving the gate for a few seconds unguarded. This was all I required. Sheltering my wife with my shield, as she clung to my arm, I sprang with her through the opening, over the bodies of my slaughtered followers, and before our enemies knew we had gone we were running like springbocs down the hill. We knew that if our flight should be discovered we should be pursued, but we hoped that we had not been seen at the moment we were rushing out of the kraal. I had been out hunting until late in the evening, and had discovered the tracks of your waggon. I guessed therefore whereabouts you would camp, and determined to place my wife under your protection, knowing that while with you our pursuers would not molest her. For myself, I intended to follow up my enemies, and revenge myself by trying to kill some of them. When morning breaks, and they do not find my dead body, they'll know that I have made my escape."

"You have acted a brave part," said the trader; "but I would advise you to let your enemies go their own way. You have saved your young wife and your own life. You will, I hope, be able to reach Natal in safety, where you will be free from danger. If you attempt to kill your enemies, you will very likely be killed yourself, and there will be no one to

protect your wife. You are also now weak from loss of blood, and although your heart is courageous, your strength may fail you.”

One of the servants had in the meantime been employed, by command of his master, in making some broth over the fire, which he now brought to the young chief, who notwithstanding his boasting was very glad to obtain it, being much exhausted from the exertions he had made.

The trader then took some to Kalinda, who lay trembling in the waggon, expecting every moment the arrival of their pursuers to kill her and her husband. The trader did his best to soothe her fears by promising that he would not deliver them up to their enemies, even though it should be discovered where they had taken refuge.

The remainder of the night passed quietly by. The glare from the burning kraal could be seen in the distance for some time, but it gradually died out, and all was dark in that direction. No sounds were brought down by the night wind to show whether the Zulus were still surrounding it; but Umgolo, knowing their habits, gave it as his opinion that they had departed as silently as they had come, after executing their fell purpose; and that if they had discovered the flight of the chief and his wife, a party had gone in pursuit of them in the direction it was supposed they had taken. One thing was certain, it could not have been suspected that the fugitives had taken refuge in the camp, or some of their enemies would have arrived before now to demand them.

The trader had previously determined to spend a day where he was now encamped, in order to rest his cattle from their rough journey, and he thought it prudent to adhere to his intention the better to deceive the Zulus, who would be less likely to suspect that he was sheltering the fugitives should he remain stationary, than were he to be found hurrying away from the neighbourhood.

---

## **Chapter Two.**

[Table of Contents](#)

### **The Foundling of the Kraal.**

The trader having selected three of his men to keep watch, lay down, wrapped in a mantle of skin, under his waggon, having given up his usual sleeping-place to his guests.

No one was seen however, nor were any sounds heard to indicate that any persons were approaching the camp, and dawn at length broke.

Rising from his bed under the waggon, the trader walked a few paces beyond the camp, to take a look over the country around, for the purpose of ascertaining as far as his eye could help him, whether any of the Zulus were still in the neighbourhood. The air was deliciously fresh and balmy, the atmosphere was bright and clear, so that the outlines of the distant hills were clearly defined against the sky. There were a few soft, white, fleecy clouds of mist floating here and there, which the breeze, as the sun rose, quickly dispersed; while below, winding through the valley, could be

seen the sheen of the river between the clumps of the trees bordering its banks.

It was difficult to believe that a terrible tragedy had been enacted a few short hours before in the midst of so lovely a scene. He proceeded on along the hill to a place whence he could see the spot where the kraal had existed. Looking through his telescope, he could clearly distinguish a large black circle of ashes marking the spot where the habitations of the slaughtered people had lately stood. He could see no human beings moving about in the neighbourhood, though he turned his glass in every direction. He feared the worst.

“Perhaps some of the poor people may have escaped death from the assegais of their enemies, and may be lying hid in the bushes or plantations around,” he said to himself; “though I fear those savages do their work too surely to give much hope of that.”

He hastened back to the camp, and having taken a hurried breakfast, and advised his guests to remain quiet in their places of concealment, he set out, accompanied by Umgolo, towards the kraal.

The stream was easily forded. As the morning was fresh, he and his companion walked briskly on. They were thus not long in reaching the neighbourhood of the kraal. A dreadful sight met their eyes. Everywhere the ground was strewn with the dead bodies of its late inhabitants. As he had supposed, the assegais of the avengers had been used too well to allow any of them to escape with life. Some lay outside, others within the two circles of ashes where the huts had stood. Still it was possible that some might have crept to a distance. He and his companion searched,

however, all round, and although every bush was examined, no one was discovered, nor did they perceive any traces of blood which might have indicated that some wounded person had got thus far from the scene of slaughter.

They were about to return to the camp, when, looking towards the kraal, the trader fancied that he saw some object move in the centre among several dead oxen, which had probably been wounded by the assegais of the



attacking party, and had returned there to die. He accordingly made his way towards the spot, followed by Umgolo, over the still warm ashes. He preferred the risk of burning his boots to going round through the entrance, where the bodies of the slaughtered people lay so thickly that he could scarcely pass without treading upon them.



“Who can this be?” he exclaimed as he got near where the dead oxen lay. “If my eyes do not deceive me, here’s a young white boy. Who are you? What brought you here, my child?” he asked in a kind tone.

But the boy did not reply. He had been lying between two of the cattle, partly under one of them, and having apparently been asleep, and just awakened, was endeavouring to get up. Round his waist was a robe of monkey skins, and a cloak of wild cat skins hung over his shoulders. Both were stained with blood, but whether it came from a wound he had received, or was that of the animals whose bodies had sheltered him, it was difficult to say. When the trader lifted him up, he evinced no fear, though he still did not speak.

“Are you English or Dutch?” asked the trader. “A Zulu you cannot be, though dressed like one.”

There was no reply. The boy, who seemed to be about eight or nine years old, looked round with an astonished gaze at the circle of ashes to which the kraal had been reduced.

“Why, the poor child is wounded, I fear,” said the trader, examining his arm. “Terror probably has deprived him of his wits.”

As he said this, taking a handkerchief from his pocket, he bound it round the injured limb, so as to staunch the flow of blood.

“The sooner we get him to the camp the better: he wants both food and water. Although he cannot say anything about himself, I have no doubt that Mangaleesu will be able to give an account of him.”

Saying this, the trader, giving his gun to Umgolo to carry, lifted the boy up in his arms, and hurried with him down the hill towards the camp. Had the boy been a Zulu, Umgolo would probably have recommended that he should be left to shift for himself, but observing his white skin he did not venture to interfere.

The child, evidently satisfied that he had found a friend, lay quietly in the strong arms of the trader, who walked on with rapid steps, carrying him as if he had been an infant.

The camp was soon reached, and the trader, placing the boy on some skins in the shade of the waggon, ordered one of his Kaffirs who acted as cook to get some broth ready, while he sent off another to obtain fresh water from the spring.

This done, he examined the wound in the boy's arm, more carefully than he had before been able to do. He first got out of the waggon a salve and some lint, with some linen bandages; for he was too experienced a hunter to travel without articles which might occasionally be of the greatest necessity.

Having taken off the handkerchief and carefully washed the wound in warm water, he dressed it with the skill of a surgeon. The boy looked up gratefully in his new friend's face, but still did not speak. The trader having in vain endeavoured to obtain an answer when addressing him in English or Dutch, he at last spoke to him in Kaffir.

The boy at once said, "I thank you, white stranger, for what you have done for me. I thought at first that you belonged to those who had killed our people, and that you were going to kill me. Now I know that you are my friend."

“You are right, my boy; I wish to be so,” said the trader. “But tell me, how comes it that you who are white, cannot speak your native tongue?”

“I have been so long with the Zulus that I have forgotten it,” answered the boy. “I once could speak it, and I well remember the white people I lived amongst. For a long time I remembered my native language; but as I always, since I could speak, knew some Kaffir, I soon understood what was said to me. I had a black nurse, but she was assegaid, and I was torn from her arms by the Zulus who carried me off. More than that I cannot tell.”

The kind-hearted trader was obliged to be content with this information. He was unwilling indeed, till the poor boy had regained his strength, further to question him, and he hoped to learn more of his history from Mangaleesu and Kalinda, who he had no doubt would be able to afford it.

Having given the boy some of the broth which was now ready, and placed a blanket under his head to serve as a pillow, he left Umgolo to watch over him. He then went and sat down by the side of Mangaleesu, who still lay in the hammock under the waggon, not yet recovered from the exertions he had made on the previous night, and the loss of blood from his wounds.

“I have recovered one of your people, and have brought him to the camp,” said the trader.

“Who is he?” asked Mangaleesu eagerly. “I thought that all had been killed.”

“Although he has a white skin, he seems by his dress and language to be a Zulu,” answered the trader.

“Then he must be little Unozingli,” said the chief. “I am glad he has escaped, for he was a favourite with us, and will some day, if he lives, become a great warrior.”

“By what chance did he happen to be living among you? Although he is dressed like a Zulu, and speaks the Kaffir tongue alone, he is evidently the child of white parents.”

“He was brought to my kraal by a tribe from a distant part of the country, who afterwards joined my people,” answered the chief. “They had taken him, they said, from a black woman who had been killed; but the child being white, they had been unwilling to destroy him, and had carried him off with them. He was at once adopted into the tribe, and has lived with us ever since, learning our customs and language, and we gave him the name of Unozingli.”

From this answer it was evident that no further satisfactory information could be obtained from Mangaleesu respecting the boy. This was a disappointment to the trader. He had hoped, after rescuing the little fellow, to have had the satisfaction of discovering his parents or friends, and restoring him to them. He was satisfied that the child was either English or Dutch, and from his features he was inclined to think he was the former.

“I don’t fancy calling him by his Kaffir name,” he said to himself. “I must get one more suited to him.” As he looked at the thick auburn hair which hung in curls over the boy’s head, his freckled, though otherwise fair countenance, his large blue eyes, and broad, open countenance, he exclaimed, “I have it! I’ll call him Lionel; for a young lion he looks, and will, I hope, some day bring down many of the brutes of the forest.”

Unwilling to leave the camp himself, lest their enemies might come in search of the young chief and his bride, towards evening the trader sent out Umgolo and another man in search of game to supply his followers with meat, for in that climate what is killed one day is scarcely eatable the next.

He also despatched two others in different directions to ascertain if any of the Zulus were in the neighbourhood, apparently searching for Mangaleesu, as he intended in that case to keep the chief and his bride more carefully concealed until he had carried them safely across the border.

The hunters were the first to return, loaded with the flesh of a couple of antelopes. Soon afterwards, while they were busily employed in cutting up the animals and preparing them for supper, the scouts came in, bringing the information that they had seen a large party who seemed to them coming from the south-west, but who were too far off to enable them to ascertain who they were. As—the intermediate ground being uneven—it would have taken them a long time to get nearer, they deemed it wise to return at once with their report.

“Whether friends or foes, we are ready for them,” said the trader. “In case they should be foes, we must keep our guests concealed; but from the direction they come, I think it more likely that they are friends, and we will have some food ready for them.”

The cooks therefore spitted according to camp fashion an additional supply of meat to roast, while the trader walked on a short distance in the direction he expected the

strangers to appear. He was not mistaken in his surmise. After some time he saw through his glass a waggon very similar to his own, accompanied by two persons on horseback and several on foot. On this, returning to the camp, he ordered his horse to be saddled, and went out to meet them. As he was seen approaching, the two mounted strangers rode forward.

“What, Hendricks the Hunter!” exclaimed the elder, a tall, gaunt man, with a weather-beaten countenance, whose grey twinkling eyes, the form of his features, and his rich brogue showed him to be an Irishman. “Mighty glad to fall in with you, old friend!” and the gentlemen shook hands warmly.

“I’m equally well pleased to meet you, Maloney,” answered Mr Hendricks. “You can give me news of the civilised world, of which I have heard nothing for many a long month.”

“Faith! as to that, it wags much as usual. Skins are fetching fair prices, which is good news for you; but the Kathlamba bushmen are again becoming troublesome, and have lately carried off several head of cattle and horses from the settlers in that direction, which is a bad matter for them, while the new arrivals are grumbling and complaining as usual because they do not find the colony the Eldorado they expected, before they have had time to dig a spade into the ground or run a plough over it. For my part, I’m mighty glad to get out of their company and find myself in the wilderness.”

“So am I generally, after I have been a short time at home, I confess, though I have many friends in Maritzburg,