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African Folk Lore*
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STORIES OF THE AMAXOSA,

OR

A SELECTION FROM THE TRADITIONAL TALES CURRENT AMONG THE
PEOPLE LIVING ON THE EASTERN BORDER OF THE CAPE COLONY,

WITH

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS AND NOTES.



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per R. M.
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P R E F A C E.



OF late years a great deal of interest has been taken in the folklore of uncivilized tribes by those who have made it their business to study mankind. It has been found that a knowledge of the traditional tales of a people is a key to their ideas and a standard of their powers of thought. These stories display their imaginative faculties; they are guides to the nature of the religious belief, of the form of government, of the marriage customs, in short, of much that relates to both the inner and the outer life of those by whom they are told.

These tales also show the relationship between tribes and people of different countries and even of different languages. They are evidences that the same ideas are common to every branch of the human family at the same stage of progress. On this account, it is now generally recognized that in order to obtain full knowledge of any uncivilized race, a knowledge of their folklore is necessary. Without this a survey is no more complete than, for instance, a description of the English people would be if no notice of English literature were taken.

It is with a view of letting the people we have chosen to call Kaffirs describe themselves in their own words, that these stories have been collected and printed. They form only a small portion of the folklore that is extant among them, but it is believed that they have been so selected as to leave no distinguishing feature unrepresented. They are termed Stories of the Amaxosa, but they are in reality only Xosa versions of stories that are common to all the tribes between the Cape Colony and Natal, and some of them are almost identical with the Zulu Tales published by Bishop Callaway.

Though these traditional tales are very generally known, there are of course some persons who can relate them much better than others. The best narrators are almost invariably ancient dames, and the time chosen for story telling is always the evening. This is perhaps not so much on account of the evening being the most convenient time, as because such tales as these have most effect when told to an assemblage gathered round a fire circle, when night has spread her mantle over the earth, and when the belief in the supernatural is stronger than it is by day. Hence it may easily happen that persons may mix much with Kaffirs without even suspecting that they have in their possession a rich fund of legendary lore.

There is a peculiarity in many of these stories which makes them capable of almost indefinite expansion. They are so constructed that parts of one can be made to fit into parts of another so as to form a new tale. In this respect they are like the blocks of wood in the form of cubes with which European children amuse themselves. Combined in one way they present the picture of a lion, another combination shows a map of Europe, another still, a view of St. Paul's, and so on. So with many of these tales. They are made up of fragments which are capable of a variety of combinations.

It will surprise no one to learn that these tales are already undergoing great changes among a very large section of the natives on the border. Tens of thousands of Kaffirs have adopted the religion of the Europeans, and the facility with which such changes can be made as were alluded to in the last paragraph has encouraged them to introduce ideas borrowed from their teachers. Thus with them Satan—of whom they had no conception before the advent of Europeans—is now the prompter to evil, and morals are drawn that never could have entered their heads in days of old. Their tales are thus a counterpart of the narrators, in possessing an adaptability to growth and a power of conformation to altered circumstances. Everything about these people proclaims that they are capable of rising to a very much higher life than that of their ancestors.

Many of the actors in these Stories of the Amaxosa will be familiar to Europeans. Animals of various kinds will come upon

So it is
with all
folk lore

the stage and talk as naturally as did the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood. Giants who feast on little children will appear, and Jack the Giant-killer, under another name, will play his well-known part. Long before the curtain falls it will be seen that Africans and Europeans have more in common than is usually suspected.

The facility with which errors can be detected makes it unnecessary for the editor to say more than a very few words concerning the care that has been taken to give absolutely not a single sentence in any of these tales that has not come from native sources. Most of them have been obtained from at least ten or twelve individuals residing in different parts of the country, and they have all undergone a thorough review by a circle of educated natives. In point of fact, they have not only been told by natives, but they have been copied down by natives, the different versions have been compared by natives, the type has been set by natives, and, finally, the proof sheets have been read by natives. The notes only are the editor's own. He has directed the work of others, but has himself done nothing more than was necessary to explain the text. He hopes therefore that these Stories of the Amaxosa will be found worthy of something more than a hasty perusal.

LOVEDALE, SOUTH AFRICA,
August 15th, 1877.

Several people at the Cape have
been sending me stories, as
an item of the Popular Tales of
the West Highlanders; I have
been writing long articles to
unknown correspondents
JH

INTSOMI ZAMAXOSA.



IMBALI YENTAKA EYENZ' AMASI.

KWAKUKO ngelinye ixesha umntu olihlwempu ehlala nomfazi wake kumzi otile. Babe nabantwana abatatu, amakwenkwe emabini ne ntombazana. Amasi bebe wafumana emtini. Ebeti ukuze afunyanwe kukanywe emtini zekupume amasi. Ayenge mnandi nje ngawe nkomo, bati nabantu abebe wasela bahlala bebityile. Ngenxa yesi sizatu, abo bantu babe ngagudile nje ngabanye abatyebileyo.

Ngenye imini umfazi waya kulima intsimi. Waqala ngoku nqamla incá ngekúba, emana eyi fumba ndaweni nye, yada yasuka yayi mfumba enkulu. Lowo waungumsebenzi wemini yokuqala, lati ilanga xa liqala ukutshona wagoduka. Wati akumka, kwa fika intaka kulondawo, yati, “ncá buya ube njengoko uburjalo, ncá ya'entsimi buyela endaweni yako.” Kwenzeka oko. Wati akuya kwa kusa, akufika kwenzekile oku, wamangaliswa kakulu. Wayi qokelela kanjalo ngalo mini, wagxumeka nezinti euxamele ukuze abone indawo apo apele kona. Ngokuhlwa wagoduka waxela ukuba incá awabeyi nqamle wafika imile nje ngakuqala. Yati indoda “ingatinina ukwenzeka into enjalo? Ubunqena akusebenzanga, ngoku uza kundixelela ubuxoki. Suka apa pambi kwam, ndiya kukubeta.”

Ngemini elandelayo yesitatu waya emsebenzini wake, waya ngentliziyo edanileyo embi, ecinga amazwi atetwe

yindoda yake. Wafika kulondawo wayi fumana imilile incá. Ezo zinti waye zifake emhlabeni zaziseko kodwa zona, kungabonakali ukuba uke wasebenza. Wamangaliswa kakulu. Wati ngentliziyo “Andisayi kuyinqamla incá, kodwa ndiya kusuke ndilime yonke into kunye nomhlaba.” Waqala ke. Yafika intaka yahlala kwezi zinti abezi gxúmekile. Yati, “citi, citi, ngubani lo ulima kulomhlaba ka bawo? Gaba ncotuka; mpini yapuka; sisinde buyola endaweni yako!” Kwenzeka konke oko.

Umfazi wagoduka waya kuxelela indoda yake into eyenze-kileyo yenziwe yintaka. Bati benza iqínga. Bemba umnxuma omkulu onzulu emhlabeni, bawu gqúma ngezinti nange ncá. Yazifihla indoda emnxúnyeni, yavelisa isandla esinye. Wati umfazi yena waqala ukulima umhlaba kanjalo. Yafika ke intaka yahlala esandleni sendoda, yaqala yenza imilozana imane incokola apa. Yati “Ngu mhlaba ka bawo lo uwumbayo. Uwumbela nina lomhlaba ka bawo? Gaba yapuka ube zimvumvana ezincinane, zisinde buyelani ezi ndaweni zenu.” Kwenzeka oko. Yati indoda yayibuyisa iminwe yayo yayi bamba intaka. Yapuma ke kulondawo yayi zimele kuyo. Yati kwi ntaka, “wena umane uwonakalisa umsebenzi wale ntsimi, ilanga ligqibelise, akusayi kuze ulibone. Intloko yako ndiya kuyi nqumla ngale ntshengeca!”

Yati intaka kuye, “andintaka ifanele ukubulawa. Ndiyi ntaka enokwenza amasi.” Yati indoda, “kaundenzele ke.” Yawenza amasi esandleni sake. Yawasela indoda. Aye mnandi lomasi. Yati indoda, “kaupinde wenze amanye kwakona ntaka yam.” Yawenza intaka. Indoda yamtuma umfazi lowo yati hamba uye kutabata itunga. Wati akufika nalo intaka yali zalisa ngamasi.

Yakoliseka kakulu indoda leyo. Yati, “le ntaka intle yam iyayi gqita nenkomo.” Wemka nayo wayisa ondlwini wayifaka empandeni. Wati emva koko ngawo onke amaxesha avuke nokuba kusebusuku ati mayenze amasi. Ebe selwa

nguye nomfazi wake. Bati bona abantwana bati q'ó basela awomti. Amagama abantwana abengo *Gingci*, owama zibulo unyana, no *Lonei*, umninawe wake, no *Dumangashe*, udade wabo. Yati lendoda yatyebe kakulu, lwada nolusu lwayo lwaguda. Yati intombazana kumnakwayo u-Gingci "kuteni lento ubawo asuke atyebe kangaka tina sihlale sinqinile?" Wapendula wati "Andazi. Mhlayimbi utya nasebusuku." Bati ke benza iq'inga bati masibaluse. Bambona evuka pakati kobusuku. Waya kula mpanda mkulu wasusa isitebe abe gqume ngaso. Wati "yenza amasi, ntaka yam." Wasela kunene. Wabuya wapinda wati, "yenza amasi, ntaka yam," wasela wada wahluta kakulu. Wabuya waya kulala kanjalo.

Kwati ngemini elandelayo umfazi waya kusebenza entsimini, yati indoda yatyelela ezihlotyeni zayo. Abantwana basala ekaya bona, kodwa abahlala endlwini. Wati uyise wabo waluvala ucango walu qinisa, wati zebangangeni nokuba kungayipina indlela, ade abuye kulo ndawo wayeye kuyo. Wati u-Gcingci "namhlanje siya kusela lamasi atyebisa ubawo, la amenza ukuba agude, asisayi kusela amasi omhlontlo namhlanje." Yati intombazana, "okwesiqu sam, nam nditi masisele kulamasi ka bawo namhlanje."

Bangena ke endlwini. U-Gcingci wasisusa isitebe pezu kwembiza, wati kwi ntaka, "ntaka ka bawo, ndenzele amasi." Yati intaka, "ukuba ndiyi ntaka ka yihlo ndibeke ngaseziko, ukuze ndikwenzele amasi." Yakwenza inkwenkwe oko. Intaka yenza intwana yancinane yamasi. Yasela inkwenkwe, yati "ntaka ka bawo, yenza amasi kanjalo." Yati intaka, "ukuba ndiyi ntaka ka yihlo ndibeke ngase mnyango, ndiya kukwenzela amasi." Yakwenza konke oko inkwenkwe." Yati intaka yenza intwana yancinane yamasi, aselwa yinkwenkwe lawo. Yati intombazana, "ntaka ka bawo, ndenzele amasi." Yati intaka, "ukuba ndiyi ntaka ka yihlo ndibeke elangeni, ukuze ndikwenzele amasi." Yakwenza oko intombazana. Yati intaka yazalisa ingqayi ngamasi.

Yati ke emva koku :—

Weza, weza Uso-Dumangashe.	Gantshi!
Weza ndingamboni.	Gantshi!
Wandisola kakubi.	Gantshi!
Intyewana zihlangene.	Gantshi!
U-Geingci wakulo Lonci.	Gantshi!
Umkomanzi awu welwa,	Gantshi!
Uwelwa zinkonjane	Gantshi!
Ezimapiko made.	Gantshi!

Yati yakuyi gqiba ingoma yayo yesuka yapakamisa amapiko ayo yemka. Kodwa intombazana yayi sasela amasi.

Bayibiza abantwana, bati, “buya ntaka ka bawo,” ayizange ivume ukubuya. Bati, “siya kubulawa namhlanje.” Bayilandela intaka. Bafika emtini apo kwakuko intaka ezininzi. Inkwenkwe yabamba enye, yati kuyo “ntaka ka bawo, yenza amasi.” Yasuka yopa igazi. Bati “asiyiyo intaka ka bawo.” Yati lentaka yopa kakulu; lada labaleka laxelisa umlambo. Yayiyeka ke inkwenkwe ya baleka yemka. Bati abantwana bangenwa luloyiko. Bate ngokwabo, “ukuba ubawo usifumene uyakusi bulala namhlanje.”

Ngokuhlwa yabuya indoda. Yati isekude yabona ukuba umnyango ubuvuliwe. Yati “bendinga valanga ngolwa hlobo.” Wababiza abantwana bake, kwasabela u-Lonci yedwa. Wabuza abanye. Wati u-Lonci “bendiye emlanjeni ndiyekusela, ndifike bengaseko sebemkile.” Wabafuna, into mbazana wayi fumana iziqusheke elututwini, inkwenkwe wayi fumana ite nea nge litye. Wati kwangeloxesha wabuza intaka yake. Banyanzeleka ukuba bamxelele inyaniso.

Yati ke indoda yatabata intambo yaba xoma abo bantwana bobabini emtini owawupezu komlambo. Wemka, wabashiya kona apo. Unina wabo wambongoza uyise wabo esiti maba kululwe, ayavuma indoda. Wati akumka inkwenkwe yalinga ukuzisindisa. Yenyuka ngentambo, yabambelela emtini yenyuka yakulula intambo eyayi bope udade wayo. Bati

emva koko benyuka ngomti, bahambela pambili bemka emzini wakowabo. Balala kwada kwaka tatu endleleni.

Bafika kulityekazi elikulu. Yati inkwenkwe, "asina bawo no ma, litye yiba yindlu yetu." Ilitye lavuleka, bangena pakati. Emva koko bahlala kona kulondawo. Ukutya bebe kufumana ngokuti baye kuzingela inyamakazi,—bezi zingelwa yinkwenkwe.

Bati bakuba behleli kona ixesha elide kulondawo yakula intombazana yankulu. Kulondawo kwakungeko bantu. Kwati ngenye imini kweza intaka ipete umntwana yamshiya kona ngase ndlwini yabo. Yati intaka, "ndenjenjalo kubo bonke abantu." Kwati emva koko kweza ingwenya kulondawo. Inkwenkwe yayiza kuyi bulala, kodwa yati "ndiyi ngwenya, andibulawa, ndingumblobo wako." Yati ke inkwenkwe yabamba ne ngwenya baya endlwini ye ngwenya pantsi kwamanzi esizibeni.

Ingwenya yayi nenkomo ezininzi, nama zimba. Yati lenkwenkwe yapiwa imazi zenkomo zali shumi nengobozi ezili shumi zokutya. Yati okunye ingwenya enkwenkweni "uze utumele udade wenu uze kumendisa kum." Inkwenkwe yaka ubuhlanti boku geina inkomo zayo, wati udade wayo walima intsimi, walima amazimba. Ingwenya yatumela ezinye inkomo. Inkwenkwe yenza ubuhlanti obukulu kunene, bazala zinkomo. Kwati kweza intaka yeza kwalusa lenkwenkwe. Yati intaka "udade wenu uligqibile isiko, ke wena, uawe bekufanele ukuba ungene ebudodeni."

Ingwenya yendisela enye intombi yayo endodeni. Wati lamntu uyi nkazana waya kulamzi wengwenya, waya kuba ngumtshakazi. Bati kuyo, "utabata bani omfuna ukuba abe yindoda?" Yependula intombi yati ndituna "u-Ngwenya." Yati indoda yayo kuyo "kota ubuso bam." Yakwenza oko. Yasuka yobuza ingwenya, ya vuka seliyindoda emandla makulu, ibonakala kakuhle. Yati "intshaba zendlu ka bawo zenza oko, wena mfazi wam unamandla ngapezu kwabo."

Emva koko kwakuko indlala enkulu, wati unina waba bantu weza emzini wabo. Akazange abazi abantwana bake, kodwa bebemazi bona, bampa nokutya. Wemka, kweza uyise wabo. Naye akazange abazi, kodwa bebemazi bona. Bambuza ukuba ufuna ntonina. Wabaxelela ukuba umzi wake utyiwo yindlala. Bampa ukutya, wemka. Wabuya wabuya. Yati indodana, "wawuba siyakufa ngokuya wasixoma emtini." Wamangaliswa, wati "okwenene ungumntana wam na?" Ungwenya wabanika ingobozi zokutya zantatu, wati mabaye kwaka ezintabeni. Wakwenza oko, wada wafela kona apo, ezintabeni.

STORY OF THE BIRD THAT MADE MILK.

THERE was once upon a time a poor man living with his wife in a certain village. They had three children, two boys and a girl. They used to get milk* from a tree. That milk of the tree was got by squeezing. It was not nice as that of a cow, and the people that drank it were always thin. For this reason those people were never glossy like those who are fat.

*The word *amasi*, translated milk, means that kind of fermented milk which is used by the Kaffirs. When taken from the cow, the milk is put into a skin bag, where it ferments and acquires a sharp acid taste. When poured out for use by the master of the household, who is the only one permitted to touch the milk sack, a portion is always left behind to act as leaven. *Amasi* is very nutritious, it forms one of the principal articles of food of the Kaffirs, and is relished by most Europeans in Kaffirland. In warm weather, especially, it is a pleasant and wholesome beverage.

One day the woman went to cultivate a garden.* She began by cutting the grass with a pick† and then putting it in a big heap. That was the work of the first day, and when the sun was just about to set she went home. When she left, there came a bird to that place, and said, "grass be as before, grass of this garden return to your place." It was so. The next morning when she returned and saw that, she wondered greatly. She again put it in order on that day, and put some sticks in the ground to mark the place. In the evening she went home and told that she had found the grass which she

*Among the Kaffirs the work of cultivating the ground fell almost entirely upon the women in olden times. The introduction of the plough has caused a change in this respect, but to the present day a large proportion of the planting and weeding is performed by females.

†*Ikúba*, a pick or hoe. Before the advent of Europeans, the Kaffirs were acquainted with the use of iron, of which the largest implement that was made was this instrument for breaking up the ground. It was of nearly the same shape as a European hoe, but in place of having an eye, into which a handle could be fastened, it was made with a top like a spike, which was driven into the large knob of a long and heavy club. It was at best a clumsy tool.

The Kaffir method of smelting iron was very simple. A furnace was formed of a boulder with a hollow surface, out of which a groove was made to allow the liquid metal to escape, and into which a hole was pierced for the purpose of introducing a current of air. In this, charcoal and virgin ore were heaped together and covered with clay so as to prevent the escape of heat. The bellows by which air was introduced were skin bags, with horns for mouthpieces. The operator held one in each hand, which he closed when he pressed in, and then opened again to admit air. The molten iron, escaping from the crude yet effective furnace, ran into clay moulds prepared to receive it, which were as nearly as possible of the same magnitude as the implement required. The Kaffir smith, using a boulder for an anvil and a hammer of iron or stone, next proceeded to finish the article, which was done very creditably indeed if it was a weapon of war, but very carelessly if it was only a pick for the women to use. The iron was hammered cold, not softened by heat as with us.

had cut growing just as it was before. Her husband said, "how can such a thing be? You were lazy and didn't work, and now tell me this falsehood. Just get out of my sight, or I'll beat you."

On the third day she went to her work with a sorrowful heart, remembering the words spoken by her husband. She reached the place and found the grass growing as before. The sticks that she stuck in the ground were there still, but she saw nothing else of her labour. She wondered greatly. She said in her heart, "I will not cut the grass off again, I will just hoe the ground as it is." She commenced. Then the bird came and perched on one of the sticks. It said, "citi, citi, who is this cultivating the ground of my father? Pick come off; pick handle break; sods go back to your places!" All these things happened.

The woman went home and told her husband what the bird had done. Then they made a plan. They dug a deep hole in the ground, and covered it with sticks and grass. The man hid himself in the hole, and put up one of his hands. The woman commenced to hoe the ground again. Then the bird came and perched on the hand of the man, and delivered its speech. It said, "this is the ground of my father.* Who are you digging my father's ground? Pick break into small pieces, sods return to your places." It was so. Then the man tightened his fingers and caught the bird. He came up out of the place of concealment. He said to the bird, "as for you who spoil the work of this garden, you will not see the sun any more. With this sharp stone I will cut off your head!"

*Kaffir law recognizes the right of individuals to possess landed property. The chief allots a piece of ground to a family, by whom it is retained and held in possession as long as it is cultivated. It is forfeited by abandonment for a long time without assigning sufficient cause. Pasture land is held in common.

Then the bird said to him, "I am not a bird that should be killed. I am a bird that can make milk." The man said, "make some then." The bird made some milk in his hand. The man tasted it. It was very nice milk. The man said, "make some more milk, my bird." The bird did so. The man sent his wife for a milk basket.* When she brought it, the bird filled it with milk.

The man was very much pleased. He said, "this pretty bird of mine is better than a cow." He took it home and put it in a jar.† After that he used to rise even in the night and tell the bird to make milk for him. Only he and his wife drank of it. The children continued to drink of the milk of the tree. The names of the children were Gingci, the first-born son, Lonci, his brother, and Dumangashe, his sister. That man then got very fat indeed, so that his skin became shining. The girl said to her brother Gingci, "why does father get fat and we remain so thin?" He replied, "I do not know. Perhaps he eats in the night." They made a plan

**Itunga*, a basket used to milk the cows in. It is woven so nicely as to be watertight. The Kaffirs are expert in making baskets and mats, but never attempt to dye any of the materials of which they are composed, or otherwise to ornament them. They use mats as we use dishes, to eat from.

†The manufacture of earthenware jars and pots was an art brought by the Kaffirs as nearly to perfection as was possible without a knowledge of the potter's wheel. They made grain jars that would contain fifty or sixty gallons, and vessels that would not hold half a pint. Some were not more than an eighth of an inch in thickness, but the clay of which they were made was so well tempered that they were exceedingly strong. These vessels were usually plain, but were sometimes ornamented by some simple pattern being worked in or on them. They were used as cooking utensils and for a variety of household purposes. The potter's art is now being lost by the Kaffirs. The large jars are being replaced by wooden casks purchased from Europeans, and iron pots have already come into general use.

to watch. They saw him rise in the middle of the night. He went to the big jar and took an eating mat off it. He said, "make milk, my bird." He drank much. Again he said, "make milk, my bird," and again he drank till he was very full. Then he lay down and went to sleep.

The next day the woman went to work in her garden, and the man went to visit his friend. The children remained at home, but not in the house. Their father fastened the door of the house,* and told them not to enter it on any account till his return. Gingci said, "to-day we will drink of the milk that makes father fat and shining, we will not drink of the milk of the euphorbia to-day." The girl said, "as for me, I also say let us drink of father's milk to-day."

They entered the house. Gingci removed the eating mat from the jar, and said to the bird, "my father's bird, make milk for me." The bird said, "if I am your father's bird, put me by the fireplace, and I will make milk."† The boy did so. The bird made just a little milk. The boy drank, and said, "my father's bird, make more milk." The bird said, "if I am your father's bird, put me by the door, then I will make milk." The boy did this. Then the bird made just a little milk, which the boy drank. The girl said, "my father's bird, make milk for me." The bird said, "if I am your father's bird, just put me in the sunlight, and I will make milk." The girl did so. Then the bird made a jar full of milk.

After that the bird sang:—

*The Kaffir house or hut is in the form of a hemisphere, seven or eight feet in height in the centre. It is made of strong wickerwork, covered with thatch. It has only one opening, which is low and narrow, but which serves for door, window, and chimney.

†The fireplace is a circle in the centre of the hut. It is made by raising a ring on the hard and smooth antheap floor. Round it the inmates sleep, while the back of the hut, or the side opposite the entrance, is used as a store room. There the jars and other household utensils would usually be placed.

*This as I suppose is a proof sheet
and this is all that has come as yet
29th October 1877*

