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ONCE ZULU PRINCE, NOW PRIVATE FOR UNCLE SAM

PRIVATE THOMAS W. TAYLOR of Company H, Twenty-fourth Regiment, U.S.A., is now on duty at Fort Alcatraz.

He is only plain Tommy Taylor to the boys in blue, but he is called Prince by his kith and kin, and one day he will be King. And that is why this story is told. Its is a true dramatic tale of a royal household.

Three continents—Africa, Europe and America—have furnished the scenes in which conquest and ambition, love and patriotism play prominent parts. It is the history of a silent and deep struggle to regain a lost kingdom; a Prince of royal blood sought self-imposed exile from the land of his birth that he might further the interests of his people.

It abounds with pathos and superstition and is a striking picture of unusual ambition.

The royal folk who compose this tale are the children of Jerger, King of the Zulus, and the heir apparent to this powerless throne is Prince Jerger Okokudek, who one year ago as "Private Taylor" enlisted in the American army.

He forced his way through the superstitious boundaries of Kafirland, won medals from Cambridge University and finally, joined the gallant Twenty-fourth Regiment that fought so bravely throughout the Santiago campaign.

That Prince Jerger became an American soldier is but the sequel of what the British invasion of the Kafir interior made possible over a score of years ago.



Prince Jerger Okokudek ("Death-Leaves-One")
San Francisco Call photo and caption.

The ebony Prince joined the United States army that he might gain the knowledge of modern warfare to teach his own people. King Jerger, his father, rules over his court and does not know that his only son and heir apparent is a private soldier in the American army. The Crown Prince of the Zulus risked his life in defense of the flag of the republic while charging up the hills of San Juan.



Army fortifications at Alcatraz — about 1900

Back of this there is yet another story. In the years gone, when Great Britain penetrated beyond their frontier to Zululand, she found a remarkable nation, organized entirely upon a military system and forming a great standing army.

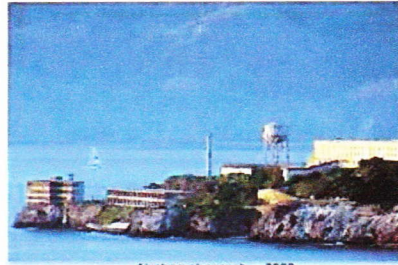
As for the natives, they received the wonderful strangers with true African hospitality and gave gold and diamonds, the best gifts of their store, to the white men from the north seas.

And their unscientific charity cost them their kingdom.

Not long after this the Hottentots and Zulus became engaged in war and England proved the powerful ally of the former.

A number of sharp skirmishes ensued; the Zulu King was captured, his military system abolished, his territory divided into districts and his mines made amenable to the crown

of England. Then concessions followed, the King was set free, pensioned and allowed to rule as potentate over the chiefs of his tribe.



Alcatraz at sunset — 2000.

And this was not all.

It was the last clause of the treaty that affected the Zulu nation more than all else combined—the cause that guaranteed education to the King's heirs—and it will eventually be the keynote to free them from savagery.

Consequently the ten royal Princesses and the and the Crown Prince of the house of Okokudek were sent to Cambridge University. It is considered something even for an ambitious mother to graduate one varsity daughter, but it is given to few Queens to graduate ten Princesses of blood royal into the profession of new women.

Two of these ten daughters are practicing physicians in London. Four of them are gold miners in South Africa. Two are expert mathematicians, and two of them are seamstresses. These ten daughters of the King left Cambridge University to fight their battles with the civilized world, and one of the royal family remained within the old college walls, and that one was Prince Jerger.

He remained to complete the university course, but destiny silently prepared him for another. The Prince loved the study of mathematics as he loved his own loyal, uncivilized people; but within a year of graduation he discovered another love. And this was his love for a woman. It was the steady growth of an affection that began upon the very first day of his entrance to the university.

Although the civilized world was a wonderland to him and inspired the keenest interest, still he pined for his home and half-savage comrades with a longing only understood by those whose lives are cast among a foreign people. The Saxon language was hard to master, Saxon manners were difficult and insincere, and the alien Prince felt the wretchedness that never had been his even when his father's kingdom passed under British rule.

That night Prince Jerger wandered into the college grounds with heart bowed down. The strange religion of the north did not appeal to him. Civilization oppressed him; he would seek consolation from the only God that his people could understand. And so, under the darkening shadows of the trees he prostrated himself upon the earth and offered up his prayer. The Christian God could not understand, but when did the Zulu gods ever fail to hear the far voice of their followers?

His prayer was answered even before finished.

Prince Jerger was so absorbed in his devotions that he did not hear a soft tread on the grass, nor was he aware that a young girl stood regarding him with pity, until her hand was on his shoulder. It was Miss Rosella Williams, fair and French, and the daughter of one of the university teachers. She interrupted his devotions by singing a chant in the Kafir tongue, a song that he had heard in the kraals of his far away home, and it came like a benediction.

Sympathy has only one language the wide world over, and this is the way their courtship began. Like poor Othello, Jerger told her the story of his life, of his ambitions for his people of the battles he and lost, and she loved him for the dangers he had passed and he loved her that she did pity them. So their love grew apace. Together they made plans for the future welfare of his people, and then he boldly announced his intended marriage to the professors. The faculty said [to] him nay; the law of the university forbade the marriage of its students. The professors advised him to consider well. They argued that no man can pursue two idols with success, and that marriage would detract from his studies.

But Cupid obeys no law save its own, and he was not to be vanquished.

If they could not marry with the consent of the faculty they could marry without it, and they did. The ebony Prince and the fair Rosella were wed.

It was a marriage that strengthened his love for his people and concentrated his energies toward their upliftment. He began the study of civil and military tactics and to further his knowledge he came to America to discover the modern arts of war, and soon found that actual experience was the quickest school. So he enlisted in the Twenty-fourth Regiment at Fort Barancas.

He joined the American army, but he kept this fact a secret from his people. It was better for them to think that he was quietly studying our laws of peace and war than to know that he was actually courting the dangers of the battlefield.

The colored boys who led the brigade up the shuddering side of San Juan Hill are now stationed at Fort Alcatraz. Prince Jerger is one of their number. He is tall and carries himself with unconscious dignity. His manner is courtly, but has a diffident restraint, and he is careful of his dress and of his speech. His voice has a modulation that only sorrow can tone, and this is his unusual story.

"When I left my family in London it was my intention to have my wife join me as soon as I discovered that the Florida climate was not too trying, but when I decided to enlist I thought it best that she remain there until I knew just where I would be stationed. Six weeks later she was dead."

[Question:] "Then you did not know she was ill?"

"Not until the day she died, and she was sick only a few hours; but I knew it by the law that civilization scorns—the law that all savages obey, and I fear that all of the schools in the universe will never be able to dispel our believe in the invisible forces of nature. On the day of which I speak I had a strange sensation of drowsiness. I could not keep awake, and was advised to consult a physician. Some one hinted that it was the first symptoms of the fever, but I felt intuitively that the danger was not to myself.

"Everywhere I looked white vapory substances haunted me. I was filled with apprehension and when the doctor informed me that I was all right I exclaimed, 'Then something is wrong at my home.'

"He went with me to the office and I immediately cabled to my father, 'Is all well at home?' and he replied: 'All are well but your wife; she is dying.'

"On the following day I was informed that she was dead.

"From that moment I felt that life held nothing more for me. All of my dreams for the welfare of my people were forgotten in this trying time of dark despair. The interest I felt in my nation suddenly died, and I plunged into the fight at San Juan, utterly regardless of Mauser bullets; not from a spirit of courage, but because my hopes had turned to ashes. Life would thereafter mean but a lingering sorrow and I cared little to leave the battlefield alive."

[Question:] "But now, Prince Jerger, if you are called upon to defend your country?"

"Then my duty is there, and it will not be my first defense of it, either, for when I was a boy I often went to war with the Hottentots and the Boers and fought my last battle with him when I was 19 years old. Of course our methods were crude and primitive, and when compared to system of warfare that I have studied while fighting under your flag, the contrast is a grotesque one.

"At the battle of San Juan I saw only one feature that reminded me of the last battle that I fought in with my father, and that one was the wild, fierce shrieks and yells of the Americans when we charged upon the enemy. I think this noise had much to do with weakening Spanish nerve, for the enemy thought that we were all alive while their men were dropping everywhere. Of course there is a great contrast between civilized and savage warfare.

"Before going to battle the Zulus offer up incantations, make salaams until the forehead touches the ground in front, and then with a yell and a dash strike both ways with their double-headed swords."

"I have learned much for the good of my country in the late Spanish-American war. My education in civilization has also strengthened my sense of its injustice toward the uncivilized countries. I would not be afraid to go anywhere in the world with the American soldiers, but I would not fight under the English flag."

Prince Jerger enlisted in the regular army for a term of three years. Rumors are now afloat of trouble in South Africa, and they have reached the Prince's ear. He will remain in Uncle Sam's service until the period of his enlistment expires, unless trouble arises or the King, his father, dies. In such an event he will leave this country at once, for Okokudek in English signifies "Death leaves one"—and Prince Jerger will be King.

ANNABEL LEE

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