

**WITH THE IRREGULARS  
IN THE TRANSVAAL  
AND ZULULAND**

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With the Irregulars in the Transvaal and Zululand by W. H. Tomasson

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**W. H. TOMASSON**

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WITH THE IRREGULARS  
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TRANSVAAL AND ZULULAND.

BY  
W. H. TOMASSON,  
LATE ADJUTANT OF IRREGULAR CAVALRY.

*Dedicated to Colonel Redvers Buller, V.C., C.B., C.M.G., A.D.C.,  
and the Officers and Men of the Irregular Horse of  
the Flying Column.*



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## P R E F A C E.

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SEEING how much even Regular Regiments prize the record of the services of their Regiments, surely an Irregular Regiment should value such annals even more. In the one case, every gallant deed is handed down from generation to generation of officers and men; in the other, the Regiment is disbanded, and its members scattered to the four winds of heaven. On these grounds I trust that this Volume, which contains a few sketches of the deeds of the Irregular Cavalry of the Flying Column, may prove acceptable to some of its whilom members. They will, I hope, look indulgently over the mistakes in facts and style, of which, I am painfully conscious, there are many; I hope critics will do likewise, and remember that the hand that wrote would rather handle sword than pen.

Most Irregulars will not fail to discover Captain Watt Whalley's hand in not a few of these pages. To the public I confess the great assistance I have received from that officer; here is a receipt for them to discover his hand from the Author's: all the sense

is his, the nonsense mine. What little entertainment the reader derives from these pages they will owe him, as the Author does the smatter of practical soldiering he possesses.

As my Colonel and Commandant used to say, finishing up a wiggling to his officers, "as for the Adjutant—the less said of him the better". Critics, say worse of his writing, I defy you to.

W. H. TOMASSON.



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CHAPTER I.

**I**N the present state of South African affairs the following chapters, the notes of a march across North Basutoland and the Transvaal may be of interest. They are from the Journal of an officer of one of the best-known Irregular Regiments.

On the 7th of July, 1878, the regiment left its head-quarters near King William's Town and marched north. The Kei river was crossed on the 9th, and Fingoland entered. The Fingoes are the most loyal race of South Africa; we have redeemed these people from a life of abject slavery, and in return they are grateful. Gratitude is scarce in South Africa;

the fact is therefore worth mentioning. Previously to our taking them in hand, they were veritable hewers of wood and drawers of water to their fiercer neighbours. They fought fairly under various leaders—Lonsdale, Pattel, and others during the Ghaika and Galeka wars of 1877. They submitted to be disarmed in 1880, but have had their arms restored, and are now fighting with us against the Tambookies, Basutos, and Tambus. After Fingoland came the Tambookie Reserve. The Tambookies, a fairly warlike race, are now in arms against the Cape Government. The Bashee river was next reached; this stream formed the limit to the warlike operations of 1877-78 against Kreli. Here we enter Bomvanaland, inhabited by a race remarkable for pusillanimity. Most Kaffirs will make a fight for their cattle, leaving his other belongings, such as wife, children, and huts to their own devices. However, we were told that these Bomvanas cannot be provoked to hostilities even by this grievous injury.

I regret I have never heard the course the Colonial Government adopted with respect to

the country lying between the Butterworth and Bashe rivers; neither have I learnt the fate of Kreli the chief of the country. He and his people fought right well for their independence, and fought honourably. He was supposed to be averse to war, but was overruled by his young men. Finding he could not avert bloodshed, he warned all European residents to quit his territory. In some instances he even supplied an escort for protection of life and property. In his case we hear nothing of those hideous atrocities that were committed by the Christian, and other adherents of Sandili, the Gaika chief in British Kaffraria. Sandili, however, had the good fortune to fall in fight. Kreli is probably a wanderer from his beautiful country. And it is a glorious territory, with rich and fertile soil, noble forests, and abundance of water. It would be an admirable home for settlers. The only drawback discoverable during the weeks I patrolled the territory were the ticks. These attacked both man and beast in the immediate neighbourhood of the sea coast. The Colonial Governments have, however, always set their