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THE NATAL DIARIES

of

(Mrs) Juliet Windham (nee Maclean)

OT 1857-59, 1860-61 and 1866

pp [S.I.]
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and doubtless the papers have not got hold of the true story yet. Last Friday some Refs from the Nordsberg road party came away from their work to the court house here in a great fright, saying that a Zulu impi had crossed the Tugela and that they must go to their kraals. The N'Kos thought they were only lazy as he had had no reports, and when he had a letter from Mr Paterson, angry at their desertion, did not quite know what to do. Only none of us dreamed of believing the story, and on Saturday the men were told it was all nonsense and went back to their work. On Sunday morning Mr Wheeler (from Player and Wheeler's, Maritzburg) who have a second store here, arrived in a dreadful state of mind to fetch his children away from this "dangerous place," (two of his boys were here on a visit) saying that a Government proclamation was out in Maritzburg that the Governor had had a message from Panda to say Ketchwayo had crossed somewhere near S mahashis, a few miles from here, that special messengers were on their way here, and that tropps were to be immediately sent up to the Laager. And on Monday the messengers arrived with printed notices to be sent round to the Field Cornets to collect an armed force, and a private letter from Mr Shepstone to say the Governor himself would arrive in a day or two here, and that some of the Cape Corps and the Buffs were already on their way. We could really hardly believe it all. As for being frightened, that you may be sure we were not. Only it was evident there was a panic in the city. Johnny had gone out for mealies to the thorns that morning, but came back in a hurry, the report having spread, and he had seen many Boers riding hard and one had advised him to trek back as hard as he could. Then arrived Mr Peters with pistols in his belt, and full of news about the panic they were in in the city. They thought Ketchwayo had sent an impi across to kill UmKungo at the Bishop's Station, and so he had been sent off to the camp for protection! The Governor was to be here about sundown, and he had seen the Cape Corps at the Mavoti! These soon

arrived and who do you think their officer was? Old Teddy Cartwright! Then came the Chief Justice in command of the armed Boers, then Carbineers under Mr W Proudfoot, and Kerkloof ditto under Mr W. Barter. It was a good thing we had plenty of beef for tiffins and dinner. On Wednesday arrived many wagons full of frightened families of Boers to take refuge in the Laager. And German Missionaries with wives and families from Hermansburg, fifteen of whom we put up in Flora's room. Then came Colonel Grey and Mr Taylor and the rest of the Buffs all in red coats and swords etc. In the course of the day Mr Allen and more Carbineers, and then, just in time for dinner, the Governor, Major Erskine and Mr Shepstone and his three sons.

Some Boers had rushed into Maritzburg on the first rumours and told how the Zulus had already burned farms and killed D. Pretorius near Greytown (who had that very day been here all right!) And all the ladies were quite alarmed at the Governor and other gentlemen deserting them all and going to such a dangerous place as Greytown, where they made sure of course that we must all have been in a great state of danger and alarm, and were astonished to find that we should never have believed a word of any even probable Zulus crossing, but the Governor's proclamation. And we still only found all this only rather good fun. By the way of a change.

Everybody made himself very pleasant and no one more so than His Excellency himself. It seems there is no doubt Ketchwayo is up to something at present, as he is close to the boundary and he has with him mounted Basutos. But what he meant if ever did mean anything more than a hunting party, it is not likely we shall ever know. The last report is that he has gone from this down towards the coast on his own side of the Tugela. Troops are to be sent to Mr Walsley's in consequence, and more stationed somewhere near Hermansburg.

The following is the latest information from the "seat of war," which was published by the Mayor yesterday afternoon.

Grey Town, half past 6 p.m.

17th July, 1861.

Sir, - I am desired by the Lieutenant Governor to inform you, that on our arrival here we found all quiet, and that all the rumours which were this morning in circulation at Pietermaritzburg are groundless.

Mr Duval Pretorius has been in Grey Town to-day. Ketchwoyo is said to have gone further down his own side of the Tugela. His Excellency would thank you to make this intelligence known to the Public.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

D. Erskine, Col. Sec.

His Worship the Mayor of Pietermaritzburg.

The Governor left yesterday for Van Staden's farm with Major Erskine, Mr Shepstone and some Carbineers, the 85th and Cape Corps. The chief body still remaining here with the Burgier force and Mr Harding. Our tent is pitched and is as full as is the house, and sentries are at the gate. Fancy what a change it was for this place, with tents and soldiers, bugles, sentries, noises and no end of horses. It was well we could get food for both man and beast.

Of course the magistrate was expected to do everything and I hardly ever saw him all day. He had to lend forage horses, Kafirs etc: and our Kafirs were at first in a great state of excitement. One said he must go to his Kreal to look after his property, and would rather go at once without waiting for his money. So he was let go. The refugees here are very anxious to fight and say they want to give the invading Zulus "pain" as they had given them "pain" when they had to cross here last year. The Governor said he wished he could send a shell across to frighten the "enemy". It was said he intended to send some message to Ketchwoyo but they themselves did not know when they left here what it might be thought necessary to do. There are of course all sorts of rumours, chiefly lies of course, afloat. He had perpetual

tiffin all day laid after breakfast and managed very well. There has been always plenty to eat and drink. Our refugee girl and the kitchen Kafir do very well. And Johnny Adams makes himself most useful to me. At first we had Major Erskine and Mr Shepstone in the verandah room, the one you had, and the Governor on the drawingroom sofa. No end of sheets and tablecloths had always to be kept clean and to see that the bedroom was also ditto, with towels, soap, etc, and that was all I had to see to.

The Chief Justice has been writing here all day sending out patrols etc. And the latest news is that a military post is to be established between this and the Tugela near Van Staden's where the Governor has gone. Every one here seems at present busy casting bullets, but I don't believe any one thinks they are likely to be used at present. Ashe wanted to find out if I should like to be sent in to Maritzburg, but of course I should not think of such a thing. I can't believe in the Zulus till I see them, I know. We are none of us nervous here. We expect Major Erskine and one of the young Shepstons here tomorrow."

To Alister. "Since I wrote we have had Dr Sutherland Mr Macfarlane, R.M. for Weenen, and Mr G Moodie from Ladysmith. Mr Macfarlane says he lately saw some 50 Basutos with rather fine horses who passed through the colony, it was said, to join Ketchwoyo. The Kafirs about here, and police who have been at the boundary, seem to believe that Ketchwoyo had really only got up a large hunting party.

Mr Edwardes has been here and says he left "Moses" at Aliok Hunter's. Mr Oakes had settled to go with him into the Zulu country and was to wait for him at the Buffalo, but I suppose it is likely he will return now."

28th

To Alister. "Patrols have been sent out in all directions from Greytown since I last wrote, and the last news is that Ketchwoyo is peacefully at his Kreal, and had sent a message across to know what we meant by all our preparations and did we mean to "eat him up?" Rather a

case of wolf and lamb! Colonel Grey and Mr Taylor dined and slept here again two days ago on their way back to Maritzburg. All the Natal Zulus seem to have been most anxious to fight against Ketchwyo, so don't alarm yourself.

Extracts from friends' letters on the occasion of the Panic and threatened Zulu invasion.
From Mrs Robertson in the Zulu Country. "We were not alarmed by the panic here, because we did not believe in it. Of course if Cetwayo intended evil to the colony of Natal we should be the last to be admitted to his confidence. He and all the Zulus here have been most hearty in their kindness to us, and we have really some choice friends among them, who, in spite of their heathenish and all its said customs, you cannot but call good men and merciful. Cetwayo is always particularly kind and courteous to "Umfundis".

Mr Robertson who thinks him, instead of his savage notoriety, really a more kind and amiable man than Zulus generally attributes his bad name very much to misunderstanding.

From Mr Addison, Lower Umvoti. "I suppose you were not frightened by this Zulu invasion affair. We were not in the least. It is now the fashion here to say that Ketchwyo never meant to come, and to blame the Governor for sending the troops, but surely that is the last thing one ought to blame him for. Living here so close to the river all the people would certainly have been killed if he had come, and then what would have been said of the Governor when it was known that he had heard such a report and not attended to it? And I assure you everyone here feels much more comfortable for having a Fort at the Tugela."

From Mr Crompton, Pine Town. "Were you frightened at the idea of the invasion? Greytown was so very near that you were in the thick of it all (Very undesirable for you at this time.) I do hope the Kafirs mean to keep quiet, but it will have, one would fear, a damaging effect on the colony which vexes me very much. Some say the Governor is only waiting for the troops per "Himalaya" to attack Ketchwyo. Do you

know if this is more than rumour? He certainly deserves to be punished for his insolence."

From Mr Mann, Pietermaritzburg. "I did not suppose that you were much alarmed by the idea of a disturbance with the Zulus. The sole apprehension that had seized you, I hear, being that of want of beef, entertained me exceedingly and I have told it to all persons I have talked with who seemed to me inclined to be unnecessarily alarmed. It ought to be very reassuring since you at Greytown are nearer to the seat of danger than we in Maritzburg. I suppose you have heard something of how we contrived nevertheless to believe for at least a few hours that we had got the danger close at hand".

August 29th. Letter home - "We have no news here since last mail. Ketchwyo has gone back to his kraal and remains quiet, but our camps and defences are to go on as he is not to be trusted. We are to have a camp between this and the Tugela, and another lower down by Mr Walmsley's.

Ashe has been publicly thanked by the Governor in the papers for his services in the late affairs. I sent a paper about it to Mrs Windham, and you will see in the one I have sent you, in an article headed "Greytown" what is a very good account of the place as it was when it was the head quarters of His Excellency, and I might say, of everyone else! Poor Ashe has rather been a sufferer by Ketchwyo. He has had so very much more work to do on account of all this disturbance. And has been often kept out late at night, which is very hard for him, we have such cold nights now. He is far from strong, and the least cold he takes brings on fever. His has of late been a case of "all work and no play." I have had perfect health all this winter which may now be considered at an end as we have had our first rain. There is now no chance till next dry season of any Zulu invasion thanks to the Tugela. If the Zulus had really come it would of course have been dreadful. Their mode of proceeding is this. They come on quietly in thousands together in single file

marching all night and hiding till about an hour before sunrise, and then fall on and the people and burn their places and steal their cattle. The Dutch were always thus taken by surprise in former times. Now it is doubtful whether, even supposing they had done all this, they are not likely to respect Englishmen. We believe they would."

Extract from The Times.

State of Affairs at Natal.

"Maritzburg, Natal, Aug 3rd. The daily life of a colony is usually dull and stagnant enough, and certainly that of Natal is no exception to the general rule. But the morning of the 13th July was one of the exceptional days. At an early hour every one was roused by the sound of bugles, the muster of our slender garrison, the running to and fro of excited officials, and by 10 o'clock a Government proclamation announced the cause of all this bustle and excitement. Mr Scott, our Lieutenant Governor, made known the reports had reached him of threatened disturbance in Zululand, and that in consequence he had ordered the troops to be moved up to Tugela, (the northern boundary of Natal, which forms the frontier between it and Zululand) as a precautionary measure, which would, he hoped, allay all alarm among the colonists, who should have speedy intimation of any real danger.

In the course of the day the garrison at Maritzburg, consisting of a wing of Her Majesty's 85th Light Infantry, a few Artillerymen, half a troop of the Cape Mounted Rifles, and such of the Natal Carbineers (a volunteer corps) as could be got together at so short notice, left the city, similar orders having been sent to the handful of the 88th at Durban, and to the Volunteer Rangers at that place and at Pine Town.

In all the force might amount, perhaps, to 800 men, small enough, but ample sufficient, in my opinion, to give a good account of any number of Zulus that were ever likely

to come against them. But, sadly as it may tell against the interest of my letter, I am happy to say that the gallantry of our soldiers had not been tested in the smallest degree. When they reached the Tugela, those who were living nearest to its borders asked what had brought them there, and laughed to scorn the notion of a Zulu attack upon Natal.

Now that all immediate danger has passed away, of course those who were the most panic-stricken are the first to pooh-pooh the steps taken by Mr Scott, and to declare that the Government was hoaxed. And yet I do fully believe the news he received of this intended attack was sufficient to justify him not only in ordering up to the frontier the forces at his disposal, but also in sending down to Graham's Town for additional reinforcements.

But, whether or not, the demonstration on the Tugela has had the desired effect. If the Zulus ever did intend crossing that river they have since thought better of it, their leader Ketchwayo has disbanded his men, and they and he have now both disappeared from the frontier. I trust, therefore, that no one in England will be alarmed by the absurd and utterly unfounded reports that have, it seems, been circulated about us at the Cape, and which may possibly reach home in some still more exaggerated form. Indeed, our position in Natal has been so strangely misrepresented to the authorities in Cape Town that they despatched, in the hottest haste, Her Majesty's ship Haradissus, with about 500 of Her Majesty's 59th, a few gunners, and about 50 of the Cape Corps, who were all very much astonished on landing at Durban yesterday to find everything and everybody going about their usual business in that bustling seaport. At Cape Town, it appears,

there were the most dismal stories going about of bloody conflicts between the Zulus and the troops, of the latter being hard pressed, the Volunteers routed and cut to pieces, and I know not what other "shaves" besides. As I have said, all this is pure invention, not a single Zulu has ever been across the Tugela, not one act of aggression by Zulus has taken place, nor have the peace and security of the colony been interrupted for a single hour.

On none does the effect of all this false intelligence fall more unpleasantly than on the gallant 59th. After a long service at the Cape and subsequently in China, they were actually waiting at the Cape for return transports to take them to England when they were hurried off hither at a moment's notice. They have been landed and are now, I am told, under canvas at Durban waiting further instructions. Seeing there is not the slightest occasion for their services, I can only express a hope that they may be speedily re-embarked in the Narcissus, and that they may soon get back to England to enjoy the brief respite of home service which they so fully deserve.

But as there is never smoke without fire, you may ask me perhaps what all this row is about. The question is somewhat difficult to answer, but I will try and do so as shortly as may be.

First of all understand that these Zulus have no affinity with those against whom England has waged her former Kafir wars. When the Dutch Boers first squatted in Natal, previous to its existence as a British colony, they certainly came into hostile collision with these Zulus, under their then King Dingaan, and some frightful massacres were perpetrated by him among the Boers. But since the time when the Dutch deposed this bloodthirsty monster and set his brother Panda on the throne in his stead, this Zulu nation

has caused us no uneasiness, Panda having been a steady and constant friend, first of the Dutch Boers, and subsequently of the British Colonial Government. But increasing years have begun to tell on Panda's influence with his people, and he had been gradually superseded by one of his sons, Ketchwayo, who appears to inherit both the talents and the bloodthirsty disposition of his uncle Dingaan. Some four years ago Ketchwayo burnt to death one of his brothers, and on a recent occasion, when Mr Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs, was in Zululand, in order that he might acknowledge by his presence on behalf of the British Government Ketchwayo's right to be proclaimed by Panda his successor to the kingdom, the former took the occasion to demand from Mr Shepstone the restoration of his younger brother, who was sent to us by Panda himself to save the boy from Ketchwayo's violence. Of course Mr Shepstone replied that the boy could not be sent back unless his father wished and demanded it. I ought to mention that this boy, now about thirteen or fourteen years of age, has been educated by the Bishop of Natal, under whose charge he now is, and it causes Ketchwayo no small annoyance that a possible future rival to the headship of the nation is being thus imbued with English notions and brought up under direct English influence.

It is said that the intelligence of Ketchwayo's hostile intentions was conveyed to the Government by Panda himself, and that it was part of his programme, having made a strong demonstration on one part of the Tugela, to send a trusty band of well-mounted horsemen across the river at a point nearest to the Bishop's Station, to make a dash at it, and bear off the boy, whose return to Ketchwayo would undoubtedly be followed by his being speedily put to death.

But apart from the mere family feuds and dissensions of these barbarous potentates, there are other causes of ill-will against us, and the chief of these is the refugee question. When the English came into Natal, now some twenty-two years ago, the country originally thickly peopled by Kaffirs was all but depopulated by the wholesale massacres, first of Chaka, and then of Dingaan, his successor. But no sooner had our rule been established than the Kaffirs began to flock back to secure the peace and protection which the strong hand of England alone could give them. By far the greater portion of these refugees were from Zululand, the Zulu Kaffirs being only too glad to exchange the tyrannical and capricious rule of their native chiefs for the easier and safer dominion of the Natal Government. This migration into our territory still goes on, and you may imagine its extent when I tell you that, whereas twenty years ago the Kaffirs of Natal might have been counted by hundreds, so nearly had the original inhabitants been extirpated by war and massacre, their present numbers are estimated at from 130,000 to 150,000.

Now, it rarely happens that a Zulu Refugee comes across absolutely empty-handed. He brings cattle, or his wives and daughters and among Kaffirs one woman is equal to at least ten cows. Not infrequently, women come over alone to escape from the cruelties and tortures which are sometimes practised to force them into distasteful marriages. Naturally Ketchwayo, the probable future head of the Zulu nation views all this with no very pleasant feeling. Every bit of property that comes over to Natal is so much lost to him, because, as supreme chief he is absolute over the life, person and property of every individual.

Ketchwayo, therefore, may have meditated an invasion of British territory, not so much to attack British settlers

as to wreak his vengeance on the refugee Kaffirs who are living on the borders of the Tugela. Ketchwayo, by all accounts is a bloodthirsty miscreant, but there is no need to paint the Devil blacker than he is, and I think much colour is given to the supposition of his attack being directed against Kaffirs rather than white men by the fact that along the Tugela there are hardly any of the latter, the district being one of the locations set apart for exclusive Kaffir occupation. This at least is certain - that during all the excitement on our side of the Tugela none of the English missionaries, traders or sportsmen in the Zulu country suffered the slightest molestation.

Mr Blencoe, a Wesleyan missionary, who was actually residing at Ketchwayo's Kraal during the time our men were marching to the front, reports that not the slightest stir was observable among Ketchwayo's ^{followers} ~~followers~~, and that he had about him only his ordinary retainers. Of course it is quite possible and perhaps probable that this might be merely the ruse of a wily savage anxious to throw dust in the eyes of a gentleman whose profession must naturally incline him to impute good rather than bad motives to his fellow-men. But I have also been informed by a gentleman who had crossed the Zulu border before the Governor's proclamation was issued, that all the young men were in the kraals as he and his friends went up the country, and that the Zulus only began to muster for war on the same day that my informant received from his friends news of the threatened outbreak, and their request that he would return at once.

The last mail brought up to Natal the Cape papers with the publication of Sir George Grey's despatches enunciating his policy for the future government of Southern Africa. Can these Zulu savages have possibly heard some vague rumours of Sir George's annexation views, and have made preparations for an armed resistance?

pp. 343 Zulu impi
Cape Corps

344 Boers under Chief
Justice

Carbinals: Brand^{foot}

1 Karkloof: W. Bate

346 50 Basutos on
horses

348 Paper account: "Greytown"
2nd dup.
Tugela

X
349-50: 800 men

350 Narcissus 500

Her Majesty's 59th
etc

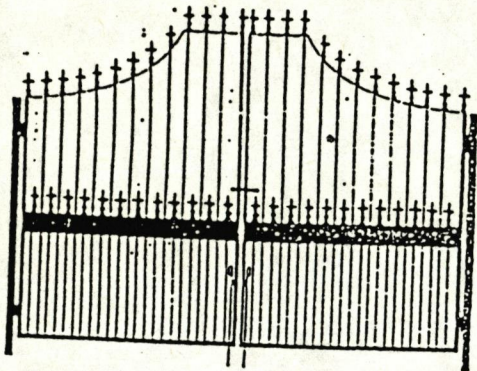
351 Runners gallant
59

353 English in Natal 22⁴
ago

Elza
Biblioteek
Ernest

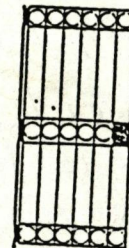
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