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FRIDAY, MAY 17, 1878.

*Lord Chamberlain's Office, St. James's Palace,  
March 12, 1878.*

NOTICE is hereby given, that Her Majesty's Birthday will be kept on Saturday, the 25th of May next.

*War Office, May 16, 1878.*

A DESPATCH, of which the following is a copy, has been received by the Secretary of State for War from Lieutenant-General the Honourable F. A. Thesiger, C.B., Commanding the Troops in South Africa:—

*King William's Town,  
Cape of Good Hope,*

Sir, *April 10, 1878.*

1. Having been in the field during the last 13 days, and constantly in the saddle, I regret I was unable to furnish you with a report last mail.

2. By my despatch, dated 25th March, I mentioned I had returned to King William's Town, and was making fresh arrangements for the clearing of the Buffalo Poort and Peric Bush. The preliminary arrangements were completed by the 26th March, and on the following day I myself fixed my head-quarters at Mount Kempf.

3. On the 28th, the forces\* under Colonel Wood, V.C., C.B., Lieutenant-Colonel Degacher, Lieutenant-Colonel Law, Commandants Frost, Schermbrucker, Lieutenant-Colonel Warren, R.E., and Captain Sansom were in position occupying posts surrounding the Kafirs under Sandilli.

4. On the 21st March, the Colonial Secretary telegraphed orders to the Transkei for the immediate despatch of 1,000 Fingoes from that part of the country, and I was led to believe that they would arrive about the 28th, on which date I had arranged to attack Sandilli. They did not arrive, however, until the 3rd April, and my plan of operations was consequently very seriously disturbed.

5. On the 28th March, the enemy showed themselves in considerable numbers on the open ground between the Gozo Heights and the precipice west of Hayne's Mill, and I ordered an attack for the following morning. The combined movements of Colonel Wood and Commandant Frost, in executing this order, were well carried out. The Kafirs, however, made no stand, and almost without resistance deserted a position which, if properly defended, must have entailed considerable loss on our side. The troops encamped on the positions taken.

6. The Kafirs were thus confined to the Bush of the Buffalo Poort Valley: this bush was of such extent that it was useless to attempt to beat it until the arrival of the 1,000 Fingoes from the Transkei. All that could be done in the meantime was to keep the Kafirs in, and prevent their obtaining cattle and other supplies from the outside. To assist this the Indian corn gardens in the vicinity of the forest were, with the concurrence of the civil authorities, destroyed. Constant raids into the bush, and on parties endeavouring to escape, or drive in cattle, were made; roads were cut through the forest where only tracks before existed; and new paths opened out through those parts where communication between our posts was most difficult or necessary. The effect of these last-named works must, I consider, be looked upon as most important, as now for many years, should the rebels again take refuge in this bush, there will be no difficulty in dealing with them as has already been done.

7. Although owing to the delay in the arrival of the 1,000 Fingoes, it was evident that a large proportion of the rebels had slipped away in small parties from the bush I was surrounding, still it appeared to me desirable to show the rebels that it was possible for our forces to penetrate into, and thoroughly search, what has long been believed by them to be an impenetrable fastness.

8. On the 3rd April the Transkei Fingoes arrived, Mr. Ayliff, the Chief Magistrate in Fingoeland, having been forced to accompany them himself owing to their unwillingness to leave their homes—the reason given being that they had become rich and independent from the spoils of the Gcaleka war. I was surprised to find, moreover, how few were in possession of Government arms, considering the large numbers that were known to be in Fingoeland.

9. A day's rest for these men was necessary, as I found that they had been pushed on by forced marches, one day's march having been 53 miles. I, therefore, made arrangements for driving the Buffalo Poort Bush on 5th April. The various paths cut through the forest and all points of egress were lined and held by the European portion of the force, while the whole of the Fingoes, to the number of 1,777, led by European Officers, drove the bush in a southerly direction. As an evidence of the difficult nature and extent of the ground to be traversed, I would mention that although these men entered the higher part of the valley at 6 A.M. they only emerged at the end at 5 P.M.