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War Office, June 15, 1878.

A DESPATCH, of which the following is a copy, has been received from the Lieutenant-General Commanding at the Cape of Good Hope:—

From Lieutenant-General Honourable F. A. Thesiger, C.B., to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for War.

King William's Town, Cape of Good Hope,
 Sir, *May 15, 1878.*

1. AS I had the honour of reporting in my despatch as per margin,* I had arranged the bulk of the forces at my disposal for operations in the Buffalo Range, where the rebels had been undisturbed since the 5th April.

2. They were daily seen in the plateau west of the Buffalo Poort, their numbers being estimated at 1,000 to 1,500.

At the beginning of April, a path had been cut by the troops from the direction of Mount Kempt to the lower portion of this plateau, and by using this (shown on map as "Molyneux Path") I hoped to prevent them retreating with impunity into the bush, all the other paths by which they could retire being at the same time waylaid.

To ensure success in this, it was absolutely necessary that the day of my intention to attack should be kept secret, and that the waylaying parties should be correctly posted.

I had taken every precaution in my power to ensure the first, and the officers detailed for the second duty had been personally shown the paths to be occupied.

3. At daybreak, on the 8th May, the column† moved as follows:—That under Colonel E. Wood, V.C., C.B., from the head of the Rabula River to the Gozo Heights.

A column under Colonel Degacher, 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment, by Wood's Path, through the bush, half a mile west of Haine's Mill, to the plateau above, preceded by Commandant Allan Maclean's Fingoes.

Commandant Von Linsingen found a path a little to the left of the latter column.

Major Buller's force descended from Mount Kempt, by Molyneux Path, to the lower plateaux, Commandant Schermbrucker advancing with his force from Tsidingi, by Mount Kempt, followed

Major Buller, C.B. These forces advanced as ordered, but the company of 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment, under Captain Surplice, and the Fingoes, under Captain Haynes, instead of waylaying the path called Buller's Path, went off too far to their right.

This mistake afforded an opening by which the enemy, on retiring from the plateau above, could escape, their retreat being covered (as actually happened) by a few determined men.

4. The force under Major Buller successfully occupied the lower plateau; but it is his belief, in which I share, that the enemy knew of our intended attack, for there were no signs of a hurried departure.

The number on the plateau seen by him was but 300, but I believe as many more retreated without his seeing them.

The Kaffirs made no stand, but leaving the plateau, which offered very strong positions for defence, they retreated to the bush below by the path shown as Buller's Path, from which, had it been waylaid, these men would have been cut off. What occurred subsequently, in carrying the position taken up by them, is related in Major Buller's report. I regret to say that our loss was heavy in this attack.

5. The conduct of Major Buller deserves the highest praise. He set an example of intrepidity and calm courage to his men under very trying circumstances; and although the operations of this day were not attended with all the success I expected, he did his best, by personal example, to secure it.

6. I beg to bring to your notice the terms in which Commandant Lonsdale is spoken of in the enclosed reports.

This officer is untiring in his exertions, and has before elicited warm commendation from those under whom he has served.

7. The rebels having been driven from the Buffalo Range Plateau during the 8th May, the western portion of the Buffalo Poort Bush was searched the next day: but few Kaffirs were found. Our only casualty was Captain Austen, 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment, slightly wounded.

8. On the 10th I moved details (as per margin)* of the forces westward to the Intaba District with the view that from this time two distinct forces should daily harass the enemy occupying the

* Von Linsingen's Force.—105 European Infantry; 79 Europeans Mounted; 800 Natives. A. Maclean's Fingoes, 550. Colonel Degacher's, 3 companies 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment.

* No 5, 1878, May 5.

† For their strength, vide Enclosure A.