

we were followed by the enemy, but at a long distance and in no great numbers, which satisfied me that at any rate in that immediate neighbourhood the Zulus were not at that time in any force. Our casualties were nil, but, as far as I could observe, we killed or wounded about a dozen of the enemy. We knew from the messages flashed to us, that a force was being collected for our relief, and it was evident that the Zulus had either got news of it or that they imagined our food could not hold out much longer, for we could see numerous fires—daily increasing—in the Inyazane Valley; evidence of the presence of a large force in that neighbourhood. The vedettes, too, were constantly seeing large bodies of Zulus filing down the distant hills towards the Inyazane, where they were evidently collecting either to intercept our relief or retreat.

To make a new road from Ekowe to the nearest point of the regular road from the Inyazane, so as to avoid a long detour of over 7 miles, had long been contemplated. It was surveyed early in March and commenced on the 7th. The road was made practicable within a week, but owing to the heavy rains which fell in March, it became too soft in places for heavy traffic. In winter, however, it would have been an excellent road.

Either the working or covering parties were nearly always under fire, though fortunately we had only one casualty; Lieutenant Lewis, the Buffs, wounded in the head. This new road is fully described by Captain Courtney.

Most unaccountably no attempt was ever made at night to capture the cattle or to annoy us inside the Fort. Had it been otherwise, the men would have been so harassed from want of sleep that the works would have been very materially delayed, and no doubt, our sick list would have been largely increased. We had a few "scares" during the night, as might be expected, but in every instance they proved to be false alarms.

The alacrity, however, with which the parapets were variously manned satisfied me that the garrison was already fully on the alert. On the 3rd April we were still hard at work improving the defences when we received intelligence that Lord Chelmsford intended to evacuate Ekowe, and to establish a fortified post on the coast road instead. The works still in contemplation were described in a paper, prepared for the new garrison (had we been replaced as at first intended), by Captain Courtney, so there would have been no check or interruption in going on with them.

Captain Macgregor had also made a ground plan (enclosed) of the Fort and its immediate vicinity for the information and guidance of our successors.

On evacuating Ekowe, I am happy to be able to report that, with the assistance of some spans of oxen sent me by His Excellency the Lieutenant-General from his camp (we had lost many by death, and had long since commenced to eat the trek oxen), I brought away every wagon and all stores which were of the slightest use. My march to the Tugela was performed without any interruption from the enemy. At one of my camps on the way down, between the Inyazane and Amatakulu Rivers, and about 5 miles from the Head Quarters laager, several dead bodies of Zulus were found, showing, I think, that the number killed in the attack on Lord Chelmsford was under estimated in the official accounts, as no doubt many other bodies were lying about in other directions equally distant from the laager.

It now only remains for me to bring to the favourable notice of His Excellency the Lieutenant-General the names of those officers who, from the positions they held, came under my personal observation; and this I find a task of some difficulty, for I am proud to state, that without exception, no officer, non-commissioned officer or private behaved otherwise than with credit to the British Army. From first to last, the men showed an excellent spirit, the highest discipline was maintained, and the reduction of the food was never grumbled at or regarded in any other light than a necessity and a privation to be borne, and which they were determined to bear cheerfully. The Officers of my Staff, Colonel Walker, C.B., Scots Guards, Captain Macgregor, 29th Regiment, and Lieutenant Knight, the "Buffs," my orderly officer, were indefatigable, and gave me every support, and much valuable advice, Captain Macgregor's position perhaps, as Deputy Adjutant Quartermaster-General, was the most prominent, and I have to thank him for the deep interest he took in all sanitary questions and reconnoissance duty. A sketch by him of the Fort and its neighbourhood is enclosed, but I trust the intelligence department in which he has served will ere long have the benefit of the report which he is compiling from his official journal.

The several Commanding Officers, Commander Campbell, Royal Navy, Lieutenant Lloyd, Royal Artillery, Captain Wynne, Royal Engineers, Lieut.-Colonel Parnell, the "Buffs," and Colonel Welman, 99th Regiment, with their officers, are entitled to full credit for the good discipline and cheerful spirit of their men.

The Royal Engineers, of course, took a very prominent part in the construction at Fort Ekowe. Captain Courtney's paper will show all that was accomplished under their able guidance. Captain Wynne's illness is much to be deplored. I consider him a most valuable officer, and his illness is entirely due to over exertion at a time when he was in very indifferent health. I much fear he is dying. Of Captain Courtney, his successor, I entertain a very high opinion, and it gives me much pleasure to endorse the favourable opinion expressed by him of his subalterns, Lieutenants Main and Willock, attached to the Royal Engineers. I had a small corps of Native Pioneers who, and their excellent officers Captain Beddoes and Lieutenant Paringdon, did much valuable service. These two officers managed their men extremely well, and gave proof that, properly officered, the Natal Kafirs are capable of being made into excellent soldiers.

The Medical Department was under the orders of Staff Surgeon Morbury, Royal Navy, and though he had many and great difficulties to contend with, he did his utmost to mitigate the discomforts to which the sick were exposed, and most carefully watched over the sanitary condition of the Fort.

The Medical Officer acting under Dr. Morbury gave him every support. The Transport Branch of the Commissariat Department was superintended by Captain Pelley Clark and Lieutenant Thirkill, 88th Regiment. Both are able and hard working officers, and assisted by their conductors did their utmost to look after the valuable property in their charge. I am very sorry to say that both these officers have returned in very indifferent health.

The Commissariat Department was most satisfactorily worked by Assistant Commissary Heygate, until he became too ill to continue at his duty, a short time before the evacuation of the Fort. Attached to the Commissariat Department as issuer was Sergeant-Major Wishart