THE ZULUS
THE ZULUS
AND
THE BRITISH FRONTIERS.
PREFACE.

Encouraged by the favourable reception already accorded to my late publication, "Camp Life and Sport in South Africa," I have ventured once more to add my quota of information to the common stock, in the hope that some additional light may be thrown upon the many complicated questions inseparable from our position as colonists in South Africa. A distinguished authority, Colonel Mure, M.P., who has had considerable experience of Kaffir warfare, in an interesting letter published in the Daily News of March 31st, has drawn a comparison between the forces at our disposal at the present crisis, and those employed by us for the subjugation of the Gaikas and Galekas in the war terminated last year.

Having served with my regiment, the Cape Mounted Rifles, in the campaign of 1851-53, I have thought in a similar manner that it might not be un-
interesting to draw a parallel between the Zulu War now going on, and former Kaffir wars, hoping that valuable suggestions may be deduced from this study. I would, at the same time, here endeavour to offer a few practical suggestions with regard to the future defence of our South African colonies, more especially as the ultimate withdrawal of the Imperial troops will relegate to the colonists themselves, in the future, the anxious duty of defending our enormously extended boundaries.

The great object to be arrived at therefore would be the institution of a defence force complete in itself, and sufficiently powerful and useful to answer all the requirements of colonial warfare, irrespective of Imperial troops; in other words a permanent colonial force, equal to all emergencies. In former days, the Colony was defended from the probable incursion of the savage Gaika and Galeka tribes by a chain of forts, placed at convenient intervals on the frontier line, and held by a mounted as well as infantry force. The cavalry force was represented by that useful corps, the Cape Mounted Rifles; and the infantry was supplied by the different regiments which happened to be available. So I think in the
present instance that a corps answering to the Cape Mounted Rifles, and similarly organised and appointed, consisting of ten or twelve troops, might be advantageously employed to defend our frontier boundaries to the north-east. These troops would be distributed over a number of different posts, communication being kept up between them by continual patrols of small parties, carrying the mails and despatches. The garrisons at these posts might be supplemented with small parties of infantry or militia (dismounted) if necessary. In this way, a constant surveillance would be exercised over the frontier line, without interfering in any way with the susceptibilities of the Zulus, or actually crossing the boundary line. They would convey intelligence of any hostile movement among the natives, and would be always available to recapture cattle stolen or carried over the border, which, being mounted, they could easily achieve; their presence would give confidence to the settlers living upon outlying farms, and would be an adequate protection. This regiment should not consist of less than eight or nine hundred men; it would possibly do away with any necessity for the employment of infantry at all, and would be the
most economical in the end. The Zulus have shown themselves incapable of successfully attacking intrenched camps, even of a very slight improvised construction. The forts, therefore, would not be very formidable or expensive, but mere earthworks. Such a force, being mounted, could easily be withdrawn, if occasion required, and concentrated upon its base, which with an infantry force would be difficult, in case of these posts being surrounded as at Etchowe. This mounted force should be as lightly equipped as possible, armed with short double-barrelled smooth-bore carbines, slung as at present seen in the Mounted Police. The saddles should be plain, with moveable holsters to carry a brace of revolvers. The horses should be bought by Government, allowing the men the right of purchase at a certain moderate price, and the arms supplied on the same terms, to be properly inspected and passed to ensure efficiency.

In addition to this mounted force, all the able-bodied population of the towns should be enrolled, and liable to serve up to a certain age, if necessity required; this at all events should be the rule until security of frontier is attained. This militia should be properly armed and equipped, and subjected to
inspection from time to time periodically, being in-
structed to defend intrenchments, and made altogether
efficient as a defensive force in case of extremity.

The patrolling force should have power to seize
arms carried over the boundary for sale to the natives.
Such sale of arms ought to be made a military offence,
and treated summarily by court-martial.

I would thus have the whole population, capable of
bearing arms, enrolled for mutual defence, with other
proper positions and stations assigned, and prepared
at a moment’s notice to take up the different points
for that purpose, if required; and I think that this
attitude would be the best preventive of any outbreak
on the part of the natives.

At the same time, I would appoint residents or
magistrates, where practicable, among the native Zulus,
to maintain order and see that justice is done, should
favourable circumstances arise for that purpose, such
as the decline of Ketchwhyo’s power, or in the event of
his death or deposition. The authority of these resi-
dents or magistrates should be supported by a large
body of native police. The friendly natives would be
no doubt available for this purpose. My belief is that,
if security to life and property could be secured to the
natives of Zulu Land by this system, which has been already successfully carried out in other parts of Kaffir Land, the force of public opinion on the part of the natives of Zulu Land would soon interpose a barrier to the excesses of despotism like that of their present King, and would be the most effectual method of initiating a new order of things in that region of South Africa.

I have been assisted by my friend, Mr. R. Acton, who has contributed the account of political transactions in Natal and the Transvaal, and of the disputes preceding the recent declaration of war. He desires to be alone responsible for the statements and comments upon those parts of the subject.

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45, Blenheim Crescent,
Notting Hill.
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