

Guy Dawnay - some letters from the Anglo-Zulu War

The fourth son of the 7th Viscount Downe, the Hon. Guy Cuthbert Dawnay (1848-89) was a well-known adventurer, traveller, sportsman and occasional soldier, seeing service in Zululand in 1879, in Egypt in 1882 and in the eastern Sudan at Suakin; he was present in the battles of Gingindlovu, Ulundi, Tel-el-Kebir and Tofrek.

Dawnay had already been on two extensive tours and hunting trips to Africa before 1879. In 1870 he had gone out on the ship carrying Cecil Rhodes and his second trip in 1872 saw him in Natal, then travelling extensively before going on to see 'the Victoria Falls of the Zambezi, and unexplored country beyond.' In 1870, he was hunting near the coast in the same area in which he later served in the Anglo-Zulu War. The Zulus apparently called him *Madhluimshe*, 'he who outstrips the ostrich'. Dawnay sat as Conservative MP for the North Riding of Yorkshire between 1882-85 and was Surveyor General of The Ordnance under Lord Salisbury, 1885-86. In 1889, he travelled to Mombasa, apparently hoping to become involved in the Emin Pasha relief operation and believing that he might assist H. M. Stanley's expedition, but was killed by a wounded water buffalo whilst out hunting 'in Masailand' on 28th February.

The private journal of his military 'adventures', written and eventually published (1886) for circulation amongst his family and close friends, has been reprinted in modern times¹ and has become a well-regarded and much quoted source of information on aspects of the Anglo-Zulu War.

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Letters from Guy Dawnay

Natal Club
Durban
April 10./79

My dear old Lewis²,

.... I wish I could have seen you again very much before I left but I may think myself very lucky to have got out when I did, as nothing could have turned out better for me than things have done, and though I left England one week before Hughie³, I have been able to buy 6 horses, and to go up to the relief of Ekowe and come back here only three days after his reaching this and actually before Lonnie's⁴ arrival. He got here yesterday afternoon. I am very sorry for the news last mail brought you of poor Bobby Barton and Rowdy Campbell⁵ as I know they were two of your especial friends.

¹ Dawney, Guy C.: *Campaigns: Zulu 1879, Egypt 1882, Suakim 1885*. Cambridge, 1989.

² His brother Lewis Payn Dawnay (1846 – 1910), later Conservative MP.

³ His brother, Hugh Dawnay, later 8th Viscount Downe, serving in the cavalry as ADC to General Marshall.

⁴ Not identified

⁵ Capt. Robert Barton, Coldstream Guards, serving in the Frontier Light Horse and Capt. the Hon. Ronald Campbell, Coldstream Guards, both killed in the Hlobane debacle.

Walker - F⁶ - I have seen & though he is not better he is getting on he says and is now at the Tugela, & I expect coming down here. He was shut up at Ekowe as you know.

We had a good fight⁷ - at least, it wasn't a good fight, for they attacked us in such a strong position, but for anyone's first time it was very exciting. We had a false alarm the night before - the greatest nuisance possible those false alarms - a rush to the trenches in the dark, several men letting their rifles off by accident, then a horrible night of sleeping in rain and mud, wet through - & then at sunrise - on an empty - very empty - stomach for me, the real attack. I had never heard a real good rifle fire before, so it was all the more interesting to me, but the sound of it all was magnificent, 2 Gatlings, 2 9-lbrs, & 2 Rocket Tubes, & 3000 rifles all blazing away together. They tried to surround us but couldn't get near under our fire, the nearest Zulu killed being 31 yards off the shelter trench. There were 12, or 14,000 of them as far as one can calculate, but no more than half were engaged, & we must have killed 1200 at least. I had a carbine and fired with the old 91st, then at 7 o'clock the word was given for the Native Contingent to charge, & then as I was attached to them, I was able to go with them, while the regular troops had to stay in the trench. Just the first charge was exciting, but the Zulus did not stand except to fire one volley & then broke. Our natives are just as bad as the Zulus for assegaing the wounded & its impossible in a pursuit to stop it.

Gough⁸ is very bad with dystentery & was in the ambulance when the fight began, but in five minutes he appeared & fired away - he is now though returning very sick. I don't know what you thought of him but he has some very good points about him. We had some narrow shaves at one time. The Adjutant of the 91st⁹ had just turned his head after showing me a Zulu to fire at, then he got a ball clean through his helmet & knocked it on to me, the next moment a ball passed us somehow and killed a native just behind Gough and myself, & in the same instant a bullet cut in two the assegai of another native not far away. The Zulus all again fought quite splendidly; no other men in the world could have skirmished as they did that morning.

The next day we marched to Ekowe¹⁰, leaving a third of our force at Gingindhlovu - the camp where we had the fight & had a very tiring march, the rear of our column not getting in till past 11 at night after starting at 7 a.m. This marching with wagons and oxen is frightful slow work - I think they will try carriers before long instead. We had 120 wagons and one sticking of one wagon stopped the whole line. I don't know why they wanted so many, for they only allowed 10 lb. to each officer or man, & didn't even get a ration of salt. For three days I eat [sic] raw kafir corn for breakfast and luncheon and for ten days did on one tin of salt tinned beef - no coffee ration even. I suppose it was only a flying column arrangement & that one will do better in future, but with no tents, some heavy rain, and poor food, our men began to get seedy. I never took my boots off the whole time, except twice for a bath. I reached this [i.e. the Natal Club] yesterday, riding fast from Gingindhlovu & I was very glad to find Hughie had not been here long. I am sorry to leave the Coast Column, but I have now settled to go with Hughie & F. Marshall, which will join Wood's column on the West. Lonnie and Gen. Newdigate will also be there and Ld. Chelmsford is coming, so I think we shall probably have the chief fuss. Don't know when we start - probably not for a week.... Guy.

⁶ Perhaps Col. Fredk. Forestier-Walker, Scots Guards, who served at Eshowe as Principal Staff Officer.

⁷ Battle of Gingindhlovu, 2nd April 1879, during the relief of Eshowe.

⁸ Capt. the Hon. Hugh Gough, Coldstream Guards, serving with the Natal Native Contingent.

⁹ Presumably Lieut. J. F. C. St. Clair

¹⁰ Relieved on 3rd April.

Landman's Drift Camp
May 23rd 79.

My dear old Lewis,

I meant to have written you last mail, but thought I would put it off till after our visit to Isandhlwana - which we returned from yesterday - & that it might give me the chance of having something to tell you..... Since I last wrote to you 6 weeks ago we have - till the last few days - done nothing but march slowly up here and [-?] stop at Martizburg on the way. We have had excellent weather & are all, men and horses, very fit, but are impatient for the real advance and tired of doing nothing in our own country. However, the expedition to Isandhlwana has rather broken the spell and was a success - all the more since people in general had said we should fail for certain, that the wagons couldn't be brought away - the wheels wouldn't turn etc. & that cavalry couldn't move in such a country ... when attacked.

We got to Rorke's Drift from Dundee on Tuesday & taking the K.D.G.s and Lancers¹¹, & started next morning an hour before sunrise over the Buffalo with 4 companies of the 24th & 7 or 800 Native Contingent to clear the hills & rocks on this side of our road. Of course everyone was very keen to meet some Zulus, and it was looked on as a certainty that we should be at least fired on from a distance as two small parties that had just ridden in to visit the place in the last six weeks had both had some long shots at them. Bertie and Colville¹² were with the last party that were there. However, they knew our force well enough and they had all moved away - the fires were still burning in their kraals & one could see the fresh cattle spoor but only two or three men were seen by our scouts far away. We reached Isandhlwana itself at 9 o'clock and stayed there 4 hours. It was a horrible sight, though so much was hidden by the grass that had grown with additional luxuriance over the place. Joaquin Miller's lines ran in my head all day¹³ - but every few steps one stumbled on a shrivelled corpse. A row of horses assegaied on the picket ropes, nineteen Natal Carbineers all killed close together, everywhere single dead bodies, men, horses, oxen, smashed up boxes, in one place a jumble of shells and rockets, broken band instruments, the ground strewn with papers of all sorts, books, letters - we recovered the 24th Order Book, with the entry for the 21st January - and the wagons mostly surrounded by a little crop of mealies & oats that had sprung up from the forage fallen on the ground.

I am more puzzled than ever to account for the fact of the disaster, having seen the place. I never saw - & everyone says the same - a place better calculated to be held by a few men against a whole army - a wall of rock to set their backs to, & a steep slope to fire down - if only they had retreated there in any sort of order instead of fighting vaguely down below. The bodies are ripped open but merely to satisfy the Zulu superstition as to the danger of looking on a corpse without doing so¹⁴. They do the same to their own dead. Only the outside clothing was taken away. Hughie got Vereker's¹⁵ ring and had him buried & Durnford¹⁶ was found and buried also. The 24th were very

¹¹ 1st King's Dragoon Guards and 17th Lancers; arrived in April 1879.

¹² Presumably Captain Charles R. W. Colville, 'the Master of Colville', Grenadier Guards.

¹³ The American poet and frontiersman Cincinnatus Heine Miller, better known as Joaquin Miller; Dawnay quotes the verses in his *Journal*.

¹⁴ As is well-known, this misunderstood Zulu custom caused anger and outrage amongst the British troops.

¹⁵ The Hon. Standish William Prendergast Vereker, son of 4th Viscount Gort. Lieut. Vereker served in the 2nd Battn., 3rd Natal Native Contingent and was killed at Isandhlwana. His remains were found with those of Lt.

jealous of our going in at all, and we actually, at their request, were forbidden to bury their dead, and there they still lie¹⁷. We brought out some 40 wagons and carts, having taken in 4 or 5 horses for each and I think very few others could have been brought out without a lot of mending first - there are about 30 I should say still left. We caught or killed 3 oxen, after one of which I had a magnificent gallop over a very difficult country, at last with the help of a fellow in the 17th [Lancers] - Jenkins - & a carbine shot, killing him. I found my revolver - .380 - very little use on an ox's head - I hope it would have more effect on a human being. Old Hughie is very fit and is now A.Q.M.G. to the Cavalry Brigade¹⁸ - he is very keen and works very hard and luckily has a good deal of influence over the General - F. Marshall. Our Brigade Major - Stewart¹⁹ - is a thundering good fellow and I consider our whole expedition to Isandhlwana entirely due to him. Lonnie joined us at Rorke's Drift and went in with us - he is very well, though he like everyone else had a severe fall the other day & thinned a good deal of skin and flesh off his nose - needless to say he is very cheerful. Genl. Newdigate²⁰ is still laid up from a fall he got a short time ago, but is better & it won't delay our advance, whenever they give us the word. The report here is that Cetshwayo has sent in to ask for terms & that John Dunn²¹ has gone up to see him. We hear nothing though officially & though I believe it must be true, it is all the more reason why we should push on instantly & be able to dictate our terms from a position in his own country. I have no doubt our terms will be as mild as we can make them - I confess as we are so far gone in the war, I wish we could have had one more fight first, and a big victory, & have reached Ulundi - if only for the effect it would have on all the other kafir tribes. Anyhow, we ought to push on at once now. We have had plenty of scares but they generally turn out to have arisen from our own Native Contingent being mistaken for a Zulu impi.

We hope to move on Monday - the 20th - but our road is still undecided on. Rupert Carrington [sc. Carington]²² is now Adjutant of the 24th, & Bill Cumming²³ here as an extra A.D.C. to Newdigate, Davies²⁴ is Commandant Conference Hill, and Cotton²⁵ with him and the others are still with the 24th. I begin to be afraid that whatever happens I shall not be at home again in time to go start with [-?] to America but I shall do all I can not to throw him over - now however I must stay with the General as long as he is in the Zulu country, war or no war. The nights now are very cold indeed, 3 or 4 nights we have had real frost, but we always have a bright, hot sunny day. I don't suppose we shall take tents with us from here - certainly we ought not to. At present, Hughes has a little tent to himself and Heneage²⁶ and I a bell tent together and I am sitting in it on a bundle of grass, writing on my pack saddle, and it seems to me writing an indifferent hand. I must shut up. I hope my next

Col. Durnford amid the scattered groups of soldiers who had made a last stand.

¹⁶ Col. William Anthony Durnford, R.E.

¹⁷ As is well-known, the 24th Regt. insisted on burying their own dead – though it delayed the whole process very considerably and caused some adverse comment.

¹⁸ Under General Frederick Marshall, following the reorganisation of the invasion forces.

¹⁹ Bt. Major H. Stewart, 3rd Dragoon Guards; 'second to none in the service' according to General Marshall.

²⁰ Lt-General Sir Edward Newdigate Newdegate, KCB (1825 – 1902); commanded 2nd Division of the reorganised invasion force. CB for this service.

²¹ John Dunn (1834 – 1895). Hunter, trader, diplomat and famous Zulu 'frontiersman'. He often represented both colonial and Zulu interests and had considerable influence over Cetshwayo, often acting as his secretary and diplomatic adviser and was rewarded with chieftainship, extensive lands and livestock. However, during the war, he reluctantly had to forgo a position of neutrality and worked with the British. After the war he was one of those allies allocated land in the divided former kingdom.

²² The Hon. R. C. G. Carington, Grenadier Guards.

²³ Capt. the Hon. Sir W. G. Cumming, Scots Guards.

²⁴ Col. H. F. Davies, Grenadier Guards.

²⁵ Capt. Hon. R. S. G. S. Cotton, Scots Guards.

²⁶ Capt. W. E. Heneage, R. E. , A.D.C. to General Marshall.

letter will be from the heart of the Zulu country - we are one march from the Blood River - the frontier - at this moment Guy

Upoko R. Camp
June 10th /79

My Dear Victoria²⁷,

I had thought I had lost all chance of writing another letter by this mail but they have just told us - late at night - that some of our irregular cavalry - very irregular they are too - are to go off to the frontier tomorrow at daybreak, and I will just try to send off a line ... We are all very jolly here, Downe²⁸ fitter I think than I have ever seen him, and very cheerful though I have no doubt he will be very glad like everyone else when this war is successfully ended, and he can come home again. We go on very slowly - you will have wondered in England I should think at the long interval of uneventfulness since Echowe, after the arrival of all the reinforcements - it has been rather wearisome to us too, but I hope things are getting on now. We have had at any rate the expectation of action to keep us all going, beginning with our expedition to Isandhlwana. Though nothing came of it, still we thought we should be opposed, and though nothing happened and we just marched quietly there and back, you can imagine how full of interest it has been to me, & our bringing off the 40 wagons was something accomplished and counted to the credit of the cavalry.

The poor Prince's death though is another disaster and one that no victory can efface²⁹. Everyone in camp I think looks upon it as in some way a personal disgrace, and I am afraid to think of all the remarks that will be made on it in France and Europe generally. You will have read all the details in the papers so I will say nothing about them. Even without all that hung on his life, one would have regretted his death as a very good, plucky and cheerful fellow. It only happened 9 days ago but it already seems a long time, as we have done a deal of marching etc. since and had our little excitement in a bit of a skirmish with the Zulus since, a night alarm, and a little shelling practise at Zulus and kraals in the last two or three days.

It is a curious thing that I have always had a dislike of Special Correspondents & especially for some things to Arch. Forbes³⁰, but within the last day or two I have had to do some Special Correspondent telegraphing & for Forbes & only yesterday morning sent off a long telegram for him, giving the events of the preceding three days. He now messes with us & is certainly a great addition to our mess & I couldn't say no, when he asked me during his absence to telegraph to the Daily News in his name any incidents there might be. Our skirmish³¹ resulted luckily for us in but one man killed - the poor Adjutant of the Lancers³² but if the Zulus had only not fired so ridiculously badly, we should have lost a good many men and horses, as we got into a nasty place. We have since shelled them out, and on Monday with a proper force of infantry & cavalry advanced to clear the hills where they had been - however, they had already gone & we only shelled away at a few hundred that were in kraals & bush where cavalry could not work. We half expect an attack

²⁷ Lady Victoria Alexandrina Elizabeth Grey, Lady Dawnay (1853 - d.1922); wife of Lewis Dawnay.

²⁸ His brother Hugh, Viscount Downe.

²⁹ The death of Louis Napoleon, Prince Imperial of France, killed in a skirmish on 1st June 1879.

³⁰ The Scottish journalist and well-known war correspondent Archibald Forbes (1838-1900) working for the Daily News. It is said that he served in 26 campaigns!

³¹ At Erzungayan Hill, 5th June 1879.

³² Lieut. & Adjutant Fredk. John Cockayne Frith. Aged 20.

soon from some small army - impi I should say - reported a little further on, but I doubt it. I must end this hurriedly as I must give up my letter to the post if it is to go at all. Guy.

Landman's Drift
Tuesday. July 1st /79

My dear old Lewis,

I was just going to write to you last week from Rorke's Drift, when I found that Dick³³ had already done so. My letter to Victoria closed rather abruptly as I had to finish it at a couple of minutes notice - when I was writing that we hadn't had this dreadful stroke of bad luck in being sent back from the front to look after the communications in the rear. You will understand what one's feelings were. So far however we have missed absolutely nothing, and I have at any rate managed to go up on a message and gaze on the kraals of Ulundi from a distance of nine miles - that was the day before yesterday, and a message we got last night by heliograph said they had marched five miles further & I expect that today at midday will see them in the king's kraal. I hope that may mean the end of the whole business, although unless they have a fight first, I am afraid it may drag on for weeks longer, and I am afraid that they don't mean fighting, or at any rate will not make a decisive one of it. Even though if they only march into Ulundi, it is very annoying to think one is out of it all, and then with such a good lot of fellows in camp, that from that alone one was awfully sorry to have to go back.

You know from Hughie and from what I told Victoria the little that we did up to the time we left the Upoko R. - we had some bits of excitement in our little skirmish on 5th of June³⁴, our false alarm in camp at night, and a little shelling of kraals etc., and had hoped it was the beginning of the real thing, instead of which it was followed by a week of inactivity. The General let me at the end of the week go off on a raid with Buller - Bill Cumming coming also - from which he expected a little excitement, but it was not much of a performance. We went off one morning with 240 irregular horse, got to the White Umfolosi at dusk, waited till it was dark & then moved on a little, lay down just with one blanket without lighting fires for cooking on & leaving saddles and bridles on, had a bitter cold night of it, then frost, turning to rain and a piercing wind - it always chooses one's bivouac nights for the worst weather. One hour and a half before sunrise we mounted, crossed the river, and at sunrise reached the big mountain we were making for, to find the Zulus already driving their cattle up the hill & the kraals deserted. They fired a shot or two at us first, but then it became very one sided. We took over 300 head of cattle, a dozen or so Zulus were killed, and about 30 kraals burnt - then when the Zulus began to collect fairly thickly at the end of an impracticable valley, Buller retired with his spoils & we had a day's cattle driving home. I only mention this as a sort of specimen of a raid. Buller is a rare good man - Bill Beresford³⁵ is a very lucky fellow to have got made his staff officer

- *July 6th*: when I stopped writing this on July 1st (owing to a furious gale and dust storm) I have had - except Gingindhlovu day - the best time of my life. I am an extraordinarily lucky chap. That night, just as were we going to turn in at 1/4 past 9 and I was congratulating myself on going to have a good night's rest - the night but one before having been occupied by finishing a 90 mile ride down from the front - a telegram came in from Sir G. W.³⁶ for Ld. Chelmsford - very important, and at 1/4 to 10, I was off, riding one horse and leading another. I had to stop at different forts to get escorts & remounts - such brutes too - and at 4.30 next afternoon - Wednesday - I reached our standing camp at Entonjaneni 90 miles off - the last part of the way with Thynne³⁷ - Reggie T.³⁸ -

³³ Perhaps his brother Richard Hugh Dawnay, Viscount Downe - but he is usually referred to as 'Hughie'.

³⁴ At Erzungayan Hill; see above.

³⁵ Lord William Beresford, 9th Lancers, who was to win the Victoria Cross near Ulundi on 3rd July 1879.

³⁶ Sir Garnet Wolseley, sent to South Africa to supersede Lord Chelmsford.

³⁷ Lt. Col. R. T. Thynne, Grenadier Guards.

rode with me. I found the stationary camp fortified and that the fighting men with ten days rations had advanced 14 miles to the White Umfolosi & was awfully annoyed at not being able to get on till the next morning, as not a man, black or white, knew the road or would go on at night & there was a dense mist come up before sunset.

However, it was all as if timed for me. I reached the camp next morning and had hardly sighted it when I heard a volley by the river & saw Zulus firing at our men at the drift. - gave my dispatches - and went down with Lonnie & Bill Cummings to the river, finding the picket lying down on the sand, firing now and then when fired at. Lonnie made a thundering good shot at 1200 yards at 4 Zulus sitting on a stone, 50 others starting up from the grass they were hiding in and bolted, one I think hit & just at that moment Grenfell³⁹ of the Hd. Quarters staff rode down & said that the men were to retire to the cover of the bush behind as two large bodies were coming to the top of the crag the other side of the river 200 yds off - just as the men got up, down came a rattling good volley at us, hitting all round & they kept on firing till the men got to cover and returned it, but only two men were hit.

When we got to camp again we found Buller & Bill Beresford & 530 irregular horse just going out & I couldn't go with them as I couldn't get a horse, though I offered any sum for a decent one. It was maddening to stand on a wagon and watch them galloping away, but it was a beautiful fight & Lonnie was wild with excitement. The old Zulus though knew what they were about & had a heap of men all ready waiting in the long grass & a few out to run away & draw Buller onto it, when they all started up and fired a volley at 50 yds without hitting though one man or horse! Buller then retired, as arranged, hoping in turn to draw them to us, but they were too wide awake & it all ended in three of Buller's force being lost & a few Zulus killed. Bill Beresford took up a man from under his horse when the Zulus were close behind him - going back to do it - and he is certain to get a V.C. & you will also see a fine picture of him, Illst'd. L. News [Illustrated London News], getting 'First Spear' as he shouted out, when running the first Zulu through with his sword. He is a very good fellow certainly.

That ended Thursday. Next morning we started out at 5.45, crossed the river & got two or three miles before we saw some Zulus appearing. We had in all something under 4000 men and marched in square [drawing inserted], the guns at the corners, Buller's horse in front and flanks and 3 squadrons of 17th in rear. The Zulus appeared on all sides and when we had marched about 4 miles we formed square, the flankers(?) fired a few shots and then all the cavalry came inside. At 10 minutes to 9 the real attack began and for half an hour it was Gingindhlovu over again without the wagons or shelter trench. I was with Newdigate - extra galloper - Lonnie, Bill Cumming, Bill Montgomery⁴⁰ & Cotton being all there & we were at the left rear corner which turned out the hottest place. Cotton was the only man hit & his was only a spent bullet which caught him above the ear & knocked him off his horse senseless, but in a minute he was alright & it only gave him a big bump there. They call the Zulus all numbers from 10 - 25,000, but I believe that about 15,000 was about the number & they attacked on all sides, so that the bullets kept whistling over in every direction. They sounded very warm but our list of killed & wounded is only 50 or 60 in all & the Lancers in the charge afterwards furnished 9 or 10 of them. It sounded magnificent though, the blaze from all sides of the square & the banging of the guns, 7 & 9 lbs. At our corner, owing to the ground, the Zulus managed to get in one great black mass within 100 yds & everyone really thought it would come to bayonets but at 60 yds they withered away.

The Lancers were ordered to mount, but the Zulus again coming on it was countermanded, a mistake I think & I was just saying so to Lowe when a bullet caught him in the small of the back & I caught him & got him off his horse, thinking he was as good as killed - in a minute or two though

³⁸ Capt. Hon. R. A. J. Talbot, 1st Life Guards.

³⁹ Bvt. Lieut. Colonel F. W. Grenfell, 60th Rifles, D.A.A.G. on Chelmsford's Staff.

⁴⁰ Capt. W. E. Montgomery, Scots Guards.

he got up again & like Cotton's it was only a spent ball, and in five minutes he was leading out the 17th. The Adjutant let me go with them and I had the most exciting gallop I suppose I shall ever have. We unluckily had to blow our horses - not strong now - rather, before we got to the Zulus & we had at one time a rather nasty crossfire from them. I had Hughies old 2nd L.G.⁴¹ sword & was riding one of Arch. Forbes' horses, which he was very good and lent me (bad grammar) - I only agreed to ride at my own risk - or I thought I was - £60 - when I heard a thud on his leg & he came down on his head & shoulder - again though it was only a spent bullet & he recovered & went on. I fancy many of them were short of powder & that accounted for some harmless knocks.

We got pretty well into them at one time & the Lancers did well. If only we had had strong horses under us! We galloped about for 40 minutes. In all the Lancers lost poor Wyatt Edgell⁴² and two men killed & 5 or 6 wounded - Jenkins having his jaw shattered while in the square and James slightly assegaied in the chest. We finished off by shelling the retiring black mass on a hill top, & then the cavalry went out and burned Ulundi. It was burnt so quickly that we got none of the loot we expected - a few odds and ends which it was rather risky work taking for in a labyrinth of fences with little doors in them & blazing huts, being all there was to reward us.

We marched back to camp with band playing, leaving 5 enormous kraals - 1000's of huts - in flames and with the satisfaction of knowing from prisoners that Cetywayo himself had been gazing on the fight from a distant hill - I write you see, now and before, - as thinking less of the question of our right or wrong in beginning this war than of the broad issue (good expression!) of the supremacy of white or black in S. Africa, which since Isandhlwana depends on our licking the Zulus.

Ld. Chelmsford asked me to take down the dispatches of our victory & at 8 that night I started & going without stopping except to get escorts & remounts - each worse than the last - & including a most weary night hunt for the track in a freezing fog on the mountain top, got here last night at 10. It was my third night ride out of 7. In that time I have had to ride 90 miles straight off twice and 102 the last one, & out of 14 nights have only 3 times had my own blanket to sleep in. One at any rates gets hardened to the saddle.

I am a lucky fellow though, extraordinarily. Poor old Dick, of course he is mad at being out of it, though he takes it thundering well. I never, I confess, knew what an awfully good fellow he is, till we were here together, hard as nails and always cheery and contented. I hope more devoutly now that this may quickly end & we may go back - all fun is I am sure over. The Zulus will never attack again. I shall hope now each day that we may hear that the king has submitted. I am glad we did it without Sir G. W. Crealock⁴³ - whom Sir G. has joined is still far away & ought to be shot. Our columns go back to Kwamaghasa & wait for them, but I don't suppose any further advance this season can be contemplated & I think now that it is certainly a matter that ought to [be] managed by diplomacy.

What an interminable letter I have sent you. When once begun though I thought I would give you a proper one and the last I hope before we meet again at home We had a camp lottery, £20 or so. Dick drew [the horses] Victor Chief, the General Cadogan, myself Rayon d'Or and we feel rather sold. Dick is very well and old Lonnie too & all the Brigade. Rupert Carrington and Bertie were, I'm afraid, out of this last thing, having to stay to guard camp, which we felt quite certain would be attacked Guy.

⁴¹ 2nd Life Guards – Hugh Dawnay's regiment.

⁴² Captain Edmund Verney Wyatt-Edgell, 1846-79. Remains transferred from burial at Ulundi to St Nicholas Church, Stanford-Upon-Avon.

⁴³ Major General Henry Hope Crealock, commanding the (newly constituted) 1st Division operating along the coastal route towards Port Durnford, which Wolseley initially joined. Crealock's men became known as 'Crealock's Crawlers' because of their slow pace - presumably what Dawnay is hinting at.