

92 The man of murders, rapes, and atrocities which even
Savages condemn. He is a half brother of Sandilli, a son
of Gaika, and ~~the~~ owner of a large property in Cattle &c.
besides being head of an influential portion of the race which
Sandilli claims sovereignty over.

The whole Kaffir System seems much like
that of France and Germany in the Middle Ages, on a
small scale. A King or head with his subject own direct
subjects & territory, claiming fealty from various potent
kings who assemble round him for war, and sometimes
fight, sometimes refuse the homage required, the whole
boiling of them being under one immense swell or
Emperor. In this case, Au Au is vassal to Sandilli who
holds it over the whole Gaika people. Idrelli however being
acknowledged head over all Gaikas, Namvias and others,
though he never interferes & has no actual power.

After a short conference with Au Au, we gave our
present of Tobacco, smoked a pipe with him, and rode
off. The entire population of every hut having assembled to see
us start, we had heard the good news that Sandilli was to
attend

a marriage festival across the river and accordingly ⁹³
made for the drift, but yesterday's water got so high
such play that though one of our followers was in. he was
ⁱⁿ in imminent danger of being swept away, and we had
to return & try lower down.

By so doing we not only managed to cross the
river, but gained a sight of Sandilli's great wife, that is
the wife selected from some influential tribe for state
purposes, and whose son succeeds to the family honours.
She and a minor wife were suffering from some slight
illness, & removed here for advice, and on riding up
we saw them at full length in the hut showing the Al-
-clermen, but they jumped however, and came out to greet
the Comrades, and a prettier Parage I never saw than
the young Chieftainess. There was something taking too
in the way she played with her ornaments of steel chains
and Tiger teeth and I never saw a good looking Gawon
till I saw her. The other wife was a wretch, all one red ochre
~~and~~ and Cow dung, and I declined shaking hands with
her. Leaving the Royal Ladies, we descended a steep Mi-
-nosa covered hill until reaching the drift, I dismounted

94 and Cropped on Brownlee's horse which was more sure footed. The river was very high and the rush of water in one place far from agreeable.

Mounting the hill beneath which "the Galopga" runs, and obtaining lovely peeps into the valley as we rode along the ridge. We came in view of some knolls here and there before us, and the most distant of all was pointed out to me as the scene of the revelry. Long, however, before we came in sight, the numerous parties of blanketed natives, and women in a stange lead-dress of beads, which we overtook; told us we were nearing the festive knoll. And most laughable some of these parties when, one especially which had halted among a cluster of Ants Nests looked inexpressibly droll every man having thrown down his blanket and perched himself like a crow on the top of one of them.

However we were now within hail of the revelry, I saw a dense swarm of human beings in and around the Circle of mud bonals forming the knoll. In front a long line of people were jumping up and down, now all together, now in twos & threes now altogether



Couples, much like the internal arrangement of ⁹⁶
a piano when a child is learning its scales. A con-
-fused din of voices through which broke at times some
shriller cry than usual, and the sudden quivering
of a forest of Apsaras in the air which were as suddenly
withdrawn, and we rode into the Circle and dis-
-mounting. Browlee said "Here Comes Sandilli"

A tall fine looking man with a withered leg
and right hand in his fist had risen from among
the multitude and followed by 5 or 6 others had
slowly advanced towards us. He touched Browlee's
hand and then mine, as also did his followers; &
some Tiger skins being spread on a soft patch of newly
dropped Cow dung to make us quite comfortable we
all sat down in a group apart, and I had leisure
during the opening of the Complimentary Overture
to scan the faces & appearance of Sandilli, Chief
of all the Gaikas, and his Counsellors.

Naked as the day they were born save a few
ornaments which I will mention hereafter, and
smeared with a coating of red clay they sat or rather
squatted in the most unbecoming & hideous attitudes

26 Their blankets having fallen in one lops folds around them. They were true Negroes in feature, with the thickest lips and broadest hair I ever saw, but their eyes had some of the vacant silliness of the Jamaican Creole or the vacant stupidity of the Cape Hottentot. Some were even almost handsome and all models for a sculptor in person. Sandilli was adorned with a necklace of large shells and a row of parti colored beads round his neck. A string of blue beads in his right ear, a huge cumbersome ivory armband above his elbow, and a row of bright brass rings on one arm completed his attire which was not distinguished by any mark of superior rank, many of his subjects surpassing him in the number and brilliancy of their decorations.

With him was his brother "Dundas", and his nephew "Fyne" (both named after English officers.) The former a stout short man of light colour with few more hair on his face than the generality of Kaffirs, a peculiarly shaved by Sandilli also. "Fyne" is a stout well made young fellow, with a pleasant open expression of face and highly looked up to by his people. He is an important personage at the Gaika Court.

These observations however were not made all at ~~the~~^{one} once. For a long time my attention, after the first Curious
Gleance, was wholly absorbed by the marvellous scene
beacted before me. And no wonder, for a wilder &
more utterly Savage Spectacle never peated a stray
tourist. We were sitting in front of a wide Semi-
Circle of Butts on a bare Hill side. The guests of the
famed Gaika Chieftain. On our left hand the dusky
warriors of Kaffraria before whom our troops have so
often recoiled and whom we have never beaten in
battle even, covered the ground by hundreds and
hundreds, a constant steam passing & repassing to
the mystic dance, and all similarly attired in
beads, teeth, shells and a tiger skin hanging down
the back. On our right sat the women of the tribe in
their dark skins and wonderful ornaments of
hanging chains and lead-chapes, while in front
the muscular forms of the dancers as they bounded
up and down, now altogether, now alternately, looking
through a cloud of dust & steam which rose from
their heated bodies, while the Apepsis quivered in
the air

98 and a deep hollow and painful sound, a sound of
hissing, shuddering and gasping added to the regular
thump of the leapers and the harsh cries of the women made
up a picture which struck me with a kind of horror and
which no pen can adequately describe. For the detail of
the scene must always be left out, indeed I have written
so much of the main feature that detail is impossible.
I ought to enlarge upon the slow solemn facing of the
women as in long single file the relieving parties marched
to their station and the relieved marched back. Upon
the horrible and peculiar sound combined with the action
of the shoulders I must which I can only describe as
"shuddering," upon the trains of naked ^{Haffirs} ~~barages~~ carrying
baskets of sour clotted milk, threading their way through
the multitude, and upon the magnificent forms of the
barages which passed in array before me. I was in a
dream, and only roused from it by Sandilli passing
his curiosity ornamented pipe for me to fill, a task which
I was too happy to do, having feared he might wish me
to smoke it myself. We then talked on the war, tasted
some of the milk which had placed before us, and then

100 Sandilli rose, and followed by his Counsellors and
a numerous train of Myrmidons in Tiger Skins and
Apepans, began a wild and hideous measure circling
round the leopard with the most fearful shuddering, groans
and starts that can be conceived. Eyes staring, chests
heaving, mouths hissing, and Apepans howling I think
the wildest imagination can picture nothing more
shocking, and when a counter circle of women joining
the contrary way, only with deep gasping and short
steps, in place of the shuddering & spasmodic jerks for-
ward I fairly shut my eyes and thought I had seen
enough. The feet or race however was to come off, &
before long a shouting ring of happy had collected the
horns of the tribe, and were soon pouring off to the sta-
point some miles distant. Two hours had elapsed &
I had smoked as many pipes as I could manage, the
dance never stopping for a moment, when a sudden
stir among the crowd and all eyes directed to a dis-
tant hill, made me turn also. A long line of horse-
men followed by a dense mass of something has been
pouring

over the ridge into the valley. As the horsemen came ¹⁰¹
leaving and the wild Haffin whistle sounded shriller
and more distinct, the something resolved itself
into a maddened chorus of Oren rushing in a
body to the beach. The Oren rose and advanced in
large masses towards the line of "course" marked out,
while the women snatching up Apepais & Knob-
-berries & zig zapped in single file with excited and
grotesque gestures, a sort of following my leader among
the Orens. As they came, the horsemen dashed by,
and the frantic Oren tramping after them; when
a wild cry was raised, the groups suddenly dis-
-persed in confusion, and I beheld a huge white
Bullock charging down towards us, tail up, head
down, and every evidence of a determination to
do for some one. There was a multitude so rapidly
melted, the hill side was alive in a moment;
Sandlill dashed like mischief into the thicket & then
while I followed his flying Counsellors and dodged
round another. Poor Browlee unduckily made
for

Collection Number: A1537

Collection Name: Robert E.E. Wilmot, Diary, 30 January – 22 July 1856

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

©2016

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of a collection, held at the Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.