

Mary Moore writes of war

Talana and after

Introduction

Mary Elizabeth Constance Moore came to Natal from England in October 1890, aged 30, to teach at St Anne's Diocesan College, then situated in Loop Street in Pietermaritzburg. There she taught English and Latin and soon became known for her devotion to duty, and for her pleasant disposition and inexhaustible humour. In August 1898 she was sent to launch a branch of St Anne's at Dundee, but the project did not prove viable and she soon returned to St Anne's in Pietermaritzburg where she became headmistress and worked under the overall leadership of the Lady Warden, Miss Marianne Browne. She played a major part in the relocation of St Anne's to Hilton in 1904, but after a disagreement with Marianne Browne's successor, left St Anne's early in 1905 and founded Wykeham, a girls' school in upper Loop Street near to the old St Anne's. At Wykeham she fulfilled her life-long dream of owning her own school. In 1919, shortly before her sixtieth birthday, she retired and eventually settled in Greytown where she was joined by her sister from England. She died in 1933.

From the moment she left London on the *SS Umkuzi* on 19 September 1890 Mary Moore began a combination of vividly detailed letters and 'diary budgets' to give her mother (Mater) and sister (Flo, or Chick) in Lincoln a full account of her colonial venture. A substantial part of these letters and diaries survives, dated from October 1890 to December 1892 and July 1897 to June 1902. They are presently held in the Killie Campbell Library in Durban. Other than a few isolated letters in the Wykeham papers in The Wykeham Collegiate Archives and a 'holiday budget' bought at random at an auction sale and now owned by Miss K.M. Nixon of Pietermaritzburg, and two later letters in the possession of Mr Drummond Mackenzie of Cramond, none of Moore's other letters has, to date, been found, nor the letters she received. There is no explanation of why some were kept, but it does appear that the resumption of the collection in July 1897 followed a home visit and extended travel abroad.

Mary Moore was an accomplished diarist and the material is filled with information about Natal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Social comment, cultural events, education, the church, the military, travel, nature, people, prejudices, gossip: all are there. Her extensive coverage of Natal issues and events is especially appealing for its spontaneity and candour. Her aim was purely and simply to meet her mother's request to 'know all about everything' and to satisfy her own

need to tell all. As a source of historical ‘facts’ the letters must naturally be subjected to the usual processes of verification. As a source for knowing Mary Moore and placing her in her *milieu* — her intellectual framework, preconceptions, attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, loyalties and aspirations, and those of her class — they are invaluable.



Mary Moore (seated in grass chair) with her fifth-form pupils at St Anne's.
(*Photograph: St Anne's College archives.*)

At this time when the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902 is undergoing reappraisal in the context of its centenary, the letters are a veritable treasure trove. With the exception of some missing letters between 5 July and 3 August 1900 when it is known that she wrote a ‘holiday budget’ of her travels around the Natal battlefields, and a significant break between 11 December 1901 and 7 June 1902, her letters during the war appear to be intact. The proportion of war news to non-war news reflects the progress of the war. Her first reference to the ‘Transvaal trouble’ was on 27 April 1898 and her references to the threat of war increased steadily to its outbreak in October 1899. During the Natal campaign there was voluminous detail, often whole letters being devoted to it. After Ladysmith was relieved she dwelt for some time on tales of the siege. References then became intermittent until peace was declared in May 1902. This, and visits to Pietermaritzburg of the generals Buller and Roberts and Sir Alfred Milner, were vividly described. Her system was fairly consistent. She began her letter on Sunday, added to it during the week, and posted it usually on Friday or Saturday when the overseas mail left.



St Anne's College, Loop Street, Pietermaritzburg, in Mary Moore's time.
Only the arched gateway on the right is recognisable today.

(Photograph: St Anne's College archives.)

The challenge of Mary Moore's writing during the war is that it is the testimony of a civilian woman caught up in the trappings and repercussions of war as she faithfully carried out her duties as teacher and headmistress in a girls' boarding school. Fear for the safety of families on farms and as far afield as the Transvaal, anxiety about relatives and friends in the forces, constant telegrams from parents fearing for the safety of their daughters, troop trains trundling past the school, frequent visits to the station nearby where telegrams with the latest news were posted, and the ever-present dread of a Boer invasion which would take in Pietermaritzburg on its way to Durban, made St Anne's a war zone of its own. Rumour abounded, both about what might happen and what had happened, given the time it took for news to be confirmed and given the many people with whom a school would have contact. This immediacy is reflected in Moore's reportage; it gives the letters authenticity and demonstrates the mixture of fact and fiction which accompanies war, even more for those at home than for those at the front.

Although the history of war is often regarded as a woman's 'no man's land', the Anglo-Boer War is moderately represented by Boer women's concentration camp reminiscences, the pro-Boer writing of Emily Hobhouse and her associates, and some memoirs of British and colonial nurses. But available pro-British writing of the strength and conviction of Mary Moore is fairly unusual. She was an 'establishment' woman through and through. She had attended Newnham College, Cambridge, not long after it was founded for women in 1871. She had taught at St Mary's School, Paddington, a high church Anglican establishment in London. Her friends in the Colony were representative of the 'old Natal' family network such as the

Vanderplanks and St Georges in Pietermaritzburg, the Mackenzies and Leucharses on their farms at Cramond, the Fannins at the Residency at Greytown, the Jacksons, also magistrates, one at Harding and one at Newcastle, the Strachans at Umzimkulu and other farming families at the Dargle and Mooi River in the Natal midlands. Her circle was enriched by the school's proximity to Government House and to Fort Napier, the imperial army's regimental headquarters in Natal. Clearly she had imperial army connections in her family; her father's brother had been in India with Lord Roberts. She was, in no uncertain terms, for Queen and Empire. She believed in British rightness and certain victory in South Africa. Her attitude to the Boers was one of contempt, signified by her use of a small 'b' when writing of them. While her derogatory judgments of them could be read as war talk of an extreme kind, they also constituted 'othering' of subject colonial peoples, more usually associated with black people. Of the latter's participation in the war Moore said very little.

Mary Moore was a conventional Victorian woman. She carried out the home-front duties expected of women and worked tirelessly in support of the troops, hosted nurses and refugees at St Anne's, visited the wounded at Fort Napier and comforted the bereaved. Yet there was much in this intelligent, lively woman which actively challenged the passive, non-combatant Victorian female image. She showed an extraordinary interest in the war and an almost frenetic desire to convey the war news, even sending newspapers to her family, favouring *The Natal Witness* over the *Times of Natal*. She commented on strategy and tactics, made judgments on generals and soldiers, and, on several occasions, expressed a wish to become involved in the war, lamenting that women were not yet allowed to fight. Perhaps this gendered conflict is best summed up in a remark in her letter of 29 October 1899 after a day of sewing at St Anne's:

Today I have a blister on my middle finger where the scizzors [*sic*] went, & my arm is as stiff from machining as if I had rheumatism . . . I stuck to the machine as I should like to stick to a Gatling or a Maxim, mowing them all down before me.

The letter quoted below shows Mary Moore's reactions to the breaking news of the battles at Talana Hill and Elandslaagte and to the first week of hostilities in Natal. It is one of her shorter and less sensational letters but it does reflect the position of those at home waiting for news. Read together with the accompanying memoir of R. Ernest Reade, who took part in the events of that week, it provides some balance for a more all-round understanding of the social phenomenon of war. War history is made up of many war stories, and some of these should be from women.

The letter

St. Anne's College
Maritzburg.
Oct:21st/99

Sunday¹

My dearest Mater & Chick,

We seem to be really in the thick of the Rebellion as they are calling it. They will not honour the boers by calling it a war.² You know how blood-thirsty one was before it began, well, now the horrors are sickening. It is nothing to speak of thousands being slaughtered when it is in a distant age & you have read it as history, or when it is in a distant land & you read in a newspaper — but when among the slain are people you have known or seen & heard about — it is awful & one longs for it all to be over.³ On Friday was a great battle at Dundee they are calling it Talani [*sic*] Hill — it was brilliant but it has cost the life of our General & of numbers of officers for the boers best shots seem to be told off to aim at the officers.⁴ The Irish acted bravely — there is a rumour here that the regiment that pursued the enemy over the hills have never returned — certainly their return has never been mentioned — it may have been that they did not think the return worth mentioning. On the other hand, many are saying that it means they were led into ambush, met by another commando & slaughtered to a man.⁵ Our camp seems to have been on the flat outside the town near where the St. Anne's School was to have been built; the hospital that is the Swedish Mission House we used to pass every day if from Miss Usherwood's garden⁶ we called on our next neighbour by creeping through the fence. It makes it so real when you know the place exactly to the hills that the rebels were posted upon & over which they were driven. Mr Bailey is still there, his wife & child are in Durban.⁷ The Bishop⁸ told me he envied him.

All Saturday we were busy for the poor men. There had been appeals in the paper for tobacco & papers — & for invalids' things. So we had got up a St Anne's Fund — all the girls & Mistresses & the Lady Warden & all Saturday Miss Lawrance & I were getting the things⁹ First we got the tobacco for it is getting scarce here. They always use Boer Tobacco here, & of course the supply is cut off from the Transvaal. We got 5 bags of 5 lbs each at 10/- a bag it used to be 7/6 before the war — this is cost price they let us have all our things cost price — Mellin's Food, Neave's Food Semolina, Corn Flour, Arrowroot¹⁰ Cocoa, & 3 cases of Condensed Milk, & Pearl Barley. We got also a gross of Matches, a gross of pipes at one shop, & 9 doz at another — & then another dozen as we had a/c left. We interviewed the man who sees about such things & he said they would be thankful for old linen so the L.W. looked out old sheets & pillow-cases & our old linen — all the afternoon we were packing & Shortie had come in for the day. Mr George wanted to see the Governor to learn whether Buccleuch & Cramond were safe & Shortie had seen us in the town & when she learnt what we were doing she gave us another bag of tobacco so had 6 altogether.¹¹ Won't the poor men be thankful. You see sometimes as happened to the Carbineers they were obliged to leave their camps & their kit fell to the enemy — when the 70 stood up against 600 boers in the bush in which Gallwey was lost — by the way he was taken prisoner & is now at Harrismith wounded but alive.

Alfred Shaw wrote after the fight to say don't think we beat a cowardly retreat our orders were to retire & we had to do so but if they would have allowed us we would have beaten the Dutch. Fancy 70 to 600. It was a brilliant little fight they never lost a man except Spenser & Gallwey.¹² As I went to church at 7 a.m. Mr Frank Green¹³ told me that there had been another victory. This at Ladismith [*sic*]¹⁴. So I returned from Church up Church street (a very long way round) that I might see the telegrams & there I saw the battle of Elandslaagte (Eel-ans-lurk-ter) (if you can, put a gutteral into the 'laag')¹⁵. It is a wonderful fight! First we retook the station & collieries & all that had been lost a day or two before — that was Saturday morning — then in the afternoon was the battle, it was 15 miles from Ladismith & of course very much nearer to Maritzburg than Dundee. All day telegrams have been arriving & new editions or rather slips of paper printed. One of the Light Horse chiefs, Sampson¹⁶, has a thigh shattered by an expanding bullet. The grandest thing was the Lancers charge — the boers scattered like sheep the Lancers went backwards & forwards through them, bayonets in hand & scarcely lost a man. One little trumpeter, of 14, killed 3 men with his revolver & was afterwards carried round the camp. We don't know the real loss yet. Boers fired on the ambulance after the battle when we were succouring their own wounded as well as ours — just like them. General Kock¹⁷ was found dying, Joubert's nephew taken, & there was an idea that Kruger's son was among the slain — but we don't know yet.¹⁸ They expected another fight at Dundee, but no news.

Monday At Dundee yesterday, the boers threw 2 or 3 shells into the town but they were not plugged, so they could not explode. However, it might be to find the range¹⁹ — (Later) It is said that the Dundee camp is entrenched, surrounded by boers & is short of ammunition. Let us hope it is not true for if it is they will all be massacred unless help can go from Ladismith. They say in the papers now 'Where are the regiments that followed the Dutch over the hill after the fight at Talani Hill'. We hope they returned & it was not thought important enough to note — but it is curious that nothing has been said. Another rumour is that 1500 boers are the other side of Table Mt,²⁰ that is 17 mi. away, we look at it from our verandas. Another that a commando has got through Zululand & is making for Greytown — certainly the troops which have been quietly waiting at Otto's Bluff — were sent on to Greytown to-day²¹. Old men say we have not begun yet, we don't know what we are in for yet — & we had — in a sort of way hoped that our 2 victories would crush the spirits of the boers — it seems only to have made them desperate.²²

Tuesday Most depressing news. Dundee is evacuated & shelled — not a building standing. What a good thing we did not spend all our money & run into debt to build a school in Dundee! Where would it have been now?²³ There is news of a battle near Ladismith but no particulars yet. Martial Law is proclaimed here, so we must mind our P's & Q's. The children wanted to know if they would be shot if they spoke of the Queen, they had an idea that they were not to mention her name.²⁴ Within an hour of its being proclaimed in Durban the Blue Jackets marched up to the National Bank & commandeered all Transvaal gold, & the clerks & managers, all English, made no protest but smilingly & agreeably complied with the law. It is suggested that the

Dutch prisoners of war should be imprisoned on hulks in the Bay, where they would roll not a little, & they think sickness might relieve them of their treason²⁵.

Wednesday News of a splendid victory near Ladismith — won by Sir G. White over 1500 boers. Nearly all volunteers engaged & Regulars as well, gunning excellent. Boers most determined & brave but their positions taken & their guns silenced. The camp from Dundee is safely removed to Ladismith²⁶ — but — the wounded are left behind — Penn-Symons & all. We are in terror that the boers will go & shoot them. According to the rules of civilised warfare²⁷ they are safe but only yesterday a boer shot 2 wounded men as the doctor was tending them & would have shot the doctor too but the pistol shot brought up 2 soldiers who shot him. He never said a word, strolled up as if to look on, & then pistoled them before the doctor knew what he was about. They are such inhuman brutes.

We call it a victory but it is the cover of a retreat & shows weakness. Besides, we are losing so many men & the boers don't, they give way when they begin to fall — so what we call victory is really only their tactics.²⁸ Things look very bad. It is like a bad night-mare. One wonders when the awakening will come. There is a heavy dark cloud & it never lifts, but gets lower & lower & more oppressive each day.

Thursday The children were going away for the All Saints' Holiday tomorrow — we had none at Michaelmas because of measles. Mrs Leuchars & Grace²⁹ asked me to go to Cramond but I did not like to go for the whole as I knew there would be many left here, & as I had lots of arrears to make up in work & I wanted to finish off the Quarter's Accounts & try to do some sewing for the soldiers — but I said I would for Sunday & wrote last night to say I would go on Saturday afternoon & return on Monday morning. However, I must write tonight to say I cannot.

We had a letter from Mr Bennett the Magistrate of Ladismith advising the L. Warden not to allow any holidays now or at Xmas — at least not to allow the children to leave & asking us to keep his girls.

Mrs Bennett wrote & said she did not know his reasons but she knew that all the plagues of Delagoa Bay & India were staring us in the face — we don't think he means the bubonic plague only — which is or has been reported at Delagoa but the cut-throats, murderers & villains of the blackest dye, of all nations & colours, which have been turned out of the Transvaal gaols & let loose upon society — sent out of the Transvaal in trains — out of their territory to go where they would & do as they will. There are petitions to the governor asking that they may not be allowed to land in Natal.³⁰

So we may have the children indefinitely except such as are provided with a proper escort by parents.

Friday (Before breakfast) Another week day. All yesterday it rained hard — the first really hard tropical rain that we have had for more than 5 minutes, this season — & we had a bad storm thunder & awful lightning nearly all the afternoon. I do hope our poor men will not suffer. Of course they must because they are not all under canvas. Alfred Shaw said when he wrote that he had not seen a tent for 11 days. The brother of a girl here said he had never been under any cover since he went up — but they

don't grumble — they are splendid fellows.³¹ I saw Mr Bird³² yesterday — just down from Johannesburg — he arrived on Sunday — the last down — only knew 10 minutes before he left that he was to leave — had orders to stay before from his head office — then sudden notice to quit — not a thing could he bring, only found room for himself. He says the Transvaal is like a barren desert, you don't see a living creature for miles & miles then you see a stray man on the line. He thinks they have sent all to the front. It is a supreme effort on their part & it will go hard with us.³³

I am sending you a paper again. Will you let Loue have letter & paper too. You will see they are doing well at Mafeking & Kimberley, both invested & cut off really, but both plucky. Rhodes is at Kimberley — Baden Powell is the mainspring at Mafeking a well-plucked little man.³⁴ Vryburg you will see has barely given itself up without a blow — full of traitors they say it was.

We have no coal & can get none — fortunately wood is procurable yet, but transport is very difficult — we tried to get some the other day & failed, still with the wattle plantations we shall get it eventually.³⁵

Late afternoon Mail goes off in half an hour. We were all so sad this morning to hear of our General's death. We had hoped against hope that he might recover.³⁶ Poor fellow & to die a prisoner in the hands of those boers. You will see Joubert's telegram — cold, callous, beast.³⁷ We hear that they have ill-treated Mr Jackson³⁸ but it is only a report brought by natives, I believe. I hope it is not true. So far though we have had victories we have now nothing but rather lost ground. We were fearing the worst — but we have just been cheered by the news that troops have come, & gone up secretly — 20,000 they say.³⁹ I don't mind a rumour like that, it cheers one, but retreats, evacuations, & deaths make one wish for peace. We feel always as if it were a night-mare & yet we can't wake. The deaths are dreadful, they say the boers are not good shots & yet they pick off all our officers!

Well good-bye dear Mater & Chick. Please send this to Loue — when you read it give my love to Kate & tell her I will write her birthday letter this week — when we have a holiday.

With much love

Mary Moore

NOTES

1. Sunday was 22 October. Either she misdated the letter or dated it on the Saturday and started writing on Sunday.
2. The *Times of Natal* tended to use the term 'rebellion'. Though Moore would have sympathised with the concept and frequently described the Boers as 'traitors', she used the term 'war'.
3. The harsh reality of war dawned very quickly once hostilities had begun. Just one week before, Moore had written, 'I am glad I am here & am awfully sorry for Miss Heaton, just to have missed it; I should have been wild if this had taken place when I was having my holiday'.
4. Of the 51 British dead and 203 wounded at the Battle of Talana it is estimated that each battalion had lost half a dozen officers, and Major-General W. Penn Symons. See Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War*, Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, p. 132.
5. This rumour proved to be unfounded. Early news of this kind probably came by telegram and by word of mouth and would be clarified later. Confirmation of news, especially in the press, would also be dependent on the work of the press censor.
6. Miss Eliza Jane Usherwood was benefactress and Lady Warden of St Anne's in Pietermaritzburg when it moved in 1879 to the property in Loop Street previously occupied by Bishop's College. She

- took a cottage in Dundee and sponsored the Branch School which Mary Moore was sent to open in August 1898. The project was abandoned after one month because, in Moore's words, there was not the 'class of people there to pay for the education of their children. They have a very good Government School which is all they need'.
7. The Rev. Gerard Chilton Bailey, Vicar of St James's Church, Dundee, had been the moving force for the branch school, hoping it would serve the growing coal-mining town and provide an alternative to the Roman Catholic Convent School opened there in 1897. Bailey remained in Dundee throughout the Boer occupation, from 23 October 1899 to 6 May 1900 and kept a daily diary. See Pam McFadden, *The Battle of Talana*, Battles of the Boer War Series, Raven Press, 1999, pp. 30–38.
 8. Bishop Arthur Hamilton Baynes, author of *My Diocese During the War*, London, George Bell and Sons, 1900. He resigned at the end of 1900 and returned to England.
 9. Moore was an indefatigable worker for the war effort and she presumed that all at St Anne's should be similarly involved. This was, after all, the expected female role in a colonial war. Her frequent reference to the 'poor men' carried with it a sense of indebtedness to them and an acceptance of patriarchy.
 10. There should, presumably, be a comma between Arrowroot and Cocoa.
 11. This refers to Mr George Mackenzie whose farm, Buccleuch and that which his son, Tom Mackenzie was to occupy in 1900, Cramond, near the village of Cramond, were Mary Moore's regular holiday destinations. So far it has not been possible to identify 'Shortie' mentioned here.
 12. In a preliminary skirmish with the Boers the previous week, Lieutenant Gallwey, son of the Chief Justice of Natal, Sir Michael Gallwey, was taken prisoner when the Natal Carbineers were guarding the Orange Free State approach to Ladysmith.
 13. Son of Dean James Green (1821–1906), of St Saviour's Cathedral.
 14. Moore frequently wrote Ladysmith as Ladismith.
 15. Telegrams and latest war news were posted outside the Colonial Buildings in Church Street. Moore's aid to the pronunciation of Elandslaagte was valiant but not totally correct. She always assisted her family in this way with Dutch names.
 16. The Imperial Light Horse was a voluntary regiment of Transvaal refugees. At Elandslaagte the 11.11 under Colonel Aubrey Woolls-Sampson were able to avenge the Boer victories over them at Majuba and Doornkop. See Pakenham, pp. 134–141.
 17. General Kock commanded the Boer forces at Elandslaagte and was mortally wounded. Commandant-General Piet Joubert led the Boer forces in the first part of the Natal campaign but was replaced after 25 November 1899 by the younger Louis Botha.
 18. Written less than 24 hours after the battle at Elandslaagte Moore's account is remarkably accurate, tinged only with the rumour and uncertainty which was to be expected. Obviously her information on a Sunday morning came from telegrams. Her prejudice towards the Boers is evident. Some accounts of the battle do suggest incidents of sly behaviour towards British medical staff. See, for example, Donald Macdonald, *How We Kept the Flag Flying: The Story of the Siege of Ladysmith* (first published, London, Ward, Lock & Co., 1900). Reprint, Roodepoort, Covos Books, 1999, pp. 8–11.
 19. Moore's interest in combat details and weaponry is unusual for a woman, especially of her time. She did own a pistol and Wykeham School was the first girls' school in Pietermaritzburg to introduce shooting as a sport.
 20. A flat-topped mountain visible from Pietermaritzburg. There was a genuine fear among the colonial population of a Boer invasion and rumours were rife of their movement south and imminent arrival on their way to Durban. In fact the Boers did not advance further south than the Nottingham Road district, some 60 kms north of Pietermaritzburg.
 21. There were Otto girls at St Anne's and Moore had many friends in Greytown and the surrounding area, notably Major George Leuchars who commanded the Umvoti Mounted Rifles during the war. Hence her focus on these areas and information about them.
 22. Of the British victories at Talana and Elandslaagte Moore wrote on 19 November 1899, 'This is as someone says the funniest war — we claim all the victories & the enemy takes all the territory — if you have a map you will see they have control of more than half Natal. It makes me so angry, I long to go & fight. We are not allowed yet. We shall soon think the very generals are traitors'.
 23. A very human reaction amid the alarming war news.

24. Loyalty to the Queen and to the British cause was assumed and actively cultivated at St Anne's. Coming largely from colonial families with 'establishment' connections, the girls hardly needed the encouragement they were inevitably given by their English-born teachers.
25. It would be fair to assume that this was newspaper information amplified by Moore's subtle humour and less subtle prejudice.
26. This refers presumably to Lieutenant-General White's attempt on 24 October 1899 at Rietfontein to prevent the Free State Boers from joining with the Transvaal Boers to cut off Brigadier-General Yule's retreat from Dundee. While his brigade achieved this limited objective, the Boers in fact held their ground with minimum loss. See Pakenham, pp. 150–1. Moore's first reports often had to be amended later.
27. Moore held the traditional view that warfare had rules and was incensed when the Boers' unexpected tactics and actions appeared to ignore them. It is difficult to verify all the examples she recounts in her letters as many came from personal information which frequently reinforced her anti-Boer prejudice. It is worth noting that observers of warfare in the twentieth century have discerned a steady descent into 'slaughter' and 'barbarism' associated with disregard for the rules and 'honour' of formal warfare. See, for example, Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War And The Modern Conscience*, London, Vintage, 1998, pp. 116–8 and Eric Hobsbawm, 'Barbarism: A User's Guide' in *On History*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997, pp. 256–8.
28. The tendency of the Boers to show a white flag and then continue fighting, evident at Talana and Elandslaagte, drew comment from Moore on several occasions. Writing on 29 October 1899, for example, she suggested, scathingly, that they all carried white flags in their riding boots!
29. Mrs Leuchars, née Mary Mackenzie, and her sister, Grace Mackenzie, were daughters of George Mackenzie of Buccleuch, Cramond. It is worth noting the speed of the postal service.
30. While the hazards of a war situation are acknowledged, racism and xenophobia clearly existed in colonial Natal as in Moore herself.
31. Moore had great admiration for the soldiers, especially the colonials, many of whom were known to her through her pupils and her friends. She was less impressed with the leadership, commenting in her letter of 29 October 1899, 'As some one said the other day — the men are splendid, but they are badly officered' and later, 'We are terribly outnumbered & out-gunned & worse [*sic*] of all out-generalled'.
32. Probably Christopher John Bird (1855–1922), one time Colonial Secretary of Natal, who played an influential role in the development of the Natal civil service and was the compiler of the Bird Papers, a collection of particulars of old Natal settlers.
33. Despite her anti-Boer feeling, Moore acknowledged their military prowess and, from the start, felt Britain was underestimating it.
34. Moore admired Baden-Powell greatly and was constantly comparing him favourably with White, indicating that Mafeking had more to hope for than Ladysmith. She was generally suspicious of Rhodes's motives.
35. The supply of coal would have been affected by the cutting of the railway link with northern Natal. It is interesting that Moore's friends the Mackenzies had formed the Clan Syndicate, which included Major Leuchars and others, to introduce wattle trees to Natal. (Personal information, Mrs Bridgid Mackenzie, Cramond.)
36. Clearly she knew when she began this letter that Penn Symons was mortally wounded, but she heard of his death on 27 October.
37. Joubert expressed his sympathy to White and Lady Penn Symons but took the opportunity to condemn the war which he said was brought about by unscrupulous speculators and capitalists who went to the Transvaal to obtain wealth and further their own interests. This would have annoyed Mary Moore.
38. Magistrate of Newcastle and father of Ruby at St. Anne's. Moore spent several holidays with the Jacksons and in later letters gave extensive coverage to Jackson's experiences of the Boer occupation of Newcastle and his journey to Durban via Delagoa Bay.
39. The British War Office had been able to muster reinforcements of 10 000 troops who came in through Durban in mid-October ahead of the main army corps under General Buller which arrived in Cape Town on 31 October 1899. Mary Moore had expressed her dismay at the dilatory attitude of the British authorities towards the Boer threat as far back as her letter of 25 September 1899 and she predicted that these forces would arrive too late.