

visit my Mother's parents who were then living in Jackson Street, West Bank, East London. It was going to be a real treat for my brother, two sisters and myself as we had never seen the sea nor our Grandparents. This was towards the end of 1901 when, although there were no major engagements taking place in the Anglo Boer War there were still Commando raids taking place, and it was proving a job to round up the elusive Boer for he was here today and gone tomorrow to carry out a raid elsewhere. Yes, De Wet, Reitz, Kretsinger, Smuts and their commandos would be near De Aar, then the Commando mountains of Cradock, then back to the Western Free State, and even Barkly and Maclear. Block houses had been built along the railway to try and stop the enemy running round the country. With no encumbrances and their good mounts they could outmanoeuvre our slow moving troops. It was Kretsinger who said, "Look at De Wet, an uneducated bywoner, but when it comes to fighting they could never catch him. If he found he was in a tight corner, he told one of our men, "When I am in a tight corner I tell my men, who are in groups of ten, twenty or even thirty, and in charge of each group is a man I can trust, Ek seg sommer, Rij kerrels' and each group leader knows where and when we will meet again. And off they go out of sight of the Tommies in no time".

Well, we set off, crossing the Caledon River from Leribe into the Free State travelling by ox waggon to Ladybrand where we were to entrain for East London. All along the route we travelled we saw small detachments of soldiers guarding all the strategic areas and on the lookout for Boer patrols.

We enjoyed this mode of travel and were interested in watching the boys cutting the tops off a couple of ant heaps, of which there were any number, and then setting fire to the grass stored by the ants in these dried out mud homes of theirs. These made very fine ovens in which the Dutch women used to do their baking when trekking.

After an uneventful trip we arrived at the station where we were met by Dad's brother Harry who was to see us safely onto the train. While waiting at the station my Mother phoned my Dad to say we had arrived safely and had been met. I can well remember her saying to my Dad "I am sure someone is listening in". We eventually set off on the train journey, a journey none too comfortable, especially with four young children to look after for there were none of the present day amenities. There was no dining saloon, no bedding boys and we had to just buy what was available at the various stations; for drinking water my Mother bought distilled water or soda water.

We eventually arrived at the East London station, the same station as it is today on which one can still read "East London - Queenstown Railway 1886" and "Cape Government Railways". I don't think there is much chance at present of a new station being built until the present Railway sheds, yards etc have been moved out to Arnoldton and in fact, they are well on with the new goods sheds etc. There will probably then be a new Railway station on another site. Having collected our baggage, my Mother hailed one of the two-horse cabs and off we set for the West Bank. As we approached the river we caught sight of numbers of ships, steam and sailing, in the River where they

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