

The Lord William Bentinck, more fortunate than the rest (Mr Digney having previously acquired some knowledge of the river on a former occasion), reached a point two miles below the position it was proposed to take up; the Damooda, Nerbudda, and Mahanuddy remaining for the night at stations lower down the river.

The further advance of the vessels on the following day was tedious, and a matter of considerable difficulty, owing to the decreasing width and depth of the channel, and the serpentine bends of the river.

By the evening the Lord William Bentinck had pushed on to a position about a quarter of a mile below the south-east angle of the old ruined city of Pegu; the Nerbudda reached a point half a mile further down; the Damooda three quarters; and the Mahanuddy a mile and three quarters below the Lord William Bentinck.

After anchoring, the Major-General, accompanied by some Staff Officers and myself, proceeded up the river to reconnoitre, and make arrangements for landing on the following morning.

In the evening, and during the early part of the night, some desultory firing took place from the enemy's river stockades on the headmost steamer, which was returned by her and the boats, while picquets were thrown out from the steamers on the banks during the night to prevent the accident of a night attack.

The disembarkation of the troops commenced on the following morning, Sunday, 21st, at 4 A.M., each steamer landing her men on the left bank of the river, abreast of her own position, from whence the different columns marched along the bank to the point of concentration abreast of the headmost steamer, the Lord William Bentinck.

At the same time the artillery, two 24-pounder howitzers (which had been previously transferred from the Mahanuddy to the paddle-box boats,) were landed by the seamen, under the directions of Commander Lambert.

The ancient city of Pegu is of a quadrangular form; the ruined walls or ramparts are still clearly defined, and are surrounded on all sides by a moat, much choked with mud and rubbish, its sides being about a mile and three quarters in length; the Pagoda, which forms the key of the position, lying in the N. E. division of the space enclosed by the ruined ramparts.

The enemy, whose numbers are stated to have amounted to between three and four thousand, were strongly posted at the S. E. angle of the walls, and also along the river front of their position, which was strongly stockaded. The enemy made no opposition to our landing, owing to our movements being concealed by the fog which prevailed in the early morning.

The concentration of the troops and the arrangements for the advance, were completed by about 6.30 A.M.; at 7 the advance commenced, the columns moving along the outer edge of the southern moat towards the eastward, so as to turn the flank of the enemy's position, their progress being necessarily extremely slow, on account of the difficult nature of the ground, which was covered with high grass and jungle, and over which there was no regular road.

The enemy immediately commenced a sharp fire, which soon caused some casualties, and as the troops advanced along the edge of the moat, they moved along the ramparts parallel to them, and maintained a constant fire. At about 9.15 the European troops who were in advance reached a point opposite to a broken opening in the rampart,

where the moat seemed passable, and after a short halt to refresh the men, and form them under cover of a wood, they advanced at 9.45 A.M., in column of attack, charged gallantly across the moat, entered the line of the enemy's defence, and drove the Burmese before them,—the enemy retreating towards the Pagoda.

I had remained a little behind to assist the advance of the Artillery, about which the General had been anxious, and on my arrival at 10 A.M., had the satisfaction of seeing our troops in possession of the enemy's ramparts.

After refreshing the men, the troops advanced at 10.45 A.M. to the left along the bund, towards the line of the river defences, for the purpose of dispersing the enemy in that quarter; but on perceiving them in full retreat towards the Pagoda, owing to the efficient fire of shell and canister which from the commencement of the affair had been kept up on them by the Lord William Bentinck and the gun-boats, the General counter-marched the troops to the right again, and returned to our original position.

At 12 o'clock the columns again advanced by the direct road leading towards the Pagoda without meeting any opposition, and on arriving near it, at 0.45 P.M., the columns were formed for the assault. On approaching it, we perceived some Burmese stealthily watching our movements; our men advanced with a rush, the enemy fired a volley and fled, we entered the Pagoda, and Pegu was ours.

It could scarcely be expected that this service could be performed without some loss; and I regret to say that the military force had six men killed and thirty-one wounded, including, among the latter, three officers; most providentially none of the seamen in the boats, or on board the Lord William Bentinck (which vessel alone was near enough to take part in the attack), were either killed or wounded, although continually exposed to a warm fire.

It is with much gratification that I have to report to your Excellency the zeal, energy, and good conduct of the officers and seamen attached to the expedition.

To Commander Rowley Lambert of H. M. S. Fox, praise is due for the able manner in which the guns were promptly landed by the seamen under his directions, and subsequently for the efficient manner in which he directed the fire from the gun-boats on the enemy's position, by which they were ultimately dislodged.

Messrs Digney, Porter, Berwick, and Simson, respectively commanding the East India Company's steamers, deserve great credit for the perseverance and energy they displayed in pushing their vessels up the river, under circumstances of most difficult navigation, as well as for their general assistance.

Lieutenants Mason and Glover, and Mr Pocock, Mate, and the subordinate officers in charge of boats, acquitted themselves to my entire satisfaction.

The services of Mr J. F. Johnson, Assistant-Surgeon of H. M. S. Sphinx, were extremely valuable in attending on the wounded, many of whom were sent on board the Lord William Bentinck at the commencement of the affair.

Commander Beauchamp Seymour, R.N., accompanied the expedition as a volunteer, and was present with the Major-General Commanding throughout the operations of the day.

I have, &c.

CHARLES D. A. SHADWELL.

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