

From Major-General Sir Thomas Willshire, K.C.B.
to the Governor-General of India.

Camp near Kelat, November 14, 1839.

MY LORD,

1. In obedience to the joint instructions furnished me by his Excellency the Commander in Chief of the army of the Indus, and the Envoy and Minister to His Majesty Shah Shooja, under date Cabool the 17th September 1839, deputing to me the duty of deposing Mehrab Khan of Kelat, in consequence of the avowed hostility of that chief to the British nation during the present campaign, I have the honour to report, that on my arrival at Quetta on the 31st ultimo, I communicated with Captain Bean, the Political Agent in Shawl, and arranged with him the best means of giving effect to the orders I had received.

2. In consequence of the want of public carriage, and the limited quantity of commissariat supplies at Quetta, as well as the reported want of forage on the route to Kelat, I was obliged to dispatch to Cutch Gundava the whole of the cavalry and the greater portion of the artillery, taking with me only the troops noted in the margin, leaving Quetta on the 3d instant.*

3. During the march the communications received from Mehrab Khan were so far from acceding to the terms offered, that he threatened resistance if the troops approached his capital, I therefore proceeded, and arrived at the village of Giranee, within eight miles of Kelat, on the 12th instant.

4. Marching from thence the following morning, a body of horse were perceived on the right of the road, which commenced firing on the advanced guard commanded by Major Pennycuick, Her Majesty's 17th regiment, as the column advanced; and skirmishing between them continued until we came in sight of Kelat, rather less than a mile distant.

5. I now discovered that three heights on the north west face of the fort, and parallel to the north, were covered with infantry, with five guns in position, protected by small parapet walls.

6. Captain Peat, chief engineer, immediately reconnoitred, and having reported that nothing could be done until these heights were in our possession. I decided upon at once storming them simultaneously, and, if practicable, entering the fort with the fugitives, as the gate in the northern face was occasionally opened to keep up the communication between the fort and the heights.

7. To effect this object, I detached a company from each of the European regiments from the advanced guard with Major Pennycuick, Her Majesty's 17th regiment, for the purpose of occupying the gardens and enclosures to the north east of the town, and two more companies in the plain, midway between them and the column; at the same time I ordered three columns of attack to be formed, composed of four companies from each corps, under their respective commanding officers, Major

Carruthers, of the Queen's, Lieutenant-Colonel Croker, Her Majesty's 17th regiment, and Major Western, 31st Bengal native infantry, the whole under the command of Brigadier Baumgardt, the remainder of the regiments forming three columns of reserve under my own direction to move in support.

8. A hill being allotted to each column, Brigadier Stevenson, commanding the artillery, moved quickly forward in front towards the base of the heights, and when within the required range, opened fire upon the infantry and guns, under cover of which the columns moved steadily on, and commenced the ascent, for the purpose of carrying the heights, exposed to the fire of the enemy's guns, which had commenced while the columns of attack were forming.

9. Before the columns reached their respective summits of the hills, the enemy, overpowered by the superior and well directed fire of our artillery, had abandoned them, attempting to carry off their guns, but which they were unable to do; at this moment, it appearing to me the opportunity offered for the troops to get in with the fugitives, and, if possible, gain possession of the gate of the fortress, I despatched orders to the Queen's Royal and 17th regiments to make a rush from the heights for that purpose, following myself to the summit of the nearest, to observe the result; at this moment, the four companies on my left, which had been detached to the gardens and plain, seeing the chance that offered of entering the fort, moved rapidly forward from their respective points towards the gateway, under a heavy and well directed fire from the walls of the fort and citadel, which were thronged by the enemy.

10. The gate having been closed before the troops moving towards it could effect the desired object, and the garrison strengthened by the enemy driven from the heights, they were compelled to cover themselves as far as practicable behind some walls and ruined buildings to the right and left of it, while Brigadier Stevenson having ascended the heights with the artillery, opened two guns under the command of Lieutenant Forster, Bombay horse artillery, upon the defences above the gate and its vicinity, while the fire of two others commanded by Lieutenant Cooper, Shah's artillery, was directed against the gate itself, the remaining two with Lieutenant Creed being sent round to the road on the left leading direct up to the gate, and when within two hundred yards commenced fire for the purpose of completing the blowing it open, and after a few rounds they succeeded in knocking in one half of it; on observing this I rode down the hill towards the gate, pointing to it, thereby announcing to the troops it was open; they instantly rose from their cover, and rushed in, those under the command of Major Pennycuick being the nearest, were the first to gain the gate, headed by that officer, the whole of the storming columns from the three regiments rapidly following, and gaining an entrance as quickly as it was possible to do so, under a heavy fire from the works and from the interior, the enemy making a most gallant and determined resistance, disputing every inch of ground up to the walls of the inner citadel.

* 2 guns Bombay horse artillery.

4 guns Shah's horse artillery.

2 Russala's local horse.

Queen's Royals.

H. M. 17th regiment.

31st Bengal N. I.

Bombay engineers.