

Copy of a letter from Major Skinner, H. M. 31st Foot, to Captain Ponsonby, Assistant Adjutant General.

SIR, *Boothkuk, September 14, 1842.*

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Major-General commanding the army in Afghanistan, that I ascended the heights above the Tezeen valley, in front of our camp, with the detachment in the margin,* on the afternoon of the 12th instant, and occupied the ridge till daylight next morning. From a communication with Major-General Sir R. Sale, G. C. B. I learnt that I was to take the high peaks to the right of my position, and, having driven the enemy from them, continue to operate among the lower hills to the head of the Huft Kotul, on the right flank of the advance guard of the army. These peaks were occupied in some force by the enemy, who was however easily driven from them and cleared away to the higher hills on my right. I ascended the first peak, which, although the way was steep, was not very difficult, in two small columns; the first, the companies of Her Majesty's 9th and 26th native infantry, under Captain Borton, of the 9th foot; the second under Lieutenant Sayers, of the 31st, composed of the two companies of Her Majesty's 31st foot and 33d native infantry, covered by the sappers and jezailchies under Lieutenant Orr. I detached Lieutenant Sinclair, of the 13th light infantry, with the company of his regiment and one of the 35th native infantry, to the higher peak on the right hand, and supported him by Lieutenant Orr and the sappers, (after I had possession of the first height) who ascended by a steep ridge that connected them. Lieutenant Sinclair attained the summit of the hill without loss, driving the enemy away, and held it until the main column of advance came in sight, when he led his column on my right over the hills at the base of the higher mountains. The height I gained descends to the high road by a succession of small peaks, each connected by a narrow ridge; the enemy occupied, with small parties, each of these peaks, and was driven in succession from them. Captain Borton, at the head of a party of the 9th foot, made a gallant charge upon a strongly posted party of the enemy, and drove them away; he showed a great deal of boldness, however, and made repeated attempts to recover his ground, taking advantage of the necessarily slow advance of the supporting parties from the steep and difficult nature of the hills. After I gained all the peaks, and the enemy had fallen back, I continued parallel to the main column over the hills to some distance beyond the top of the Huft Kotul. Considering the great number that at one time opposed me, until the appearance of the main column drew them off, my loss was not great, while the enemy suffered considerably. I beg leave to bring to the notice of the Major-General the very good

* 1 company H. M. 9th foot, 1 ditto 13th light infantry, 1 ditto 31st foot, 1 ditto 26th native infantry, 1 ditto 35th native light infantry, 1 ditto 33d native infantry, 50 Broad-foot's sappers, 50 Jezailchies.

conduct of the officers and men who were under my command.

I have, &c.

THOS. SKINNER, Major,
H. M. 31st regiment.

Copy of a Letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Richmond, commanding 33rd Native Infantry, to Captain Ponsonby, Assistant-Adjutant-General.

*Camp, Boothkuk,
Sept. 14, 1842.*

SIR,

MAJOR-GENERAL Pollock, C.B., commanding the troops, having entrusted me specially with the command of the rear guard of the army from Tezeen through the Huft Kotul pass, on the 13th instant, and having placed at my disposal the troops detailed in the margin,* I have now the honour to report the operations of the day, for the Major-General's information. Having made the necessary disposition of my force to protect the baggage in the valley of Tezeen, and to secure the gorge of the pass, the different picquets were gradually withdrawn to strengthen the latter. Soon after, I observed a large body of the enemy collecting near the Fort of Tezeen, south-east of my position, and directed Lieutenant Douglas, whose guns had been previously posted on a commanding point, to open on them; but the distance proving too great for shells, the fire was discontinued. The enemy, I suppose, encouraged by this, formed his cavalry in the valley to the number of about 600 men, with the evident intention of moving towards my post. I instantly decided on anticipating him; and, as Captain Alexander's (horse artillery) three guns were still on the ground, I availed myself of his services by sending forward his guns within range of the enemy, supported by the front squadron of Her Majesty's 3rd light dragoons under Captain Unett, one squadron of 1st light cavalry under Brevet Major Scott, and the detachment of 3rd irregular cavalry under Captain Tait, with orders to charge the enemy if the ground proved favourable, and an opportunity offered. This soon occurred, the guns having made good impression; and the instant I observed the cavalry advance, the other squadron of dragoons was hurried forward under Major Lockwood, as a support, thus ensuring the success achieved by the spirited and gallant charge of their comrades in front, which completely dispersed the enemy, who left about fifty men on the field, and a standard, the latter taken by the 1st light cavalry, the bearer of which was cut down by Brevet Captain Goad.

Having accomplished all I wished, the troops returned to their original position in excellent order, covered by the very effective fire of the guns directed by Captain Alexander, and by a company of the 35th regiment light infantry, the latter ordered forward for the purpose.

* H. M.'s 3rd light dragoons, 160; 1st regiment light cavalry, 295; Det. 3rd irregular cavalry, 60; Sikh cavalry, 200; total sabres, 750. Two 9-pounders No. 6 light field battery; picquets, H. M.'s 9th and 31st foot, 143; 4 co. 26th regt. N. I., 310; right wing, 33rd N. I., 129; 35th native light infantry, 294; picquets, 60th regiment N. I., 124; Sikh infantry, 300; total bayonets, 1300.