

No. 22.

*Brigadier-General Havelock to the Deputy Adjutant-General of the Army.*

SIR, Camp, Futtehpore, July 12, 1857.

BY telegrams and reports in various shapes, the Commander-in-chief has been kept informed of the operations of Major Renaud, 1st Madras Fusiliers, on the Grand Trunk road, between the 1st and 11th instant, at the head of a force of 400 British and 420 native troops, with two pieces of cannon. He has everywhere pacificated the country, by punishing the ringleaders in mutiny and rebellion, wherever they have fallen into his hands, and earned, as I venture to think, the best thanks of his Excellency.

2. But on the 10th instant his position became critical.

Cawnpore had suddenly fallen, by an act of treachery unequalled in our annals, save by one fatal event beyond the Indus; and the rebel force, thus freed from occupation, had rapidly pushed down a force to the vicinity of this place, within five miles of which the Major would arrive on the morning of the 12th. He would thus be exposed to the attack of 3,500 rebels with 12 guns.

3. No time was to be lost; so on the 10th my column marched, under a frightful sun, fifteen miles, to Synee, and, resuming their course at 11 o'clock at night, joined Major Renaud on the road, by moonlight, and with him marched to Khaga, five miles from Futtehpore, soon after dawn, and took up a position.

4. The heat was excessive, but there were now on a point 1,400 British bayonets, and eight guns, united to a small native force. The whole is detailed in the margin.\*

5. Our information had been better than that of the enemy, for when Lieutenant-Colonel Tytler pushed a reconnaissance up to the town they evidently supposed they had only Major Renaud's gallant but small force in their front, for after firing on the Lieutenant-Colonel and his escort, they insolently pushed forward two guns and a force of Infantry and Cavalry, cannonaded our front, and threatened our flanks.

6. I wished earnestly to give our harassed soldiers rest, and so waited until this ebullition should expend itself, making no counter disposition, beyond posting 100 Enfield Riflemen (64th) in an advanced cosp. But the enemy maintained his attack with the audacity which his first supposition had inspired, and my inertness fostered. It would have injured the *morale* of my troops to permit them thus to be bearded, so I determined at once to bring on an action.

7. Futtehpore constitutes a position of no small strength. The hard dry Grand Trunk Road subdivides it, and is the only means of convenient access, for the plains on both sides are covered at this season by heavy lodgments of water, to the depth of two, three, and four feet. It is surrounded by garden inclosures of great strength, with high walls, and has within it many houses of good masonry. In front of the swamps are hillocks, villages, and mangoe groves, which the enemy already occupied in force.

\* *British.*—3rd Company, 8th Battalion, Royal Artillery, 76; 1st Madras Fusiliers, 376; Her Majesty's 64th Regiment, 435; 78th Highlanders, 284; 84th Regiment, 190; Detachment Bengal Artillery, 22; Volunteer Cavalry, 20.—Total British, 1,403.

*Native.*—Regiment of Ferozepore, 448; 13th Irregular, and 3rd Oude Irregular Cavalry, 95; Golundauze, 18.—Total Native, 561.

Grand total, 1,964.

8. I estimate his number as set forth in the margin.\*

9. I made my dispositions. The guns, now eight in number, were formed on and close to the chaussée, in the centre, under Captain Maude, Royal Artillery, protected and aided by 100 Enfield Riflemen of the 64th. The detachments of Infantry were, at the same moment, thrown into line of quarter-distance columns, at deploying distance, and thus advanced in support, covered at discretion by Enfield skirmishers. The small force of volunteers and Irregular Cavalry moved forward on the flanks, on harder ground.

10. I might say that in ten minutes the action was decided, for in that short space of time the spirit of the enemy was utterly subdued; the rifle fire, reaching them at an unexpected distance, filled them with dismay, and when Captain Maude was enabled to push his guns through flanking swamps to point-blank range, his surprisingly accurate fire demolished their little remaining confidence. In a moment three guns were abandoned to us on the chaussée, and the force advanced steadily, driving the enemy before it on every point.

11. Major Renaud won a hillock on the right in good style, and struggled on through the inundation. The 78th, in extension, kept up his communication with the centre; the 64th gave strength to the centre and left; on the left the 84th and regiment of Ferozepore pressed back the enemy's right.

12. As we moved forward the enemy's guns continued to fall into our hands, and then in succession they were driven by skirmishers and columns from the garden inclosures, from a strong barricade on the road, from the town-wall, into and through, out of and beyond, the town. They endeavoured to make a stand a mile in advance of it. My troops were in such a state of exhaustion that I almost despaired of driving them further. At the same time, the mutineers of the 2nd Light Cavalry made an effort to renew the combat by charging, with some success, our Irregular Horse, whose disposition throughout the fight was, I regret to say, worse than doubtful. But again our guns and riflemen were, with great labour, pushed to the front. Their fire soon put the enemy to final and irretrievable flight, and my force took up its present position in triumph, and parked twelve captured guns.

13. I must endeavour, in this hasty despatch, to do justice to those who led the troops to this easy victory:—

First on the list I must place Major Renaud, whose exertions at the head of the advanced column I cannot sufficiently praise. His coolness and conduct in the action are equally entitled to my highest commendation.

I hope that it will be in the power of his Excellency the Commander-in-chief to bring speedily to the notice of His Royal Highness the General commanding-in-chief the courage and skill of Captain Maude, Royal Artillery. I have seen some Artillery fights in my time, but never beheld guns better served, or practice more effective, than that of my battery under this officer.

Colonel Hamilton led his Highlanders well, and they followed him full of spirit and devotion.

I have every reason to be satisfied with the conduct in this combat of Major Stirling at the

\* *Mutineers.*—2nd, 3rd, and 7th Light Cavalry and Irregulars, 500; Native Infantry and Artillery, 1,500; Armed Insurgents, 1,500.—Total, 3,500. Iron and brass guns, 12.