

No. 17.

*Colonel Rowcroft to Colonel R. J. H. Birch, C.B.,
Military Secretary, with the Right Hon. the
Governor-General, Allahabad.*

*Camp Amorah, 9 miles from Belwa,
opposite Fyzabad, March 6th, 1858.*

SIR,

No. 168.

I HAVE the honor to acquaint you, for the information of the Right Honorable the Governor-General, that on the 4th instant, in the evening and during the night, I received reports that the enemy were preparing in great force with several guns to move on us from Belwa, Fyzabad, and Nawabgunge. The camp, baggage, &c., was at once struck and packed that night. About 7.30 the next morning, the 5th instant, the Field Force as per margin,* moved out of camp, and I took up a position and formed line a little to the west of the village of Amorah and the camp; the Naval Brigade and guns in the centre across the road, the two Goorkha Regiments on the right and left of the Naval Brigade, the Sikh Detachment on the left of the Goorkhas, and the Yeomanry Cavalry, one squadron on the right, and one on the left of my line. I rode forward a little in advance to meet a Cavalry Patrol. From the officer's report, I at first thought it was a party of the enemy sent into the villages for plunder, but I immediately heard the bugles of the enemy sounding a halt, and then the advance. I doubled the strength of the patrol, and ordered the officer to obtain further information, and to be careful not to commit his patrol by going into any village.

They soon returned, the officer reporting the enemy to be advancing in great force. Our line remained steady in position, anxiously awaiting the moment for attacking the enemy.

The bugle sounds neared on our line, and the enemy soon showed themselves in great force, their line extending right and left, over-lapping our flanks. Our guns opened from the centre, and the enemy commenced a heavy and rapid cannonade from several guns on our line. I ordered out the skirmishers and the whole line to advance. I received a report from Major Richardson, commanding left squadron, that the enemy in force were pushing round my left rear. I ordered him to detach a troop, or if necessary with the squadron, to attack and clear out the enemy, but not to leave my left for any time. This was gallantly and effectually carried out by Major Richardson and his squadron, zealously and actively aided by Captain Brooks, with a party of Goorkhas, cutting up and killing a number of the enemy. Here Captain Jenkins and Cornet Durnford had their horses shot and killed under them. Major Richardson reports that he received great assistance from Cornets Kloer and Troup, his orderly officers.

2. I saw there was no time to be lost, and that a rapid and decisive blow must be struck. Leaving orders for the guns to continue the advance and fire, and taking a party of Rifles of 20 men from the Naval Column, with Lieutenant Ingles, R.N., to re-inforce the Marine skirmishers, I rode on to the right squadron, and ordered Captain Chapman to advance rapidly with his squadron, inclining to the right, and bringing up his right shoulders to charge the enemy's sowars and infantry, hoping it would also shake their centre. At the same time I sent an orderly trooper with an order to the Gorrucknath Goorkha Regiment, on the right of the Naval Brigade, to advance at the charge, and the

Goorkhas moved gallantly forward. The result of this movement was soon apparent. I saw the left of the enemy hesitating, and some pressing towards their centre, the sowars in rapid retreat.

Down came the Yeomanry Cavalry at a charging pace, well and steadily together, on the moving masses of infantry, routing them and cutting down and killing great numbers, upwards of 90 reported. The whole left of the enemy soon gave way. I galloped up to the Yeomanry Cavalry, and thanked Captain Chapman and the squadron for their good gallant movement and charge, and ordered Captain Chapman to move towards the left to threaten the enemy's centre. The combined movement and gallant bearing of the troops, the steady advance of the Naval Brigade, soon shattered the whole line of the enemy. They abandoned their guns and were in full retreat, and our gallant troops captured 7 guns with limbers and ammunition. When ordering the right squadron to advance, I detached a party of 20 troopers to the rear of the naval guns to cover and protect them, and this party, under Acting Cornets Copland and Prinsep, by their gallant and excellent service aided in capturing some of the guns.

3. The pursuit now commenced for 7 miles to near Belwa, the enemy having to be driven out of topes and villages as we advanced.

A short distance from Belwa the enemy made a short stand with a large force, keeping up an effective fire on us from a heavy gun; and here I have to regret the loss of Acting Second Master Mr. John Fowler, R.N., of the Pearl, killed by a round shot, also Private Poirouoo Singh, of the Gorrucknath Regiment, mortally struck by a round shot shattering his chest (since dead). The effective fire of our guns, the advance of our troops, and the right squadron moving forward to be ready for a charge, soon drove the enemy out of sight into the heavy jungle and woods.

4. After advancing about a mile further and halting a short time, I prepared for returning to camp. The troops began to feel the fatigue and heat, and the Goorkha troops were much distressed with the heat and marching through much heavy ground and cultivation.

5. My best and warmest thanks are due to Captain Sotheby, R.N., Commanding the Naval Brigade of the Pearl, and to the officers and seamen, who with their guns were my main stay in the action, and most valuable to me at all times; also to Major Richardson, Commanding, and to Captain Chapman, Commanding Right Squadron, and to the officers and men of the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry, whose services have been most useful to me—always active, ready and willing for any duty ordered. Also to Captains Barclay, 68th Regiment Native Infantry, and Brooks, 1st Light Cavalry, in military charge of the two Goorkha Regiments, with Captain MacGregor, 9th Light Cavalry, attached, who were zealous and forward in their duties; and the Commandants, Colonel Byroop Singh Kooer, and Major Captain Sewuckram Thappa, always bravely urging on their men; also to those zealous active officers Lieutenant Turnour, R.N., in charge of Naval Artillery, Lieutenants Radcliffe, R.N., and Grant, R.N., in charge of Naval Column, and to Lieutenant Pym, R.N., with his gallant active Marine skirmishers, and to Lieutenant Ingles, R.N., with the useful and valuable riflemen of the Naval Column, and to Lieutenant Burlton, 40th Regiment Native Infantry, with his brave ready Sikh skirmishers, who reports Havildar Kurrum Singh, Bengal Police Battalion, for his conspicuous good conduct and gallant bearing.

6. My best thanks are also due to Captain Morgan, 22nd Regiment Native Infantry, Field

* H.M.S. frigate Pearl's Royal Marines, 32; Naval Column, 140; Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry, 200; Gorrucknath and Burruck Goorkha Regiments, 850; Bengal Sikh (Police Battalion), 39; 12-Pr. Howitzers, 4.