

pleasure in recommending Brigadier-General Walpole, Colonel Dennis, and the officers mentioned by the former, to the favourable consideration of the Viceroy and Governor-General.

I have, &c.

H. W. NORMAN, Major,
Deputy Adjutant-General of the Army.

No. 55.

Brigadier-General R. Walpole, C.B., Commanding Rohilcund Division, to the Chief of the Staff.

*Camp, Sisseah, Banks of Saarda,
January 16th, 1859.*

SIR,

IN a former despatch I acquainted you, for the information of the Right Honourable the Commander-in-Chief, that I had formed two columns under Lieutenant-Colonel Wilkinson, 42nd Highlanders, and Lieutenant-Colonel Smyth, Begnal Horse Artillery, and directed the former to proceed to Madho Tanda, for the purpose of watching the course of the Saarda in front of that place, and the latter to guard the fords on that river from Colonel's Wilkinson's left, as far as Birimdeo at the foot of the hills.

On the 28th ultimo, on hearing that a large force of rebels was collected in the neighbourhood of Khyreeghur, I proceeded to Colonel Wilkinson's Camp, where I remained a week visiting the different ghats, and afterwards joined Colonel Smyth's camp at this place.

The arrangements made by both these officers were excellent; all the principal ghats were watched; yet still (although I was in hopes we should hear of any large body of rebels crossing) the line to be watched, forty miles, was so extended for the small force at my disposal, and the jungle was in parts so dense, that I saw at once it was impossible to prevent small bodies of men at night crossing the river, which was falling daily, and fresh portions of it becoming fordable.

Colonel Dennis having informed me that he was directed to sweep through the Khyreeghur jungles, Colonel Smyth, on the 14th instant, proceeded to the small detachment (which was watching the Bunbasa ghat, thirteen miles up the river, on the extreme left of our line) with two guns, a few Highlanders on them, and an escort of cavalry, to strengthen that post, in case an attack should be made on it, when the rebels were disturbed by Colonel Dennis's column.

On the 15th instant, at dawn, firing was heard in our camp, from a ghat about (3) three miles up the river, where we had a picquet of 20 Highlanders, 20 Kumaon Levy, and 10 Irregular Cavalry, and, soon after, information was sent in that the enemy was crossing the river in strength with elephants and guns, about 600 yards below the picquet, where the forest was very dense.

I immediately despatched Lieutenant Lance, with a party of the 2nd Punjaub Cavalry, to ascertain what was going on, and proceeded with the troops specified in the margin* towards the picquet, leaving a few men in Camp (which was ordered to be struck and packed) under Lieutenant Millet, to guard it. On passing through a village, or rather a few wretched hovels on the edge of the jungle, I found that the enemy occupied the only path through which we could pass, so I formed up the troops at this village, placing the guns where they commanded the open ground up to the edge of the forest, with the few Infantry to support them, and the Cavalry drawn up on the flanks where the ground was tolerably open.

* 2 B. Horse Artillery guns, 5th Troop, 1st Brigade; 180 Sabres of the 2nd Punjaub Irregular Cavalry and Rohilcund Horse; 1 officer and 37 men 42nd Highlanders, and 1 officer and 54 men of the Kumaon Levy.

I sent off to Colonel Smyth to beg him to return with his two guns, and the few Highlanders and Sowars he had taken to Bunbasa, and also to Colonel Wilkinson's camp—20 miles distant—to desire him to forward, as quickly as possible, a troop of cavalry and two companies of Highlanders.

At about 8 o'clock A.M., Colonel Smyth arrived, he having started early, leaving the guns and detachment to follow later in the day, but, on meeting my messenger, and hearing what was going on, he directed him to proceed as fast as possible to Bunbasa, and pushed on to join me.

From the time we took up our position, a fire was opened on both sides, but without any damage to us; at about 8½ A.M., the enemy issued from the forest in force, a line of 300 or 400 Sepoys, many dressed in uniform, leading in skirmishing order, supported by two guns, large numbers of foot and some horsemen. Colonel Smyth riding forward took a position to enfilade them with the guns; and the Highlanders and Kumaon Levy, in extended order, received them with a heavy fire at the same time; the artillery, reserving their fire until within grape range, drove back the whole mass with great loss into the forest, along the edge of which their skirmishers remained, keeping up a fire, and occasionally advancing to attack us whenever our fire ceased.

At about twelve o'clock, the two guns, with the eleven Highlanders on them, and the cavalry, returned from Bunbasa, and a squadron arrived from the south; and, thinking it of the greatest consequence to prevent the enemy escaping through the forest, and feeling confident I could hold my position in their front, I despatched two guns and a squadron of cavalry to the open plain in front of the village of Nugra, to watch the whole of the jungle in that direction, and determined to act on the defensive until the two companies of Highlanders, which I had sent for, arrived, unless my picquet, which was separated from us, should be seriously attacked, when I determined to advance into the jungles to rescue them.

At about three o'clock P.M., a heavy fire of musketry was heard in the direction of the picquet. I therefore decided to attack and unite with it. I directed Colonel Smyth to gain possession of the road which led to them. He galloped forward with the guns with great gallantry. The infantry, only about ninety in all, advanced in skirmishing order, and the cavalry formed, as well as the rough jungle would permit, to support the whole. The enemy fought with great determination; but the Highlanders advanced with such intrepidity and steadiness, and the guns were so well served, and taken so nobly to the front, that the enemy, though fighting in the most obstinate manner, after a severe struggle, gave way. We continued to advance, pressing their right so effectually that, in an hour, I was enabled to open communication with the picquet. But we had suffered severely. Captain Lawson was badly wounded, nobly fighting in the front with his men; the Colour-Serjeant of the same company was killed. Lieutenant Kemp, commanding the detachment of Kumaon Levy, was mortally wounded, while gallantly leading on his men; and our casualties, for so small a force, were considerable, but our object was gained; the infantry of the picquet under Lieutenant Coleridge were at once sent to the front, and reinforced our thin line of skirmishers; and the whole, advancing with cheers, continued to drive the enemy before them until the sun was down; when we arrived at a deep swamp which was impassable for guns, the enemy were hurriedly and in confusion re-crossing the river, and but a feeble fire was kept up. At