

fortifications. The River Beena runs under its west face.

The reconnoissance confirmed in all essentials the information on which I had formed my plan of attack. I carried it out, by investing, the same evening, the rock of Rathgur as closely as the great extent, hills, thick jungle, and a difficult river would allow me. But it is impossible, unless with a very much larger force than my own, to invest completely such ground, because a great part of it is dense jungle, which, hiding all view of the enemy's motions, enables him, by a feint, to concentrate videttes and pickets on one point, and then pass through the vacuum.

Sir Robert Hamilton had the goodness to place at my disposal 600 or 700 troops of all arms of the Regiment of Bhopal; and I had requested their commander to invest the south-west of the fort, as being nearest to their country, and to take the village of Puttan, which they did with alacrity, after firing a few shots.

The next day, as soon as the officers commanding the Artillery and Engineers had reported that they were ready for the siege, I attacked the fort from the left, at the south-west end of the rock, under cover of a feint from the right, against the town, from which all possible advantage was to be derived.

Both succeeded.

Leaving a troop of the 3rd Light Cavalry at the foot of the slope to cover our rear, accompanied by Captain Forbes, commanding the 3rd Light Cavalry, who is always as zealous as he is useful, I mounted, with the troops in the margin,* under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Liddell, the slope, two Companies of the 3rd Europeans skirmishing and covering the breadth of the rock, two Companies supporting, and the rest in reserve. We made our way through thick jungle, and reached, without being discovered, the edge of the open ground in front of the east curtain of the fort, which Major Boileau had selected for the breaching batteries.

I directed a road to be cut immediately by the Sappers and Miners from the foot of the slope to this battery; our left to open a communication down the south of the rock with the troop of the 3rd Cavalry, investing the south of the rock; our right to open a communication down the north side of the rock with the camp; and rifle-pits to be made at night in front of our attack, enfilading as much as possible the enemy's line of defences.

The enemy, having perceived our position, commenced rather a sharp fire on it from their jinjals and small guns in the curtain and bastions, which I kept down with the fire of the 6-pounder of the Hyderabad Contingent and the 5½-mortars, the former firing at the loop-holes and embrasures, the latter, with half-charges, dropping their shells on the banquette. I beg to mention, for his devotion on this occasion, Quarter-Master Thompson, commanding a half-battery of the artillery of the Hyderabad Contingent, who has completed thirty-two years of meritorious service. Twice hit, he continued to fight his guns successfully to the close of the day. I thanked his battery on the ground.

The two 18-pounders, with elephant draught, were brought up the hill at 4 P. M., the 3rd Europeans dragging them up the steep where the elephants could not go.

* Lieutenant-Colonel Liddell Commanding: 3rd Bombay European Regiment; detachment of Siege Train under Lieutenant Mallock, two 18-pounders, 16 men Bombay Artillery; two 5½ inch mortars, 10 men Bombay Artillery, 96 Madras Sappers and Miners, two 6-pounder guns Artillery; Hyderabad Contingent; one Troop 3rd Light Cavalry, under Captain Forbes.

The feint against the town drove the enemy out of it into the fort, and enabled Brigadier Steuart, with the force in the margin,* to take possession of the "Eedgha," a Mussulman place of prayer, opposite the north face, commanding the town, and within range of the main gate of the fort. On this height, and another to the left, he skilfully placed Captain Lightfoot's 9-pounder battery—one 8-inch howitzer and two 8-inch mortars. These batteries, forming the right, or town attack, kept up night and day an effective fire on the line of defences and buildings of the fort.

On the 27th instant, I changed the 8-inch howitzer from the right to the left attack, in order to enfilade with its fire the defences and palaces of the north face.

I was constantly between the two attacks, which were two and a half miles apart.

From the town attack I directed a detachment of the 3rd Europeans, supported by another of the 24th Native Infantry, with two companies of the 24th Native Infantry in reserve, and under cover of houses and trees and of a heavy fire from the Eedgha Battery, to take a low massive tower close to the main gate, Captain Lightfoot being of opinion that a howitzer might be placed in it which would batter the gate and strengthen and shorten the cordon of investment. I had a couple of 8-inch shells thrown into the tower, to drive out the enemy should they be there, when the storming party, gallantly led by Captain Lightfoot (who volunteered to accompany it, for which I beg to recommend him to His Excellency) entered the tower, under a heavy fire from the walls, by the postern opposite the walls, from which it was only fifty yards distant. Captain Lightfoot recommends Private Davies, of the 3rd Europeans, for his gallantry and intelligence on this occasion.

Captain Lightfoot and Lieutenant Bonus, of the Engineers, having, after a thorough examination of the tower, reported that the massive construction and nature of its defences prevented their being used for the offensive, I withdrew the troops from it before daylight.

On the 28th instant, at 8 o'clock, the sand-bag batteries of the left attack having been completed, the two 18-pounders and the 8-inch howitzer, having been brought up to them, commenced their fire against the outer wall of the east curtain of the fort with such good effect that it was evident that a practicable breach would be soon made.

I had just returned to the camp from the battery when the rebels, coming in force out of the thick jungle, crossed the River Beena, and attacked the videttes of the right rear of the camp. Another large body of them appeared at the same time on the opposite bank, the two bodies amounting to 1,500 or 2,000 men, many of them sepoy and valaites.

I moved rapidly, with the outlying picket of Her Majesty's 14th Dragoons, who, in less than a minute, were in their saddles, against the rebels, ordering two guns and the rest of the pickets to follow in support. The enemy, who were skirmishing with a picket of the 3rd Light Cavalry, on seeing our approach, fired a discharge of muskets and rockets at us, and ran into a gorge of the Beena, and up its rocky banks. I directed Captain Hare, following in my rear, to move by a short line, and cut off their retreat.

* Four 6-pounder guns, Bombay Horse Artillery; six 9-pounder guns, Bombay Light Field Battery, under Captain Lightfoot; fifty Bombay Sappers and Miners; detachment of Siege Train; two 8-inch mortars and one 8-inch howitzer, twenty-six men Bombay Artillery; all the artillery under Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull; two troops of H.M.'s 14th Light Dragoons, under Major Scudamore, 24th Regiment Native Infantry.