

*From Brigadier-General Sir N. Chamberlain, K.C.B., Commanding Eusufzye Field Force, to the Adjutant-General, Army Head Quarters,—(No. 6, dated Camp, Crest of the Umbeyla Pass, the 7th November, 1863).*

I HAVE the honour to continue my report of the proceedings of this force since the date of my last letter No. 5, dated 31st ultimo.

2. From the moment that the Bonairs placed themselves in declared hostility to us, it was evident that our line of communication by the Umbeyla defile could no longer be depended upon; and it became indispensable to seek some new line which should remove us further from the Gurroo Mountain, and enable us to communicate with our own territory, beyond the reach of the Bonair tribe. To this end Colonel Taylor, Chief Engineer with the force, has caused the approach to our camp from the heights above our right flank to be examined by the officers of his department, and has selected a line of road by the villages of Khanpore and Sherdurra which answers the required conditions, and will, with some labour, be made sufficiently practicable for our purpose. When the new road is ready, our base will be at Per mouli, the nearest village in the plains where water is obtainable, instead of at Roostum.

3. Besides the new road to the rear, working parties have been employed for some days in making a road in the direction of Umbeyla along the western slopes of the right ridge. The road will supersede that by the gorge, which is extremely bad, and commanded on both sides, and will enable the troops, whenever the time comes, to march forward without coming under fire from the Gurroo Mountain.

4. From the date of my last report, until yesterday, the enemy attempted nothing more serious than firing as usual at our exposed breastworks and piquets, and advancing from time to time with standards, as if to attack the camp; these demonstrations were met with alacrity by our marksmen and the field guns in position, with some loss to the enemy, and little or none to ourselves. In the meanwhile the inactivity of the enemy has enabled me to employ the troops in improving the breastworks and defences generally, as well as the interior communications of the camp. Yesterday afternoon the enemy came out in considerable numbers and attacked the troops engaged in covering the working party which was making the new road to the front. I am sorry to say that in this attack we incurred some loss. I had gone down with the covering party in the morning, and finding that the officers with the covering party were all young and inexperienced, I placed it under command of my orderly officer, Major G. W. Harding, of the Bombay Staff Corps, whose conduct on previous occasions had led me to place entire confidence in his coolness and determination, although up to the commencement of these operations he had had no experience in actual warfare. Major Harding having been unfortunately killed whilst in the execution of this duty, it has not been possible to ascertain with exactness the reasons which led him to delay the withdrawal of the covering party from the time when he received the order to that effect (certainly not later than two P.M.) until nearly dark. But there appears no doubt that he found it difficult to bring away some of his party who had been wounded: he consequently remained too long, and permitted himself to be surrounded. This was a serious error. When, however, Major Harding found himself

overmatched and in difficulty, he behaved like a gallant soldier, and probably saved his detachment by his coolness and determination. Ensign Murray, of the 71st Highland Light Infantry, fell early in the action at the head of his men. The other officer killed, Lieutenant Dugal, 79th Highlanders, left the advanced breast-work without leave, accompanied by a single Sepoy, and is supposed to have been killed in attempting to join the covering party. My duty requires me to make this statement, though I cannot help appreciating the spirit which induced this officer to seek the post of danger. Lieutenants W. Batty, of the Guides, and J. S. Oliphant, 5th Goorkha Regiment, were wounded on this occasion.

5. The enclosed reports from Lieutenant-Colonel Wilde, C.B., commanding the right defences, and Major Brownlow, commanding the advanced piquet, will afford His Excellency further information on the subject of this affair, and show the steps taken under my orders to reinforce and assist Major Harding. I regret to say that night having come on before the covering party got back to camp, it was impossible to recover the bodies of the killed until this morning, when troops were sent out for the purpose under Lieutenant-Colonel Wilde, C.B.

6. I enclose a Casualty Return.

7. A copy of this report has been sent to Colonel Norman, C.B., for the information of Government.

*From Lieutenant-Colonel A. Wilde, C.B., Commanding Right Defence, to Major T. Wright, Assistant Adjutant-General, Peshawur Division,—(No. 111, dated Camp, Umbeyla Pass, the 8th November, 1863).*

IN obedience to your memorandum of to-day's date, I have the honour to forward the report of Major Brownlow, commanding the advance piquets of the right defence, connected with the attack made by the enemy on the piquets, under the command of the late Major Harding, on the 6th instant.

2. About two o'clock P.M. on the day in question, Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor, C.B., of the Royal Engineers, and myself, directed the return of the working and covering parties on the new road towards camp. This order was issued on account of the distance these parties necessarily were from camp, and not with the knowledge that any attack was contemplated by the enemy. This order appears to have reached the late Major Harding, and it is impossible to say what his reasons were for not acting up to it.

3. About half-past three o'clock P.M. I received reports that Major Harding was being attacked in force by the enemy, and proceeded immediately to the advance piquets, sending to head-quarters for reinforcements, and in less than an hour the Peshawur Mountain Train and 350 Riflemen of the 4th and 5th Goorkha Regiments reached me at Major Keyes' piquet.

4. Before my arrival Major Brownlow had sent out every available man to reinforce the supports to Major Harding's piquets, and Lieutenant Jenkins in command of two companies of the Corps of Guides had proceeded to occupy the head of the spur below which Major Harding's piquet was