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A DESPATCH, of which the following is a copy, has been received by the Secretary of State for War:—

*Head Quarters, Camp at Kinta,
(on Kinta River), December 18, 1875.*

SIR,
I HAVE the honour to acquaint you that by the exertions of the Civil Commissioner in procuring native water transport, &c., of Captain Buller, R.N., Commanding Her Majesty's ship "Modeste," Senior Naval Officer, in causing the adaption of boats to the service, and a sufficient amount of stores having been provided by the Control Department, the Force (Naval and Military), as per margin*, was enabled to advance from the above place up the river towards Blanja, on the 8th instant.

The labour in poling the heavily laden boats against the strong current was so severe, and the delay caused by the grounding of some of the larger boats, and the intricacy of the channel so frequent, that it was scarcely possible or advisable to attempt more than seven or eight miles advance each day. The troops encamped on successive nights on an island above Passir Sala, at Passir Garnam, at Pulo Telor (a short distance above Lumbha), and at two miles beyond Bhota, arriving at Blanja on the 13th instant, without having experienced any opposition on the river; the villages, however, were mostly deserted and the boats removed.

Receiving intelligence at Blanja that the Malay Chiefs, Lela and Ismael (supposed to be implicated in the murder of the Resident) had passed through Blanja and taken the road to Kinta, and that it was their intention to obstruct the passage of this road, I decided, with the concurrence of the Senior Naval Officer, and the Civil Commissioner, to commence an advance without delay from the Perak River, through the jungle to the Kinta River, and get possession of the Kinta capital. I accordingly proceeded with the force as before (leaving 50 men, 1st Battalion, 10th Regiment, under an officer to occupy Blanja). The extreme badness of the narrow path, through the intensely thick jungle, constantly interrupted by trees of very large size fallen across it, the swampy ground and deep mud over which it was necessary to pass, and occasionally to construct a rough cord-ray way for the guns, rendered progress very slow.

At a turn in the path, about two or three miles from Blanja, the first opposition was encountered; a rapid fire was opened upon the advanced guard, which was under command of Lieutenant Paton, 1st Battalion, 10th Regiment, from behind a stockade, concealed by the thickness of the jungle, at about 30 yards' distance. Our men placed themselves under cover and returned the fire with promptitude. One of the guns, Royal Artillery, and the naval rocket tube, were brought forward, and the enemy retreated hastily. No casualty on our side occurred with the exception of a severe wound through the thigh received by Dr. Randall, the Colonial Medical Officer, who accompanied the expedition. It was impossible to ascertain the numbers of the opposing Malays, or the amount of loss inflicted on them.

After a further advance of about two miles fire was again opened from another stockade on rising ground on our front, which was taken possession of in the same manner as the former. This was a well-chosen position, and I feel confident from the character of the work here commenced, and the extensive preparations that had been made for its completion, that it was intended to make an obstinate stand at this point, and that had this and others at favourable points been completed their capture would have been attended with some difficulty and probable loss. The jungle on both sides is for the most part impenetrable for troops, and the use of flanking parties impossible, and it is most difficult to obtain a view of the enemy interrupting the march.

The force halted at the close of the day (at dusk) on a comparatively open piece of ground on the side of a ravine, at the bottom of which there was a stream of water. Here also stockading had commenced. The labour of the men, particularly of the Royal Artillery and rocket men, had been so severe that Captain Buller and myself concurred in the expediency of resting here on the following day, a sufficient defence being thrown up to protect the force from surprise. On the following morning (the 15th) the troops and Naval Brigade again advanced, and reached the Papan Mines without impediment, except from the badness of the road, about six miles from Kinta, encamping there, and remaining the following day to allow time for the arrival of further supplies from the rear, which had been much delayed.

From this place a reconnoitring party of about 40 men, under a friendly Rajah (Mahmoud) was sent, accompanied by Mr. Swettenham, one of the Civil Commissioners, whose local knowledge and

* Naval Brigade—70 men, 2 guns, and 2 rockets.
Royal Artillery—40 men and 2 guns; 1 Battalion
10th Regiment—100 men; 86th Regiment—100 men.