

Brigade, two rockets and two guns) left Banda Bahru, but, owing to the strength of the current (four knots an hour), the difficulties and delays that will occur with a flotilla of 45 boats crowded with troops, and poled by Chinese under an intensely hot sun, made the progress up the river slow, and we were unable to do more than seven or eight miles in the course of the day. On the 8th we encamped for the night on a dry, sandy island half a mile above Passir Sala: on the 9th at Passir Gorem; on the 10th at Pulo Telor; on the 11th about half a mile above Blota; on the 12th two miles below Blanga.

On the morning of the 13th the troops marched into Blanga, and the gun and rocket boats took up their position opposite the campong (village).

We found that ex-Sultan Ismail and his men had recently left, evidently in a great hurry, as numbers of boxes packed for travelling lay about.

From information gained we knew that the ex-Sultan could not be far off, on his road towards Kinta, the capital of Perak, the Major-General, the Commissioner, and I agreed that by pushing on the forces in pursuit that day we should prevent the enemy building strong stockades and otherwise intercepting our advance, and this view was afterwards confirmed by finding incomplete stockades on the track.

Leaving 50 men of the 10th Regiment to garrison Blanga, and 22 officers and seamen in charge of the boats, we advanced through the jungle, following the track of the ex-Sultan. When about two miles from Blanga we met some opposition, the rear guard of the ex-Sultan having felled trees and interlaced them with bushes at a turning in the jungle path.

The advanced guard of the 10th Regiment, under Lieutenant Paton, came suddenly on this obstacle, and a volley was fired down the road as well as from both flanks by the enemy. The rockets of the Naval Brigade and a gun of the Royal Artillery were immediately got into position, and after firing a couple of rounds from each, the advanced guard making use of their rifles, the Malays retired.

I regret to say that Dr. Randell, Principal Civil Medical Officer, Straits Settlements, was shot through the thigh. No other casualty, however, occurred, and the force proceeded, feeling their way cautiously, the enemy retiring, firing occasional shots without result.

About 4 P.M. we arrived at a strong stockade, at which the enemy made a short stand, but a round from a rocket drove them out.

This last stockade was evidently intended to have been a formidable place of defence had time been given them to have completed their work. It was evident the ex-Sultan Ismail and suite were only a short distance ahead of us, making their retreat to Kinta on elephants.

Every endeavour was made to overtake him, but in consequence of the men of the Naval Brigade having to carry the 24-pounder rockets and tubes, and the great difficulty of moving the guns along the jungle path, full of obstacles such as fallen trees, swampy ground, deep mud, &c., our progress was so much impeded that we were unable to come up with him.

At 7.30 P.M. we arrived at a spot where water could be obtained, and it being quite dark we encamped for the night about seven miles from Blanga. The next day was employed in getting up supplies, and on the 15th we marched to Papau, a distance of six or seven miles farther on. The progress through the jungle, owing to the difficulties already mentioned, not exceeding a mile per hour.

On the evening of the 16th Mr. Swettenham, one of Her Majesty's Deputy-Commissioners for Perak, proceeded to the front to reconnoitre, accompanied by the friendly Rajah Mahmud and his followers, and on the morning following the force advanced to within half a mile of Kinta, from where, after firing guns and rockets in the direction of the town, the forces proceeded on the march.

On entering Kinta some light guns were fired by the Malays, but they were soon silenced by the guns and rockets, and the enemy fled hastily up the river. The forces then marched in and took possession, and are now encamped here waiting instructions.

Nine (9) brass guns were captured in the campong.

Information was received last evening that ex-Sultan Ismail, the Maharajah Lela, and their followers, were retreating with all haste to Patani, a dependency of Siam.

I wish to express my thanks to the Major-General Commanding for his courtesy in keeping me always acquainted with his intended movements, and the greatest cordiality exists between the sister services.

Great credit is due to Major Dunlop, R.A., Her Majesty's Commissioner, for the efficient manner in which he organized the coolie transport, and for the tact he displayed in the management of the Chinese, overcoming the great difficulties in transporting sufficient supplies for 250 men over 22 miles of jungle path. This, combined with his duties as Commissioner, entailed severe work upon him.

Mr. Swettenham, Deputy Commissioner, rendered good service to the Expedition. From his acquaintance with the Perak River and perfect knowledge of the Malay language he was enabled to give much information, which materially assisted the flotilla in the ascent of the Perak River to Blanga, and also to gain much useful information on the march to Kinta, personally going to the front to reconnoitre.

I beg to bring to your favourable consideration the conduct of Commander Singleton, of Her Majesty's ship "Ringdove," who acted as my second in command. His services were of great value to me, and he carried out my orders with promptitude, displaying great energy and sound judgment.

The conduct of the Naval Brigade was most satisfactory, and I have no hesitation in saying that no body of officers and men could have worked better. The almost insurmountable difficulties that constantly occurred were cheerfully and energetically encountered.

I have as yet received no official report of the proceedings of the Naval Brigade on the Laroot River; but I understand they are on their way down the Perak River to Blanga.

Since the Expedition has started the Almighty has granted us most favourable weather, and I am thankful to say the health of the Naval Brigade is most satisfactory.

I enclose a report of the numbers of officers and men composing the Brigade.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) ALEX. BULLER,
Captain and Senior Officer,
Straits Division.

The Secretary, Admiralty.

*Head Quarters, Kinta,
December 29, 1875.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to enclose, for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Ad-