

the Despatch was an order to join the camp at Isandlana as soon as possible, as a large Zulu force was near it.

I have no particulars to mention besides.

7th Evidence.—Captain Nourse, Natal Native Contingent, states: I was commanding the escort to the Rocket Battery, when Colonel Durnford advanced in front of the camp on the 22nd to meet the enemy. Colonel Durnford had gone on with two troops, Mounted Natives. They went too fast, and left us some two miles in the rear. On hearing heavy firing on our left, and learning that the enemy were in that direction, we changed our direction to the left. Before nearly reaching the crest of the hills on the left of the camp, we were attacked on all sides. One rocket was sent off, and the enemy was on us; the first volley dispersed the mules and the natives, and we retired on to the camp as well as we could. Before we reached the camp it was destroyed.

8th Evidence.—Lieutenant Curling, R.A., states: I was left in camp with two guns, when the remaining four guns of the battery went out with the main body of the column, on 22nd January, 1879. Major Stuart Smith joined and took command of the guns about twelve noon.

I hand in a written statement (marked B). I have nothing to add to that statement.

(Signed) F. C. HASSARD,
Colonel, Royal Engineers, President.
F. T. A. LAW,
Lieutenant-Colonel, R.A.
A. HARNESSE,
Major R.A. and Lieutenant-Colonel.

A.

Captain Essex's Evidence.

Rorke's Drift,
January 24, 1879.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to forward for the information of the Lieutenant-General Commanding, an account of an action which took place near the Isandlana Hills on the 22nd instant.

After the departure of the main body of the column, nothing unusual occurred in camp until about eight A.M., when a report arrived from a picquet stationed at a point about 1,500 yards distant, on a hill to the north of the camp, that a body of the enemy's troops could be seen approaching from the north-east. Lieutenant-Colonel Pullaine, 1st Battalion 24th Regiment, commanding in camp, thereupon caused the whole of the troops available to assemble near the eastern side of the camp, facing towards the reported direction of the enemy's approach. He also dispatched a mounted man with a report to the column, presumed to be about twelve or fifteen miles distant. Shortly after nine A.M., a small body of the enemy showed itself just over the crest of the hills, in the direction they were expected, but retired a few minutes afterwards, and disappeared. Soon afterwards, information arrived from the picquet before alluded to, that the enemy was in three columns, two of which were retiring, but were still in view; the third column had disappeared in a north-westerly direction.

At about ten A.M. a party of about 250 mounted natives, followed by a rocket battery, arrived with Lieutenant-Colonel Durnford, R.E., who now assumed command of the camp.

The main body of this mounted force, divided into two portions, and the rocket battery were, about 10.30 A.M., sent out to ascertain the enemy's movements, and a company of 1st Battalion 24th Regiment, under command of Lieutenant Cavaye, was directed to take up a position as a picquet on the hill to the north of the camp at about 1 200

yards distant, the remainder of the troops were ordered to march to their private parades when the men were to be down in readiness, at this time, about eleven A.M., the impression in camp was that the enemy had no intention of advancing during the daytime, but might possibly be expected to attack during the night. No idea had been formed regarding the probable strength of the enemy's force.

At about twelve o'clock, hearing firing on the hill where the company 1st Battalion 24th Regiment was stationed, I proceeded in that direction. On my way I passed a company of the 1st Battalion 24th Regiment, under command of Captain Mostyn, who requested me, being mounted, to direct Lieutenant Cavaye to take special care not to endanger the right of his company, and to inform that officer that he himself was moving up to the left. I also noticed a body of Lieutenant-Colonel Durnford's mounted natives retiring down the hill, but did not see the enemy. On arriving at the far side of the crest of the hill, I found the company in charge of Lieutenant Cavaye, a section being detached about 500 yards to the left, in charge of Lieutenant Dyson. The whole were in extended order engaging the enemy, who was moving in similar formation towards our left, keeping at about 800 yards from our line.

Captain Mostyn moved his company into the space between the portions of that already on the hill, and his men then extended and entered into action. This line was then prolonged on our right along the crest of the hill by a body of native infantry. I observed that the enemy made little progress as regards his advance, but appeared to be moving at a rapid pace towards our left. The right extremity of the enemy's line was very thin, but increased in depth towards and beyond our right as far as I could see, a hill interfering with an extended view. About five minutes after the arrival of Captain Mostyn's Company I was informed by Lieutenant Melville, Adjutant 1st Battalion 24th Regiment, that a fresh body of the enemy was appearing in force in our rear, and he requested me to direct the left of the line formed, as above described, to fall slowly back, keeping up the fire. This I did; then proceeded towards the centre of the line. I found, however, that it had already retired. I therefore followed in the same direction, but being mounted had great difficulty in descending the hill, the ground being very rocky and precipitous. On arriving at the foot of the slope I found the two companies of 1st Battalion 24th Regiment drawn up at about 400 yards distant in extended order, and Captain Younghusband's company in a similar formation in echelon on the left. The enemy was descending the hill, having rushed forward as soon as our men disappeared below the crest, and beyond (?) the right of the line with which I was present had even arrived near the foot of the hill. The enemy's fire had hitherto been very wild and ineffective, now, however, a few casualties began to occur in our line. The companies 1st Battalion 24th Regiment first engaged were now becoming short of ammunition, and at the request of the officer in charge I went to procure a fresh supply with the assistance of Quartermaster 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment and some men of the Royal Artillery. I had some boxes placed on a mule cart and sent it off to the companies engaged, and sent more by hand, employing any men without arms. I then went back to the line, telling the men that plenty of ammunition was coming. I found that the companies 1st Battalion 24th Regiment before alluded to had retired to within 300 yards of