

No. 6.

Major-General Sir Hugh Rose, K.C.B., Commanding Central India Field Force, to Colonel Green, C.B., Adjutant-General of the Army.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to state to you, for the information of his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, that after the capture of Rathgur the rebels, who had retired from Chunderapore to Barodia, as mentioned in my report of the 7th February 1858, concentrated in the latter place, having been reinforced by such of the garrison of Rathgur as had escaped, and by rebels from Kooreye and other places in Bundelcund.

2. Barodia, on the left bank of the river Beena, is a strong village with a "gurrie," or small fort, with dense jungle on each side, about 12 miles from Rathgur, on the road to Kooreye, a strong fort 29 miles to the north of Saugor.

3. The object of the rebels in concentrating at Barodia was to prevent or endanger my advance to Saugor, by retaking Rathgur, or by placing themselves in my rear on the road from Bhopal to Saugor, to cut off, as they had already attempted to do, the supplies coming to me from the friendly States of Scindia and Bhopal. It was consequently necessary to attack the enemy, and drive them out of Barodia.

4. Taking with me the force stated in the margin,* I marched at mid-day, on the 31st ultimo, from Rathgur, leaving Brigadier Steuart with the remainder of my force, to protect Rathgur and the camp.

5. I moved in the order of march which I always adopt when near the rebels, as a precaution against their system of surprises; that is, a line of flankers of Her Majesty's 14th Light Dragoons on each side of the road, 50 yards in front of the leading file of the advanced guard, which, with a file of irregulars, has charge of the guides; another line of irregular cavalry, 150 yards in echelon in front of the outward flanks of the 14th; and, should thick jungle border the road, a company of infantry, in extended order, on each side of it, to support the flankers of the 14th and the advanced guard. By this means all dangerous ground is searched; surprises are almost impossible; and spies, lying concealed at a great distance from the road, are frequently seized.

6. As we approached Barodia and the river Beena, we had very thick jungle, long grass, and nullahs on our left. The flankers of the irregulars, suddenly halting, reported that they perceived the enemy in force in ambuscade on our left. Being with the advanced guard, which was under Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull, I ordered the two guns of his troop to open their fire to the left, on the enemy; before they could do so, the enemy opened a musketry fire on us, killing Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull's horse, and keeping it up with tenacity although I reinforced the division of horse artillery with four of Captain Lightfoot's 9-pounders, firing grape and round shot; it was too close for shrapnell.

* Four guns Horse Artillery; four guns Captain Lightfoot's Battery; two 5½ inch mortars, with 15 men of Captain Woolcomb's Battery, under the command of Lieutenant Strutt; three troops 14th Light Dragoons; two troops 3d Bombay Light Cavalry; 25 men Madras Sappers and Miners; 3d European Regiment; Detachment Hyderabad Contingent Field Force, under Captain Hare.

7. Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull, with the Horse Artillery, took ground to the right, with the view to enfilade the enemy, but he could not get a slant at them. However, this movement enabled him to obtain good views of a body of rebel horsemen, with a red standard, endeavouring to gain a wood to our right, and outflank us. I had directed a charge of cavalry against them, but it could not be executed, in consequence of the Staff Officer being unable to find a passage down the high banks of the Beena; two rounds of spherical case burst amongst this batch; they disappeared.

8. I had placed the 3d Europeans in skirmishing order, in front of the flanks of the guns; their united fire diminished, but did not silence the fire of the rebels.

9. I therefore charged the rebels out of their advanced position, with the skirmishers of the 3d Europeans, who, under Lieutenant-Colonel Liddell, gallantly drove them out of their own treacherous element,—thick jungle and twisting nullahs,—and took possession of the bank of the river, commanding the ford to Barodia, which now first became visible; the rebels had displayed so much obstinacy in defending this position, in order to prevent our advance across the Beena to Barodia.

10. Lieutenant-Colonel Liddell, Captain Neville, Royal Engineers, Captain Campbell, 3d Europeans, Captain Rose, my Aide-de-Camp, and Lieutenant Macdonald,* Assistant Quartermaster-General, were conspicuous in this advance.

11. I turned the advantage gained by the 3d Europeans immediately to account, and sent the Hyderabad Irregular Cavalry, supported by the 3d Bombay Light Cavalry, under Captain Forbes, to cross the ford covered by the skirmishers, to pass through the jungle to the front, and fall on the enemy in the open, which I had learnt was between the jungle and Barodia. I followed with four guns of the Horse Artillery, and a troop of Her Majesty's 14th Light Dragoons in support, under Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull, ordering the rest of my force to follow, with the exception of Captain Hare's infantry and guns, which remained at the fort to prevent the rear being cut off.

12. Captain Forbes found the enemy's flanks, particularly their left, posted in thick jungle, their centre in comparatively open ground; he charged and broke their centre, cutting up thirty or forty of them. The third, and a very strong position, the village of Barodia, now came within sight. Captain Forbes having observed a body of cavalry retreating leisurely on it, attempted to cut them off, but their flight, on seeing his intention, became so rapid that he only succeeded in killing eight or ten of them before they got well under the protection of their guns, in position at their village, and of the matchlock men posted in the dense jungle which surrounded three sides of it, and lining the banks of a wet nullah running along the front.

13. Captain Forbes mentioned, for their conduct on this occasion, and I beg to recommend to his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, Subadar Soojut Khan, for having killed, himself, three of the rebels, all of his own caste; Naick Hunut Sing, very severely wounded; Naick Babadheen Khan and Trooper Vass, also severely wounded; who attracted the notice of their officers by en-

* Lieutenant Macdonald was slightly wounded, and his horse twice wounded.