

2. We had scarcely taken up a position pointed out to me by Colonel Gold, when intelligence arrived that Colonel Murray was hard pressed by the natives, and short of ammunition, and Colonel Gold requested me to advance to his support. I therefore proceeded to the Omata Blockhouse, about four miles on the great South Road, from whence I was enabled to obtain a good view of the country, and of a pah constructed on the crown of a hill, about a mile beyond, which displayed flags, and from which a continual fire of musketry was kept up upon Colonel Murray's force on my right; here I found Lieutenant Blake, first Lieutenant of the Niger, just brought in, dangerously wounded by a ball through the breast.

3. I immediately sent Mr W. H. Hyde, Assistant Paymaster, doing duty as my aide-de-camp, to inform Colonel Murray of my arrival; and as it was half-past five, and there was only half an hour's daylight left, I determined to attack this pah at once.

4. Accordingly I planted the 24-pounder rocket tube about 700 yards from it, and, after a few discharges, the men stormed the pah under a heavy fire, in the most gallant style,—William Odgers, leading seaman, doing duty as my coxswain, being the first man in it; and having captured the flags, and destroyed everything living in the trenches, as far as could be ascertained in the dark, I returned to the blockhouse.

5. In performing this service I am thankful to say that I had only four men wounded, which may be in some measure accounted for by the rapidity of the attack, taking the enemy completely by surprise, and giving no time for the usual Maori tactics, while the increasing darkness also favoured our small force, and prevented a good aim being taken by their sharpshooters.

6. It was impossible for me to estimate the number opposed to us, nor could their exact loss be ascertained,—16 dead were counted inside the entrenchment, 11 or 12 were lying in the road outside; but no doubt many of the wounded succeeded in crawling away unobserved.

7. After a short rest at the blockhouse I returned to town, placed the wounded in military hospital, and re-embarked my men, as I did not consider the ship safe without them, at this exposed anchorage.

8. I cannot speak too highly of the conduct of all engaged in this sharp and decisive affair, more especially the conduct of William Odgers, leading seaman, to which I shall bring your more particular notice in another letter.

9. I beg to enclose the Surgeon's report of casualties in the party landed. I have, &c.,

(Signed) P. CRACROFT,
Captain and Senior Officer in New Zealand.
Commodore Wm. Loring, C.B.,
Senior Officer.

List of Casualties in the party from Her Majesty's Ship Niger, at the attack and capture of the Maori Pah, on the 28th March 1860.

Robert Glanville, captain foretop, severely wounded in the leg.

George Tozer, ordinary 2d class, severely shot through the thigh.

William Palmer, private R.M., severely wounded in the knee.

William Clark, private R.M., severely wounded in the knee. (Signed) W. PATRICK,
Surgeon, H.M.S. Niger.

(Signed) P. CRACROFT,
Captain and Senior Officer, New Zealand.

(Copy.)

No. 11. Her Majesty's Ship Niger, Taranaki,
New Zealand, March 31, 1860.

SIR,

WITH reference to paragraph No. 4 of my letter No. 10, 1860, I beg leave most respectfully to lay before you a statement of the conspicuous gallantry of William Odgers, leading seaman, upon the occasion of the capture of the pah, in having been the first to enter it, in the face of the heavy fire opened upon us.

He also assisted in hauling down the enemy's colours, in which act of daring, which was performed under my own eye, three other men equally participated, viz—Robert Glanville, captain foretop, William Older, A.B., and William Clark, supernumerary marine, belonging to the Iris, carrying your broad pendant.

And I should wish to submit for your consideration whether all these men are entitled, equally with William Odgers, to the decoration of the Victoria Cross, and if not, then I should beg leave to recommend William Odgers for it, as being the most deserving, for the reason first mentioned.

It would be proper to add that Robert Glanville and William Clarke were both severely wounded in the pah.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) P. CRACROFT,
Captain and Senior Officer in New Zealand.
Commodore Wm. Loring, C.B.,
Senior Officer.

(Copy.)

No. 12. Her Majesty's Ship Niger, Taranaki,
March 31, 1860.

SIR,

REFERRING to my letter No. 10, of this date, reporting the service upon which Lieutenant W. H. Blake, Senior Lieutenant in charge of a detachment of seamen and marines, had been employed with the force under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Murray, 65th Regiment—

I have now the honour to enclose a letter and its enclosure, received from the Lieutenant-Colonel, expressing his high sense of the gallant conduct of Lieutenant Blake at the Action at Omata, on the 28th instant, in which that officer was dangerously wounded, as also of the steady good conduct of the petty officers, seamen, and marines, upon this occasion, under Mr C. B. Theobald, Midshipman, upon whom the command had devolved.

In requesting you to bring the gallant conduct of Lieutenant Blake to the favourable notice of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I beg to recommend him to their Lordships as a most zealous active officer, who has always merited my entire confidence, and is well worthy of promotion.

The name of Lieutenant Blake has been before mentioned to their Lordships in Despatches, as being the Senior Lieutenant present at the destruction of a formidable Chinese piratical stronghold and junks, in March 1859.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) P. CRACROFT,
Captain.
Commodore Wm. Loring, C.B., &c., &c.