

*Extract from a Letter from the Governor-General in Council to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, dated Fort William, 23d February 1824.*

ON the 30th January, we learnt that an affair had taken place between our party of observation on the Sylhet frontier, commanded by Major Newton, and one of the bodies of invaders coming from Assam; your Honourable Committee will learn from the correspondence which took place on that occasion that, disregarding the intimation which they had received of the determination of the British Government to resist the occupation of Cachar by the forces of a foreign power, and anxious only to effect their object of concentrating a large force on our immediate frontier, the parties from the northward and eastward hurried on, in avowed defiance of our repeated remonstrances and warnings; to the point where the Generals proposed to unite their forces; on the 16th Major Newton, finding that a body of about four thousand Burmese and Assamese had crossed into the plains of Cachar, at the foot of the Berteaka Pass, and were stockading themselves at Bikrampore; also that the force to the eastward had defeated the Manipore Chief, Rajah Gambhur Sing's troops; and that a third division were crossing into Jyntra, immediately north of the station of Sylhet, he resolved, under circumstances so threatening to his force, to concentrate his detachment at Juttrapore, a Cachar village, about five miles beyond the boundary of the Sylhet district, and move from thence due northward against the invading party from Assam, before they could have time to strengthen their position. The Burmese position was discovered early in the morning of the 17th of January, and hostilities commenced by the discharge of two shots from their stockade at the British advanced guard; an attack was then made by the British force under Major Newton, in two divisions which was completely successful though a party of Burmahs in the stockade, variously estimated at from two to five hundred, made a brave resistance, and were not overpowered without the loss of six of our sepoy's killed, and eighteen wounded; about one hundred and seventy-five of the Burmah force were destroyed, the remainder fled towards the hills.

*Copy of a Dispatch from Major Newton to the Adjutant-General of the Army, dated Budderpore, 18th January 1824.*

SIR,

IN consequence of intelligence which I received on the evening of the 16th instant, that a body of about four thousand Burmese and Assamese had crossed into the plains at the foot of the Berteaka Pass, and were stockading themselves at the village of Bikrampore; also that a force to the eastward had defeated Rajah Gambhur Sing's troops, and that a third division were crossing the Mootagool Pass into Jyntra to the north west, I resolved, under circumstances so threatening to my force, to concentrate my detachment at Juttrapore, and move from thence with the whole due north, and attack the enemy before they could have time to

strengthen their position; I accordingly ordered Captain Johnston, to join me from Tilayn, leaving his camp standing; at two A. M. of the 17th, we moved off; at six A. M. just beyond an almost impervious grass and reed jungle, which we with considerable difficulty passed, we came into a comparatively plain country, where the situation of the enemy was discovered by the discharge of two shots at our advanced guard; their position extended along the villages at the foot of the hills, they were covered by the huts, bushes, &c. in a close and difficult country, and on their right they had a stockade on the banks of a steep nullah, occupied by about two hundred men; the attack was made in two divisions: the southern face of the stockade being assaulted by Captain Johnston, with part of the 23d native infantry, and Rungpore light infantry; and the enemy's line in the villages being attacked by Captain Bowe, with part of the 10th native infantry, the whole under my direction; this last was immediately successful, the greater part of the enemy, supposed to be Assamese, flying to the hills at the first fire; Captain Bowe then wheeled his force at the attack of the stockade which was making a brave resistance against Captain Johnston, and in a short time it was carried by assault by the united exertions of both parties.

I cannot in too strong terms bring to your notice, for the information of his Excellency the Commander in Chief, the exertions of the troops on this occasion, the Officers and men were equally conspicuous in their zealous endeavours; I cannot therefore particularize individuals, when all who were engaged claim an equal share of praise; but in justice to the merit of the European Officers, and Staff General and Medical, I do myself the honour to annex a list of their names, and an account of the killed and wounded on both sides.

General Staff—Lieutenant T. Fisher, D. A. Q. Master General.

1st Bat. 10th Regt.—Captain W. Bowe, Acting Adjutant; Ensigns, J. Buncombe and H. M. Grams; Surgeon J. Grierson.

2d Bat. 23d N. I.—Captain J. Johnston; Lieutenant Richardson, Actg. Adjt.; Lieutenant Ellis; Assistant-Surgeon Forrest.

Rungpore L. I.—Lieutenant A. Fuller.

I have, &c.

J. NEWTON, Major,  
Comd. Detacht.

*Statement of the probable loss of the Burmese, in the action of the 17th January 1824.*

Killed in and about the stockade	-	-	34
Killed in the pursuit and adjacent country by estimation	-	-	150
Prisoner wounded	-	-	1
			185

There were taken one standard, several musquets, and kukrees; a quantity of grain, ammunition, &c. was destroyed by the stockade taking fire, at the close of the engagement.

T. FISHER, Lieutenant,  
Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General