

*India Board, July 3, 1843.*

THE following dispatches have been this day received at the East India House:

*Major-General Sir C. J. Napier, K.C.B., to the Governor-General of India.*

*Camp, near Hyderabad, April 8, 1843.*

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to enclose to your Lordship the official report of the capture of Oomercote, by the troops under the orders of Major Woodburn.

I have, &c.

C. J. NAPIER.

*Major A. Woodburn, 25th Regiment, Commanding Field Detachment, to the Assistant-Adjutant-General, Sinde Field Force.*

*Camp, near Oomercote, April 5, 1843.*

SIR,

I DO myself the honour to report, for the information of Major-General Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B., commanding in Sinde, that, agreeably to the instructions conveyed to me by Captain Brown, A.D.C., and which I received at Jourbee, at two o'clock P.M., on the 2d instant, I marched with the 25th regiment the same afternoon, to join the detachment under Captain Whittie, then halted at Gooroor, and which place (distant eighteen miles) was reached at eleven P.M.

On joining, I assumed command of the detachment. After a halt of three hours the whole moved off, and shortly after sunrise encamped at Syud-ke-Thukur, twelve miles from Gooroor. At this place I found considerable difficulty in obtaining any correct information as to whether the fort of Oomercote was occupied by a garrison of the enemy; but, from what I could collect from different quarters, I was inclined to suppose it was not held by one of any strength. We marched from Syud-ke-Thukur shortly after midnight, on the morning of the 4th, and found the road an excellent one throughout to this place, and the distance 21 miles; there was jungle the whole way occasionally in thick patches, but generally composed of scattered bushes. As Oomercote was approached, the jungle became thicker and higher, so that (the country being a level plain) we did not fairly get in sight of the fort until within about 800 yards of the N. W. bastion. At first no one was seen on the walls, but on nearing it, which I did with a party of horsemen to reconnoitre, some armed men shewed themselves on the bastions. On observing this, I directed Captain Jacob to go round to the eastern face of the fort with his regiment of Sinde horse, for the purpose of preventing the escape of the garrison, if they wished to do so, and to induce them to shew their strength if they were inclined to defend themselves. In the mean time the Heads of the Hindoo population of the town of Oomercote came out, and expressed their pleasure at the arrival of British

troops and made their submission. By them I was informed that, the greatest part of the garrison having fled some days before, there were few men now in the fort, and they did not mean to resist, but would evacuate it on a guarantee being given that their lives would be spared. I desired Lieutenant FitzGerald, of the Sinde horse, to go and inform them their lives should be spared, on condition that they came out and laid down their arms. While he was doing so, I directed Captain Whittie to bring up his guns and place them in position, as I concluded the sight of them would hasten the determination of the garrison. The infantry was also brought forward and halted under cover of some trees. By the time these arrangements were made, the garrison opened the gates, and, coming out, laid down their arms and gave up the keys, giving thus into our possession a most important and strong fortress, having eleven guns mounted, and its defences in excellent order, without the effusion of a single drop of blood. Lieutenant Moyle immediately took possession with his company of the 21st regiment.

I have ordered Captain Jacob to leave behind a squadron of the Sinde horse under an European Officer, who, with the above company, are to garrison the place. In leaving a company of infantry, in addition to the squadron, I have made the garrison stronger than I find was intended by the Major-General in his instructions to my predecessor in command.

Captain Whittie assured me a squadron alone was directed to be left. I beg, however, to submit for the Major-General's consideration, that foraging parties will, from all I can hear, be obliged to go often to the distance of many miles, and will require to be in strength, as there are now many parties of the followers of the Amcer Shere Mahomed scattered about the country, as well as others of different tribes hostile to us, who are always to be met with where forage is most plentiful. To make these foraging parties sufficiently strong might, were a squadron left alone, often leave too small a garrison in the fort; and on this account I have been induced to add the infantry, so as to admit of all the cavalry being absent at one time, when such is required.

The town under the walls, and on the east side of the fort, contains about 1000 houses, with a well supplied bazar. The inhabitants are Rajpoots, Banians, and other Hindoos, all calling themselves Marwarrees, and they profess to be friendly to us, and to detest their former rulers, the Ameers of Sinde. These professions appear to me to be sincere. At all events they placed great confidence in us, as on the approach of our troops, they did not remove either their families or property out of the town, and the men and children mixed themselves up among our people, before we got possession of the fort, in a most friendly and confident way. I mention this not only to shew their present feeling towards us, but also, if I may be allowed to make the suggestion, how beneficial it will be to any garrison placed at Oomercote if means are adopted to encourage its continuance, as much, not only of the comfort, but also the very