

I have this morning received the gratifying information from Major Hill that some thousand families are coming in, and which I hope in a future dispatch to confirm positively. It is my intention to proceed to Prome in three days, and to take the field immediately. I am happy to say that the general health of the troops here, as well as their conduct, is very satisfactory.

*Extract from a Letter from Major Hill to Major Mayhew, dated 18th December, 1852.*

A termination to unremitting assaults from the enemy, from the 5th to the 14th instant, having been brought about by the arrival of a reinforcement of troops under the personal command of Major-General Godwin, Commanding the Forces, I am now enabled to place before the Major-General a detailed report of the operations during that period.

I do myself the honour to report, for the Major-General's information that, for some days previous to the enemy appearing in our vicinity, several of their advanced posts were seen within two miles of us, in a northerly direction. Elephants and gold umbrellas plainly indicated that their main army was not far off, and as I had been informed that Moug Keya Soungé commanded 10,000 men at Sheogyne, I felt it necessary to keep the garrison alert, in case that portion of his force, which was then so near us, might make a sudden descent upon the garrison.

Shortly after eight o'clock on the night of the 5th instant, a few shots were fired by our sentries, which were answered by the enemy, and soon the firing became general. After eleven o'clock, as the moon rose, the fire slackened and gradually ceased. Large bodies of infantry were seen the next morning, from the elevated post of the Pagoda, moving in different directions, and from 150 to 200 Cassay horsemen, and by half-past nine, A.M., a very heavy fire was opened upon the south-west angle of the Pagoda, immediately adjoining which I had stockaded in about 2,000 Peguers, with their families.

On the 3rd instant I was informed that for some distance to the southward and eastward a very large number of carts were approaching the Pagoda, and by sunset 216, filled mostly with women and children, besides a great many men, arrived and claimed British protection; I felt this to be a greater charge than defending the garrison, having perfect confidence in the troops; I resolved, therefore, on the following morning to draw the whole of the Peguers into a compact body under the walls of the Pagoda. Working parties from all the European and native troops in the garrison, with the officers, besides every disposable public follower, were ready by six o'clock the following morning to clear away a top of large trees for their accommodation. Every one worked with such hearty good will that by mid-day every tree was felled, and the sappers were in readiness, with the assistance of the Peguers, to make a stockade. By night-fall two sides of the stockades were completed, and the greater portion of the handies brought within it, thus enabling the families to have both food and shelter in their carts.

The enemy having taken up their position round us never left it until the day on which General Godwin relieved the garrison. I believe I am speaking within bounds when I say there must have been fully 6,000 men regularly employed in investing the Pagoda, from the space they covered; and so near did they find safe cover from our fire that

it became the more necessary to preserve the greatest vigilance to prevent surprise at any time they wished to attempt it; their attacks were chiefly directed against the Peguers, and on the night of the 8th a very spirited and well kept up assault was made upon them for about two hours.

Night after night gongs were sounding in different parts of the jungle, which, and their shouting, informed us where they were collecting their troops. Several other determined assaults were made on various sides of the pagoda, which were repelled by our guns and heavy file-firing, which drove them back. The last attack was made the day before the arrival of the troops. On the morning in question (the 13th), at 20 minutes past 5 o'clock, under cover of a dense fog which hung over the ground below the pagoda, a shout was suddenly heard, and a large body of men rushed across an open piece of ground on the S.E. angle of the stockade, which was the weakest point of the Peguers' position. A picquet which was always kept in readiness at the head of the steps immediately ran to their assistance, the men ranging themselves among the Peguers; and so determined was the attack that our Peguers and the enemy had a hand-to-hand contest with their spears, and several were dangerously wounded, the picquets also using the bayonet at the same time. There must have been great loss on the part of the enemy, as the ground was open both to our battery and the musketry from our walls, but as the fog hung over the low lands for some time after, they were able to convey away their dead, and only three or four were found killed close to the stockade.

In conclusion, I beg to say a few words in reference to the officers and men composing this garrison.

Little that I can say with respect to the practical knowledge of Lieutenant Campbell, of the Bengal Engineers, which he has already gained on field-service, could add to his reputation as a good service officer, but his unremitting zeal in planning and carrying out his suggestions has mainly contributed to the small loss sustained by the troops.

Lieutenant James, of the Bengal Artillery, who was the only artillery officer I had to give directions for the working of the guns on the four angles of the Pagoda, has performed his arduous duties much to my satisfaction.

Lieutenant Harris, of the Madras Sappers, who has but recently joined that distinguished corps, has proved himself to be a most efficient sapper officer, from the short time he took to finish the stockade for the Peguers, and the manner in which he executed a plan for a covered gallery to enable the water-carriers to supply the troops with water with safety to themselves.

Lieutenant Dangerfield, of the First Madras Fusiliers, my Staff Officer, is an intelligent, enterprising, and most promising officer, and I found I could entrust duties to him which required coolness and judgment, with perfect confidence.

The officers and men, both European and native, composing the garrison, have performed their duties in a most admirable and satisfactory manner. The harassing duties all were exposed to for eight days and nights, without intermission, requires no further comment than by my adding that their constant vigilance and steadiness were conspicuous throughout the whole of the operations.

A return of killed and wounded of the troops, as well as all other classes, accompanies this report.