

No. 90.

Lieutenant C. G. Baker, Commandant of Cavalry, 1st Bengal Police Battalion, to Captain Gordon, Field Adjutant, Lieutenant-Colonel Turner's Field Force.

*Camp Munjhaen,
September 27, 1858.*

SIR,

No. 88.

FOR the information of Lieutenant-Colonel Turner, C.B., Commanding Field Force, I have the honour to report the details of a successful attack by the cavalry detachments under my command, upon the rebel force at Suhejee, near Peroo, which resulted in the total rout of the enemy, whose loss is estimated at from 80 to 90 killed and many wounded, with but a comparatively small list of casualties on our side.

2. In compliance with the orders of the officer commanding the field force, the detachments of cavalry noted in the margin,* marched at about 1 P.M. yesterday, with the view of intercepting the retreat of the rebel force posted in the village of Suhejee, distant five miles.

3. On nearing the village above mentioned, I discovered the enemy in possession of it, as well as in occupation of all the neighbouring topes of trees, sugar-cane khêts, &c., from which positions a heavy fire was at once opened. An irregular fire at intervals from the adjacent village of Nonar proved that place to be also held by the mutineer force.

4. Requesting Lieutenant Broughton, with the 3rd Seikh Irregular Cavalry, to take up a position to the north-west of Suhejee, clear of the enemy's fire, which was now very hot, I halted my troop, and despatched a note to Lieutenant-Colonel Turner, C.B., reporting the position of the enemy and the very difficult nature of the ground for cavalry to act upon, being a succession of muddy rice khêts, intersected by water-courses.

5. The enemy observing us stationary, and seeing no infantry or guns advancing in support, became bold, threw out skirmishers, and emerging from their cover drew up in line, their right resting on Suhejee, and their left on the village of Russowlee. At this moment the rebel force must have mustered from 900 to 1000 strong in infantry, with 50 cavalry.

6. The enemy advanced. Without exchanging a shot I at once retired slowly, followed up steadily by the rebel line for a hundred yards clear of village or jungle, when suddenly wheeling about my divisions into line with a hearty cheer, we charged into and through the centre of the enemy's line, Lieutenant Broughton with his detachment immediately following up the movement, with excellent effect from his position upon the enemy's left. The rebel right wing, of about 300 men, broke at once, but the centre and left, observing the great labour of the horses in crossing the heavy ground, stood, and, receiving the charge with repeated volleys, were cut down or broke only a few yards ahead of the cavalry. From this moment the pursuit was limited to the strongest and best horses of the force, numbering some 60 of all ranks, who, dashing into and swimming a deep

* 3rd Seikh Irregular Cavalry.—Ressaldar 1, Duffadars 3, Trumpeter 1, Troopers 49; Total 54.

Under Lieutenant Broughton.—Volunteer doing duty, G. C. Blake, Esq.

1st Bengal Police Cavalry.—Ressaldar 1, Jemadars 2, Duffadars 6, Trumpeter 1, Troopers 58; Total 68.

Under Lieutenant C. G. Baker.—Volunteers doing duty; Lieutenant and Adjutant Nolan, 2nd Bengal Police Battalion, and George B. Chicken, Esq., Master Indian Navy.

No. 22224.

F

and wide nullah, followed the flying enemy through the village of Russowlee and its sugar-cane khêts, over two miles of swamp, and five hundred yards into the thick jungles near Peroo, when, both men and horses being completely exhausted, I sounded the halt and assembly, and, collecting my wounded returned to Camp at Munjhaen about 6 P.M.

7. I cannot sufficiently express my thanks to the European officers and gentlemen volunteers, who led the several detachments on this occasion, who, by their courage and example, were the means of sustaining the pursuit over a most difficult country, far beyond my most sanguine hopes.

8. To Lieutenant Broughton, commanding the 3rd Seikh Irregular Cavalry, and G. C. Blake, Esquire, Volunteer, doing duty, my thanks are especially due for so gallantly supporting the charge of my troop, by leading the attack upon the enemy's left.

Mr. G. B. Chicken, Master, Indian Navy, of the Dehree Naval Brigade, and Lieutenant and Adjutant Nolan, of the 2nd Bengal Police Battalion, both Volunteers, doing duty with my troop, rendered me the greatest assistance and service. The former Officer, who, I regret to say, was most severely wounded, performed a very gallant act, in charging into the jungle, and attacking a body of some 20 Sepoys, who were preparing to rally and open fire upon the now scattered pursuers. Surrounded on all sides, but fighting desperately, he would have been cut to pieces, had not Lance Duffadar Kala Khan, Duffadar Ukber Khan, and Trooper Shabaz Khan, of the 1st Bengal Police Cavalry, with Trooper Dhull Sing, of the 3rd Seikh Irregular Cavalry, dashed into the crowd to his rescue, and routed it after killing several of the enemy. All these men, as well as their horses, were wounded. I would also beg especially to bring to the notice of Lieutenant Colonel Turner, C.B., the gallant conduct of Ressaldar Mahomed Wazeer Khan, and Troopers Nuttur Sing and Hakim Sing, of the 1st Bengal Police Cavalry. The Ressaldar has been mentioned in despatches by Captain Rattray, on former occasions, as having particularly distinguished himself, and the two troopers were conspicuous in their gallantry on this.

9. Lieutenant Broughton particularly mentions Ressaldar Fyzoolah Khan of his regiment, for his forward zeal, and I am happy in being able to add my testimony to his report.

10. I trust I may be pardoned for mentioning so many officers and men for distinguished conduct on this occasion; but the success of the charge and pursuit depended so entirely on the conduct of those who rode to the front, that I am naturally grateful to those men, whose brave example and support gave me so effective a victory over a force composed almost entirely of well-armed mutineer Sepoys.

11. The greater portion of the captured arms and accoutrements of the enemy were by my orders broken up and thrown into wells, as a large number of the troopers were obliged to dismount, to convey the wounded to camp. Annexed is a list* of a few that were brought in. I beg to enclose Casualty Rolls.

I have, &c.,

CHAS. GEO. BAKER, Lieutenant,
Commandant, Cavalry, 1st Bengal
Police Battalion. (Seikhs.)

* 1 Enfield Rifle, 24 Percussion Muskets, 1 Flint Musket, 5 Matchlocks, 32 Tulwars.