

THE INDIAN NEWS,

AND

CHRONICLE OF EASTERN AFFAIRS.

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Dates of Advices.

The Overland Mail from India arrived in London yesterday afternoon, the 1st instant, bringing advices to the following dates:—

Calcutta 25th December

Madras 29th do.

Bombay 3rd January

Government having discontinued the packet from Southampton for Alexandria, of the 3rd of the month, letters for India, *via Southampton*, can only now be forwarded on the 20th of every month. Letters arriving at the Post-office before 8 o'clock on the morning of that day are in time. The mails *via Marseilles* continue to be forwarded, as usual, on the evenings of the 7th and 24th; but when these dates happen to be Sunday, then on the Monday following.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC NEWS.

We preface our usual summary of the political contents of the present Mail by a few remarks relative to the recent disaster at Ramnuggur, respecting which we were informed by Lord Gough, in what a sarcastic Indian writer terms, "one of his poetic despatches," that the said disaster was a most decided victory on his part, in which "the enemy were signally overthrown on every occasion, and only saved from utter annihilation by flight." The facts being, that they retired leisurely after Lord Gough had himself ordered the retreat of our shamefully exposed troops; and carried with them one of our guns. To quote the words of the *Friend of India*, "Our campaign commenced inauspiciously, without corresponding advantage over the enemy, of whose strength, or even position, we were profoundly ignorant. We lost eleven officers, killed and wounded; and 130 rank and file. The engagement, which appears to have been without an object, was unsuccessful, and we have given Shere Singh the triumph of having captured one of our guns." So much for facts and despatches.

"The movements of the Commander-in-Chief," says the same excellent authority, "have filled with the deepest anxiety all those who have friends, relatives, and connections with the army. We can afford time, but we cannot afford a useless and wanton sacrifice of life. We have a difficult country for future operations, a brave and resolute enemy to encounter, well provided with troops, artillery, and ammunition; and animated with the strongest hopes of success—which our dilatory movements in reference to Mooltan have strengthened in no common degree. The whole of the Punjab is in arms against us."

The *Bombay Times* also thus speaks of Lord Gough's despatches:—"The facts suppressed are so obvious and so well known, and many of the assertions made are so suspicious, that we have preferred accepting the authority of letters from officers with the force." Subsequently to the Ramnuggur affair, we stated in our last that Sir J. Thackwell and Brigadiers Godby and Penny had crossed the river, and that an engagement had taken place in which the Sikhs were defeated, the particulars of our

victory not being then known; that Sir Walter Gilbert had been sent in pursuit of the fugitives, and that the Commander-in-Chief had himself crossed the Chenaub, without encountering opposition of any kind.

The Mail now received informs us, as might have been expected, of the retreat of Shere Singh, and his unmolested occupation of a strong post on the Jhelum. A still worse blunder has been committed; after the defeat of the Sikh chief, instead of following up his success, Sir J. Thackwell has been compelled to halt, *according to orders*! In other words, it is believed throughout the force that his hands were tied by instructions which forbade pursuit, and he appears to have had no discretionary power left him which he might have exercised on an occasion where the possibility of an almost complete destruction of the enemy's force presented itself.

Into this humiliating position has Lord Gough's "*most successful issue*" resolved itself. Shere Singh is safe—has been joined by clouds of fresh troops—has a stronger position than before—and if defeated, can retire at once on the hill country, where our artillery cannot follow him. We have no more "poetic despatches" from the Commander-in-Chief, but abundance of more reliable ones in the communications of his officers.

The Bombay column arrived before Mooltan on the 21st of December, the besieging army now musters 15,000 British troops, and one hundred pieces of ordnance, far the greater part of very large calibre. It is understood that the army of the Chenaub will remain inactive till after the fall of Mooltan. It appears to be the universal opinion in India that Lord Gough considers his "*most successful issue*" to consist in getting the rebels to capitulate, in which case the Punjab will find us in wars for many a year to come.

Such is the general position of affairs in the Punjab. We will now address ourselves to our usual historic synopsis of events as they have occurred since the departure of the last Mail.

And first, of the operations of Sir J. Thackwell. On the 1st of December his force assembled on the right flank of the enemy at Ramnuggur, and moved on towards Wuzerabad, which he reached at sunset, and immediately commenced crossing in the boats provided by Captain Nicholson, these rendering the pontoons unnecessary. The cavalry were not permitted to cross, as the ford was considered unsafe after dark. A portion of Major Tait's regiment, however, went over, and lost three men and some horses drowned. At noon on the 2nd, the whole having crossed, marched for the enemy's camp, taking up ground for the night. The march was resumed on the 3rd, and continued till 12 o'clock, when the enemy were reported on the move, and soon afterwards opened fire. The cavalry now formed in line, the enemy attempting to turn Sir Joseph's right flank. Seeing the attempt, Brigadier White ordered the cavalry to retire in *echelon* of regiments from the right, by which the right was thrown back. During this movement the cannonading of the enemy became very hot, whilst not a shot was returned by us. The *Delhi Gazette* states as a fact, that General Thackwell had positive orders not to engage the enemy. The infantry and artillery were ordered to lie down, the enemy's shot passing over them. At last, it became evident that the enemy were about to attack in earnest, and Major Christie's troop of Horse Artillery was brought from the left up between the 3rd Dragoons and the 8th Light Cavalry, and opened a very effectual fire; notwithstanding which, the enemy kept moving to their own left with the continued determination of turning General Thackwell's right. An advanced demonstration of the 3rd Dragoons, however, brought them to a stand still, and subsequently induced them to make a retrograde movement, from the danger which arose of their own right being turned by the threatened advance of the Dragoons. The whole of the British Artillery now poured in a destructive fire, which told heavily on the Sikhs, from their having come within five hundred yards of our lines. It is asserted by various officers, that at this juncture, *had not Sir Joseph's hands been tied*, a dash of the Cavalry must have secured the whole of the enemy's guns; and wonder is on all hands expressed that he should have allowed instructions, which did not contemplate the Sikhs coming out of their entrenchments to meet us, to trammel his proceedings, when he had such a brilliant opportunity of seizing the Sikh park of artillery.

Thannah establishments in the Juswun Dhoon, while Rajah Purmodh Chund, of Mahalmoree, broke out into open rebellion. Mr. Lawrence immediately returned from Deenanuggur, and with four of Waller's guns, two companies 71st N. I., three companies 29th N. I., and the 1st Sikh local infantry, with 100 suwars, turned the hills and marched down the Dhoon, thus compelling the insurgents to abandon all the passes. Colonel Wilkinson, with head-quarters and a wing of the 28th N. I., marched from Hoshearpoor, to make, if necessary, a combined attack on the Naree Pass. The insurgents, however, did not wait for this, but allowed the two forces to join unmolested. Col. Wilkinson with his force returned to Hoshearpoor, and on the night of the 1st inst. both positions of the insurgents at Umb and Uknote were simultaneously attacked. Both expeditions succeeded; the enemy were driven from Teerah, their prisoners released, and the place burnt by the force under Major Simpson, and at the same time the 1st Sikh regiment, under Major Hodgson, carried the village of Uknote, the usual residence of Oomed Singh, and dispersed the force there collected, taking some and killing others. This village being the property of the Rajah, alone was burnt. Indeed at Uknote a complete surprise was effected, and the success of the two expeditions, as shown in the almost simultaneous burning of the two places, so alarmed Bedee Bikramah Singh that he fled with all his horsemen, abandoning his infantry and guns. He left his fort full of property, and a large camp standing. This was on the 3rd inst., and on that day intelligence reached the Dhoon that the Rajah Mahalmoree had been completely defeated by Lieutenant Gordon, with three companies of the hill regiment. The Rajah himself surrendered to Mr. Barnes, abandoning all his forts; and soon after Rajah Oomed Singh, who had fled after the attack of Umb, was arrested. Thus, within thirteen days, the inroad on the frontier at Pathankote was effectually repelled, and the *emeutes* in the hills completely put down. Of the leaders, three Rajahs are prisoners, and one, the Bedee, a fugitive in the Punjab. One officer wounded, 2 men killed, and 6 wounded, is the extent of our loss.

We had at one time reason to believe that the account of Mr. Oliver's seizure by the insurgents in the Lower Hills, as mentioned by the *Agra Messenger*, had originated in a mistake. Such, however, appears not to have been the case. He was, we learn, taken prisoner by a party of the Rajah of Uknote's men, either on the 24th or 25th of November, at the village of Umb, which is situated on the other side of the Naree pass in the Dhoon. There we learn he remained until the assault of Umb by Major Simpson, on the 2nd, when he was released by our troops, having, however, in the mean time, lost almost everything he possessed in the shape of private and public property. The only item the rebels spared was a twelve-inch theodolite, the appearance of which they did not like, and so left it.—The burning of the villages of Umb and Uknote was seen by the Bedee at his camp in the Chenee Ghat, which is twelve miles north-west of Hoshearpoor, and inspired him with such terror that he fled forthwith, accompanied by about 150 horsemen. He was traced as having passed by a village within a few miles of the Hoshearpoor cantonment, whence he passed on close to Tanda, and crossed the Beas at the Sree Govindpoor Ghat. Brigadier General Wheeler, who was then at Mookerean, having heard of the Bedee's flight, immediately despatched a party of cavalry in chase, but the distance between the fugitive priest and his pursuers was too great to give the latter any chance of catching him, and he was found to have crossed the river some time before they reached its banks. Mr. Lawrence arrived at Oonah on the 4th inst., and gave immediate orders for the blowing-up of the fort, and the confiscation of the Bedee's property, which was and is to be sold by public auction. The Rajah of Uknote has given himself up, and a reward of 1,000 rs. has been offered for the capture of his son. An uncle of the Bedee has also surrendered, and both prisoners were taken into Hoshearpore on the 8th inst. The whole of the Vakeels who had quitted Hoshearpore without leave were hastening thither to excuse themselves for their act of disobedience. The entire country is pacified, thanks to the zeal and energy with which the civil and military authorities acted in cordial co-operation, and we hope to hear no more of risings in that part of the country. The skill displayed by Major Simpson in his attack on Umb and Uknote has, we are informed, been duly and warmly acknowledged. We may as well take the opportunity of mentioning that, although somewhat late in the field at Deenanuggur, owing to the extreme badness of the roads over which they had to march during the night from near Pathankote, Majors Ferris and Simpson were in time, with their detachments, to aid by their presence in the rout of the insurgents at the place.—*Delhi Gazette*, Dec. 16.

The only item of any consequence from the Jullundur Doab is that Mr. Barnes had succeeded in capturing the son of the Rajah of Uknote, for whom a reward of 1,000 rupees had been offered, and that Mr. Lawrence had returned to Jullundur as a more central point than Hoshearpore for watching any attempt at insurrection, should any such manifest itself, of which there appears no present prospect. A letter from Jullundur station, of the 16th inst., informs us that Brigadier General Wheeler's field force, which now consists of two corps of irregular cavalry, (2nd and 16th,) the 7th light cavalry, Major Swinley's troop of horse artillery, Captain Burnett's battery, and the 3rd and 4th regiments of N. I., was to march on the 18th in the direction of Tanda, the heavy pieces of ordnance (mortars) that were expected having reached the camp.—*Delhi Gazette*, Dec. 20.

"HAJEPORE, Dec. 16.—On looking over your paper of the 9th, I see a description of the recent operations against the insurgents in the Jessoon Valley. Here are more details—print or burn them as you like. On returning from the Pathankote expedition, the detachment, consisting of head-quarters and five weak companies, 29th N. I., Hodgson's Sikh corps, two companies 71st N. I., four horse-artillery guns, and a party of the 16th Irregulars under Lieut. and Adjutant Smith, 34th N. I., the whole under Major Simpson, 29th Regt. N. I., moved up the Jessoon Valley, the first march being from Hajeepore to Tilwanah, arriving there on the evening of the 29th; the next morning we proceeded to Dumgool, where there was an obstreperous Rajah and fort, which fort was variously stated to be held by from 300 up to 12,000. On reaching it, Mr. Lawrence (who accompanied the force) and the Irregulars went ahead, found the rebels had bolted, but captured the Rajah's son, who was quietly making off,—and a devilish good-looking beggar he is. His father afterwards came in and gave himself up. An attempt was made to blow up one of the towers, but from too small

a charge of gunpowder, or from some other cause, the explosion had but a partial effect. Next day the force encamped at Umbhotah, where, according to reports, we expected to find a large body of rebels ready to measure swords with the Feringhis; here, as far as Umbhotah itself was concerned, we were again disappointed; but fighting was yet in store for us. Orders were received in the course of the day, directing the 29th N. I. to proceed early in the morning to a place called Umb-ka-bagh, and Hodgson's corps to go to Garota (not Ankot), the residence of the insurgent Rajah Omaid Singh, Rajah of Umbhotah. Not being an eyewitness of the deeds of the Sikh corps, I will merely tell of the doings of the Callenjuns. We marched about half-past four o'clock A. M., crossed the bed of a dry river, and went up the Umb road. On nearing Umb (the lights of which we saw a long way off), when about a mile distant, or perhaps less, bang went a zumbooruck, reverberating through the still air, and the echoes rolling like thunder amidst the surrounding hills (this occurred before daybreak), the enemy amusing themselves by blazing away with matchlocks. We made a flank movement round a thickly-wooded garden, which we had supposed was the point of attack, but which turned out not to be the case. This movement brought us in front of their position, which was on three very strong heights. We waited till daylight, the enemy in the mean time slightly changing their ground, and keeping up a continual shower from matchlocks and jezails,—the Jack steady as a rock, and looking on with the utmost *sang froid*. At last the word was given, and the 8th and light companies advanced to the charge at a double, the regiment supporting from behind, the men hurrahing and eager for the fray. The enemy redoubled their fire on seeing the gallant way in which the stormers advanced, but it was of no avail. On the assailants pressed, in spite of the steep heights and the heavy fire, drove the rebels before them, and in a short time the colours waved triumphantly on the conquered heights of Umb. I regret to say Lieutenant and Adjutant Faddy, 29th Regt. N.I., was severely wounded while cheering on the men, but I am glad to be able to add that his wound is progressing favourably. The loss on our side was one European officer and ten men wounded, besides the Hajeepore Thannadar, who was with us, and was severely struck, showing the utmost gallantry. The number of the slain on the enemy's side none can decisively say, but I should think at least twenty-five killed and a great many wounded. The villages were plundered and burnt to the ground, and many camels, horses, &c., taken. We had the pleasure of rescuing a Mr. Oliver from the hands of the Philistines. Poor fellow! he had been in their power for some ten or eleven days, and of course was scurvily treated by them. From his account it appears that the Rajah Omaid Singh (who commanded in person) was the first to bolt, and gave over his army to his second in command and Wuzeer, who behaved very well, and only went when it was all up. The enemy, knowing the bridge-paths down and over the khuds so much better than we, of course many got off into the surrounding hills, but I think the fright we gave them will last them many a long day. When the fight was over, we made the best of our way down to the bagh, where we made no small havoc among the beer bottles and cold meat. Our hunger and thirst being appeased at last, accompanied by our trophies and prisoners (thirty-eight in number) we returned to camp about ten A.M. The next day we halted. On the next we went to Chooloo, from which place on the same day, two companies 29th N.I., and two do. Sikh corps went on a head to Oonah, the seat of the Gooroo Beekram Singh. On reaching it they found the fort empty, (reports were that the Gooroo had a large force and some guns, but the latter were never found, though new wheels, &c., for them were, however). The success at Umb and Garota had made them mizzle. The remainder of the force reached Oonah the next day, and halted two days, and saw all the lions of the place, the most curious of which was the Gooroo's sacred rhinoceros. It is a female about ten years old, and report says was bought by the Gooroo when only one year old for 2,500 Co.'s rs. We then broke up and retraced our steps *via* Hoshearpore (where we were most hospitably entertained by the gallant 28th Regt. N.I.) to our several destinations, and here we are snug in our lines, but ready to have another shy at any obstreperous Sikh, &c., that may wish to kick up a row."

"P.S.—I forgot to mention, that after Umb was captured two companies were sent off to a small fort about a mile and a half off, but found it empty. A few of the enemy were knocked over, I believe; but as I was not there, I speak only from report. The enemy's force, according to Mr. Oliver's report, was 400 men, well armed with jezails and matchlocks; ours was 125 rank and file, or thereabouts; three companies being at Noorpoor and two on duty at Pathankote.—AN EYE-WITNESS."—*Delhi Gazette*, Dec. 23.

"HOOSHEARPOOR, Dec. 4.—You do not seem to be aware that some of the party of our regiment (28th) now at Kangra contributed a good deal to the success of Lieutenant Gordon. They were commanded by Lieutenant Kendall, and made a march of thirty-five miles on a pitch dark night through an awkward country, full of mountain streams. Half an hour after their arrival, a party of the hill rangers, which had gone down to reconnoitre the ghat on the Beas under Lieutenant Gordon, being hotly fired upon by the enemy concealed behind mud walls, Lieut. Kendall's detachment dashed down to their assistance, followed by the Hill regiment, under a sharp fire from the guns of the fort. One shot struck the ground within three feet of Lieut. Kendall. The appearance of this aid, which was at once magnified into an army by the enemy, induced the latter to think discretion the better part of valour, and away they went."—*Ibid*.

NORTH-WEST PROVINCES.

We learn from Allahabad that on the night of the 6th instant arrangements were made to prevent any affray between the Hindoos and Mussulmans, and the largest tazeeah was carried through the town with infantry and cavalry in front and rear. Captain Hungerford of the artillery, commanding a detachment of Europeans *en route* to the Upper Provinces, manned two guns, and was posted at a point which was considered most likely to be the scene of attack. All the officers of the regiment were down in the town, and Mr. Money, the magistrate, accompanied the tazeeah through the town, and saw it buried on the 7th. By these judicious arrangements on the part of the magistrate, a disturbance, and perhaps a very serious one, was prevented. We regret, however, to state that reports have reached Allahabad of a very serious affair (some thirty miles