

European News.

From British papers to the 4th March, received by the Steamer Hibernia.

From Willmer & Smith's European Times, March 4.

Great Battle in India.

3,300 British and Native Troops killed and wounded—and reported loss of 30,000 Sikhs—at Moodkee and Ferozeshah.

Our advices from Bombay, since the sailing of the steamship Cambria, come down to January 17, and furnish accounts of one of the greatest battles ever fought by the British in our Indian Empire, in which we have sustained the known loss of 3,300 of our brave soldiers, including the gallant SALE, Sir J. M. Kaskill, and Major Broadfoot. When these accounts left the scene of action for Bombay, for transmission to England, there were several regiments from which returns had not been received, so that a further loss may be calculated upon.

An Extraordinary Gazette gives the official account of all the military operations in this great struggle. The result, we are proud to say, is as glorious and decisive a victory as ever crowned the British arms, and equalled only by the field of Waterloo. Previous to laying before our readers copies of the more important despatches, we prefix the following brief outline:—"On the 12th, 13th, and 14th of December, the Sikh army crossed the Sutlej, with, at the lowest estimate, 80,000 men (of whom 20 or 30,000 were cavalry) and about 150 pieces of cannon of the largest calibre moveable in the field, and exquisitely finished—an artillery immeasurably more powerful than was ever brought into the field by Wellington or Napoleon. It is only in morals that the Sikhs are to be ranked as barbarous. They are a race as vigorous in body as acute in intellect, and as skilful in all the arts they cultivate, of which war is the chief, as the generality of Europeans. The place at which this formidable host passed the river may be about 40 or 50 miles from Lahore, the capital of Punjab, and within a much less distance of Ferozepore, the most advanced of the British posts. Ferozepore is about 15 or 20 miles from the point at which the Sikhs crossed the river, if it is so much. The invaders having established themselves and established themselves on the British side of the Sutlej, made some slight demonstration of attacking Ferozepore in the interval between the 15th and 18th; but, upon the last named day, broke up, and taking the direct road to Delhi, proceeded in a southerly direction, as if they would mask Ferozepore, leaving it on their right. In this direction, a division of 30,000 of the invaders had proceeded about 25 miles to a place called Moodkee, when, on the evening of the 18th, they were met by a part of the British army commanded by Sir Hugh Gough and the Governor General, Sir Henry Hardinge, who, as second in command, took the field in person.

A fierce conflict ensued, in which the Sikhs lost the artillery attached to their division, in number 17 guns. It was in this stage of the battle that Sir Robert Sale and General M. Kaskill fell. The contest proceeded languidly through the 19th and 20th, the armies on both sides being occupied with the burial of their dead, and the re-organization of their respective armies. During these two days the British commander received some reinforcements; but the invaders having fallen back upon their main body, probably 30 or 40,000, presented a prodigiously augmented force, when the shock of battle was renewed on the 21st, at a place called Ferozeshah, about 12 miles in retreat from Moodkee. At Ferozeshah the invaders had prepared a strongly entrenched camp, which they stood prepared to defend with 100 pieces of their huge held artillery and 60,000 men. Imagination can scarcely depict the fury and the obstinacy of the two days' fight that must have preceded the capture of the invaders' camp, with all its material and artillery, and the utter dispersion of the invading army, on the 22nd December. The most fortunate escaped to the islands in the Sutlej, or perhaps to the Panjab bank, but the greater part were scattered in broken parties through the British territories. Their loss is variously estimated at from 25 to 30,000 in killed and wounded. Our loss in killed and wounded, it is to be feared, falls little of 3,300, including 50 European officers.

From General Sir Hugh Gough, G.C.B., the Commander in Chief of the Army in India, to the Governor General of India. Camp, Moodkee, Dec. 19, 1845.

Right Hon. Sir,—It would be a superfluous form in me to address to you a narrative of the campaign which has opened against the Sikhs, and the successful action of yesterday, since you have in person shared the fatigues and dangers of our army, and witnessed its efforts and privations, but that my position as its head renders this my duty; and it is necessary, from that position, I should place these events on record, for the information of all Europe, as well as of all India.

You, sir, know, but others have to be told, that the sudden and unprovoked aggression of the Sikhs, by crossing the Sutlej, with the great proportion of their army, with the avowed intention of attacking Ferozepore in a time of profound peace, rendered indispensable, on our part, a series of difficult combinations for the protection of our frontier stations, so unjustifiably and so unexpectedly menaced.

From the advanced and salient situation of

Ferozepore, and its vicinity to the Sikh capital, its defence against a sudden attack became a difficult operation. It was always possible for the Sikh government to throw a formidable force upon it before one sufficiently numerous could on our side be collected to support it; but when, upon the 11th instant, it became known at Umballa, where I had established my head-quarters, that this invasion had actually taken place, the efforts to repel it followed in rapid succession; notwithstanding I had the fullest confidence in Major General Sir John Littler, commanding at Ferozepore, and in the devotedness and gallantry of the troops occupying it.

The troops from the different stations in the Sirhind division were directed to move by forced marches upon Bussean, where by a most judicious arrangement, you had directed supplies to be collected in a wonderfully short space of time.

The main portion of the force at Loodianah was withdrawn, and a garrison thrown into the little fortress there. From this central position, already alluded to, both Loodianah and Ferozepore could be supported, and the safety of both places might be considered to be brought, in some measure, within the scope of the contingencies of a general action to be fought for their relief. All this is soon related; but most harassing have been the marches of the troops in completing this concentration. When their march had been further prolonged to this place they had moved over a distance of upwards of 150 miles in six days, along roads of heavy sand; their perpetual labour allowing them scarcely time to cook their victuals even when they received it, and hardly an hour for repose, before they were called upon for renewed exertions.

When our leading corps reached Wudnee, a small jaghire of the late Maharajah Shere Singh, its garrison shut the gates of the fort against them; and, as our battering guns were far in the rear, it was determined to reserve it for future chastisement, and we remained content with compelling the village to furnish supplies (it could however provide little, except for our overworked cattle), under pain of enduring a cannonade and assault; this it did, without the necessity of firing a shot.

When we reached Wudnee, it was evident that the force before Ferozepore felt the influence of our movements, as we heard that a very large portion of that force had been detached to oppose our further advance; their feeling parties retired on the morning of the 18th before our cavalry piquets, near the village and fort of Moodkee.

Soon after mid-day, the division under Major General Sir Harry Smith, a brigade of that under Major General Sir J. M. Caskill, and another of that under Major General Gilbert, with five troops of horse artillery and two light field batteries, under Lieutenant Colonel Brooke (brigadier in command of the artillery force), and the cavalry division, consisting of her Majesty's 3rd Light Dragoons, the body guard, 4th and 5th Light Cavalry, and 9th Irregular Cavalry, took up their encamping ground in front of Moodkee.

The troops were in a state of great exhaustion, principally from want of water, which was not procurable on the road, when, about 3 p. m., information was received that the Sikh army was advancing; and the troops had scarcely time to get under arms, and move to their positions, when the fact was ascertained.

I immediately pushed forward the horse artillery and cavalry, directing the infantry, accompanied by the field batteries to move forward in support. We had not proceeded beyond two miles when we found the enemy in position. They were said to consist of from 15,000 to 20,000 infantry, about the same force of cavalry, and about 40 guns. They evidently had either taken up their position, or were advancing in order to battle against us.

To resist their attack, and to cover the formation of the infantry, I advanced the cavalry under Brigadiers White, Gough, and Maetier, rapidly to the front, in columns of squadrons, and occupied the plain. They were speedily followed by the five troops of horse artillery, under Brigadier Brooke, who took up a forward position, having the cavalry then on his flank.

The country is a dead flat: covered at short intervals with a low, but, in some places, thick jhow jungle, and dotted with sandy hillocks. The enemy screened their infantry and artillery behind this jungle, and such undulations as the ground afforded; and, whilst our battalions formed from echelon of brigades into line, opened a very severe cannonade upon our advancing troops, which was vigorously replied to by the battery of horse artillery under Brigadier Brooke, which was soon joined by the two light field batteries. The rapid and well directed fire of our artillery appeared soon to paralyse that of the enemy; and as it was necessary to complete our infantry dispositions without advancing the artillery too near the jungle, I directed the cavalry under Brigadiers White and Gough to make a flank movement on the enemy's left, with a view of threatening and turning that flank, if possible. With praiseworthy gallantry, the 3rd Light Dragoons, with the 2nd brigade of cavalry, consisting of the body guard, 6th Light Cavalry, with a portion of the 4th Lancers, turned the left of the Sikh army, and sweeping across the whole rear of its infantry and guns silenced for a time the latter, and put their numerous cavalry to flight. Whilst this movement was taking place on the enemy's left, I directed the remainder of the 4th Lancers, the 9th Irregular Cavalry, under Brigadier Maetier, with a light field battery, to threaten their right. This manoeuvre was also successful. Had not the infantry and guns of the enemy been screened by the jungle, these

brilliant charges of the cavalry would have been productive of greater effect.

When the infantry advanced to the attack, Brigadier Brooke rapidly pushed on his horse artillery close to the jungle, and the cannonade was resumed on both sides. The infantry under Major Generals Sir Harry Smith, Gilbert, and Sir John M. Caskill, attacked in echelon of lines the enemy's infantry, almost invisible amongst wood and the approaching darkness of night. The opposition of the enemy was such as might have been expected from troops who had everything at stake, and who had long vaunted of being irresistible. Their ample and extended line, from their great superiority of numbers, far outflanked ours; but this was counteracted by the flank movements of our cavalry. The attack of the infantry now commenced; and the roll of fire from this powerful arm soon convinced the Sikh army that they had met a foe they little expected; and their whole force was driven from position after position with great slaughter, and the loss of 17 pieces of artillery, some of them of heavy calibre; our infantry, using that never failing weapon, the bayonet, whenever the enemy stood. Night only saved them from worse disaster, for this stout conflict was maintained during an hour and a half of dim starlight, amidst a cloud of dust from the sandy plain, which yet more obscured every object.

I regret to say, this gallant and successful attack was attended with considerable loss; the force bivouacked upon the field for some hours, and only returned to its encampment after ascertaining that it had no enemy before it, and that night prevented the possibility of a regular advance or pursuit.

I beg to congratulate you, right honorable sir, on this first defeat of our invaders by the army I have the honor to command. The perseverance by which success was attained you personally witnessed; and the troops I am sure felt proud of the self-devotion with which their Governor General exposed himself to every danger amongst them. I before said that our loss has been severe; it could not be esteemed small if we had no other record, when I mention that, towards the conclusion of the affair, Major General Sir Robert Sale, to whom India and England are so much indebted, had his left thigh shattered by a grape shot, and that the wound has since proved mortal. Sir John M. Caskill, an old and valued officer, who has done his country much good service, received a ball through his chest, on the advance of his division, and immediately expired. Brigadiers Bolton and Maetier, and Lieut. Colonel Bamby and Byrne, and other valuable officers, are amongst the wounded. These losses our country and the service will deplore, but not consider unavailing, when Ferozepore shall be rescued from the invader, and the insult to our territory and rule fully punished.

I have every reason to be proud of, and gratified with, the exertions of the whole of the officers and troops of this army on this arduous occasion; with the conduct and dispositions of the generals of divisions, the brigadiers of the several arms, the general, personal, divisional, and brigade staff, and the commanding officers of regiments; but this despatch is necessarily completed in the utmost haste, and in the midst of most important operations,—I must, therefore, reserve to a future opportunity, the pleasing task of bringing especially and by name to the notice of government the particular merits of individual officers.

I cannot, however, refrain from expressing my deep sense of obligation to the heads of the two principal departments. Major General Sir James Lumley, was unfortunately prevented by severe sickness from taking part in the active duties of this great crisis. Major Grant, deputy adjutant general, therefore supplied his place, and it is my duty to say how ably this has been done; and how great a loss I have endured by being deprived, for the present, of his services, in consequence of two wounds which he received whilst urging on the infantry to the final and decisive attack of the enemy's batteries. Neither must I fail to record the valuable aid which has upon this, as on a former campaign, been afforded me by the Quarter-Master-General, Lieut.-Colonel Garden; his departmental arrangements demand my highest commendation. Major Gen. Sir Harry Smith having been appointed to the command of a division, the charge of his office as Adjutant General of her Majesty's Forces developed upon Lieutenant Colonel Barr, who, not only in the performance of these duties, but in every way in which assistance can be rendered in active operations, has been to me a most valuable staff officer.

I have to thank you, right honorable sir, for having placed at my disposal the services of the officers of your staff, and to thank them for the valuable assistance they afforded me on this arduous day. It shall be my pleasing duty to mention them individually, with the officers of my own personal staff, in the recommendation list I shall have the honour of forwarding, at an early date, to Government,—I have, &c.,

H. GOUGH,
General, Commander-in-Chief.

From His Excellency the Commander in-Chief to the Right Hon. the Governor General of India.

Camp, Ferozeshah, Dec. 22, 1845.

Right hon. Sir,—I have again to congratulate you on the success of our arms. A grand battle has been fought against the Sikh army at this place, and, by the blessing of Divine Providence, victory has been won, by the valor of our troops, against odds and under circumstances which will render this action the most memorable in the page of Indian history.

After the combat of the 18th at Moodkee, information was received the following day that the enemy, in increased numbers, were moving on to attack us. A line of defence was taken up in advance of our encampment, and dispositions made to repel assault; but the day wore away without their appearing, and at night we had the satisfaction of being reinforced by her Majesty's 29th Foot, and the E. I. Company's 1st European Light Infantry, with our small division of heavy guns.

I must here allude to a circumstance most favourable to our efforts in the field. On this evening, in addition to the valuable counsel in which you had in every emergency before favoured me, you were pleased yet further to strengthen my hands by kindly offering your services as second in command in my army. I need hardly say with how much pleasure the offer was accepted.

On the morning of the 21st the offensive was resumed; our columns of all arms debouched four miles on the road to Ferozeshah, where it was known that the enemy, posted in great force and with a most formidable artillery, had remained since the action of the 18th, incessantly employed in entrenching his position. Instead of advancing to the direct attack of their formidable works, our force manoeuvred to their right; the second and fourth divisions of infantry, in front, supported by the first division and cavalry in second line, continued to defile for some time out of cannon shot between the Sikhs and Ferozepore. The desired effect was not long delayed, a cloud of dust was seen on our left, and according to the instructions sent him on the preceding evening, Major-General Sir John Littler, with his division, availing himself of the offered opportunity, was discovered in full march to unite his force with mine. The junction was soon effected, and thus was accomplished one of the great objects of all our harassing marches and privations, in the relief of this division of our army from the blockade of the numerous force by which it was surrounded.

Dispositions were now made for a united attack on the enemy's entrenched camp. We found it to be a parallelogram, of about a mile in length and a half a mile in breadth, including within its area the strong village of Ferozeshah, the shorter sides looking towards the Sutlej and Moodkee, and the longer towards Ferozepore and the open country. We moved against the last-named force, the ground in front of which was like the Sikh position in Moodkee, covered with low jungle.

The divisions of Major-General Sir John Littler, Brigadier Wallace (who had succeeded Major-General Sir John M. Caskill), and Major-General Gilbert, deployed into line, having in the centre our whole force of artillery, with the exception of three troops of horse artillery, one on either flank, and one in support, to be moved as occasion required. Major-General Sir Harry Smith's division, and our small cavalry force, moved in second line having a brigade in reserve to cover each wing.

I should here observe, that I committed the charge and direction of the left wing to Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Hardinge, while I personally conducted the right. A very heavy cannonade was opened by the enemy, who had dispersed over their position upwards of one hundred guns, more than forty of which were of battering calibre. These kept up a heavy and well-directed fire, which the practice of our far less numerous artillery, of much lighter metal, checked in some degree, but could not silence. Finally, in the face of a storm of shot and shell, our infantry advanced and carried these formidable entrenchments. They threw themselves upon the guns, and with matchless gallantry wrested them from the enemy; but when the batteries were partially within our grasp our soldiery had to face such a fire of musketry from the Sikh infantry, arrayed behind their guns, that, in spite of the most heroic efforts, a portion only of the entrenchment could be carried. Night fell while the conflict was everywhere raging.

Although I now brought up Major-General Sir Harry Smith's division, and he captured and long retained another point of the position, and her Majesty's 3rd Light Dragoons charged and took some of the most formidable batteries, yet the enemy remained in possession of a considerable portion of the great quadrangle, whilst our troops, intermingled with theirs, kept possession of the remainder, and finally bivouacked upon it, exhausted by their gallant efforts, greatly reduced in numbers, and suffering extremely from thirst, yet animated by an indomitable spirit. In this state of things the long night wore away.

Near the middle of it, one of their heavy guns was advanced and played with deadly effect on our troops. Lieut-General Sir Henry Hardinge immediately formed her Majesty's 50th Foot and the 1st European Light Infantry. They were led to the attack by their commanding officers, and animated in their exertions by Lieutenant-Colonel Wood (aide-de-camp to the Lieut-General), who was wounded in the outset. The 50th captured the gun, and the enemy, dismayed by this counter-check, did not venture to press on further. During the whole night, however, they continued to harass our troops by fire of artillery, wherever moonlight discovered our position.

But with daylight of the 22nd came retribution. Our infantry formed line, supported on both flanks by horse artillery, whilst a fire was opened from our centre by such of our heavy guns as remained effective, aided by a flight of rockets. A masked battery played, with great effect upon this point, dismounting our pieces, and blowing up our tumbrils. At this moment Lieut-General Sir Henry Hardinge placed himself at the head of the left, whilst I rode at the head of the right wing.