

army under Major General Pollock, C. B., I conceive that I owe it to the troops who have so long formed the garrison here, to address to you a report, which may convey some notion of their conflicts, and the severity of their duties, labours, and privations. It has before been made known to Government, that I reached Gundamuck on the 30th of October 1841, under instructions from the authorities at Cabool, and there received intelligence of the breaking out of a terrific insurrection at the Afghan Capital, on the 2d November. My retracing my steps on that city was, in a military sense, impracticable, since the first inevitable sacrifice would have been of the lives of 300 sick and wounded, whom I could not have left in depot with the treasonable Irregulars at Gundamuck, whilst my cattle was unequal to the transport of my camp equipage, and my ammunition insufficient for protracted operations. In the position which I occupied, I could not absolutely command a day's provisions, or even water, and should have been hemmed in on every side by hostile tribes, amounting to 30 or 40 thousand men, part of whom might have seized Jellalabad, and reduced it to ashes, or, holding it, have left me no alternative but a disastrous retreat towards Peshawur. I therefore came to the resolution of anticipating any movement of this kind, and, by possessing myself of this city, establishing a point on which the force of Cabool might retire, if hardly pressed, and restoring a link in the chain of communication with our provinces. Two marches brought me, after a successful contest at Futtahabad, to Jellalabad. My breaking up from Gundamuck was followed by the immediate defection of the irregulars there, the destruction of the cantonment, and a general rising of the tribes. I found the walls of Jellalabad in a state which might have justified despair as to the possibility of defending them; the enceinte was far too extensive for my small force, embracing a circumference of upwards of 2,300 yards. Its tracing was vicious in the extreme; it had no parapet, excepting for a few hundred yards, which there was not more than two feet high. Earth and rubbish had accumulated to such an extent about the ramparts, that there were roads in various directions across and over them into the country. There was a space of 400 yards together, on which none of the garrison could shew themselves, excepting at one spot; the population within was disaffected, and the whole enceinte was surrounded by ruined forts, walls, mosques, tombs, and gardens, from which a fire could be opened upon the defenders, at twenty or thirty yards.

The garrison took full possession of the town, in such a state, on the morning of the 12th of November, and, in the course of the day, the place and detached hill by which, on one side it is commanded, were surrounded and surmounted by a force of not fewer than 5000 insurgents. A general attack, on the 14th of November, ridded us of these enemies, and a similar array brought against us a fortnight afterwards, was dissipated by a second sally, on the 1st of December. But we had seized the town, having in our possession not quite two days provisions and corn for our men and horses, and beheld the arduous task before us of striving to render the works defensible, and collecting supplies for our magazine from the midst of a fanatical and infuriated people, with very narrow means, in the way of treasure, to purchase them. I appointed Captain Broadfoot, of Shah Shooja's sappers, Garrison Engineer, and Captain Abbott, of the Artillery, Commissary of Ordnance. Captain McGregor, Political Agent, gave me the aid of his local experience, and through his influence and measures, our Dak communication with India was restored, and a great quantity of grain collected, whilst the unremitting and almost incredible labours of the troops, aided by the zeal and science of Captain Broadfoot, put the town in an efficient state of defence. Captain Abbott made the Artillery dispositions in the ablest manner, and used every exertion to add to, and economize, our resources in the way of gun and musquet ammunition, in both of which we were deficient for the purpose of a siege. Lead and powder were procured in and about Jellalabad, and a quantity of cartridges discovered in an old magazine, and thus the troops completed to 200 rounds per man. It is to be remarked, that I might, in the second week of November, have marched upon Pesh Bolak, relieved from investment the corps of Jezzailchees under Captain Ferris, and with it operated a doubtful retreat upon Peshawur. But I felt it to be my duty to give support to the last moment to our troops, struggling against their numerous enemies at Cabool, and maintain for them a point, on which to retreat and rally, if they met with reverse.

On the 9th of January, I was summoned by the leaders of the Afghan rebellion to give up the place, in fulfillment of a convention entered into by the Political and Military Authorities at Cabool; but, as I was fully assured of the bad faith of our enemies, I refused to do this; and on the 13th, received the melancholy intelligence of the disastrous retreat of our troops from the capital, and their annihilation in the Ghilzie defiles, by the rigours of the climate, and the basest treachery on the part of those in whose promises they had confided. Almost at the same time it became known to us that the brigade of four regiments marched to my succour from Hindoostan, had been beaten in detail, and forced to fall back upon Peshawur: my position was most critical, and I might, whilst our enemies were engaged in plundering the force from Cabool, have attempted, and perhaps effected, though with heavy loss, a retreat across Khyber, but I resolved, at all hazards, on not relinquishing my grasp on the chief town of the valley of Ningrahar, and the key of Eastern Afghanistan, so long as I had reason to consider that our Government desired to retain it. The

discouragements of my garrison at this moment were very great, their duties most severe, their labours unceasing, and the most insidious endeavours made by the enemy to seduce the native portion of them from their allegiance. But their fidelity was unshaken, and their serenity amidst labours and privations unclouded. With reference, however, to the state of fanatical excitement and national antipathy which prevailed around us, I had been compelled, as a measure of prudence, to get rid, first of the corps of Khyber rangers, and next of the detachment of Jezzailchees, and a few of the Afghan sappers, and a body of Hindoostanee gunners, who had formerly been in the employment of Dost Mahomed Khan. Works had in the meantime been completed, of which the annexed reports and plans of Captain Broadfoot contain ample details. Generally, I may state, they consisted in the destruction of an immense quantity of cover for the enemy, extending to the demolition of forts and old walls, filling up ravines, and destroying gardens and cutting down groves, raising the parapets to six or seven feet high, repairing and widening the ramparts, extending the bastions, retrenching three of the gates, covering the fourth with an outwork, and excavating a ditch ten feet in depth and twelve feet in width, round the whole of the walls: the place was thus secure against the attack of any Asiatic enemy not provided with siege artillery.

But it pleased Providence on the 19th February, to remove in an instant this ground of confidence. A tremendous earthquake shook down all our parapets built up with so much labour, injured several of our bastions, cast to the ground all our guard houses, demolished a third of the town, made a considerable breach in the rampart of a curtain in the Peshawur face, and reduced the Cabool gate to a shapeless mass of ruins. It savours of romance, but is a sober fact, that the city was thrown into alarm, within the space of little more than one month, by the repetition of full one hundred shocks of this terrific phenomenon of nature.

The troops turned with indefatigable industry to the reparation of their walls, but at the moment of the great convulsion, Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan, Barukzye, the assassin of the late Envoy, and treacherous destroyer of the Cabool force, having collected a body of troops, flushed with a success consummated by the vilest means, had advanced to Murkhail, within seven miles of our gates. He attacked our foraging parties with a large body of horse on the 21st and 22d of February, and soon after, establishing his head quarters to the westward, two miles from the place, and a secondary camp to the eastward, about one mile distant, invested the town, and established a rigorous blockade. From that time up to the 7th of April, the reduced garrison was engaged in a succession of skirmishes with the enemy, who, greatly superior in horse, perpetually insulted our walls by attacks and alerts, and compelled us daily to fight at disadvantage for forage for our cattle. The most remarkable of these affairs were those of the cavalry under Lieutenant Mayne, commanding detachment Shah Shooja's 2d cavalry, and Jemadar Deena Singh, 5th light cavalry, already reported; a sally under Colonel Dennie, C. B. to defeat a suspected attempt of the enemy to drive a mine, on the 11th March; the repulse of an assault upon the transverse wall to the northward of the place, on the 24th of the same month, by detachments under Captain Broadfoot, (who was severely wounded), and Captain Fenwick, Her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry; the capture of bullocks and sheep by Lieutenant Mayne on the 30th and 31st of January; and the seizure of large flocks of the latter, in the face of Mahomed Akbar's army, by a force of infantry under Captain Pattisson, Her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry, and of cavalry under Captain Oldfield, on the 1st instant. These successes were crowned by Providence by the issue of the brilliant and decisive attack on the Camp of the Sirdar, on the 7th instant.

I have to notice as a measure of defence, my having enrolled as a provisional battalion a large body of our camp followers, and armed them with pikes and other weapons. On all occasions of assault and sally these men were available to make a show upon our curtains, and I have pledged myself to them to recommend to Government, that they should enjoy all the pecuniary advantages of native soldiers beyond the Indus. I at the same time held forth to the troops of Shah Shooja's force the expectation that they would be put, during the especial service, on the same footing with their comrades of the Bengal army.

From the time that the Brigade threw itself into Jellalabad, the native troops have been on half, and the followers on quarter rations, and for many weeks they have been able to obtain little or nothing in the bazars to eke out this scanty provision. I will not mention, as a privation, the European troops from the same period having been without their allowance of spirits, because I verily believe this circumstance and their constant employment have contributed to keep them in the highest health and the most remarkable state of discipline. Crime has been almost unknown amongst them, but they have felt severely, although they have never murmured, the diminution of their quantity of animal food, and the total want of ghee, flour, tea, coffee, and sugar; these may seem small matters to those who read of them at a distance, but they are serious reductions in the scale of comfort of the hard working and fighting soldier in Asia. The troops have also been greatly in arrears of pay, besides their severe duties in heat and cold, wind and rain, on the guards of the gates and bastions. The troops, officers and men, British and Hindoostanee, of every arm, remained fully accounted on their alarm posts every night from the 1st of March to the 7th