

Hired lorcha, No. 1, armed as gun-boat—Detachment Royal Artillery, and all the Ordnance stores, &c.

Hired lorcha, No. 2—Detachment Royal Sappers and Miners, with tools, scaling ladders, and other materials.

At nine o'clock the following morning, the Squadron arrived at the Bocca Tigris, when the Vulture, taking up a convenient position, with the Old and New Arrunghoy Batteries on one side, and the North and South Wangtung Batteries on the other, lowered her boats, in which two detachments, the one under Lieutenant Colonel Brereton, C. B., Royal Artillery, the second in command, the other under my immediate superintendence, were instantly disembarked, and the respective batteries having been surprised and taken possession of without opposition, the guns were spiked, the ammunition destroyed, and the garrison permitted to retire without molestation.

At six o'clock the squadron arrived at Wampoa, beyond which the Vulture's draught of water would not permit her to proceed.

The following morning the troops were distributed in the steamers Pluto and Corsair, and the armed boats of the Vulture, with the exception of the detachment of Seapoys on board the *Espiegle*, and a party which it was deemed prudent to leave for the security of the Vulture, in consequence of the greater part of her crew being employed on boat service.

I here established my head-quarters on board the Pluto, to which vessel Sir John Davis likewise removed from the Vulture.

About eleven o'clock we arrived at a reach of the river on which stands four strong forts, namely, Pachow, Wookongtap, Napier, and Wampoa Creek.

The attack on the two first I entrusted to Lieutenant Colonel Brereton, C. B., and that on the two others, which was led by Major Aldrich, Royal Engineers, I reserved for my own immediate supervision.

To gain access to Forts Pachow and Napier, which were approached simultaneously, it was found necessary to blow in the gates, after which the guns were spiked and the troops re-embarked.

On proceeding towards Forts Wookongtap and Wampoa Creek, a well directed fire of round shot, chain shot, and grape, was opened by those batteries upon the steamers and boats; and I consider it due to Lieutenant Colonel Brereton to state, that but for the intelligent manner in which that officer directed the crowded boats under his command, to be steered upon the salient angle of Fort Wookongtap, a very heavy loss must have inevitably ensued, as the showers of grape which were poured from guns of large calibre fell thickly around the boats almost immediately after the Lieutenant Colonel had caused this judicious movement to be made.

The greater part of the seamen being employed in pulling the boats, the guns of the steamers, Pluto and Corsair were chiefly manned by the acting gunners of the 18th Regiment, and I have much satisfaction in stating, that, on the batteries opening fire, they were promptly replied to by the steamers, in a style that would have done credit to experienced Artillery men.

The gun boat of the Royal Artillery also opened its fire, and threw some shot into Fort Wampoa Creek.

On the troops reaching the shore, the garrisons of Forts Napier and Wampoa Creek evacuated the works by the rear, but entrances were speedily effected by means of powder bags, which were applied to the principal gates by Captain Durnford and Lieutenant Da Costa of the Royal Engineers.

The guns having been all spiked, and the magazines exploded, the expedition next proceeded to the French-folly Fort, a strong work, surmounted by a Keep, commanding one of the narrowest bends of the river.

The descent upon this fort was equally rapid as upon those that preceded it, and the gate having been blown in, it was ascertained from the preparations obviously made in the batteries for our reception, that a very few minutes delay would have brought upon us the fire of this formidable work.

Four other batteries were afterwards spiked without opposition, and by six o'clock in the evening the greater part of the troops had landed at the British Factories, after having spiked, or otherwise rendered unserviceable, eight hundred and seventy nine pieces of heavy cannon.

It became now necessary to secure our position from attack on the land side, and fortunately the situation of the factories in relation to the surrounding suburbs, enabled me, by a series of defensible barricades, to shut up all the avenues of approach.

The following day, the 4th instant, the detachment arrived from the *Espiegle*, and additional measures were taken to strengthen our position, and to obtain local knowledge of its environs.

The same day Sir John Davis was waited upon at the British Consulate within the Factories, by the Chinese High Commissioner Keying, to whom he prescribed certain terms, failing compliance with which before six o'clock the next evening, his Excellency declared his intention of breaking off all further negotiations, and of employing the force under my command, in conjunction with that of my coadjutor Captain M'Dougall, in redressing by more serious hostile operations the injuries complained of.

The ensuing day, the 5th instant, the High Commissioner requested that the period allowed him for consideration of the proposed terms might be extended to eight o'clock the following morning. After this request had been granted, intelligence was received of bodies of troops moving into the city. I accordingly lost no time in making my dispositions for the assault.

I will here inform your Lordship that my confidence in our dispositions for the attack was much strengthened by the result of a reconnaissance made at day-break that morning by Captain Clark Kennedy, the Acting Assistant Quarter Master General, and Lieutenant Da Costa of the Royal Engineers. Those officers penetrated, during that still period of the morning, to the City Walls, which they ascended in two places, and ascertained satisfactorily that sufficient space existed thereon for making a lodgment.

Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary having informed me that all his demands had been fully acceded to by the Chinese authorities, I gave orders, with his Excellency's concurrence, for the return of the troops, to Hong Kong, with the exception of the light company of the 18th Regiment, under Captain Graves, and a small party of Sappers, under Lieutenant Da Costa, both which it was thought prudent to leave behind in the Factories, until the various local improvements prescribed by the Treaty are fully completed.

At twelve o'clock on the 8th instant, the troops accordingly re-embarked, and arrived in Hong Kong the afternoon of the following day.

The Pluto has since been sent back to resume her position off the Factories, and as a further precaution, I put on board her, with the concurrence of Sir John Davis and Captain M'Dougall, two intelligent subalterns and thirty picked men of the 18th Regiment, to act as marines until the arrival of the Naval Commander-in-Chief.

I have since received several reports from these detachments, all which represent the aspect of affairs as perfectly satisfactory; and I shall be much mistaken if the lesson we have given the Government and people of Canton be soon forgotten, whilst the discipline and forbearance of the troops, during our occupation of the suburbs, and which I have acknowledged in the annexed General Order, can scarcely fail to engender amongst the Chinese inhabitants, feelings of respect to which they have been hitherto strangers.

I cannot conclude this despatch without congratulating your Lordship upon the whole of these operations having been carried into effect without the loss of a man. More especially as in the crowded state of the boats, and the strong tide that was running at the time, any one shot taking effect from the heavy batteries opposed to us on the 3rd instant, must have inevitably cost me seventy or eighty men, as it would have been impossible to render any assistance under the circumstances of our position.

The gratifying task now only remains to me of doing justice to the merits of the officers under my command, who have principally assisted me in the conduct of these operations.

Of Lieutenant Colonel Brereton, C. B., the second in command, whose report I annex, I cannot speak too highly. His long experience, his distinguished military reputation, and his professional attainments and resources have been apparent in every step throughout this expedition, and I cannot sufficiently express my acknowledgments for the scope he has given to all these valuable qualities, and for his perfect and most cordial support.

Lieutenant Colonel Phillpotts, the commanding Royal Engineer, never quitted my side from the commencement to the end of the operations. To him I am indebted for the most judicious and scientific advice, and to him also for the admirable plan for the attack upon the gateways of the City of Canton, and for which I desire this able and meritorious officer may have all the credit to which he is justly entitled.

My sense of Major Aldrich's services is not easily expressed. I had appointed this officer to act as my Aid-de-Camp, but I soon found that his abilities and knowledge were much too valuable to be lost in a secondary situation. I charged him therefore with several operations under my own superintendence, the leading features of which I have already detailed, and on the approach to the Factories I employed him in all the descents upon the Forts in that neighbourhood, and which duty he performed with a promptitude, skill, and ability, beyond my praise.

To Captain J. Bruce, 18th Regiment, the Assistant Adjutant General, my utmost acknowledgments are due for indefatigable and most useful services. Every detail connected with the armament, equipment and embarkation of the troops, on this sudden emergency was carried out under his superintendence. He undertook also, on our arrival at Canton, in addition to his other duties that of a Field Engineer, and in twenty four hours by means of his incessant activity and personal exertion, every approach to the position was barricaded in such strength, that every officer and man slept in the secure conviction that it was unassailable by any force the Chinese could bring against us. Neither would I limit my approbation of the services of this officer to the present occasion. Captain Bruce has been three years and a half on my Staff, of which, two years and a half Assistant Adjutant General, and in every situation, but in this last in particular, his services have been to me invaluable.

In the absence of the Assistant Quarter-Master-General, on sick leave, Captain Clark Kennedy, 18th Regiment, conducted the duties of this Department to my entire satisfaction, and evinced the utmost intelligence combined with the best arrangement. Without putting me in possession of his intention, he made the reconnaissance already referred to of the City Wall, on the morning of the 6th instant, and succeeded in ascending the rampart in two places, before the guard was alarmed, and in bringing me back the most satisfactory information, respecting the space afforded upon it for lodgments. It was this proof of Captain Kennedy's zeal, combined with the knowledge he had so gallantly obtained, that induced me to select him to conduct the column under Major Fitz-