

it was rifle-pitted, and it may be so, but I did not perceive this, and the fire came from the middle of the palisade as often as from the level of the ground.

I halted to give Kemp time for one hour, when I heard the dogs begin to bark furiously, and being afraid that Kemp's party might be cut off, I resolved to advance. His party was formed of No. 1 Division, A.C., under Sub-Inspector Goring, and some fifty Natives who formed the whole Kupapa force in the field, except about a dozen who were behind at the entrance to the scrub. I now warned the officers and men to their several posts. Major Hunter, who had been present with me when I fixed my plans, and who had expressed an earnest wish to be allowed to take charge of the storming party, I told off to that duty, with No. 3 Division, A.C., the Patea Rifles, and the Patea Yeomanry Cavalry dismounted. No. 6 Division I detailed to remain in support, and requested Inspector Cumming to place Sub-Inspector McDonnell with No. 2 on a track leading to the left, which I thought might be used against us unless it was held. I then ordered the advance, and Major Hunter sprang to the front, cheering on his men, gallantly seconded by Captain Gilling, of the Patea Rifle Volunteers. The enemy opened a smart fire upon us, but the open space we traversed without loss, chiefly because the fire was kept down by the flanking party and supports. When Major Hunter reached the work he found the entrance was in rear, and led his men round the work, partly to clear the way for the fire of Kemp's party, and partly perhaps to give his men all the concealment he could. Major Hunter entered the bush in passing the work. He was abreast of the gate at a very short distance, and some of the Hauhaus were already leaving the place, when they were obliged to run back for shelter from our fire. At this moment Kepa, a Native of No. 1 Division, ran up to the palisades and looked over them; in doing so he was shot through the shoulder and left the field, returning to Wairoa with a report that the kainga had been taken. For a few minutes it appeared to be so, but just now a fire was opened on Major Hunter from the bush, and he was himself mortally wounded. The few men actually with him had as much as they could do to bring him out of the bush; and a very gallant fellow, mounted constable Kelly, was also struck down; nevertheless the stormers, though assailed by overpowering odds, held out stoutly, covering those who were carrying out their officer and their comrade. The Natives of the chief Kemp, and No. 1 Division Armed Constabulary, supported them, and the two wounded men were slowly brought out of the place towards the rear. The Hauhaus became furious at thus seeing their prey escape them, and fired heavily upon the troops; but they were met by equal determination and a very heavy fire, for almost every man in the force under my orders was so posted as to be able to fire effectively, and having spare ammunition at the earthwork outside the bush, and packhorses to bring it up, there was no occasion to husband our cartridges. The wounded were being extricated painfully, for the stretchers had not yet come up; but the fortitude of our men was unshaken, and they returned more than they were receiving. The Natives must have been crowded too, and though as yet we cannot say what their loss was, I am sanguine that it was severe. Kemp's few Natives behaved admirably, undismayed by the continual arrival of reinforcements to the enemy, or the fact of our having lost an officer. I was present myself on this part of the field, and visited all the positions of the force, and it must be satisfactory to the Government to know how staunch our men were even under the trying circumstances of having to take out their wounded under so galling a fire without stretchers, and in face of a very superior force. To prevent the enemy turning our flank, we refused our right, and gradually showed a front towards the kainga and towards Okutuku. Now when relief was wanted and stretchers urgently needed, our men were cheered by seeing No. 6, led by Sub-Inspector Roberts, arrive on the ground at a double. They came up in single file, with their distance sufficiently maintained to halt and front the enemy a few yards in front of our position, in skirmishing order, and they brought up stretchers to carry off the wounded. Sub-Inspector Roberts had very judiciously left one section behind to reinforce No. 2, and Inspector Cumming moved up this force to occupy the left of the dray road, close to the open ground. Thus the fire upon the front of the kainga was still maintained, and at the immediate front our force was strengthened. After giving time for the removal of the wounded, I now withdrew No. 1 by the bush track, unseen by the enemy, and re-formed it in support of No. 2. In the same manner the storming party withdrew to the rear of No. 1. Lastly, No. 6, with a constancy and firmness beyond all praise, when their recent organization and previous exertions are remembered, retired, fighting slowly but steadily, still covered by the other troops. Kemp drew off his Natives in the same way, and much about the same time; but he diverged to the proper left, so as to lean upon Inspector Cumming and Sub-Inspector McDonnell, whom he then joined, and, ultimately, was with the last who left the scrub.

Meanwhile these operations, carried out with perfect regularity, had given time to the wounded to reach the redoubt which Mr. Middlemas and the Wairoa Rifles had constructed, where they were dressed, and from which they were sent on towards Wairoa, under an escort.

The force having at length been safely withdrawn, I inquired from all the officers I could see if their men were all present, and was informed that they were sure all the dead and wounded were brought off. I made similar inquiries of the men, and one man told me that he thought some men—or one at least—had been left. Accordingly I sent back twice, and returned myself; but as nobody was discovered, and as the men seemed confident that all their comrades had been brought off, I felt no longer any hesitation in retiring under cover of the redoubt. The circumstance that some men had not been brought off has since become known to us, yet I cannot satisfactorily ascertain where these men fell. The officers could not tell except from what they saw or their men told them, because nobody exactly knew who had carried off the wounded or who the wounded were—some had walked out, others had been assisted out of the scrub. But it has been a bitter disappointment to the men who suffered the greater part of their loss in extricating the wounded, and who voluntarily on many occasions returned towards the enemy on the report, often unfounded, that men were left behind. All the time of the retreat the men were extended, and each man took cover and laid down. The enemy pressed us very hard, dashing in with tomahawks whenever men fell, but recoiling always from the determined front shown him, and the terrible rapidity with which the breach-loaders enabled our men to fire. On these occasions, which were many along our whole front, the men stood up and fired volley after volley, such as I never before heard in bush fighting. Their resolution may be judged from the fact that the enemy had once seized a man and were tomahawking him, when the men rushed back and rescued him. He is savagely