

was to impede my movements by depriving me of supplies. If this surmise is too civilized a motive for his movement, it is very difficult to understand why he permitted so many individuals, travelling almost alone, to pass the beach, and reserved his attack for the strongest party likely to pass. The only casualty suffered by the escort was the loss of one, if not two, horses. Of these, one was the horse of the contract shepherd; and the enemy, on observing it fall, ran up, and possessed himself of the saddle.

No. 3 Division came up to-day, and to-night I shall move at 9 p.m. in two columns to attack the enemy, who has not, I think, as yet passed the Patea River, which is in flood.

I am in great hopes that I may now come up with Titokowaru's women and baggage, which he will doubtless defend. It appears that, having followed him steadily through the bush and through the several new tracks he has opened, he has at last determined to relinquish his hold of the whole district he had possession of, and to fall back on his own country.

I trust and believe that I leave no enemy behind; and as I move in light order, I shall be able, with the garrison of Patea, to muster 600 effectives inclusive of the Native force, for operations, until I have to establish posts of communication. To avoid lessening this, which is no more than sufficient, I have ordered the Veterans to take up the post at Nukumaru, and shall bring forward the men thus liberated to form a garrison at a more advanced post. Owing to sickness and other causes from which this force has lost men, I would recommend the careful enrolment of any men who may offer to engage up to the number of 100 men.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. Defence Minister, Wellington.

G. S. WHITMORE, Colonel.

Enclosure in No. 24.

Copy of a Letter from Lieutenant HUNTER to the OFFICER COMMANDING CAMP, Patea.

SIR,—

Advance Camp, Patea, 11th March, 1869.

I have the honor to inform you, for your information, that the convoy from Patea to Wairoa, on the 10th instant, of which I was in charge, was attacked by the rebel Maoris at the mouth of the Whenuakura River.

By keeping up a steady fire on the point of attack, and throwing out a few skirmishers to outflank the enemy, we were enabled to dislodge them from their position, which was occupied by our skirmishers, until I considered all danger had passed in consequence of the ready assistance I received in reinforcements from the Advance camp, Patea.

I have, &c.,

JAS. HUNTER, Lieut.,

Patea Rifle Volunteers.

The Officer Commanding Camp, Patea.

No. 25.

Copy of a Letter from Colonel WHITMORE to the Hon. Colonel HAULTAIN.

SIR,—

Head-Quarters, Kakaramea, Patea, 14th March, 1869.

I marched on the evening of the 12th instant, in two columns respectively little under 400 and 200 strong, by both banks of the Patea River. I myself accompanied the larger column, which was more especially intended to attack the enemy, and reached the jungle-side at daybreak, without being discovered. Lieut.-Colonel St. John commanded the left column, and also reached the bush early at Otoia (Gentle Annie), so that there was good reason for hoping that he had been unperceived. His object was to intercept the enemy's retreat.

As we approached the enemy's camp, which we had discovered only by such indications as might be studied in the chase, but are seldom relied upon in warfare, we threw off our packs and prepared to attack the position. It proved to be on high ground commanding the whole open country from Putahi to Kakaramea, on the range above the Patea River. Otoia must have been some miles below stream, as only the back of Gentle Annie was visible. The spot was not a kainga of former times, but simply a camp chosen for its suitability by Titokowaru. A heavy mist unfortunately covered the spot, rendering it impossible to distinguish objects at a few yards' distance. This circumstance, which favoured our approach, embarrassed us very much during the attack, and prevented Titokowaru's defeat from being the total destruction of his force. I divided the force into two columns of attack, with a reserve. The right column was commanded by Major Kemp, with his own troop and Native Militia, No. 1 A.C., under Sub-Inspector Gascoigne, in support. The left, by Captain Gundry, consisted of No. 8; No. 2 A.C., under Sub-Inspector Scannell, supported him.

I gave the word to advance at about 6 o'clock, and both columns moved forward briskly. Unluckily the sentry, while escaping, was fired upon by the left column, and their shots, which but for the mist would not have saved Titokowaru, did, as it turned out, give him a timely alarm. Unable to see the way, and almost immediately fired upon with great precision by the enemy's guard or picquet, which turned out with great alacrity, the Arawas of No. 8 and No. 2 now moved forward under great disadvantages, and ultimately were compelled to halt, holding their ground till the mist cleared off. The right column also pressed forward to what proved to be within but a few yards of the camp, but was also obliged to lie down and take cover from the same cause and with the same object. I must observe, too, that the fire from the rear, which sometimes in so dark a mist could not be repressed, was so trying to the men in front that I think the Colony may be proud of the spirit and discipline which, after a fatiguing night-march, enabled them to hold their own with constancy under such a trial, and dash forward directly they got the word.

I regret to say that during this interval we had to sustain many losses, hit from points which we could not see, but which proved afterwards to have been prepared for the purpose. At first the men thought these to have been shot from the rear.