

the centre; while Captain Lloyd, 57th, with fifty men, and Captains Wright, 70th, and McKellar, T.M., with twenty-five men each, in support of Captain Lloyd, should proceed up the several small spurs on our left to take in reverse the rifle pits which are constructed half way up the steep incline towards the two paha which crown the crest of the hill. To enable the bush parties to accomplish their long and fatiguing marches, and to arrive simultaneously at a given time, I had arranged that guns should continue firing until 10 o'clock. The three Armstrongs, under Captain Martin, R.A., were placed on the right bank of the Oakura River, to breach the upper paha, and the 24-lb. howitzer, and the rocket tube, which, owing to Mr. Larcom's recent wound, and a severe accident which disabled Sergeant-Major Arthur, I entrusted to a junior non-commissioned officer, were placed within about 800 yards of the front of the lower stockade, which they were to endeavour to knock down.

The beautiful practice of the Armstrong guns, under Captain Martin, set fire to a whare within the stockade of the lower of the two upper paha, at the very hour I had named, 10 o'clock A.M., for the simultaneous advance of all the parties, and of this fortunate accident immediate advantage was taken by Captain Corbett's party, who rushed at once upon the paha, and under cover of the smoke, climbed over the stockades, and got into it by a zig-zag entrance between the two lines of palisades, followed very closely by the assailing parties under Captain Lloyd, who climbed the spurs and rushed the rifle pits, from which a heavy fire had been kept up on the centre and right parties, who with a tremendous cheer for the Queen pushed rapidly forward. The party under Captain Schomberg, 57th, led by Major Butler, mounted the high ground to the right, also taking the rifle-pits on that side in reverse; and Captain Russell's party, under my immediate direction, forced their way through the very formidable double line of palisades which extends across the valley, backed by rifle pits from which the Maoris had been driven by the fire of the parties above, and were escaping as rapidly as possible.

Captains Atkinson and Good's Rifle Volunteers had found the bush track so overgrown, that they were, unfortunately, a few minutes late, but they did good service by appearing at the very top of the clearing, by which line they prevented the Maoris escaping, and killed one, Kati Ruaturiwahati, the chief owner of land in the Oakura and Tapuae district.

With the exception of Captains Atkinson and Corbett's men, who had a very fatiguing night march—and to the latter it is with much pleasure I give the credit of taking possession of the pa on the top of the hill, which is, as I always imagined, the key to the whole position—the troops generally only took up their positions at 10 o'clock, and in twenty minutes they were in possession of the whole line of works, extending for at least half a mile from the high ground on the right, which Major Butler gained by his successful flank march up a very steep incline to the paha taken by Captain Corbett on the left.

The Maoris made one attempt to recover their prestige by creeping through the bush, and firing a volley upon Captains Schomberg and Page's companies, in which one man was severely wounded and one horse shot. Another Maori was captured in the fern, after deliberately attempting to shoot one of the Mounted Corps, who upon this, as on every occasion, rendered me most valuable assistance. It is surprising even after the place was taken, that more casualties did not occur, so many Maoris concealed themselves in the fern and standing crops of Indian corn, which, with potatoes, &c., covered the cleared ground around the pa to an extent of 30 or 40 acres, and from which, and the adjoining bush the Maoris kept up for some time an ineffectual fire, until driven away by a few rockets and shells from the cohorn mortar.

Although the wounds are severe, we did not lose a single man. I need hardly dwell upon the importance of this success, and the Lieutenant-General himself is well aware how impregnable the position appeared.

I am sure the Lieutenant-General will give the officers and non-commissioned officers, and men of the small force under my command, the credit they so truly deserve for their gallantry and willingness to undergo the fatigue of the four days' operations they have brought to so successful a close. I have taken the liberty of transmitting a nominal and numerical Return, by which the Lieutenant-General will see what officers were engaged on this occasion.

I at once made arrangements to occupy one of the pas, within which I directed Lieutenant Ferguson, R.E., to construct a redoubt, leaving the stockade to prevent the rebels from attempting to scale the parapets, as the nature of the ground obliges its construction very close to the edge of the bush; and I also directed the whole of the stockading across the valley to be levelled, and the rifle pits filled in.

To Major Butler, 57th Regiment, I am most especially indebted for the cordial co-operation and assistance he renders me on every occasion, and in this for the gallant manner in which, on seeing the place taken, he not only conceived the idea, but led the men under Captain Schomberg and Page to the top of the range on the right, from which he partially intercepted the retreat of the Maoris.

The firing of the Armstrong guns, and especially of that in charge of Sergeant Spink, was most excellent; but it is very evident that such guns are of little use in breaching native paha.

My own staff officers, Lieutenant C. M. Clarke, D.A.Q.M. General, and Lieut. E. Brutton, Garrison Adjutant, were unremitting in the execution of my orders. Captain F. Mace, Taranaki Militia, volunteered his services, and, as on every occasion, rendered me very good service.

Staff-Surgeon Young was on the ground, and attended promptly to the wounded men; and I would wish specially to bring to the Lieutenant-General's notice the very considerate manner in which Staff-Assistant-Surgeon M. Jones volunteered to proceed, at five o'clock in the morning, with Captain Atkinson's party, and at a moment's notice undertook the five hours' long and fatiguing march through the bush, rather than allow them to proceed without a medical officer. All the officers and men speak loudly in his praise, although his professional services were not actually required.

The native prisoner, who is a returned slave from Waikato and of no tribal importance, awaits the orders of the Government in the civil prison. He states that Kaitake was defended by 200 Maories, under Parengi Kingi, who was the first to run away on hearing the cheers which preceded our advance; a sudden panic seized the whole of the rebels, who, after the departure of their chief, lost no time in effecting their escape.