

CORRECTION OF MISSTATEMENTS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS IN 'THE QUARTERLY REVIEW.'

['The Quarterly Review' for March, 1837, contained an article on Major Snodgrass's 'History of the Burmese War,' to which was attached an account of the attack upon Denahew by the water column, under the command of Brigadier-General Cotton. On this article reaching India, it attracted the notice of an officer of distinction, who writes us, that the person from whom the author of the article in 'The Quarterly Review' received his information, could not have been present, nor was his description of this occurrence correct. Being aware of the impression which such a publication would be likely to create against Brigadier-General Cotton, and the column composing that small force, he has requested us to give publicity to the accompanying account, for the perfect accuracy of which he vouches, having been attached to the water column until the arrival of the army at Prome, and landed with the troops at Denahew; his object in so doing being only to state facts, and to rescue Brigadier-General Cotton and his column from the impression which the false statements in 'The Quarterly Review' are otherwise likely to perpetuate. We therefore, readily acquiesce in the wish, and give the statement as it reached us accordingly.]

Expedition of the Water Column, from Rangoon, with an Account of the Attack made by it on Denahew.

Feb. 16th, 1835.—The troops embarked at Rangoon, under the command of Brigadier-General Cotton, consisting of

Madras Artillery, Rank and File, 76	76	Commanded by Captain Kennan.
Rocket Brigade	30	Commanded by Lieutenant Paton.
47th Regiment	100	Commanded by Lieut.-Col. O'Donoghue.
89th Regiment	450	Commanded by Major Baden.
Madras Europeans	200	Commanded by Captain Cursham.

Total Europeans	855	Rank and File.
Bayonets	750	

18th Madras Native Infantry embarked in the Provision Boats, and left at Teesit.	}	236 Rank and File. Commanded by Captain D. Ross.
---	---	---

Staff of the Force, Brigadier-General Cotton, Commanding.

Aid-de-Camp, Captain Wainwright, 47th Regiment.

Acting do., Lieutenant Wilson, 18th Regiment.

Major of Brigade, Captain Sadlier, 47th Regiment.

Second in Command, Brigadier-Lieutenant Colonel Mallet, 89th Regiment.

Acting Aid-de-Camp, Lieutenant C. Forbes, 89th Regiment.

Major of Brigade, Captain Young, 89th Regiment.

Assistant Quarter-Master-General, Captain Steele, Madras Native Infantry.

Assistant Adjutant-General, Captain Ker, Madras Native Infantry.

Deputy-Assistant-General, Captain Lourie, Madras Native Infantry.

Acting Deputy-Paymaster-General, Captain Todd, Madras Native Infantry.

17th.—Set sail at day-light, reached Teesit, a village on the left bank of the river, where three stockades, destroyed by Brigadier-General Fraser, some time before, were found rebuilt, but evacuated. They were immediately destroyed. In the evening the advance boats were fired upon, and had two men killed and one wounded.

18th.—Proceeded up the river, the light division commanded by Major Baden, 89th Regiment, burnt another stockade on the right bank. In the evening came to anchor within six or seven miles from Panlang, when Brigadier-General Cotton, accompanied by Captains Alexander and Chad, from the steam-boat, immediately proceeded to reconnoitre the enemy's position. They found two stockades, nearly opposite to each other; the nearest to us on the left bank, called Yoathect, and the other on the right bank, named Meighee; and about a mile farther up, on the point of land, formed

by the river branching off, was seen the extensive stockade of Panlang, all fully occupied by troops.

19th.—At day-light, a point of land, five hundred yards distant from the nearest stockade, was occupied; and a battery of four mortars and two six pounders, under the command of Captain Kennan, was erected, and soon began playing upon the stockades.

It was intended to bring up the armed vessel *Satellite* which accompanied the flotilla, with the steam-boat; but the former grounded and occasioned great delay, in endeavouring to get her off, in which they did not then succeed. Two columns of attack were formed on the right and left banks of the river; the right under Lieut. Col. O'Donoghue, 47th regiment, and the left under Major Basden, 89th regiment. At five o'clock, P. M., the steam-boat coming up, she immediately proceeded in advance and anchored between the two stockades, the two columns of boats advancing in the rear. The rockets commenced playing from the steam-boat, right and left, into the first stockades, when the signal was made for landing, Brigadier-General Cotton proceeding with the right column, and Brigadier Lieutenant-Colonel Mallet with the left; both stockades were instantly taken, with the loss only of one man, of the navy, who was shot in the boat. The different columns lost no time in re-embarking, and moved to the large stockade, which was evacuated by the enemy, and immediately taken possession of by our troops. The enemy had between four and five thousand men in the three stockades, commanded by the Kee Wongee. The flotilla was detained here in endeavouring to get off the *Satellite*, and forming a post at this place, until the 25th, when they proceeded to Mizlee, about ten miles up to the branch of the river, leading to Yangaacham Yah. The 18th Native Infantry, under the command of Captain Ross, with twenty-five men of the Madras European regiment, were left to garrison Panlang.

26th.—The flotilla weighed anchor and proceeded eighteen miles, when we anchored at a place called Tallyoda. The gun brigs had here great difficulty in passing the sands, and frequently grounded. The advance and light division of the navy boats had taken up a position the evening before, in the river Irruwaddy, commanding the entrance of the branch leading to Panlang.

27th.—The steam vessel was lightened, and, with the smaller boats that could proceed, joined the advance division in the Irruwaddy. As the flotilla advanced, they found the enemy occupied the left bank of the river, from which they were dislodged, and a position was taken up about ten miles below Denabew, the left resting on an island which here divides the river. Two six pounders were placed upon the point, commanding the space between the island and left bank. With the greatest difficulty and exertion the larger brigs could be brought over the flats and sands, and the whole of the flotilla did not join the advance until the 5th of March. We here expected to find Brigadier-General

Campbell, and his force, awaiting our approach at a village called Lain, on the left bank of the river; but General Cotton had received a despatch from General Campbell, desiring him to make an attack upon Denabew, with the force he then had under his command; that he (General Campbell) should move on from Serawah, where he had arrived with his column, towards Prome, the next day, and that General Cotton's force would be sufficient to take Denabew.

March 6.—The flotilla got under weigh early in the morning, and took up a position two miles below Denabew, on an island near the right bank of the river, from whence General Cotton proceeded with a detachment of the 89th regiment to reconnoitre the enemy's work.

7th.—At six o'clock, A.M., two hundred and fifty rank and file of the 89th regiment, ninety-four of the 47th, and one hundred rank and file of the Madras European regiment, landed with four six pounders, two five and a half inch howitzers, and two rockets, under the command of Brigadier-General Cotton, about a mile and a half down the bank of the river, and marched up in two divisions, the right commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel O'Donoghue, 47th regiment, and the left by Major Basden, 89th regiment. They proceeded direct to the first outpost or stockade, which was immediately taken without much resistance, in which our loss was twenty-six rank and file, killed and wounded. Six hundred prisoners were taken and placed in the stockade, and about four hundred were killed and wounded. Six guns, twenty jinjals, one hundred muskets, and two hundred spears, were captured in the post. Brigadier-General Cotton then formed his battery of four six pounders, two eight and a half inch howitzers, two five and a half inch howitzers, and two rocket tubes, at a distance of about four hundred yards from the second stockade, on the right of which, and to the left of the first outpost, was another stockade which flanked the second front face. A picquet of fifty men of the Madras Europeans, under the command of Captain Curliam, was placed between the stockade taken and the enemy's post to the left. Another picquet of forty men was placed to protect the battery. The battery played upon the enemy's stockade, apparently, with good effect, which was returned from the stockade with heavy artillery and jinjals during the day. About eleven o'clock, A.M., the officers commanding the engineers and artillery reported that a favourable opportunity then occurred of attacking the enemy's works by a storming party, which was immediately in readiness; when 200 men, under the command of Captain Ross, 89th regiment, were directed to advance to a gateway in the centre of the front face of the stockade. No impediment appeared between the battery and the stockade; but, on the storming party reaching within fifty yards of it, they found a deep nulla or ravine, faced with iron spikes, and every obstacle that could be placed there to obstruct their progress, while a heavy fire from the enemy's stockade continued to play upon them. A reserve of all the men that

could be sent out of the stockade, already in our possession, with the picquet at the battery, amounting to seventy-five rank and file, were ordered to be in readiness to move on to the assistance of the advance party; but, before the reserve could be formed, on the arrival of the storming party at the ravine, they swerved to the right, and, before any assistance could be given, they had moved off from their position, and were under the bank of the river, from whence Captain Ross hoped to force a passage into the corner of the stockade; but here he unfortunately received his death-wound, having been severely wounded previously. Captain Cannon, of the 89th regiment, was also killed here, and Lieutenant Charles King, of the 89th regiment, was severely wounded. Orders were given for the party to bring off their killed and wounded, and then retire; which was done. Besides two captains killed, and one subaltern severely wounded, three subalterns of the 89th regiment were slightly wounded, and eighty-four rank and file were killed and wounded. Every individual killed and wounded was brought off, and, in the course of the day, those unfortunately killed were buried. The wounded were first put on board the *Suff* gun-brig, and, the next day, were sent to Rangoon. 'The Quarterly Review,' of March, 1827, in its article on the Burmese War, by Major Snodgrass, says, that, 'in the attack by Brigadier-General Cotton on Denabew, three hundred of our men were killed and wounded, and the retreat was so precipitate that the wounded were not carried off. The next day, most of the killed and wounded men who had been left in the stockade were crucified upon rafts, which were sent down the stream, to remind the invaders of their ill-concerted and injudicious attempt;' *not one word of which is true!* Not only were the British wounded sent on board the flotilla, but, previous to the troops retiring, every Burmese that could be found who was wounded here, was sent off, and some carried on the backs of their friends who had been so fortunate as to escape. On the army's taking possession of Denabew, at the second attack, the friends of the deceased Europeans who had been buried there, examined the graves, and found that not one had been removed or disturbed. So much for the veracity of 'The Quarterly's' source of information; but to proceed:

Our battery continued playing upon the enemy's stockade, until six o'clock in the evening, which was returned with a heavy fire, and which, during the day, occasioned fifteen men to be killed and wounded, at and near the battery. Several twenty-four-pound cannonades, with ammunition, &c., were landed and brought to the stockade, with an intention of forming a heavy battery during the night, to attack the enemy's stockade the next day.

At six o'clock, P. M., all the prisoners were released, and desired to go whither they pleased; they went off and retired to the villages, towards Rangoon, taking with them all their wounded friends. The wounded Burmese prisoners had been attended by our surgeons during the day, and their wounds dressed. Se-

veral of these people were afterwards seen on board the British fleet at Rangoon, serving with our transports as sailors. Soon after six o'clock it became dusk, when a picquet was placed at the battery, under Lieutenant-Colonel O'Donoghue, and the remainder of the troops, with the guns, &c., were removed into the stockade; after which a consultation was held, to consider the propriety of remaining, with so small a force, to attack the stockade the next day, or returning on board the flotilla that night, after embarking the whole of the guns, ammunition, &c., and waiting for the return of Brigadier-General Campbell's column, to assist in reducing the enemy's works. To retire was decided upon; one hundred and twenty-six men were killed and wounded on this day, leaving two hundred and seventy-four of the four hundred men landed in the morning, of which a number were knocked up, from the severe fatigue they had undergone during this day, and were reported sick.

Instructions were given to carry off the guns, rockets, ammunition, howitzers, &c., which were all in the stockade; and a party of one hundred and fifty men was appointed for the purpose, with the assistance of Captain Alexander, who sent some people from the boats. At ten o'clock at night, two faces of the stockade were attacked by the enemy, who were received by a very sharp fire from the little band within, which soon dispersed them; at eleven and twelve o'clock, they again made attacks; but the troops inside were prepared to receive them, and not more than two rounds were fired into the stockade at each time. In the mean time our people were carrying off the guns, &c., without being perceived by the enemy; during which time the troops inside the stockade destroyed the guns, jiojals, arms, pikes, &c., that were taken in the morning, and threw them into the river that was close to the stockade. At one o'clock, A.M., every thing was on board the boats; the enemy gave us another salute, immediately after which the troops marched out and embarked, unobserved by the enemy; nor did they appear for some time to suspect our intention of retiring, as it was not till after the men were all on board that we heard the slightest demonstration of joy at our departure, when, as is their usual custom, they set up a most horrible yell, their music, with Bandoolah's band, making a tremendous noise; after which, a house that we had occupied during the day, in rear of the battery, was set on fire, and burned to the ground. We lay very quietly at anchor, until six o'clock the next morning, when the flotilla dropped down to the island we first occupied; where we lay until intelligence was received of Brigadier-General Campbell's retracing his steps, and marching upon Denabew, crossing the river with what boats and canoes he could secure for his men, horses, guns, &c., at Serawah, to Henzidar.

We lay very quietly, unmolested by the enemy, in this position, until the 16th, when General Cotton received accounts from General Campbell, with instructions to move up the river, and anchor the flotilla near Denabew. The flotilla immediately got under

weigh, and proceeded to the island before occupied, for the attack, where they were again ranged across the river, and a battery formed on the point of the island, about a mile and a half from Denabew, with a large village in our rear, which appeared unoccupied. Here the flotilla remained until the arrival of Brigadier-General Campbell's column, which made its appearance on the 25th, to the great delight of the troops on board the flotilla. From the time we had taken our position at this place, we had been attacked every night by the enemy from shore, as well as by the war-boats. On the night of the 17th, guns were brought from Denabew, opposite to the flotilla, which, about half-past twelve o'clock, commenced a heavy fire on them. At the same moment the war-boats made a desperate attack to get into our rear, in which they failed, and were beat off without any loss on our side—the enemy had one gold boat sunk in the engagement. Every night after firing from the shore was kept up on the boats, but with little effect.

When it is considered that any serious disaster happening to General Cotton's force would have put a stop to the whole proceedings of the campaign; that the army in advance was entirely dependent on this force for its existence; that provision boats were constantly going to Paulang and back; that, on their return to Denabew, the troops of General Campbell's column were short of provisions, and had been without spirits for two or three days;—the destruction of this small force would have put an end to the campaign, and subjected General Campbell's column to the greatest disasters, if not to utter destruction. Had Brigadier-General Cotton attacked the enemy's stockade on the opposite face, he must have divided his force, and left the provision boats in the rear unprotected, except with the troops on board. The enemy's war-boats, thirty in number, besides the batteries from the stockade, would have been in full play upon our boats, until the troops landed, when the navy would be fully employed with the enemy's war-boats, in place of giving that assistance to the troops they would have so much required. The principal stockade, which this small force would thus have attacked, was nine hundred yards in length, by seven hundred on the river face, immensely strong, with fifteen thousand men to protect it. Captain Alexander with his naval force, during the attack on shore, would have been compelled to be entirely engaged with the enemy's war-boats, to prevent the possibility of their passing the advance division, as they would then have had an easy conquest of our provision boats in the rear, and would, at all events, have escaped to intercept our boats coming up from Rangoon. General Cotton, as well as Captain Alexander, had too much at stake, not to have acted from the best considerations and interest for the service on which they were engaged. They acted with judgment, they did their duty, and preserved the whole force, which, by one act of imprudence, might have destroyed the whole British army in Burma.