

committed no overt act, and thus putting themselves in an awkward position). When the clouds are red we know it is with the blood of the tutu nunui* (great disturbance,—a hint that there are signs of a great disturbance). These words are words to be laughed at and derided by the foolish, but who, on the day of their fulfilment, will be startled—

All.

By your obedient loving servants,
41 signatures.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL CAMERON, C.B., TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

Head Quarters, Te Rore, 30th January, 1864.

SIR,—

I have the honor to forward, for your Excellency's information, copy of a report from Colonel Warre, C.B., commanding at New Plymouth, giving an account of a skirmish which took place between the Taranaki Volunteers and the rebel natives near Bell Block, on the 19th instant.

I have expressed to Colonel Warre my satisfaction at the conduct of the troops engaged, and especially with the promptitude shown by Captain Atkinson and the men under his command in availing himself of the opportunity of inflicting loss on the enemy.

I have, &c.,

D. A. CAMERON,
Lieutenant-General.

His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B.,
&c. &c. &c.

Enclosure.

New Plymouth, 20th January, 1864.

SIR,—

I have the honor to report, for the information of the Lieutenant-General commanding, that early yesterday morning Mr. Parris informed me that an attack had been made the previous evening on the block-house at Mahoetahi by the Mataitawa natives, one of whom had been wounded, and that the rebels had threatened to return in the morning and burn the block-house. Shortly afterwards a telegraphic message from Bell Block reported that the rebels appeared in force at Sentry Hill, about one mile and a half inland of Mahoetahi, and they seemed to be moving forward as if to attack the block-house.

An escort of the 57th regiment being ready to proceed to Poutoko, I completed it to 100 rank and file, with 10 of the Royal Artillery and 1 howitzer, under Captain Russell, 57th regiment, and directed him to proceed with Captain Atkinson's and Captain Webster's companies (50 rank and file each) of Volunteer Rifles, who were assembled for the purpose of cutting thistles near Omata, to Bell Block, where I joined this force with 15 of the Mounted Corps, under Captain Mace, Taranaki Militia.

As the rebels had scattered through the fern land, I directed the Volunteers, assisted by the mounted men, to ascertain their strength, it being reported that the rebels had been joined by 200 of the Ngatiruanuis from the South. Sending the mounted men across the Mangoraka river at the lower ford by Mahoetahi, the Volunteers advanced across the open fern land, in two divisions, half extended and half in support, driving the rebels back to their position at Sentry Hill (a very commanding knoll between the two rivers) which being threatened on three sides, the rebels abandoned. This knoll was quickly occupied by the mounted men and Volunteers, who, under a desultory and quite ineffectual fire, which they hardly returned, rapidly advanced across the Mangoraka river, through thick scrub and fern, towards the upper ford of the Waiongana river, driving the rebels back upon Manutahi (an entrenched position at the head of a long clearing, flanked by bush on either side.) Not having force enough to attack this position, I thought it better not even to enter the clearing, so I directed Captain Atkinson to fall back slowly and steadily on the detachment 57th regiment, while I proceeded to Mahoetahi to communicate with the friendly Chief Mahau.

Captain Atkinson recrossed the Mangoraka, but his rear-guard had scarcely reached the river, when it was fired upon by some of the rebels, who must have concealed themselves in an adjoining bush on our advance. With the greatest promptness Captain Atkinson placed his rear-guard in ambush, and continued his march with the remainder of his men; the rebels fell into the ambush, the men of which fired rather hastily: one native was killed and two or three others wounded. The body of the native killed was brought in, but, although the whole of the Volunteers joined in the search, they could not succeed in finding the wounded men, who concealed themselves in the scrub and fern; but the Volunteers brought away three double-barrelled guns, and some pouches with ammunition, &c.

In conclusion, I must beg to bring to the Lieutenant-General's notice the admirable manner in which the Volunteer Rifles, under Captains Atkinson and Webster, and the mounted men under Captain Mace, Taranaki Militia, skirmished through the thick scrub and fern.

It was to Captain Atkinson's promptness in taking advantage of the nature of the country, that I must attribute the successful result of the day's skirmish, and the infliction of punishment upon rebel natives who, during the last fortnight, have been constantly endeavouring to waylay and murder settlers, and have killed many of the cattle pasturing upon Bell Block. Mr. Parris, Assistant Native Secretary, and Captain Stapp, Adjutant of the Taranaki Militia, volunteered their services and assisted the officers of my staff, Lieutenant C. M. Clarke, Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General, and Lieutenant

* An allusion to an old Maori tradition or fable.