

men were flagging, and a movement was absolutely necessary. I employed most of the men in practising the single and flying sap.

Early on the 29th, I heard that the Ngatiporou were really advancing, and were actually at Fort Roberts. I therefore completed a small redoubt for my stores, and rode down to meet the Ngatiporou, whom I met at the Whare Kopai Stream. My reception was most cordial. The tribe flocked round me, and appeared in the highest spirits. Ropata, however, was so ill as to be compelled to halt. He said he had feared I was impatient, and that Mr. Richmond had given him permission to return; but he knew if he did so the tribe would be of little use, so that he had decided to come on as fast as he was able, however slow. He promised to come up next day.

Meanwhile, under great difficulties, the pack-transport was being pressed forward by Mr. Richmond and Captain Newland and Mr. Smith, whom I had engaged for the service. The deficiency of sumpter animals was a considerable obstacle, but, working with a will, it was going on favourably. The meat supply was also difficult, as animals could with difficulty be kept at night. To avoid this, I constructed sheep-yards, and had small flocks of sheep driven up for slaughter. Mutton is inferior to beef for the field, but it possesses a great advantage in being a more manageable sort of stock.

On the 30th, at 8 a.m., Ropata arrived, and soon after the Ngatiporou, who were very well received by the Arawas, of whom they speak in terms of admiration. I sent out this day a party to scout, and another road-party to facilitate the transport, and sent the pack-train to Fort Fraser to obtain further supplies and more ammunition. I had proposed to advance this afternoon, but to my very great embarrassment and regret am obliged, at 4 p.m. (when I accidentally discover it), to send express despatches to Turanganui for ammunition to complete the Ngatiporou, who have only twenty rounds per man, my supply in reserve not being nearly sufficient to complete them, and leaving me without anything to fall back upon. Under these circumstances, I am most unwillingly obliged to put off my advance one day at least, and to send to Mr. Richmond to beg him to add largely to the order sent down yesterday.

I shall however trust to receiving further ammunition to-morrow, and at dawn move forward, though I sadly fear Te Kooti will retreat in the night. This fear is not shared by the Maori chiefs; but this deficiency, which is incomprehensible, when it is considered how many opportunities the Natives have had of being completed, discourages me, and renders me perhaps less hopeful than I should otherwise have been.

I have this despatch forwarded by express to be read by Mr. Richmond, who cannot fail to take the most immediate steps to repair the only cause of delay which can be attributed to anything except the vicious tribalized Native system, under which, among many other causes of delay and misfit, all the ammunition issued on one expedition is made away with before the next, for I have no doubt that most of these Natives were complete before they returned to their homes.

If Te Kooti does remain till morning, there is a very fair prospect of entirely cutting him off, and I trust some certainty that his stronghold will be taken, though the time occupied may be some days, possibly ten or twelve. The account of the scouting party is not as favourable as I could wish with regard to the road of the party sent round to intercept the enemy's rear; but distant views of country do not convey accurate ideas of localities always, and the guides seem certain they are right, so I shall make no change of plan.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. Colonel Haultain.

G. S. WHITMORE, Colonel.

### No. 13.

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

SIR,—

Head-Quarters, Ngatapa, 5th January, 1869.

My last despatch, of the 30th ultimo, brought my operations up to the establishment of the dépôt for my siege operations on the next ridge to this place. I there built a redoubt, and named it Fort Richmond. I could get pack-animals to this point, after improving the track, easily enough, though the hills were high; but there was no grass, and horses had to go back to Fort Roberts directly they delivered their loads. Beyond this point the track was across too rugged a region to admit of pack-transport till I had devoted labour to improve it, and I was compelled to trust to the men carrying their rations and ammunition up and down the two hills on their backs.

On the 31st, I marched\* at daylight to the conical rise on the same ridge as Ngatapa Pa, but about 700 yards from it. The apex of this rise I fortified and christened the Crow's Nest. Here I posted a few of the best shots of the force as a picket to prevent the Natives from firing away ammunition if the enemy should open fire upon my position.

The Hauhaus were plainly visible, strengthening their fortifications, when we arrived; and I turned the morning to good account myself, strengthening my camp and improving the road to my rear with Nos. 6 and 7 A.C.

At length, about 1 p.m., the enemy opened fire, discharging a volley suddenly, but all his bullets fell short. Our sharpshooters replied by a dropping but well-directed fire, which continued till night, the enemy replying by volleys now and again.

In the evening, after receiving the reports of the scouts and consulting with the chief Ropata, I decided that it would be better to change the route by which I had intended to send the party to the rear of the place. The right-flank gully was evidently the better adapted for such a march, and I ascertained that it was also the shortest. Our scouts moreover informed us, that from the apparent fortifications round to the rear entrance there were no fortifications at all, and that on the enemy's left the cliff was so steep as to render attack or escape alike impossible. The cliff on his right flank was

\* Force marched 31st:—No. 1 Armed Constabulary—3 officers, 64 men; No. 3 A.C.—2 officers, 61 men; No. 6 A.C.—2 officers, 55 men; No. 7 A.C.—3 officers, 62 men; No. 8 A.C. (Arawas)—1 officers, 60 men. Total, A.C.—11 officers, 302 men. Ngatiporou—370 men. Head-quarters, spies, scouts, Medical Department, &c.—5 officers, 6 men. Total—16 officers, 678 men.