Cryslty of the Troops in India 1845

(Reference in House of Commons on 17.8.1846, 19.1.1847, 25.1.18470

Origin of Report: The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury of Friday May 15, 1846, page 3, column 2:

The Late Battles in India

A letter from Private John Lunn, of the 80th regiment, to his father, of St Leenards Street, stamped, dated from the camp before Lahore on the 8th Of March, relates some incidents connected with the battles on the banks of the sutled which have not hitherto been published. The following are extracts:

"On the 6th of December, our regiment marched from Umballa to Moolkee, a distance of 150 miles; and on the 18th, in the evening after a fatigueing march, we were engaged for the first time: the battle commenced at 4 0 clock, and lasted till ten, when we were marched back to our camp having sustained a loss of only 7 killed and ten wounded. On the 19th, there was no fighting. On the 20th we started in pursuit of the enemy, and came up with them at 4 03clock when the British forces formed for action, and engaged, the centest being carried on till ten the next mornings at that time the enemy retreated, and we thought they had relinquished the contest; but in about an hour after they came down upon us in thousands, severly harassing our comparatively small force: we, however, effectively resisted them, and at 4 0 cleck in the afternoon they made a second retreat. At this time the weather being excessively hot, and our exertions everpowering, we were drawn up to receive tations and grog, when to our disappointment it was announced that the camel which had become borne our grog had been shot and all had been lost. We then made for the enemy's camp, and helped curselves (nearly famished as we were) to the best we could find: all we obtained was flour, with which we made some cakes and fried them, - glad indeed of anything, hunger and thirst having become almost insupportable: our officers were as badly off as the men, and in fact got nothing but what the soldiers divided with them. On the succeeding day morning we commensed hanging and shooting all the prisoners, which dreadful work occupied us nearly the whole of the day. On the 22nd we commenced our march towards Ferespore plains, which we reached in a few days, and then remained quietly in camp for a week."

at a minute's notice, we marched out to face the Sikhs, and confronted them at about 80 clock, when our big guns cracked about their ears, and their numerous guns about ours: we seen came to close quarters, and then many a brave men's life departed. A camen ball pays no respect to persons: it will kill generals as well as private soldiers: and when such projectiles are flying about, it is every man for himself; though if a soldier does not want to lose the number of his mess, the closer he keeps to his work the safer. But at such times a curious sensation steals ever even the bravest, for ne one knews but that the next moment may be his last. At the time I went into the field and heard the rear of the guns, I confess that I felt rather curiously, though I do not consider that I was then, or

5. III (C)

am new, anything of a coward. It was a herrid sight to
see the mangled corpses of friends and foes, to hear the
grouns of the dying and the price for help of the wounded:
grouns of the dying and the price for help of the wounded:
those who have never seen a field of battle can not picture
its herrors; nor can they regret know the regret a soldier
its herrors; nor can they regret know the regret a soldier
its herrors; nor can they regret know the field, and amongst
enemy were stewed in thousands all ever the field, and amongst
them were to be seen the lifeless bedies of numbers of our
them were to be seen the lifeless bedies of numbers of our
brave countrymen. I had an opportunity of seeing a great
deal more of the carmage than many others; as I was sent
deal more of the carmage than many others; as I was sent
out the day after the action to assist in burying the dead,
and to bring home the wounded. I am glad to say that we lest
comparatively few of our men, although our regiment was in
the thickest of the fight: by dead and wounded, we were
deprived of 450: among the latter were Caleb Foreman, a
stamford man, who was twice disabled, but not dangerously."

The writer then mentions John Christian from Stamferd, and Sam Woodward from Baston, both of whom were in the action; but received ne wounds. Lunn was himself slightly kurt, but had recovered at the time he wrote the letter. A sen of had recovered at the time he wrote the letter. A sen of abel Blades lest a leg (as stated in a former paper) and at the time of Lunn's writing was in Ferezpere hespital in a state of great suffering, but was expected to rally.

Mercury: 21.8.1846: page 3, column 2:

A letter which appeared in the Mercury of the 15th May was the subject of some observations in the House of Commons on Monday night. It was from a private named Lumn, a native of Stanford, serving in India in the 88th regiment of infantry: and it stated a circumstance which a society in London, called the "Peace Seciety" has since published extensively as illustrative of the cruelty and horror of war. On Saturday last, on agent of the society was in Stamford, making enquiries as to the authenticity of the letter, and the respectability of the writer. He had an interview with the Magistrates, then sitting at the town hall; and he then larned some particulars of the former life of Lunn (who was stated to have been at least ence in that hall under no very respectable circumstances), which satisfied him that it was possible that person's representation of the massacre of Sikh prisoners by the British army on the day after a battle might be a groundless calumny; and such we are bound to say, from all enquiries which have new been made on the subject of Lumn and his letter, we curselves have no doubt whatever is the case.

Simla October 4, 1846

My dear Sir John,

I send you the Commander in Chief's letter in reply to yours.

You gave a true and indignant answer to the charge. I hope the officer's name will be forthcoming. Private Lunn of the 80th shall be examined - a more infamous fabrication never was attempted to be palmed off on public credulity.

The demonaical ferocity alleged to have been committed by the army on the 22nd December is an impossibility. It is an enormous lie and I will not waste government time and mine by taking any further notice of it at present.

If you.....that at the.....of
Ishliff, the same charge was made. I denied the
possibility of such cruelty either at Istihliff
or Ghuznee, and both Sir Genje Pollock and horizon
Sir William Nott, subsequently refuted the
charge in strong terms of reprobation.

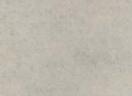
John

Yours my dear, Siz very truly,

Hardinge

Sir John Hobhouse, Bart

British Museum: Add. Ms. 26475: Letter from Hardinge, Governor General of India to Sir John Hobbouse, Bart.



5-111/2