

the 11th were the forerunners of a serious movement, unless the measures which I was adopting speedily broke up the combination, I took all the necessary steps for strengthening the defences of Sherpur, and made every preparation to meet the large force known to be assembling.

“As regards food, ammunition, etc., I had no anxiety at this period. Sufficient supplies were actually stored in Sherpur to last the entire force for nearly four months, with the exception of *bhusa* (chopped straw), of which there was enough for six weeks. There was ample firewood¹ for all purposes; medicines and hospital comforts were sufficient for all possible requirements for a similar time, and there was enough ammunition both for guns and rifles to have carried on an obstinate defence for three or even four months.”

The critical events of the 14th were followed by a period of comparative calm at Sherpur; the garrison of Butkhak was successfully withdrawn, and Sir F. Roberts with his recruited force was able to direct his full attention to strengthening his entrenchments, so as to be able to hold out against any immediate hostile combination until his reinforcements under Brigadier-General C. Gough should arrive from Gandamak.

The enormous extent of the cantonment, together with the unfinished state of its defences, caused some anxiety lest a general attack should be made before the preparations could be completed. For the defence of a perimeter of some 8,000 yards the maximum number of troops available was about 7,000, including cavalry, no allowance being made for reconnaissances or for counter-attack. Colonel Perkins, R.E., was directed to carry out as far as possible a scheme for the defence which had been prepared in November, but postponed, as being at that time less urgent than providing shelter for the troops and collecting supplies.

¹ Large stacks of firewood were fortunately found in the cantonment when first seized; this supply of fuel had apparently been stored for the use of the Amir's troops.



IMPROVING THE DEFENCES 277

Strong working parties were at once employed as follows :

The northern face, and in fact the key of the cantonment, *viz.* the Bimaru heights, had been strengthened by the erection of some towers ; these were now supplemented by a line of breastworks below the outer crests, with emplacements for guns at selected points. The gap in the hills was flanked by trenches and commanded by a blockhouse. The south and west faces (about 2,700 and 1,000 yards long respectively) were already finished and considered fairly secure, consisting of a wall 16 feet high with banquette and parapet, and 30 feet in rear the flat-roofed barracks, also provided with a parapet and forming a second line of defence. Four gateways, however (three in the southern and one in the western face), had to be barricaded and provided with the means of firing from them, while other irregular entrances, which had been made for convenience' sake, were built up. Ramps and ladders were also added to the existing means of access to the outer wall.

At the north-west angle of the defences there was a broad gap between the fall of the Bimaru Hills and the western line of barracks (a portion of which had been destroyed some time previously) ; this was now closed by a ditch and a breastwork of ammunition-wagons, and swept by two 18-prs. and a Gatling gun placed in position on the interior slopes of the Bimaru Hills. It was further strengthened by abattis and wire entanglements.

The eastern face was extremely weak, the outer wall being as yet little higher than its foundations, while a low barrack erected by the 28th Punjab Native Infantry along part of its length was not yet provided with a permanent parapet. It received some assistance, however, from a small fort within the enceinte, which had been used as a hospital, and was now furnished with a sand-bag parapet on the roof, while another small fort some fifty yards in front of the right centre was occupied as a redoubt, and flanked the wall of the barrack.



The north-east corner was further strengthened by a two-gun battery thrown up on the eastern slopes of the heights, while Bimaru village was loopholed, and the open space in front obstructed by abattis and wire entanglements.

Of the outlying buildings in advance of the village some were made defensible and others were destroyed, as well as some of the adjacent woods, the trees of which were largely used as abattis.

The artillery available consisted of twelve field and eight mountain guns, besides such of the captured guns as could be pressed into the service. These latter were placed in position, and consisted of four smooth-bore 18-prs., with about 200 shot and 160 shell, and two 8-inch howitzers with 140 common shell; but owing to the wretched quality of the Afghan fuses the 18-pr. shell had to be filled and used as shot, while our own fuses were wrapped round with wax-cloth, and so made to fit the howitzer shells. There were also four 7-pr. mountain guns of Afghan make, which Colonel Gordon mounted, but their ammunition was so unreliable that their effect proved almost *nil*. The infantry were fairly off for ammunition, having on an average about 350 rounds per man.

The defences of the cantonments were divided into the following sections—shown in the accompanying plan—and their superintendence entrusted to the officers named below :

Section I.—Brigadier-General H. T. Macpherson, C.B., V.C., from the 2nd Brigade gate on the southern face to the Bimaru village on the east.

Section II.—Colonel F. H. Jenkins, C.B., Corps of Guides, from the Bimaru village up to the eastern slope of the Bimaru ridge.

Section III.—Brigadier-General Hugh Gough, C.B., V.C., from the eastern extremity of the Bimaru village to the gorge which divides the ridge.

Section IV.—Major-General J. Hills, C.B., V.C., from the gorge to the head-quarters gate

Section V.—Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brownlow, C.B., 72nd Highlanders, from the head-quarters gate to the 2nd Brigade gate.

Brigadier-General Massy was placed in the centre, whilst Brigadier-General Baker, C.B., commanded the



The north-east corner was further strengthened by a two-gun battery thrown up on the eastern slopes of the heights, while Bimaru village was loopholed, and the open space in front obstructed by abattis and wire entanglements.

Of the outlying buildings in advance of the village some were made defensible and others were destroyed, as well as some of the adjacent woods, the trees of which were largely used as abattis.

The artillery available consisted of twelve field and eight mountain guns, besides such of the captured guns as could be pressed into the service. These latter were placed in position, and consisted of four smooth-bore 18-prs., with about 200 shot and 160 shell, and two 8-inch howitzers with 140 common shell; but owing to the wretched quality of the Afghan fuses the 18-pr. shell had to be filled and used as shot, while our own fuses were wrapped round with wax-cloth, and so made to fit the howitzer shells. There were also four 7-pr. mountain guns of Afghan make, which Colonel Gordon mounted, but their ammunition was so unreliable that their effect proved almost *nil*. The infantry were fairly off for ammunition, having on an average about 350 rounds per man.

The defences of the cantonments were divided into the following sections—shown in the accompanying plan—and their superintendence entrusted to the officers named below :

Section I.—Brigadier-General H. T. Macpherson, c.b., v.c., from the 2nd Brigade gate on the southern face to the Bimaru village on the east.

Section II.—Colonel F. H. Jenkins, c.b., Corps of Guides, from the Bimaru village up to the eastern slope of the Bimaru ridge.

Section III.—Brigadier-General Hugh Gough, c.b., v.c., from the eastern extremity of the Bimaru village to the gorge which divides the ridge.

Section IV.—Major-General J. Hills, c.b., v.c., from the gorge to the head-quarters gate

Section V.—Lieutenant-Colonel F. Brownlow, c.b., 72nd Highlanders, from the head-quarters gate to the 2nd Brigade gate.

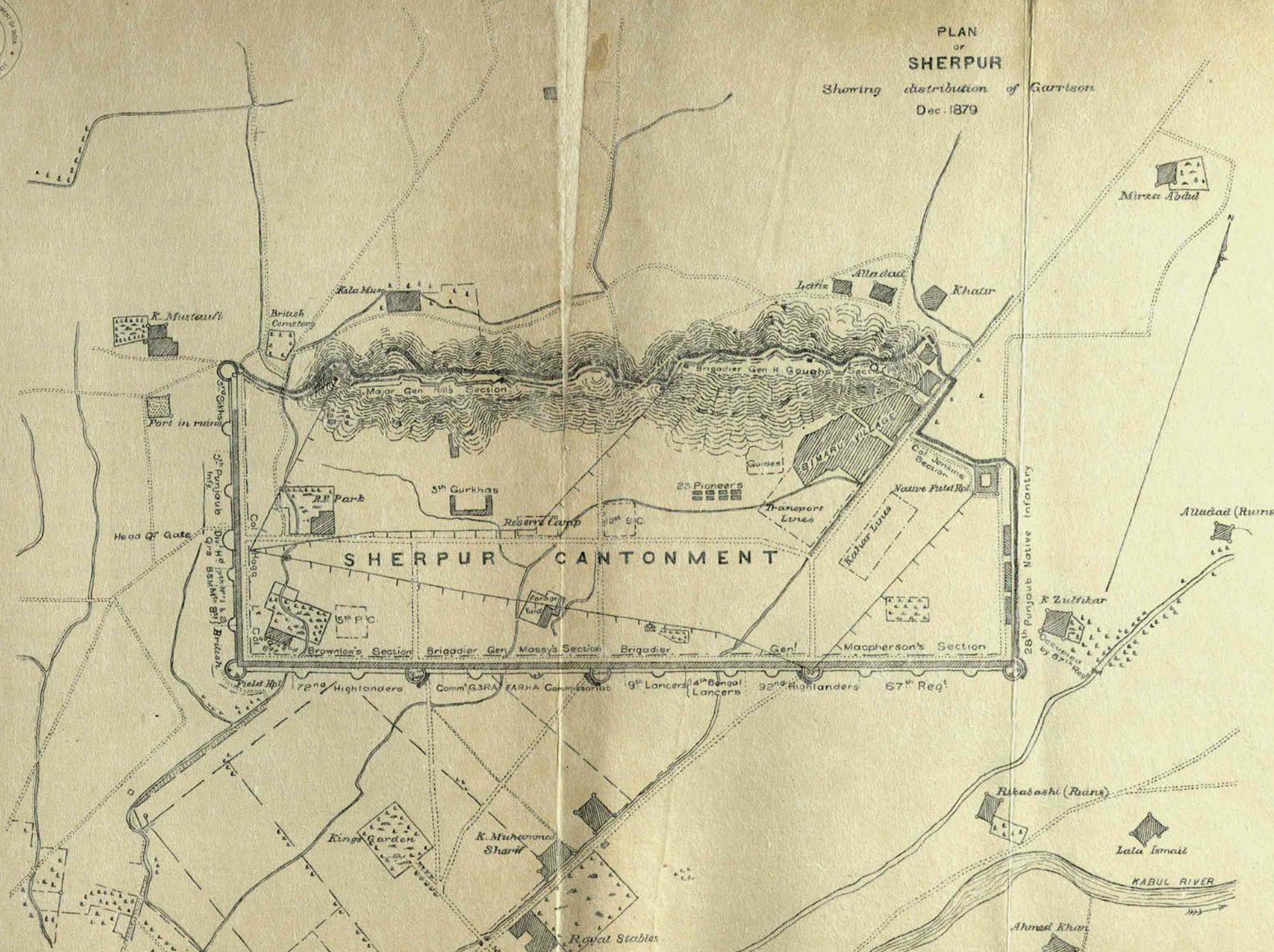
Brigadier-General Massy was placed in the centre, whilst Brigadier-General Baker, c.b., commanded the



CSL

PLAN
OF
SHERPUR

Showing distribution of Garrison
Dec. 1879



Scale 4 Inches = 1 Mile
Yards 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 1100 1200 1300 Yards

By Major R. G. Kennedy
and Lt. Moaviers Smith D. A. G. M. G.



reserve, which was formed up at the southern entrance to the gorge leading to the Bimaru ridge.

Telegraphic communication was established between divisional head-quarters on the west face and the temporary head-quarters of Generals Macpherson, Gough, Hills, and Baker, and the native field hospital. All the sections were also brought into communication with each other and with head-quarters by means of visual signalling.

Every effort was made to place the British position in a thorough state of defence, while the situation or the force was communicated by telegram to the Commander-in-Chief in India, and the advisability of reinforcements being despatched was urged by General Roberts. At the same time orders were sent to Major-General Bright at Jalalabad to move Brigadier-General Charles Gough's brigade to Kabul without loss of time, and to advance Brigadier-General Arbuthnot's brigade as soon as fresh troops should reach Jalalabad from India.

Early on the following morning (15th December) the telegraph wire was cut, communications with the base (at Peshawar) severed for the second time since Kabul was occupied, and the force again isolated. The Lieutenant-General had intended to recall to Sherpur the garrisons of both Butkhak and Lataband, but he finally decided to maintain the latter post, whose situation was a strong one, its ammunition plentiful, and its supplies sufficient to last over the probable date of Brigadier-General Charles Gough's arrival. Sir Frederick Roberts rightly judged that so long as this post was held, no serious opposition would be offered to General Gough's advance. The event amply justified the Lieutenant-General's decision; heliographic communication was kept up with Lataband whenever the weather allowed it during the ensuing week, while a serious attempt on the part of the Afghans against the post on the 16th December was easily frustrated by the troops under Colonel Hudson. The enemy, to the



number of 800 or 1,000, were dispersed with considerable loss, and not a single casualty occurred on the British side.

Meanwhile at Kabul, on the 15th and 16th, the enemy were comparatively inactive, the latter date being occupied with the looting of the city and Bala Hissar, where Muhammad Jan secured large quantities of ammunition, which was reported to consist of 130 tons of powder and 100,000 rounds of Snider ammunition. Eighty tons of powder had already been destroyed by the British.

On the 17th December a hostile demonstration was made by the Afghans on the Asmai heights and the Siah Sang ridge, which was answered by artillery fire from the cantonments and their immediate neighbourhood.

On the 18th the Lieutenant-General learned by heliogram from Lataband, and by a letter from Brigadier-General Charles Gough, that that officer had not yet advanced beyond Jagdalak, owing to the weakness of the force available for the strengthening and reopening of the line of communication. It was, however, of the utmost importance that the force at Sherpur should be enabled to assume the offensive as soon as possible, both for the sake of the prestige of the British, which would seriously suffer if the city of Kabul remained much longer in the hands of the enemy, and because the post of Lataband was only provisioned up to the 23rd. General Roberts, therefore, urged the Commander-in-Chief to instruct Brigadier-General Gough to advance at all hazards. His appeal did not reach head-quarters in India till the 21st. [For an account of the difficulties and delays on the line of communication, see p. 318.]

On the same date, shortly before noon, the enemy issued from the city in great strength and again occupied the Siah Sang ridge and the heights west of Sherpur. By using the cover afforded by the orchards and walls of the suburbs, some of them managed to advance to



within 400 yards of the works; here, however, they were checked by the telling rifle fire of selected marksmen, and they made no attempt to advance further. The British loss was only one sepoy killed, Lieutenant L. Sunderland, 72nd Highlanders, and one man wounded.

During the night the enemy occupied two fortified villages a few hundred yards from the cantonment eastern face, from one of which, Kala Mir Akbar, they caused considerable annoyance to the garrison of the small fortified village which had been transformed into a redoubt at that point and garrisoned by fifty rifles of the 67th. General Baker was accordingly sent out at 9 a.m. on the 19th with 400 each of the 67th and 3rd Sikhs, two guns of No. 2 Mountain Battery, and some sappers, with orders to destroy the fort. In this undertaking twelve men were wounded, as well as Lieutenant C. A. Montanaro, R.A., who received a mortal wound while laying a gun. This young officer had already distinguished himself on the 14th December, and was mentioned by Sir Frederick Roberts for his gallantry on that date. The 19th December was also marked by the death of Major J. Cook, v.c., 5th Gurkhas, of wounds received on the 12th, an officer whose loss was universally deplored, and who was spoken of by the Lieutenant-General in Divisional Orders as having earned "the admiration of the whole force."

On the 20th desultory firing similar to that of previous days was kept up on the cantonments, but beyond throwing out cavalry videttes no sorties were undertaken in reply, nor any attempt made to gain possession of portions of the enemy's position. The British force was not large enough to admit of the General holding such positions when taken; and he considered that had he replied to the enemy's efforts in this manner, he would have been playing their game, and he therefore determined to wait until he could act decisively. Every night information reached the Lieutenant-General that an attack was contemplated, but it was not until the 21st December that the enemy



showed signs of special activity. On that day large numbers of them moved from the city, and, passing round to the eastward of Sherpur, occupied the numerous villages in that direction in very great force. It became apparent that this movement was preparatory to an attack from that quarter; and at the same time the General was informed that the enemy were preparing a number of ladders, with the intention of attacking the southern and western walls by escalade.

On the same date Sir Frederick Roberts received news by heliograph that Brigadier-General Charles Gough's brigade was approaching Seh Baba, and would be at Lataband on the 22nd and would reach Kabul on the 24th. As the Lieutenant-General was very desirous of keeping open his communications with India, and as he felt it most important that General Gough should be fully acquainted with the exact position of affairs at Kabul, and further, as it was very possible that cavalry might be of service in the advance from Lataband, the 12th Bengal Cavalry were despatched at 3 a.m. on the morning of the 22nd December to join hands with Gough's advance guard. Major J. H. Green, who commanded the regiment, was instructed that if Butkhak, through which place he had to pass, was unoccupied by the enemy and proved friendly, he was to halt there, leaving a detachment to watch the Logar bridge, whilst from the other side Colonel Hudson was to push on to Butkhak with the Lataband garrison as soon as the head of General Gough's column arrived at Lataband. Should it be found, however, that Butkhak was hostile, Major Green was to press on to Lataband and unite with the troops there. The latter event proved to be the case, and the cavalry went on as arranged, losing three men killed and three wounded in the operation.

The story of this perilous ride, through a hostile country and in the darkness of a winter night, cannot be better told than in the graphic words of Mr. Hensman (*Afghan War*, p. 250).



"The 12th Bengal Cavalry had a fearful journey outwards. On passing Kala Muhammad Sharif, on their way to the Kabul bridge, they were fired upon by a picquet; and, the alarm being given, the enemy turned out and blocked the way. The cavalry turned off from the road, and struck the river lower down. The water was not very deep, but the banks were steep and slippery, and men and horses fell backwards as they tried to climb up the further bank. It cost two hours to ford the river, the last squadron having to dismount in the stream, crawl up the bank, and drag their horses after them. The sowars were wet through, and two or three horses were drowned. Once over the road to Butkhak was taken, and from every village on the road turned out a few men, who fired upon the horsemen. They, perhaps, mistook them for another convoy of *yabus*. The dismounted men had to be left to return to Sherpur under cover of the darkness. Upon nearing Butkhak, a patrol was sent out; and as it was then near daybreak, they could see men moving about the village. The place was occupied by several hundred Afghans, who opened fire upon the cavalry. The latter could not stay to fight; and Major Green, in command, knowing how impossible it was to return to cantonments, resolved to push on to Lataband. One sowar was shot dead and three others wounded; and the enemy followed so closely, that a squadron was dismounted and ordered to skirmish out with their carbines. This gave time for all stragglers to be got together again, and in a short time the skirmishers were recalled, and the whole regiment trotted off to Lataband. Twelve men were missing, but ten have since reported themselves at Sherpur. They disguised themselves by altering their uniform, and then hid away in *nalas* until evening, when they crept out and made a wide detour to the north, until they reached the open plain between the Wazirabad Lake and the Bimaru Hills. Their horses and accoutrements were lost. The enemy have occupied the village of Khoja Darwesh, about 3 miles



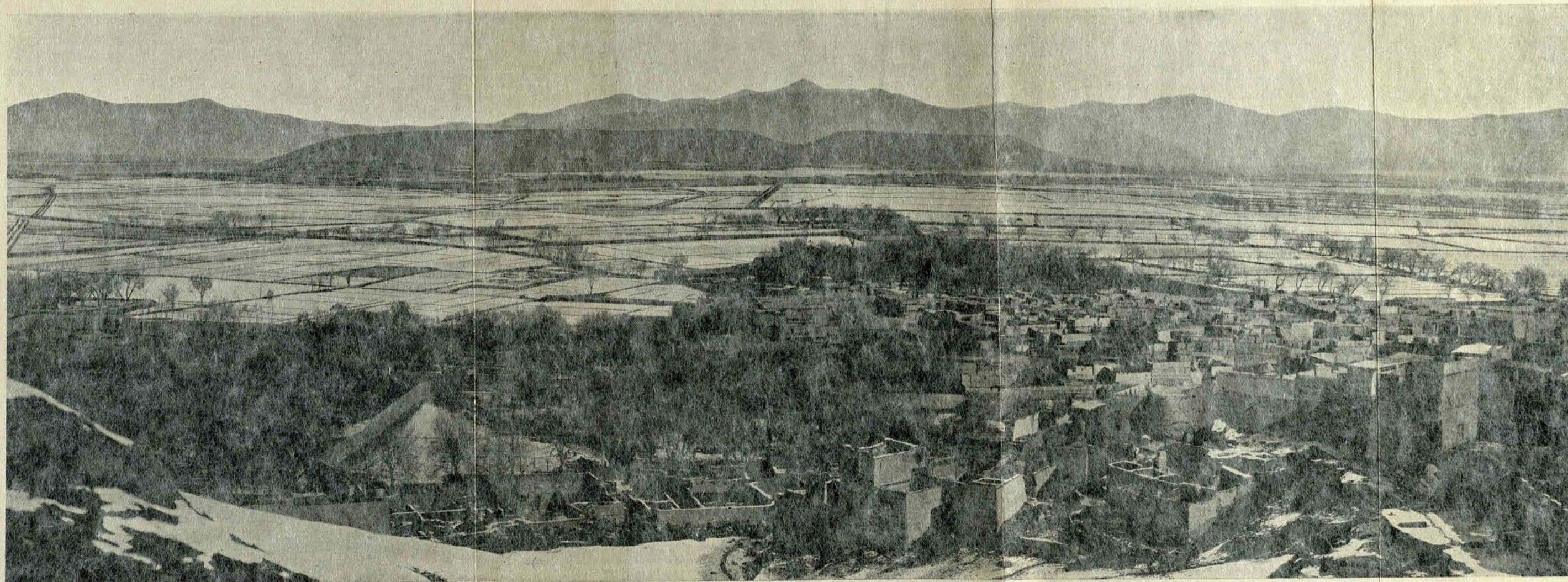
to the east of Sherpur, and are reported to be collecting in force in the forts between Bimaru and this village. They are probably Kohistanis, who have taken the precaution of securing their line of retreat in case of defeat."

The 22nd passed at Sherpur without noteworthy incident. The enemy were, however, aware of the near approach of reinforcements for the British, and they perceived that the moment for decisive action had arrived. Towards evening Sir Frederick Roberts received credible information that a general attack was to be delivered on the following morning; that the real operations would be against the eastern face, supported by a false attack on the southern wall; and that the aged mulla, Mushk-i-Alam, would with his own hand light the beacon fire at dawn on the Asmai heights which was to be the signal for the commencement of the attack. All the British troops were accordingly ordered to be under arms at a very early hour on the 23rd, and at 5.30 the information was proved to be correct, the signal fire appearing on the Asmai Peak and announcing the beginning of the assault.

Heavy firing was opened almost immediately against our southern and eastern faces, and by 7 a.m. an attack in force against the eastern side was fully developed, whilst large numbers of the enemy, provided with scaling ladders, were drawn up under cover of the walls to the south. The guns were at this time in position as follows:

- 2 guns F-A, Royal Artillery, in the 67th bastion; remainder in reserve.
- 2 guns G-3, Royal Artillery, in gorge; 2 guns on north-west spur of Bimaru heights.
- No. 1 Mountain Battery on Bimaru; 2 guns G-3, Royal Artillery, in reserve.
- No. 2 Mountain Battery in bastion to right of 72nd gate.

From 7 a.m. until 10 a.m. the fight was carried on vigorously; repeated attempts were made to carry the low eastern wall by escalade; but though the enemy on several occasions reached the abattis, they were each



SHERPUR FROM DEH-I-AFGHAN, AT THE FOOT OF ASMAI



time repulsed, and many dead marked the spots where the assault had been pressed home. The most determined attack was directed against the sections commanded by General Hugh Gough and Colonel Jenkins, and its defeat was in a great measure due to the excellent dispositions which these officers made.

The troops defending these sections were the Guides Infantry, in the trenches about Bimaru, 100 men of the 28th Punjab Infantry, in the native hospital, and the 67th Foot, reinforced by two companies of the 92nd Highlanders from the reserve. When the attack was first made, it was still so dark and misty that little could be seen in front of the trenches, and orders were given to reserve fire until the advancing masses of Afghans could be clearly distinguished. The men of the 28th Punjab Infantry were the first to open fire, while at the same time General Hugh Gough's guns of No. 1 Battery, under Lieutenant J. C. Shirres, fired star-shells, which, bursting in the air, illumined the attacking force in the fields and enclosures 1,000 yards away. The Guides next joined in the fusillade. To the right of the 28th Punjabi sepoys were the 67th and the 92nd, whose fire was reserved until they were ordered to fire volleys within 200 yards' range on the advancing enemy, some of the ghazis amongst whom advanced to within 80 yards against the concentrated fire. The attack collapsed, and the Afghans hastened behind cover. The cartridges of the defenders were too precious to be wasted, and only when bodies of men got within range were volleys fired at them; but the Afghans were lavish in their expenditure of ammunition, to which they had been able to help themselves without stint from the immense stores at the Bala Hissar.

Meanwhile the heavy Afghan guns under Major C. A. Gorham, on the bastions of the cantonments, had opened fire with round shot and shell whenever opportunity offered. At 10.30 two 9-prs. of F-A, Royal Horse Artillery, were placed on the battery



facing east, and fire was opened from one of them on such bodies of rebels as could be seen among the orchards and villages. Two mountain guns were also in action in the 72nd bastion, and the right division of G-3, Royal Artillery, shelled the enemy at 1,200 yards' range from the west end of Bimaru ridge. Finally Captain Morgan, with two 7-prs., was in action at Bimaru village.

Soon after 10 a.m. a lull took place, but at 11 a.m. the attack was resumed, although it was not marked with the determination of the former period.

Finding that it was impossible to dislodge the enemy by any fire that could be brought to bear upon them from the defences, the General determined to attack them in flank; and for this purpose he directed four guns of G-3, Royal Artillery, and the 5th Punjab Cavalry, under the command of Major Craster and Lieutenant-Colonel Williams respectively, to move out through the gorge in the Bimaru heights. Accordingly between 11 and 12 (noon) Major Craster took four guns of his battery about half a mile beyond the gorge and began to shell a village, Khwaja Kala, under the east end of the ridge, at about 1,500 to 1,600 yards' range. The view was much obscured by willow brushwood, but the fire of the guns had the desired effect. The counter-stroke at once told, and the Afghans, who had doubtless been apprised by their scouts of the arrival of reinforcements on the Logar, wavered and soon began to seek safety in flight.

The time for the action of cavalry had now arrived; General Massy was directed to proceed with every available man and horse, and do his utmost against the enemy. The 5th Punjab Cavalry had already proceeded (as above mentioned) through the gorge to the north-east. As soon as Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, who commanded them, observed that the enemy, now foiled in their attack and disheartened, began to disperse, he advanced to cut off the Kohistanis, who were attempting to retreat to the north, and he



succeeded in twice charging home among them, killing a considerable number. General Massy followed as soon as possible with the remaining cavalry of his brigade, but by the time he arrived the Kohistanis had made good their retreat over the hills. Accordingly, in pursuance of instructions, Massy skirted the village of Khojah Rawash, whence the 14th Bengal Lancers were sent back towards the gorge leading over the hills to Kohistan to block that road; the 5th Punjab Cavalry and 9th Lancers were sent to Siah Sang hills to intercept the retirement towards the city of Kabul, whilst the Guides Cavalry were kept on the plain to the east to prevent the enemy's retreat towards Butkhak. The only three available roads of retreat were thus cut off. The 5th Punjab Cavalry and 9th Lancers engaged the Afghans who were retreating towards Kabul, and both regiments, dismounting, opened a heavy and telling fire upon them. The Guides Cavalry also succeeded in rendering a good account of the enemy more to the eastward.

Meanwhile a party of infantry and sappers moved out to destroy the villages to the south which had already caused considerable annoyance, and which might have impeded the arrival of Brigadier-General Charles Gough's brigade on the following day. In this duty Lieutenant J. Burn-Murdoch, R.E., was wounded, and Captain J. Dundas, V.C., R.E., and Lieutenant C. Nugent, R.E., were accidentally killed by an explosion.

The other casualties on the 23rd December amounted only to three men killed and two officers (Brigadier-General H. Gough¹ and Lieutenant C. F. Gambier) and twenty-eight men wounded—a very trifling loss when the results of the day's fighting are considered. The great combination of the tribesmen was completely dissolved, their forces were scattered, and the wisdom of Sir Frederick Roberts in concentrating his army at Sherpur, and in awaiting the course of events until he

¹ Brigadier-General H. Gough's clothing was penetrated by a bullet, but the *poshtin* he was wearing saved him from anything worse than a contusion.



could deliver a crushing blow from his own position was conclusively proved.

On the 24th not a single Afghan was to be found in the adjacent villages, or visible on the surrounding hills. The city was perfectly clear of them, and so precipitate was their flight, that they left their dead unburied where they fell. By mid-day many parties of them were upwards of 25 miles from Kabul, the rapidity of their retreat being doubtless accelerated by the knowledge that reinforcements were near at hand.

The cavalry, divided into two parties, commanded respectively by Brigadier-Generals Massy and Hugh Gough, proceeded by Beni Hissar and the Chardeh Valley in pursuit; but so rapid had been the enemy's flight and so retarded were the troopers by the heavy snow, that no success attended their efforts, though neither party returned to Sherpur until after nightfall.

The old mulla, Mushk-i-Alam, had carried off the newly proclaimed Amir, the young son of Yakub Khan, Musa Jan, to Ghazni; Muhammad Jan was reported to have fled from the city at 8 a.m. on the 24th; Muhammad Tahir Khan, son of Muhammad Sharif Khan (a state prisoner at Dehra Dun), who had been very active against our troops, was said to have escaped to Wardak.

Meanwhile Brigadier-General Charles Gough had left Lataband with his column at daybreak on the 23rd December, and was able to communicate by heliograph with Sir Frederick Roberts at 1 p.m. from Butkhak. He halted that evening 6 miles from Sherpur, and marched into cantonments without opposition on the following morning, his brigade amounting to 2,000 infantry, 2 squadrons and 6 mountain guns, including Colonel Hudson's Lataband garrison and the 12th Bengal Cavalry under Major Green.

The city of Kabul and the Bala Hissar were again occupied by the troops, the ground at the latter place being first carefully examined and the magazine emptied.



MAP OF KABUL AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY.

TO ILLUSTRATE OPERATIONS OF NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1879.



Scale of Miles
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
London, John Murray.

Camel Track
Mule

W.A.E. Johnston, London, Edinburgh & London.



STRENGTH OF THE ENEMY 289

During the time that the enemy occupied the city and the Bala Hissar, the people, especially the Hindus and Kizilbashs, no doubt suffered considerable inconvenience, and a few, whose relations with the British had been friendly, were ill-treated, but the General had no reason to believe that any large amount of either treasure or valuables was discovered or carried away by the followers of Muhammad Jan.

It was impossible to form any accurate estimate of the numbers of the enemy who had been assembled against the division under Sir Frederick Roberts in the cantonments at Sherpur. The contingents from Kohistan, the Logar and Langar Valleys (Khawat) and other districts had received great accessions to their estimated strength from every hamlet through which they passed, and when within a day's journey of Kabul they had been joined, almost *en masse*, by the population of the numerous surrounding villages, and by many disaffected people of the city. General Roberts calculated the strength of the enemy besieging Sherpur at 60,000 men. Their losses must have been considerable, not less than 3,000 having been killed and wounded.

The average strength of the British force round Kabul during the events from the 15th to the 23rd December was 225 officers, 6,882 men and 24 guns. The losses from the 10th to the 23rd inclusive amounted to 12 officers and 84 men killed, 15 officers and 248 men wounded, exclusive of about 30 followers.

Every exertion was at once made to re-establish communications and to facilitate the advance of troops from the Khyber towards Kabul, whose arrival would have the best possible effect, and convince the Ghilzais and other neighbouring tribes of the power of the British Government.

On the 26th December Butkhak was re-occupied. Major-General R. O. Bright was urged by the General Commanding the Field Force to send up troops to occupy Seh Baba and Lataband, and to push on the



290 THE KHYBER RE-OCCUPIED

telegraph line and re-open communications. General Hills resumed his functions as Military Governor, and Sir Frederick Roberts issued a proclamation announcing a general amnesty to be extended to all insurgents, with the exception of a few of the ringleaders.

On the 27th December Brigadier-General Baker marched from Kabul through deep snow into the Koh-i-daman with four mountain guns, the Guides Cavalry, and 1,700 infantry. The column marched 12 miles and encamped, and on the following day moved another 6 miles to the fortified village of Baba Kushkar belonging to Mir Bacha, the principal leader of the Kohistanis in the late rising, which was found deserted and razed to the ground; all other forts and villages belonging to the same chief were destroyed, his vineyards were cut down, and his fruit-trees ringed. The force then returned to Sherpur, having accomplished its mission without experiencing any opposition.

By the 29th communications with the Khyber were restored, Seh Baba was occupied on the 30th by 200 men from Jagdalak, and Lieutenant-Colonel Money marched from Sherpur with the 3rd Sikhs to re-occupy Lataband.

At the capital all walls and enclosures within 1,000 yards of the Sherpur cantonment were levelled, including the fortified villages of Muhammad Sharif (Rikabashi) and Muhammad Khan, from which the British troops had been much harassed in 1841.



CHAPTER IX

OPERATIONS IN THE KURRAM DISTRICT FROM SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS'S ADVANCE TO KABUL, SEPTEMBER 26TH, 1879, TO THE END OF THE YEAR.

THE restlessness and lawlessness of the hill tribes in the neighbourhood of the Kurram Valley were not long in showing themselves after the departure of Sir Frederick Roberts from Ali Khel on the 26th September, 1879. The first outrage committed was the murder on the 30th September, near Sapri, of Lieutenant F. G. Kinloch, 5th Bengal Cavalry, who was on his way to join the 12th Bengal Cavalry at Kurram Fort. This act led to the issue by Brigadier-General T. E. Gordon, C.S.I., who had taken over command of the Kurram Valley from Major-General Roberts, of more stringent orders regarding the strength of posts and convoys and their hours of marching. A punitive expedition against the Zaimukhts was also sanctioned by the Government of India, but owing to subsequent events this had to be postponed for a time.

On the 2nd October the hostility of the Mangals and Ghilzais, which had manifested itself in attempts to impede the advance to Kushi of the 1st Division, found vent in an attack on the entrenched camp on the Shutargardan, where the following garrison had been left under command of Lieutenant-Colonel G. N. Money, 3rd Sikhs:

No. 1 Mountain Battery, 4 guns (Captain H. R. L. Morgan).
3rd Sikhs (Major C. J. Griffiths).
21st Punjab Infantry (Major F. W. Collis).

This force had no reserve ammunition.



VIGOROUS REPRISALS

As early as 7 a.m. on the date mentioned large numbers of the enemy were observed on the heights overlooking the crest of the Shutargardan Pass. Colonel Money at first refrained from firing on them in consequence of the representations of Captain Turner, the Political Officer, who hoped that Ala-ud-din Khan, younger brother to Padshah Khan, head of the Ghilzais, who was momentarily expected in camp, would have sufficient influence to induce the tribesmen to come to terms and to withdraw without bloodshed. Padshah Khan had been ousted in favour of his younger brother in negotiations with the British, and the attitude of the tribe was no longer friendly. At the same time it was important that heliographic communication with the Field Force should be kept up. An attempt to occupy a position favourable for this purpose was opposed by the Ghilzais, who, moreover, emboldened by the apparent hesitation of the British, continued to advance, and fired several shots into the outlying picquets. Colonel Money now felt that the time for negotiation was passed, and that vigorous reprisals should be made on the aggressive tribesmen. An advance was ordered, the four guns, No. 1 Mountain Battery, which were posted in divisions on the right and left, beginning at the same time to shell the enemy. Major Griffiths, with 200 rifles of the 3rd Sikhs and 50 rifles of the 21st Punjab Infantry, under Captain G. H. C. Dyce, advanced to storm the position occupied by the tribesmen, 150 rifles of the 21st Punjab Infantry being kept in reserve. Major Griffiths was wounded almost immediately, and the command then devolved on Captain W. B. Aislabie, who led the assault with complete success. The artillery fire was most effectual in keeping down the enemy's cross-fire, which would otherwise have caused annoyance and more loss. Thanks to this and to the suddenness of the attack the position was carried with but slight loss, amounting to only one British officer and six men wounded. The enemy fled in the utmost confusion



before the British advance, and dispersed to their homes without making any attempt to rally. The bravery displayed on this occasion by Jemadar Ganesha Singh (Dogra), 3rd Sikhs, was brought prominently to notice by Colonel Money.

This repulse seemed, however, to have only a temporary effect in the neighbourhood. Annoyances on the line of communications continued, the telegraph was cut more than once, and on the 13th October Brigadier-General Gordon at Ali Khel received a telegram late at night from Mr. Christie, Political Officer at Kurram, to the effect that a number of Mangals and Jajis had assembled to make an attack on either or both posts of Paiwar and Ali Khel. At day-break on the 14th the enemy advanced against a tower on the left front of the camp at Ali Khel, and engaged the picquet which was posted there. Immediately afterwards they showed in great force on the right, and advanced boldly over broken ground to within 80 yards of two towers and a palisade held on that flank by the 29th Punjab Infantry. They also appeared lower down in the ravines, and engaged the picquets posted there by the 2-8th Foot. They had evidently taken up their position during the darkness, and waited for the first daylight to make their attack. A portion of the 29th Punjab Infantry was ordered to sally out through the palisade and drive them off, which operation was performed most effectually by the detachment under Lieutenant H. P. Picot, followed up by supports under Major C. E. D. Branson and Lieutenant R. W. Macleod, and, with the assistance of parties of the 2-8th Foot and 11th Bengal Infantry, the enemy were completely repulsed. Captain H. G. Grant, Brigade-Major, then took out 50 troopers of the 12th Bengal Cavalry and 5th Punjab Cavalry by the front of the camp, and passing up the broad bed of the Rokian stream, intercepted the enemy and cut up some twenty of them. In front of the British infantry position the tribesmen were forced to abandon twenty-four bodies



of their dead and three wounded men, who were brought into camp.

While this was happening on the right, the enemy also showed in strength at the end of the plateau on the left flank, coming up the ravines leading from the Paiwar Kotal stream. They were at once driven out from their advanced position by a detachment of the 5th Gurkhas and party of the 11th Bengal Infantry under Colonel P. H. F. Harris. The Afghans then crossed the stream and took up a fresh position on the rocky and wooded ridges above, whence, however, they were quickly dispersed by the fire of the three guns of C-4 Battery, and were pursued for some distance by the infantry.

The casualties of the British were six men of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, 11th Bengal and 29th Punjab Infantry slightly wounded. Five prisoners were taken, including three wounded men. It was estimated that 1,500 to 2,000 men were engaged in the attack.

A simultaneous and still more determined attempt was made to overpower Colonel Money's post on the Shutargardan. On the 13th October intelligence was received there that the Ghilzais were again assembling and bent on disturbing the road near Karatiga and Surkh Kotal; and at 9 p.m. information arrived that the telegraph wire was cut and the enemy were in possession of the road, intending to attack the post at Surkh Kotal, which was held by 90 rifles under a British officer. Accordingly Lieutenant-Colonel Money directed Major Collis, commanding 21st Punjab Infantry, to take two companies of his regiment and two guns of the Kohat Mountain Battery and to accompany the relief (90 rifles) which was about to proceed to the Surkh Kotal post. At 8 a.m. on the 14th heavy firing was heard, and intelligence was brought that 2,000 Ghilzais had attacked the Surkh Kotal at daybreak, and were then engaged with Major Collis's detachment. Major Griffiths was at once ordered out in support, with two companies of the 3rd Sikhs; while two



companies of the 21st Punjab Infantry and one mountain gun, were directed to take possession of the ridge above the camp. The latter party was only just in time, as the enemy, who were advancing in force from the south of the camp (where the action took place on the 2nd), were within 50 yards of the ridge when the Punjab Infantry arrived, and were with difficulty dislodged. Later on a very large body of the enemy again endeavoured, with great pertinacity, to force this ridge, and the detachment there was reinforced by two additional companies of the 3rd Sikhs under Lieutenant-Colonel Money in person.

In the meantime, in obedience to instructions, Major Collis had moved out of the camp at the Shutargardan, at 7 a.m., with Captain Morgan, R.A., and one mountain gun, Lieutenant Fasken and 50 rifles of the Sikhs, and Captains W. E. Gowan and Dyce, Lieutenant W. H. Young and 140 rifles of the 21st Punjab Infantry, with a view to relieving the post at Surkh Kotal, and covering a detachment which was bringing up a convoy of ammunition from Karatiga. On arrival at Surkh Kotal, Major Collis found that the post was then being attacked by a considerable number of hillmen. He at once engaged the enemy, and his little force were already dislodging them from their positions when the arrival of Major Griffiths's reinforcement completed their discomfiture for the time and drove them from the hills above Surkh Kotal with considerable loss. Nevertheless, the Afghans having been in turn reinforced by large numbers, renewed the attack, and endeavoured once more to establish themselves on the neighbouring heights, in which, however, they were frustrated by the gallantry of the 3rd Sikhs and 21st Punjab Infantry, and by the accurate fire of Captain Morgan's guns. The enemy now broke, and were pursued for more than a mile, the guns continuing to shell them until they were out of range. Their strength was estimated at 3,000, of whom they left 40 dead on the field. The British loss was two men killed,



296 A STRENUOUS EFFORT RESISTED

Captain D. M. D. Waterfield, R.A., and seven men wounded.

On the following day (October 15th) Colonel Money was informed that the enemy had been largely reinforced, and that their numbers were now from 10,000 to 17,000. He therefore resolved to concentrate his small force, and accordingly abandoned the post on the Surkh Kotal. On the 16th the numbers of the tribesmen were said to have still further risen, and as Colonel Money was very uncertain as to when news of his position would be received at Kabul or assistance reach him, he determined to act as much as possible on the defensive, to be sparing of ammunition, and to endeavour to draw the tribesmen on to expose themselves. On the 18th October the British position was completely surrounded and the water supply cut off; but meantime a force had started from Kabul on the previous day under Brigadier-General Hugh Gough, and on the morning of the 19th this force arrived at Kushi and heliographic communication was established with the Shutargardan post. Having support near at hand, and feeling sure that the fact would have a strong moral effect on the enemy, Colonel Money decided to resume the offensive. Skirmishers were sent out to drive off the enemy's sharpshooters from below the plateau to the west of the camp, and access was re-opened to a water-spring near the Kushi road. At the same time the four guns of the Kohat Battery, under Captain Morgan and Lieutenants W. H. Frith and J. C. Shirres, opened a heavy fire of shell and shrapnel on the whole of the enemy's line. On this an immediate movement was observable amongst them; their fire slackened, and before long ceased altogether, a rapid retreat commenced, and before evening there was not a man to be seen. The British casualties on this day were eight men wounded.

On the arrival of General Hugh Gough at the Shutargardan the Karatiga road was at once re-opened, in order that the mails might be forwarded from Ali



Khel, as well as the details of regiments who were waiting to join their head-quarters at Kabul. After this object had been accomplished, the 21st Punjab Infantry was sent back to Ali Khel (as related in Chapter VII.), the remainder of the Shutargardan force and the 9th Lancers returned with General Hugh Gough to Kabul, and the post on the Shutargardan was evacuated for the winter.

Meanwhile the hostility of the tribesmen which had been shown by the attack on the Shutargardan was also felt at Balesh Khel, and at points in the Hariab Valley. At the former place a demonstration by some 5,000 of the enemy was speedily dispersed by a small force under Colonel R. G. Rogers, commanding the post; while an advance from Ali Khel into the Chakmanni Valley had an excellent effect in scattering the combinations of the Afghans. Brigadier-General Gordon, however, considered that the available British force would be more advantageously disposed on a less extended line now that communication with Kabul was broken, and advocated a retirement from the Hariab Valley, and the establishment of our most advanced post at the Paiwar Kotal.

This suggestion was adopted, but before the troops were moved from Ali Khel, General T. E. Gordon was recalled to Simla and was succeeded in the command of the Kurram district by Brigadier-General J. Watson, C.B., V.C. General Gordon remained, however, at General Watson's request, until the arrangements for the evacuation were complete. By the 8th November the post at Ali Khel was abandoned, and the troops there fell back to Kurram, turning aside for a few days into the Chakmanni country to enforce the payment of a fine inflicted as a punishment for the share taken by the Chakmanni in the late disturbances.

No obstacle now stood in the way of the punitive expedition into the Zaimukht Valley which, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, was sanctioned by Government as far back as the 4th October, but which



had been postponed for various reasons. As originally ordered, this expedition was to be under the command of Brigadier-General J. A. Tytler, C.B., V.C., and a column composed as follows concentrated at Balesh Khel on the last day of November, 1879¹: Brigadier-General Watson being in chief military and political charge of the Kurram District, accompanied the force to Zawo.

Adequate transport for the force had not yet been collected at Balesh Khel, in consequence of which a further delay of a week occurred, which was, however, utilised by the Brigadier in obtaining information about the country to be traversed. Several reconnoitring parties were pushed forward on the 30th November and following days, without meeting with any opposition or hostility, except a few shots fired by Massuzai villagers

¹ For a fuller account of this expedition see *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, Vol. II.

Native Cavalry.

1st Bengal Cavalry	. . .	57	} Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Low, 13th Bengal Lancers.
13th Bengal Lancers	. . .	155	
18th Bengal Cavalry	. . .	55	

Artillery.

1-8, Royal Artillery (4 guns 7-pr. M.L.R. jointed, 2 divisions)	. . .	195	Major J. Haughton, R.A.
No. 1 Mountain Battery (2 guns 7-pr.)	. . .	78	Lieutenant H. N. Jervois, R.A.

European Infantry.

2-8th Regiment	. . .	41	} Captain D. A. Grant, 85th Foot.
85th Light Infantry	. . .	733	

Native Infantry.

13th Bengal Infantry	. . .	323	Lieutenant-Colonel W. Playfair.
4th Punjab Infantry	. . .	557	Lieutenant-Colonel H. P. Close.
20th Punjab Infantry	. . .	399	Colonel R. G. Rogers, C.B.
29th Punjab Infantry	. . .	568	Colonel J. J. H. Gordon, C.B.
No. 8 Company Sappers and Miners (half company)	. . .	57	Lieutenant H. P. Leach, R.E.
Medical officers	. . .	8	Surgeon-Major W. C. Boyd.

Total . . . 3,226



on the 3rd December, which did no damage and were not replied to. At length, the route of the column having been determined upon, and the transport having arrived, Brigadier-General Tytler began his march on the 8th December, his force carrying eleven days' supplies, while sufficient for a further ten days had been collected at Doaba, and was to be forwarded thence to meet the column at Torawari. Starting from Balesh Khel, the force reached Gwaki on the 8th December, and next day pushed on to Manatu. Next day three separate columns were sent out to destroy the villages in the Wattizai Valley. On the 12th the force advanced to Chinarak and next day a portion of the force moved out to attack Zawo, a noted stronghold of the tribe. Hitherto the enemy had offered no serious opposition, and at Zaithunak and Chinarak the villagers had given in their submission.

Zawo is a regular mountain fastness, approachable by three paths, one up a difficult ravine about 8 miles long and in places only 10 feet wide, and the other two by tracks over difficult hills. General Tytler decided to advance up the ravine with the main body, but detached Colonel Gordon with a column to protect his right by an advance along the hills, while a smaller flanking detachment moved along the spurs on the left.

The main body reached Bagh, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Chinarak, without opposition, but after a very difficult march. Meanwhile Colonel Gordon, advancing along the hills, came upon the enemy in a strong position. A direct attack having failed, the position was turned, but even then the enemy did not retire until turned out after a sharp hand-to-hand encounter, when they retreated to a second position, from which they had again to be driven. Colonel Gordon, having at last gained possession of the ridge, bivouacked for the night on its crest.

On the 14th the advance was continued as before, and Colonel Gordon, after driving the enemy before him, occupied the high ground flanking the approach



300 A SUCCESSFUL EXPEDITION

to Zawo by the ravine. The main body, leaving a detachment at Bagh, pushed on to Zawo, but, on nearing the village, had to move in single file under a heavy fire and shower of rocks from the heights on the left. The summit of the pass being gained, detachments were sent down to destroy the villages. Having effected their object, the troops returned to Chinarak unmolested, for which the reason appears to be that the enemy had, in their hand-to-hand encounters with the right column, lost heavily.

On the 17th the force moved to Sperkhwait, and from thence a detachment proceeded next day to destroy Yasta, which was effected without much opposition. On the 21st the force returned to Chinarak, where the submission of certain sections was received. On the 22nd the force marched to Sangroba and a detachment was sent on down the valley to the villages of Hadmela and Dilragha. A fine of Rs. 7,000 was levied on the three last-named villages, of which Rs. 3,100 were paid on the spot, and hostages given for the payment of the balance within five days. Two men, who were implicated in the murder of a syce of the 1st Bengal Cavalry in August, were caught at Dilragha and were shot in front of the villagers.

On the 23rd the force reached Thal, where it was broken up.

The expedition was completely successful, severe punishment had been inflicted in the destruction of villages, their strongholds Zawo and Yasta had been penetrated, and the tribe forced to offer their submission at Chinarak. The total amount of fines imposed amounted to Rs. 26,100, and was realised.

Our casualties were slight, consisting of one British officer (Lieutenant Renny, 4th Punjab Infantry) and one sepoy killed and two men wounded.

About this time the rising of the tribes round Kabul, and the confinement of the division there to the Sherpur cantonments, was the cause of hostile demonstrations against Thal, Kurram and Paiwar; the



THE NATIVE REGIMENTS

301

tribesmen, however, dispersed to their homes without hostilities on receipt of news of the re-occupation of Kabul by General Roberts.

On the 22nd December Brigadier-General Watson brought to the notice of the Adjutant-General in India the desirability of relieving several of the regiments of the native army then serving in the Kurram command. Thus the 1st Bengal Cavalry had 105 men and 124 horses short of strength, 107 men on sick leave, besides a large proportion in hospital. The horses of the regiment were in very poor condition, and quite unfit for hard service. The 11th Bengal Infantry wanted 113 men to complete strength and had about 250 men in hospital and absent on sick leave, and General Watson feared that by the end of the cold season the regiment would have but a very few men in its ranks fit for duty. The 20th Punjab Infantry had not a large number sick or absent on sick leave, but it was 206 short of its numbers and had suffered a good deal in the Khyber the previous year. The 21st Punjab Infantry was 114 short of numbers, had 142 sick in hospital, and upwards of 50 away on sick leave. The 29th Punjab Infantry was only 51 short, and had not a large number sick; but, including the Jowaki campaign, it had been by this time three years in the field, and deserved relief.

At the end of the year various movements of troops were ordered in the Kurram Valley, the 1st Bengal Cavalry being directed to proceed to Thal. Brigadier-General Tytler was ordered to take command of all troops at and below Balesh Khel, while Brigadier-General J. J. H. Gordon commanded at and above Kurram Fort.¹

¹ The distribution of the troops in the Kurram Valley on the 31st December is shown in Appendix XVI.

CHAPTER X

OPERATIONS ON THE KHYBER LINE, SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER, 1879.

WHEN the news of the attack on Sir Louis Cavagnari's Embassy reached Simla on the 5th September, 1879, the British troops under Brigadier-General Doran in the Khyber were distributed as follows :

At Landi Kotal.

Cavalry	.	.	.	10th Bengal Lancers (2 squadrons).
Artillery	.	.	.	{ 11-9, Royal Artillery.
				{ No. 4 (Hazara) Mountain Battery.
Infantry	{	British	.	{ 1st Battalion, 12th Foot.
			.	{ 1st Battalion, 17th Foot.
	{	Native	.	{ 24th Punjab Infantry.
			.	{ 27th Punjab Infantry.
Sappers	.	.	.	"A" Company, Bengal Sappers.

At Ali Masjid.

Infantry	.	.	.	{ 39th Bengal Infantry.
				{ 45th Sikhs.

At Jamrud.

Cavalry	.	.	.	10th Bengal Lancers (1 squadron).
Infantry	.	.	.	2 companies (from Peshawar).

The pass was, for some portion of its length, in charge of a *jazailchi* corps under Lieutenant G. Gaisford, which was intended for escort and orderly work and to hold certain posts. His command consisted of 259 men at the end of the first campaign, and was gradually increased to a total of 400.

Steps were at once taken to strengthen this line of advance on Kabul, and on the 9th September a project was forwarded from the Adjutant-General's office to the Government of India for the support of General



GENERAL BRIGHT'S BRIGADES 303

Roberts's advance by a movement from this direction. The proposals put forward were to create depots along the Khyber route with the least possible delay and with a minimum force, and gradually to increase the posts as fresh troops arrived. For this purpose the following troops would be required :

1 British Cavalry Regiment.	1 Horse Artillery Battery.
11 squadrons of Native Cavalry.	8 Mountain Train guns.
1 Heavy Battery.	2 British Infantry Regiments.
1 Field Battery.	5 Native Infantry Regiments.
2 companies of Sappers and Miners.	

Major-General R. O. Bright was named to command the operations and all the troops from the Indus to the front of the line of communications, with the following brigades under him holding sections of the line :

Base at Peshawar, Brigadier-General J. C. G. Ross, c.B., commanding the Peshawar District.

3rd Brigade, Jamrud to Basawal, Brigadier-General J. Doran, c.B.

2nd Brigade, advance depot and brigade at Jalalabad, Brigadier-General C. G. Arbuthnot, c.B.

1st Brigade, Safed Sang to Jagdalak, with movable column at Gandamak, Brigadier-General C. S. Gough, c.B., v.c.

The first move was to be to Dakka, which was to be occupied as soon as possible by the Guides Corps with two guns of the Hazara Mountain Battery, and a supply depot formed with rations for 10,000 men for two months; from Dakka further advances were to be made, as troops and supplies arrived, to Jalalabad and Gandamak. On the 10th September the Commander-in-Chief asked for sanction for the immediate move to Dakka of the 10th Bengal Lancers, the Hazara Mountain Battery, and the 24th Punjab Infantry, contemplating a further advance to Basawal as soon as the Guides should arrive at Dakka. This he proposed to do in order to give confidence to the Governor and people of Jalalabad, for up to this date it was taken for granted that the Amir's garrison would hand over the fort of Dakka at once to the British. But on the 11th a reconnaissance to within half a mile of Dakka, as well as reports from the Khyber, showed that, though the



304 DIFFICULTIES OF TRANSPORT

regular infantry of the Amir's garrison still held Dakka, yet resistance might be expected beyond that point; that six Herati regiments were advancing towards the Khyber from Kabul, and that efforts were being made by the mullas to excite a general rising of the tribes.

The instructions regarding the advance were therefore modified, and the movement beyond Landi Kotal delayed until that post could be further strengthened.

Major-General R. O. Bright, c.B., arrived at Peshawar on the 15th September, and was followed on the 20th and 21st by Brigadier-Generals C. Gough, c.B., v.C., and C. G. Arbuthnot, c.B., who were appointed respectively to the command of the 1st and 2nd Brigades of the Khyber Field Force, as the line of communication was called. Meantime the movement of troops to the frontier continued, and the work of organising the Field Force was pushed forward with such haste as was possible. But in addition to the sickly state of the regiments at Peshawar, the Major-General had to cope with other and even more serious obstacles to his advance. The difficulties in the way of obtaining transport were enormous. All available carriage, both in the station and district of Peshawar, as well as a considerable portion of the movable column carriage, was being diverted to the Kurram Division for the advance of that force on Kabul. Arrangements were, however, at once entered into for sending supplies to Landi Kotal by contract. At first there were some difficulties in carrying out the contracts owing to the *Id* festival; but the service afterwards proceeded with regularity, and supplies were sent forward daily.

On the 25th September Brigadier-General C. Gough reported from Landi Kotal that the Amir had written to his officials positively forbidding opposition to the advance of the British troops. On the 29th the Guides, with two guns of the Hazara Mountain Battery, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel F. H. Jenkins, occupied Dakka without opposition, whither he was followed the next day by the 10th Bengal Lancers and



the 24th Punjab Infantry, together with Brigadier-General Charles Gough and his staff.

The strength of the Khyber Field Force on the 28th September was 1,385 British and 4,060 natives. (For the composition of the whole force see Appendix XIII.)

Brigadier-General C. Gough, with the advance column, continued his march on the 2nd October as far as Basawal, thence, as soon as supplies and transport allowed, to Barikao, and on the 12th idem the Guides occupied the fort at Jalalabad. The slowness of this advance was occasioned in part by the difficulty in procuring supplies, while the lack of transport was terribly felt, the column having to depend principally on carts, almost the whole of which broke down in the march from Basawal to Barikao, and incalculable extra fatigue and exposure were thus entailed on the baggage guards. Only half the necessary transport being available, three days were consumed for each daily stage of the forward move.

Meanwhile Brigadier-General Arbuthnot with the 2nd Brigade, except the Carabiniers who had not yet joined, advanced as far as Jamrud, and General Bright with divisional head-quarters was at Ali Masjid on the 8th October and Landi Kotal on the 9th. At the former place the amount of sickness amongst the troops was most deplorable, the 2nd and 39th Bengal Infantry regiments being almost entirely *hors de combat*.

On the 12th October orders were received for General C. Gough to send forward a flying column under Colonel Jenkins, C.B., to consist of the Guides, a wing of the 9th Foot, and the Hazara Mountain Battery, which was to reach Gandamak as quickly as possible. The object of this move was to overawe the Ghilzais and to intercept fugitives of the Afghan regiments broken up at the battle of Chaharasia, news of which had been received a few days before.

Considering, however, the weakness of the force at his disposal, the scarcity of supplies, and the want of



306 THE HEAVY BATTERY RETURNS

transport, General Gough was of opinion that such a deduction from his troops would only invite disaster, as he could not afford supports; and, should the column be despatched, there would remain with him only one troop of cavalry, a wing of British infantry, and a wing of native infantry, with no guns, and only three days' supplies. Gandamak, moreover, was fully 28 miles from Jalalabad, and the feeling of the country was very doubtful, and even reported hostile; whilst the smallness of the force at Jalalabad, even without reductions from it, almost invited attack. In view of these facts the flying column was not despatched, as proposed, to Gandamak, but a day or two later it was advanced as far as Fatehabad.

About the same time the heavy battery (13-9) was ordered back to India, as its services were no longer required, now that Sir Frederick Roberts's division had occupied the city of Kabul. Thus on the evening of the 17th October the following was the distribution of troops between Landi Khana (divisional head-quarters) and Jalalabad:

Fatehabad

(Under Colonel Jenkins).

Guides Cavalry (220 sabres).	2-9th Foot (wing) (300 rifles).
No. 4 (Hazara) Mountain Battery.	Guides Infantry (480 rifles).

Jalalabad

(Head-quarters of Brigadier-General Charles Gough's, 1st Brigade).

10th Bengal Lancers (2½ squadrons).	2-9th Foot (wing).
C-3, Royal Artillery (4 guns).	24th Punjab Infantry (5 companies).
No. 6 Company Sappers and Miners.	

Ali Boghan.

24th Punjab Infantry (1 company).

Barikao.

10th Bengal Lancers (1 troop).	24th Punjab Infantry (2 companies).
--------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Basawal

(Head-quarters of Brigadier-General Arbuthnot's, 2nd Brigade).

3rd Bengal Cavalry (1 squadron).	1-12th Foot (2 companies).
C-3, Royal Artillery (2 guns).	51st Light Infantry (2 companies).
27th Punjab Infantry (2 companies).	

Dakka.

3rd Bengal Cavalry (1 squadron).	27th Punjab Infantry (6 companies).
11-9, Royal Artillery (2 guns).	45th Sikhs (1 company).



On the 19th October Brigadier-General Charles Gough was authorised to continue his march with the main body of his brigade as soon as he should think fit, as Sir Frederick Roberts from Kabul was pressing for his advance to Safed Sang. Transport was now available in the form of 1,000 camels belonging to nomad Afghan traders (*Kuchis*), which reached Jalalabad on the same date, and arrangements were made to march on the following day.

A garrison of two guns C-3, Royal Artillery, and detachments of the 10th Bengal Lancers and 27th Punjab Infantry was left at Jalalabad, and the remainder of the force united with Colonel Jenkins' column near Fatehabad. Its further advance, however, was here again delayed by the news of the Amir's abdication. It was believed that this intelligence would materially affect the attitude of the Mohmands and the people of Jalalabad, and General C. Gough was accordingly ordered not to leave the vicinity of that place until the line of communications should have been strengthened. Meanwhile a reconnaissance was pushed on to Safed Sang; the divisional head-quarters and those of Brigadier-General Arbuthnot moved to Basawal, and the 27th Punjab Infantry (1st Brigade) and the 45th Sikhs (2nd Brigade) exchanged places.

About the same time an attempt was made to negotiate with the Ghilzai chief Asmatulla Khan, in consequence of a letter from Sir F. Roberts urging that he should be induced to visit him at Kabul.

On the 23rd October a further advance was made, the 1st Brigade moving to Fort Battye and occupying Gandamak with an advance guard composed of the Guides and the Hazara Mountain Battery, while on the same date General Bright's head-quarters marched to Barikao and thence on the following day to Jalalabad. Brigadier-General C. Gough's main body also advanced to Gandamak and encamped there on the 24th October.

Here the brigade was ordered to halt, while arrangements were made for opening communications with the



1st Division. In a despatch received by Brigadier-General C. Gough on the 26th, Sir Frederick Roberts announced that about the first week in November he would be able to despatch a strong brigade towards Gandamak to co-operate with an advance from that place. Major-General Bright therefore determined to employ the 1st Brigade of his division as a movable column, to advance to Jagdalak, or further if necessary, and to meet the brigade from Kabul.

Meanwhile a darbar was held at Jalalabad by the Major-General on the 30th October, at which the intentions of the British Government were explained to the ex-Amir's Governor. On this occasion apparently trustworthy information was received that the Ghilzai chiefs had decided not to oppose the British advance.

On the 1st November General Bright proceeded to visit the camp of the 1st Brigade at Gandamak, which place was now in telegraphic communication with the head-quarters of the division.

Preparations had been made for the early advance of the brigade, to join hands with the Kabul force. The scale of baggage had been reduced to a minimum, calculated for a ten days' absence. Officers were allowed one mule between two; British soldiers, one mule between nine; native soldiers, one mule between ten; followers, one mule between sixteen. Reinforcements had also arrived at the front, including I-A, Royal Horse Artillery, No. 2 Company of Sappers and Miners, and detachments of the 24th Punjab Infantry and 45th Sikhs and of the 51st Light Infantry.

On the 1st November a messenger arrived at Gandamak from Kabul, from which place he had set out at 2 p.m. on the 30th October, bringing with him a copy of the instructions issued to General Macpherson, in command of the column about to start from Kabul. On receipt of this intelligence, preparations for the march of Gough's brigade were at once made, and on the morning of the 3rd November the following force, taking seven days' supplies, marched out of camp



GOUGH'S BRIGADE

309

to the old cantonments, thus getting clear of Gandamak and crossing two stony river-beds, which considerably delayed the baggage animals :

		Strength.	Total.
Cavalry .	{ Guides Cavalry	200	
	{ 10th Bengal Lancers	100	
		<hr/>	300
Artillery .	{ 2 guns I-A, Royal Horse Artillery	38	
	{ Hazara Mountain Battery	200	(3 guns)
		<hr/>	
Infantry .	{ British 9th Foot	425	425
	{ Native		
		{ Guides Infantry	500
		{ 24th Punjab Infantry	500
		{ Nos. 2 and 6 Companies Sappers and Miners	100
		<hr/>	1,100
			<hr/>
			1,825
			<hr/>

At 8.30 on the 4th November the force marched for Jagdalak, the Guides Infantry, which were in the advance guard, being ordered to crown the heights on either side whenever necessary. The crowning parties were in turn relieved by the 9th Foot and 24th Punjabis as those regiments came up. After an uneventful march of 8 miles the brigade encamped at Surkhab.

On the 5th November the column marched at 7.30 a.m. in the same order as on the previous day, with the exception that 150 of the 24th Punjabis were sent on with the advance guard for the purpose of crowning the heights and holding them till the arrival of the rear guard, thus saving the labour entailed by relieving the crowning parties from different portions of the column. The two guns of I-A, Royal Horse Artillery, were left at Surkhab, and two companies of the 45th Sikhs were sent out from Gandamak as an escort to them. A halt of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours was made at the Pezwan Kotal, to enable the baggage (which was much delayed by a very difficult ascent from the Surkhab Valley) to close up. A second halt was made on the Jagdalak Kotal, on the hills to the south of which some men were seen ; but they kept perfectly



quiet until the main body had moved on. As the rear of the baggage came up, about fifty men made a demonstration against it; but on being promptly met by a company of the 24th Punjab Infantry, they retreated without coming within range. Eventually, when the rear guard descended from the kotal, a few men followed up and fired three shots, without, however, doing any harm.

A round hill completely commanding the Jagdalak end of the pass below the kotal was occupied by a company of Guides, who held it until the arrival of the rear guard. Preparations had evidently been made to defend the kotal, for low stone walls, apparently newly built, were observed on the hillside to the north of the road. These defences, however, could have been easily turned.

The head of the column reached Jagdalak, which is 13 miles from Surkhab, at 4.15 p.m., but the rear guard did not arrive till dark, the rough nature of the road and the frequent ascents and descents having delayed the camels very much. The whole of the infantry, artillery, and sappers were encamped in a spacious old ruined fort about half a mile beyond the village, and overlooking the entrance of the famous Pari Dara. The position thus held was a very strong one against any enemy not armed with the best long-range weapons. The cavalry were encamped in the valley between the fort and the village.

Information having been received that the Pari Dara, or narrow defile through which the Jagdalak stream flows, was the road usually taken by camels, it was determined that a portion of the force should advance by this route on the 6th November. The higher road to the west is best suited for the march of troops, and accordingly the force was divided into two columns, one advancing by each route to Kata Sang.

Two hundred men of the 24th Punjab Infantry, with fifty Guides Cavalry, under the command of Captain E. Stedman, were left to hold the fort of



GOUGH AND MACPHERSON MEET 311

Jagdalak, with orders to patrol with infantry and cavalry beyond the Jagdalak Kotal, occupying the kotal for the greater part of the day, so as to keep the road open for the mails. The 10th Bengal Lancers formed the advance guard of the column which took the Pari Dara route, and the whole of the camels were sent through the defile, guarded by the 24th Punjabis. The Guides, 9th Foot, the Mountain Battery, and Sappers and Miners, with the whole of the mule and pony transport, proceeded by the upper road. The heads of the two columns, which started at 7.30 a.m., arrived almost simultaneously at the place where the two roads again converged, about 6 miles north of Jagdalak. Three miles further on the encamping ground of Kata Sang was reached, and here the advance guard met General Macpherson, who had also intended to encamp here, but, on account of the limited space, he sent back orders for his brigade to halt at Seh Baba, 4 miles distant, at the foot of the Lataband Pass, whither he returned in the evening.

Brigadier-General C. Gough having thus accomplished the purpose of his advance and joined hands with General Macpherson, his brigade started on its return march at 7.30 a.m. on the 7th November.

The troops who had come by the Pari Dara returned by the upper route, and *vice versa*, Colonel Jenkins, with some of the Guides, being sent to reconnoitre the track which leads over the Dabeli Pass towards the Adrag Badrag Pass, striking the Kabul River near Kats Muhammad Ali. The troops resumed their old positions in the fort and valley at Jagdalak on their return. It was reported by Captain Stedman that on the previous day, when returning from the kotal, which he had occupied according to orders, his men had been fired upon and followed up, but on their fire being returned the enemy retired with the loss of one of their party.

On the 8th November the Guides, one company of Sappers, and two guns were left to hold Jagdalak under



Colonel Jenkins, who was directed to reconnoitre the Iro Manzil route, and to return the next day to the Pezwan Kotal, leaving 200 Guides Infantry, 50 Cavalry, two guns, and the company of Sappers to hold the Jagdalak Kotal and repair the road. He was to hold the Pezwan Kotal with the remainder of the Guides, four guns of the Hazara Battery, and another company of Sappers, who were also to repair the road and Surkhab Bridge.

The remainder of the force, with the advance guard under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel F. Norman, 24th Punjab Infantry, and the rear guard under Major N. H. Macnaghten, 10th Bengal Lancers, marched to Lukhai, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of the Surkhab Bridge. A signalling party was left on the Jagdalak Kotal and another on the Pezwan Kotal until late in the afternoon, and a heliographic message was received from Colonel Jenkins on the Iro Manzil Pass.

On the 9th November, leaving the four guns, the company of Sappers and Miners, and the 2nd Gurkhas (who had relieved the two companies of the 45th Sikhs as escort to the guns of I-A, Royal Horse Artillery, at the Surkhab), the remainder of the force, including the horse artillery, marched for Gandamak at 7.30 a.m., and on arriving there resumed their original positions in camp.

The health of the troops during the expedition had been excellent, and the weather bright and fine, though the nights were extremely cold.

A month now passed almost without incident. The winter set in with severity soon after the return of Gough's brigade to Gandamak, and every effort was made to lay out the winter encampment there with as little delay as possible; warm clothing was urgently required, and food supplies were only obtained with difficulty and in small quantities from the surrounding country. In the course of the month sites were chosen and arrangements made for constructing posts at Pezwan Dara, Jagdalak Kotal, Jagdalak Fort, and Sang Toda,



which were to be occupied by small garrisons. The telegraph line was completed on the 19th November to Kabul.

On the 15th November Sir Frederick Roberts assumed command of the whole Kabul Field Force from Kabul to Jamrud. Various movements of troops took place amongst the brigades of the 2nd Division; the 45th Sikhs were re-transferred to the 2nd Brigade and their head-quarters marched back to Jalalabad, together with the two companies of the 51st King's Own Light Infantry which had advanced temporarily to Gandamak; and the 4th Gurkhas with the divisional staff moved up to Gandamak, where Major-General Bright remained until the 1st December.

On the 14th Brigadier-General Hugh Gough, with an escort of 100 infantry and 50 cavalry, arrived in the camp of the 1st Brigade from Kabul for the purpose of making arrangements between the 1st (or Kurram) Division and the 2nd (or Khyber) Division for the safety of the communications between Gandamak and Kabul; he had found the road apparently quite safe with nomad Ghilzais proceeding up and down it.

On the 1st December divisional head-quarters with General Bright returned to Jalalabad. Two days later two squadrons of the Carabiniers proceeded to Fatehabad to meet the ex-Amir Yakub Khan, who was being escorted by rapid stages to India. The party reached Jalalabad on the 4th December, and went on towards Barikao on the following day, accompanied by four companies of the 51st Light Infantry, as well as the cavalry escort. No excitement was caused in the country by the passage of the Amir, although it was generally known that his removal to India was contemplated.

When December opened, General Bright was preparing for a long-projected expedition into the Laghman Valley, but on the evening of the 7th December an order was received from General Roberts that the Guides Corps was to march at once with all

EXCITEMENT AT KABUL

speed to Kabul. The Laghman expedition was accordingly abandoned, and every effort was made to carry out General Roberts's orders with all possible expedition; but there was the usual difficulty of transport, and there was a distance of 23 miles to send reliefs before the Guides could advance. The 2nd Gurkhas and 200 of the 10th Bengal Lancers marched from Gandamak on the 8th with this object, the former reaching Jagdalak that evening. Colonel Jenkins was thus able to leave Jagdalak on the morning of the 9th, and arrived at Kabul on the evening of the 11th.

Up to within the last few days the attitude of the Ghilzais had been friendly, but on the 11th December intelligence reached divisional head-quarters at Safed Sang from Brigadier-General Charles Gough, that there was much uneasiness amongst the tribes, and that he had been informed that Asmatulla Khan was endeavouring to collect men for an attack on Jagdalak. Orders were therefore sent to reinforce the Jagdalak garrison, and a report was made to Field Force head-quarters respecting the weakness of the line from Dakka to Gandamak.

Late on the same night a telegram was received by General Bright stating that there was considerable excitement at Kabul, where large numbers of the enemy had collected and been engaged that day. Sir Frederick Roberts therefore directed Gandamak to be reinforced, so that, if necessary, he could call on General C. Gough to advance his brigade on Kabul. Orders were at once issued for the following moves :

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 companies 51st Foot and a wing 24th Punjab Infantry to march from Jalalabad to Gandamak, detaching one company to strengthen Fort Battye. | |
| 1-12th Foot to march from Landi Kotal to Jalalabad. | |
| 30th Punjab Infantry to march from Landi Kotal to Dakka. | } Furnishing detachments to Basawal, Barikao, Ali Boghan. |
| 27th Punjab Infantry to march from Dakka to Jalalabad. | |
| 4th Gurkhas (company) to march from Ali Boghan to regimental head-quarters. | |

An application was sent to Peshawar for the 22nd



Punjab Infantry to reinforce Landi Kotal; but no telegraphic communication on these subjects could be despatched to Army Head-quarters, as the telegraph line was cut between Barikao and Basawal for the first time for some nights.

On the 12th December a more satisfactory telegram was received by General Bright from Sir Frederick Roberts, announcing that he thought it was improbable that he would be obliged to call on the Khyber Division for assistance, and directing that no application was at present to be made for reinforcements from India. In the evening of this day another telegram was received from Sir Frederick Roberts stating that he proposed withdrawing the Seh Baba post to Lataband, fearing an attack on it by Asmatulla Khan, and that, if the wire was cut between Gandamak and Kabul, General C. Gough was at once to advance and attack Asmatulla. On the 13th General Gough received orders from General Bright to advance from Safed Sang to Jagdalak on arrival of the relieving troops detailed. Accordingly General Gough on the 14th moved forward with the 9th Foot, 2 squadrons 10th Bengal Lancers, 4th Gurkhas, and, leaving half this force at Pezwan, he marched on with the remainder and two guns Hazara Mountain Battery to Jagdalak, where he received telegraphic orders from General Roberts to advance on Kabul, leaving sufficient garrisons at all the posts which were calculated to resist attack and to abandon the remainder, including Lataband. On the 14th Bright was directed to push on Arbuthnot's brigade towards Kabul, the posts of Pezwan and Jagdalak being still held. Meanwhile news had been received of the severe fighting at Kabul; the excitement amongst the Khyber tribes was daily increasing and the line of communications was constantly threatened by Asmatulla Khan, who, on the 14th December, was reported to have moved with some 2,000 men to the village of Sapri, about 4 miles from Jagdalak (not on map). It was likewise reported that the intention had been that there should be an attack

MORE TROOPS REQUIRED

CSL

on the 1st Division at Kabul, and, simultaneously with this movement, one upon the troops holding the line of communications; but that Sir Frederick Roberts, having taken the initiative, had apparently hurried matters on sooner than the tribes intended.

On the same day Bright telegraphed to Army Headquarters at Cawnpore that the 1st Brigade of his division had been called to Kabul by Sir Frederick Roberts and that orders had also been received by him for the 2nd Brigade to follow as soon as possible, and that these were the only troops between Landi Kotal and Kabul. Almost the whole of the 1st Brigade was now, General Bright reported, *en route* to Kabul, and it was not known by him whether any garrison had been left at Pezwan and the Jagdalak outposts; but if there had, they were, he considered, most dangerously situated, as no support was available. General Bright was therefore of opinion that a strong division of all arms was required before the 2nd Brigade could advance from Jalalabad, as the state of the line of communications was at the time weak and precarious.

Intelligence had already reached Army Headquarters at Cawnpore, on the 12th December, that Sir Frederick Roberts anticipated being obliged to call up the 1st Brigade of the Khyber Division; on this the Commander-in-Chief had at once directed the following troops to be warned for service, and to be held in readiness to move on receipt of orders:

- 4th Bengal Cavalry from Mian Mir to Peshawar.
- 11th Bengal Cavalry from Nowshera to Peshawar.
- 17th Bengal Cavalry (300 sabres).
- D-A, Royal Horse Artillery, from Peshawar.
- I-C, Royal Horse Artillery, from Rawalpindi to Peshawar.
- D-4, Royal Artillery, from Rawalpindi to Peshawar.
- 1-5th Fusiliers (6 companies) from Hasan Abdal to Peshawar.
- 1-25th Foot (wing).

On learning on the 14th December that Lieutenant-General Roberts had decided to collect his force within Sherpur, orders were immediately issued by the Com-



mander-in-Chief in India for the above troops to move to the front. The General Officer commanding the Rawalpindi Division reported that the troops from that division would be ready to march on the 16th December; and D-4, Royal Artillery, which was ready to move, marched at once for Peshawar. In accordance with personal orders given by the Viceroy, on the same evening the 8th Hussars were ordered from Muttra to Hasan Abdal, the 1st Gurkhas from Dharmasala, and the effective men of the 2nd and 4th Gurkhas from Dehra and Bakloh, respectively, to Peshawar.

Meanwhile, on the arrival at Gandamak of the 24th Punjab Infantry and three companies of the 51st Light Infantry, Gough had advanced to Jagdalak, leaving reinforcements at Pezwan and Jagdalak Kotal. He was followed on the 15th December by Colonel W. Daunt of the 2-9th Foot, with 280 men of that regiment and 187 of the 4th Gurkhas, which column was fired on by Ghilzais while on the march. All the troops which General C. Gough had brought from Gandamak were supplied previous to starting with seven days' provisions; but, on arrival at Jagdalak, it was found that the garrison there had only one more day's supply in hand, and had sent their transport into Gandamak for more.

Early on the morning of the 15th the telegraph wire was cut on both sides of Jagdalak. That evening crowds of men with standards were observed assembling on all the surrounding hills, and numerous beacon fires were lit on all the peaks of the Siah Koh. At the same time news arrived that Asmatulla Khan had come from Kats Laghman with a large gathering and purposed an attack on Jagdalak in conjunction with the Ghilzais of Hisarak and Auzangiani west of Gandamak under Maizullah Khan and Saiad Khan of Hisarak, with whom was Abdul Karim, who led the enemy against Roberts at Chaharasia. Later on, as it was getting dark, the enemy came pouring down from the hill-tops and opened a desultory and long-range fire from every direction upon the camp, fortunately without inflicting



any loss. This was continued for some hours, the men remaining steady at their posts, and only returning the fire when it could be done effectively, and in order to drive the enemy from positions which caused annoyance.

Brigadier-General Charles Gough's force at Jagdalak on the 15th and 16th December amounted to 961 infantry, 73 sappers, 4 7-pr. guns, and 224 sabres. His orders were to move without delay to Kabul, but considering the very threatening attitude of the tribes, and the weakness of the garrisons which he must leave behind him, he did not consider it advisable to comply with directions which involved such risk without reference to General Bright in the following message on the 15th:

"The more I think of this advance that I have been ordered to make, the more risky and injudicious I think it. Even if I take all available force, my column would be a weak one to face the odds and difficulties I should have to encounter. Roberts with 6,000 men is not able to keep the field, and has withdrawn into position at Sherpur, and it seems a great risk to expect me to force my way in. If any disaster happened, it would have a very serious effect; whilst even success would leave this line so weak that communication would be instantly cut, and there would be no news from Kabul. I cannot help thinking it would be much wiser for me to wait till reinforcements come up from the rear, and when you are able to hold these posts during an advance. Of course, I know how weak the line is all the way down; but by pushing up regiments along the line, troops may be accumulated at the front pretty quick. I shall not be able to advance for two or three days yet; and the responsibility thrust upon me is so great I should be much obliged by your opinion as to what course I ought to pursue. The wire is cut both sides of us, so that I cannot communicate either way."

General Gough was instructed in reply by General Bright to await further orders from General Roberts,



THE KABUL LINE

319

to whom the Major-General at once wrote detailing the views of General Gough, and to whom Sir Frederick Roberts was requested to send his orders on the subject direct.

The importance of the Khyber line at this moment, and the difficulty of deciding between withholding support from the Kabul Division, and exposing the communications to imminent danger of being broken, if Gough's brigade advanced, is sufficient reason for pausing here to detail the distribution of troops along the line on the 16th December.

From Kabul eastward to Lataband that post and the intermediate one at Butkhak were held by detachments from the 1st Division (Chapter VIII.).

From Jagdalak eastward to Jamrud the whole line of communications was garrisoned by the 2nd Division (less the Guides Corps) under Major-General Bright, distributed as follows:

Jagdalak Fort and Kotal.

Head-quarters of 1st Brigade.	No. 3 Company, Sappers.
10th Bengal Lancers, 220 men.	2-9th Foot, 487 men.
No. 4 Mountain Battery, 4 guns.	2nd Gurkhas } 507 men.
No. 2 Company, Sappers.	4th Gurkhas }

Pezwan Kotal.

10th Bengal Lancers, 50 men.	No. 5 Company, Sappers.
No. 4 Mountain Battery, 2 guns.	No. 6 Company, Sappers.
24th Punjab Infantry (wing).	

Safed Sang and Gandamak.

10th Bengal Lancers (detachments).	51st Light Infantry (5 companies).
I-A, Royal Horse Artillery.	2nd Gurkhas } (detachments).
2-9th Foot (detachment).	4th Gurkhas }
24th Punjab Infantry (3 companies).	

Fort Battye.

10th Bengal Lancers (detachment).	24th Punjab Infantry (1 company).
-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

Fatehabad.

51st Light Infantry (3 companies, en route to Gandamak).	45th Sikhs (wing, en route to Gandamak).
--	--

Jalalabad.

Head-quarters of 2nd Brigade and of Khyber Division.	1 Company, Madras Sappers.
6th Dragoon Guards (3 squadrons).	1-12th Foot (3 companies).
C-3, Royal Artillery, 4 guns.	27th Punjab Infantry (7 companies)
	45th Sikhs (wing).



DISTRIBUTION OF TROOPS

Barikao.

3rd Bengal Cavalry (1 squadron). | 27th Punjab Infantry (1 company).

Basawal.

6th Dragoon Guards (1 squadron). | C-3, Royal Artillery, 4 guns.
3rd Bengal Cavalry (3 squadrons | 1-12th Foot (wing).
furnishing detachments).

Dakka.

3rd Bengal Cavalry (detachment). | 22nd Punjab Infantry (wing, *en route*
11-9, Royal Artillery, 2 guns. | to Gandamak).
30th Punjab Infantry (6 companies).

Landi Khana.

3rd Bengal Cavalry (detachment). | 31st Punjab Infantry (detachment).

Landi Kotal.

Head-quarters of 3rd Brigade. | 11-9, Royal Artillery, 4 guns.
17th Bengal Cavalry (1 squadron | 1-12th Foot (detachments).
furnishing detachments). | 22nd Punjab Infantry (wing).
31st Punjab Infantry.

Ali Masjid.

17th Bengal Cavalry. | 30th Punjab Infantry (2 companies).
8th Bengal Infantry. | 4th Madras Infantry.

Jamrud.

3rd Bengal Cavalry (detachment). | 15th Madras Infantry (2 companies).

In all 224 officers, 2,557 British and 9,288 Native troops: total combatants, 12,069.

On the 16th December the Commander-in-Chief in India, who had twice before urged unsuccessfully the desirability of mobilising a reserve force, again repeated his recommendation to Government that a reserve division, composed as follows, should be assembled at Peshawar:

Cavalry Brigade.

8th Hussars, Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Chaplin, v.c.
5th Bengal Cavalry, Major H. A. Shakespear.
1 regiment Central India Horse, Lieutenant-Colonel C. Martin, c.b.
E-A, Royal Horse Artillery, Major W. W. Murdoch.

Three Brigades of Infantry.

1-5th Fusiliers, Colonel Rowland.	2-14th Foot, Colonel D. S. Warren.
1st Gurkhas, Lieutenant-Colonel Story.	1-18th Foot, Colonel M. J. MacGregor.
32nd Pioneers, Lieutenant-Colonel Crookshank.	1 regiment Hyderabad Contingent.
	3 regiments Madras Infantry.

The Deoli Regiment.



The formation of this reserve division was sanctioned by Government on the 21st December, 1879, and Major-General J. Ross, c.b., commanding the Peshawar District and the base of operations, was appointed to the command of it.

To return to the movements of the Khyber Division, the days between the 16th and 21st December were employed at all the stations on the line of communications in anxious endeavours to hasten forward the reinforcements which should relieve Gough at Jagdalak, and enable him to comply with Sir Frederick Roberts's orders for the advance of the 1st Brigade on Kabul. The remaining 3 companies of the 51st Light Infantry and a wing of the 45th Sikhs at Jalalabad marched to Gandamak on the 16th December and thence towards Jagdalak, closely followed by the remainder of the 45th Sikhs, a company of the 4th Gurkhas, and the head-quarters of the 2nd Brigade under General Arbuthnot. At the same time detachments of the 12th Foot and 27th Punjab Infantry moved from Barikao to Jalalabad, and the remainder of the 12th with 11-9, Royal Artillery, were ordered to advance as soon as reinforcements should reach Landi Kotal from Peshawar.

Meanwhile on the 17th December a reconnaissance from Jagdalak Fort under Major Macnaghten, commanding the 10th Bengal Lancers, co-operating with Major E. T. Thackeray, v.c., r.e., from Jagdalak Kotal, cleared the road between Jagdalak and Pezwan and inflicted some loss on the enemy, who had taken up a position some 2 miles from the kotal. On the 18th the road was still further cleared by detachments from both places under Major F. F. Rowcroft (4th Gurkhas) and Colonel F. Norman; and on the 19th the latter officer started from Pezwan for Jagdalak with a convoy of 1,200 animals, escorted by 670 men of the 24th Punjab Infantry and 2nd Gurkhas, and 2 guns, No. 4 Mountain Battery. General Gough sent a force under Major C. J. C. Roberts, 9th Foot, to meet Colonel Norman



and to assist him in attacking and dispersing the Ghilzais who assembled every day and threatened the road below Jagdalak Kotal. Major Roberts found the enemy posted as on the previous day and an engagement took place, the Ghilzais attempting to get round his flank. This was met by Major Roberts, and immediately afterwards Colonel Norman came up and, bringing his guns into action, enfiladed the enemy's whole line, forcing them to retire with considerable loss, including their leader Saiad Khan and his son among the wounded. Major Roberts then covered the passage of Colonel Norman's convoy, which came into camp without the loss of a single animal, although the Ghilzais from the north side made a daring attempt to get at it whilst coming through the pass west of the kotal, which was defeated by the steadiness of the rear guard.

This reinforcement brought General C. Gough's effective strength up to:

Cavalry	:	:	:	242	Sappers	:	:	:	73
Infantry	:	:	:	1,679	Mountain guns	:	:	:	6

Colonel Norman also informed General C. Gough that he had arranged for another large convoy for the next day (the 20th December) with warm clothing and supplies, which duly arrived without mishap.

Previous to the above engagements, Brigadier-General Charles Gough had been informed by divisional head-quarters through Pezwan that a large number of Ghilzais were collecting in his front, and that he was on no account to risk his communications with Gandamak or a repulse, which would have the worst possible effect on the whole line. He was further instructed that, under the circumstances, his advance on Kabul had become impossible. A little later it was notified to him by General Bright that the Ghilzais were collecting in large numbers, not only in his front but also on his flanks, and threatening Pezwan; and, therefore, that it would be more judicious for him not



THE POSITION AT LATABAND 323

to jeopardise his communications with Gandamak, and that he should consequently retire and concentrate at that place. Having, however, been reinforced in the manner described, and finding that little serious opposition was offered to the movement of troops, General Gough reported to the Major-General on the 20th that he hoped that the Ghilzais had now been effectually dispersed, and that he proposed advancing to Lataband, whence he could communicate by heliograph with Sherpur. He also enquired when he might expect reinforcements to reach him. In reply General Bright told him that the 22nd Punjab Infantry was the only additional regiment which could be sent on until reinforcements arrived from India. The proposed advance to Lataband was, however, sanctioned; but in consequence of various items of intelligence received at Jalalabad, General Bright came to the conclusion that Brigadier-General Gough was not fully alive to the state of the country round him, since all information tended to show that the Ghilzais were collecting in large numbers and were only waiting for Gough to advance to cut off his retreat. The Major-General accordingly sent telegraphic instructions through Pezwan countermanding the advance on Lataband until reinforcements should arrive. But on the evening of the same day (the 20th December) a telegram was received at divisional head-quarters from General Gough stating that he had received fresh orders from Sir Frederick Roberts to advance on Kabul without delay, and that he proposed doing so on the following day, reaching Seh Baba that day, Lataband post (Samuch Mulla Umar) on the 22nd December, Butkhak on the 23rd, and Kabul on the 24th of the month. The message from the Lieutenant-General had been heliographed from Kabul to Lataband, and thence sent on by a special messenger to Jagdalak. At the same time Colonel Hudson, commanding at Lataband post, informed General Gough that he had supplies only up to the 22nd December and that his men were on half rations.