





until the season for active operations arrives, as it is undesirable to have a larger force than is absolutely necessary in Sherpur during the winter months.

“I would name the 20th March as the date by which these additional troops should reach Kabul.

*“Statement of posts proposed to be held between
Lataband and Jamrud.*

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>Lataband</i> | { Two mountain guns. 24th Punjab Infantry. |
| <i>Jagdalak and Seh Baba</i> | { 45th Sikhs. |
| <i>Jagdalak Kotul and Pezwan</i> | { 51st Light Infantry. |
| <i>Gandamak</i> (to hold fort and form movable column) | { Two squadrons 3rd Bengal Cavalry. Two guns 11-9, Royal Artillery. Two guns Hazara Mountain Battery. 12th Foot. 22nd Punjab Infantry. 27th Punjab Infantry. |
| <i>Fort Battye</i> to be abandoned and a new post formed near <i>Rozabad</i> | { One squadron 3rd Bengal Cavalry. Two companies 4th Madras Infantry. |
| <i>Jalalabad Fort</i> | { One squadron Carabiniers. One squadron 17th Bengal Cavalry. Six companies 4th Madras Infantry. |
| <i>Jalalabad Movable Column</i> | { One squadron Carabiniers. One squadron 17th Bengal Cavalry. Four guns 11-9, Royal Artillery. 25th Foot. 30th Punjab Infantry. 31st Punjab Infantry. |
| <i>Ali Boghan</i> | { 50 men 8th Bengal Infantry. |
| <i>Barikao</i> | { One troop 17th Bengal Cavalry. 150 men 8th Bengal Infantry. |
| <i>Basawal</i> | { One squadron Carabiniers. One troop 17th Bengal Cavalry. 390 men 8th Bengal Infantry. |

“The Field Artillery, 2nd Division, to remain undisturbed as at present.

“The reserve division to take up all posts to and inclusive of Dakka, viz. :

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <i>Dakka</i> | { 1½ troops native cavalry. Four guns Field Artillery. One company British infantry. One wing native infantry. |
| <i>Haft Chah</i> | { 50 men, native infantry. |
| <i>Landi Khana</i> | { Half troop native cavalry. 60 native infantry. |



| | |
|---|--|
| <i>Landi Kotal garrison</i> | { One squadron native cavalry. 500 infantry. Two field guns. |
| <i>Landi Kotal Movable Column</i> | { 1,000 infantry. Two mountain guns. |
| <i>Kata Kushtia</i> | 18 native infantry. |
| <i>Ali Masjid</i> | { One troop native cavalry. 600 native infantry. |
| <i>Fort Maude</i> | 25 native infantry. |
| <i>Jamrud</i> | { One troop native cavalry. 250 native infantry." |

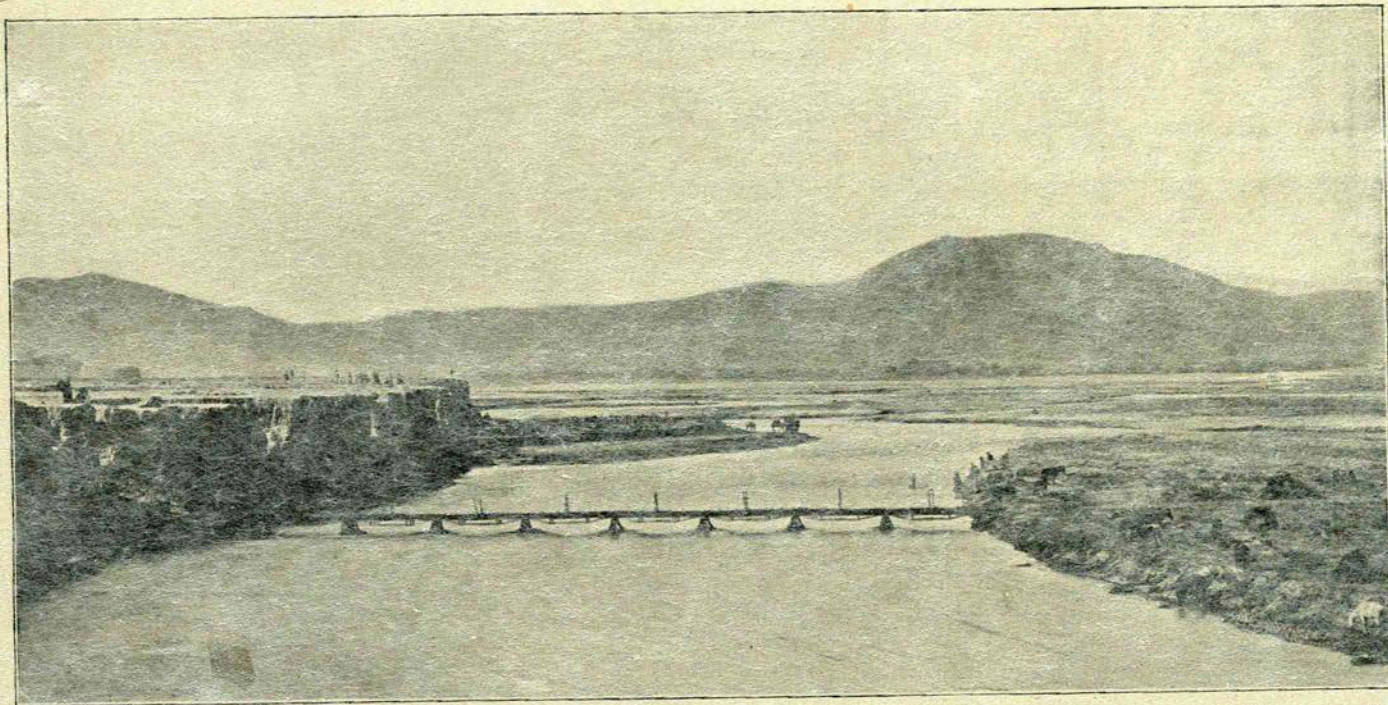
The above statement was followed on the 28th of January and 5th of February, respectively, by the two communications from Sir Frederick Roberts which are given below.

1. *Despatch from Kabul, No. 24 of 1880.*

"Ghazni for the present may be looked upon as the centre of disaffection, many of those who were at Kabul having made for that place after having been defeated here; and Musa Jan, the infant son of the ex-Amir, has been set up there as Sovereign of Afghanistan, and his rule proclaimed. The country is undoubtedly greatly excited, but though constant rumours of projected attacks are industriously circulated, no offensive movements have been undertaken, and I see no reason to anticipate at present any attack in force, though doubtless later on, unless we take the initiative, a combination against us is more than probable.

"The past month has been devoted to strengthening Sherpur cantonment, improving the defences of the Bala Hissar, which the arrival of General C. Gough's brigade enabled me to hold; the opening out of communications which may prove of great service hereafter; and the collection of commissariat stores, principally forage, which the events of December interrupted. Into these matters I propose to go at some length for His Excellency's information.

"Although much was accomplished in placing Sherpur in a state of defence previous to the Afghan attack, much still remained, and this has now been



TEMPORARY BRIDGE OVER KABUL RIVER AT JALALABAD, 1880 (SOUTHERN PORTION)



THE STRENGTHENING OF KABUL 373

almost entirely completed. The most noticeable improvements are the completion of the blockhouses on the Bimaru heights, the construction of a long loop-holed wall connecting the native field hospital with the Bimaru village, and the strengthening of all the works along the eastern and northern faces, and at the north-east corner.

“An esplanade of a depth of 1,000 yards has been cleared all round the position; the villages, walls, and woods which came within this radius have been cleared away, and all cover for an attacking force as far as possible destroyed.

“A good military road, suitable for field artillery, now encircles the cantonment, and is connected by branch roads with all the gates; whilst the village of Deh Afghan, the Aliabad Kotal, and the Kabul River, have all been united with cantonments. An excellent bridge has been constructed by the 23rd Pioneers at a point on the Kabul River to the eastward of, and well removed from, the city. It is not intended to carry guns, the sappers and miners being employed upon a more massive and permanent pile-bridge a short distance down-stream.

“The fortified village of Kala Ibrahim, which stands about 150 yards beyond the river, is being prepared for the reception of a detachment, and will form an admirable bridge-head. These works will render communication with the Bala Hissar and the Siah Sang heights permanently safe. For the convenience of local traffic, and in anticipation of the spring floods, another bridge is being erected close to the site of the old stone bridge under the remains of the walls of Kala Muhammad; but as this road runs for a considerable distance within pistol-shot of the city walls, it clearly would not do to depend on it alone.

“A blockhouse and small entrenched camp will be provided at the western end of Siah Sang. These will command our direct line of communications with India; and with them in existence and the Bala Hissar held, no enemy could venture on the plain to the east of Kabul.

"The interior defences of the Bala Hissar have been much improved; broad roads have been opened out, lateral communications established, and the banquette, which in many places was destroyed, repaired and made practicable. The hill above is now being rendered very defensible by a strong blockhouse on its summit, supporting two smaller posts to the south.

"Connection between these posts and the Bala Hissar itself is maintained by the old and partially ruined walls, which form an excellent covered way.

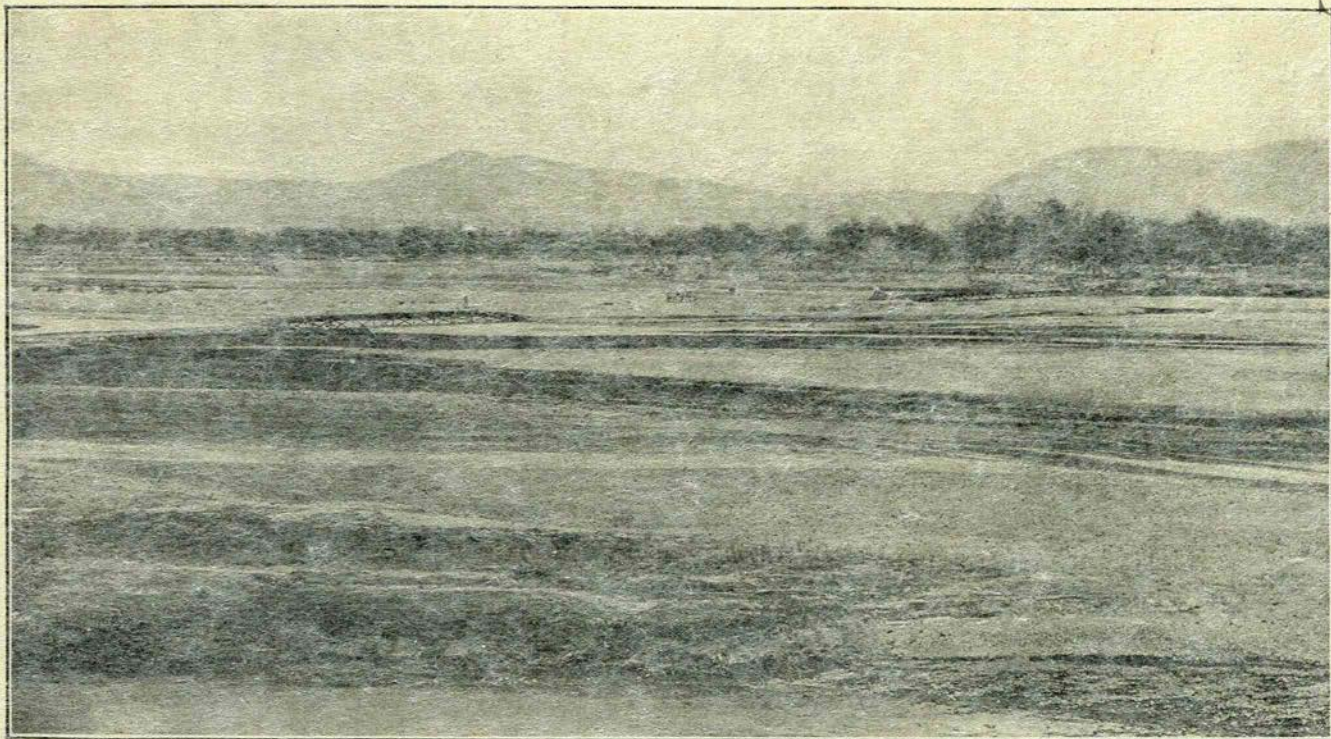
"A magazine is also being constructed in the upper Bala Hissar, sufficiently large to contain all the ammunition which His Excellency wishes held in reserve at Kabul,—namely, 600 rounds per rifle.

"With the increase of the force by General C. Gough's brigade and the completion of the improvements above related, I anticipate no difficulty in holding both Sherpur and the Bala Hissar, and also in preventing the enemy occupying the city, unless the townspeople should rise *en masse* against us.

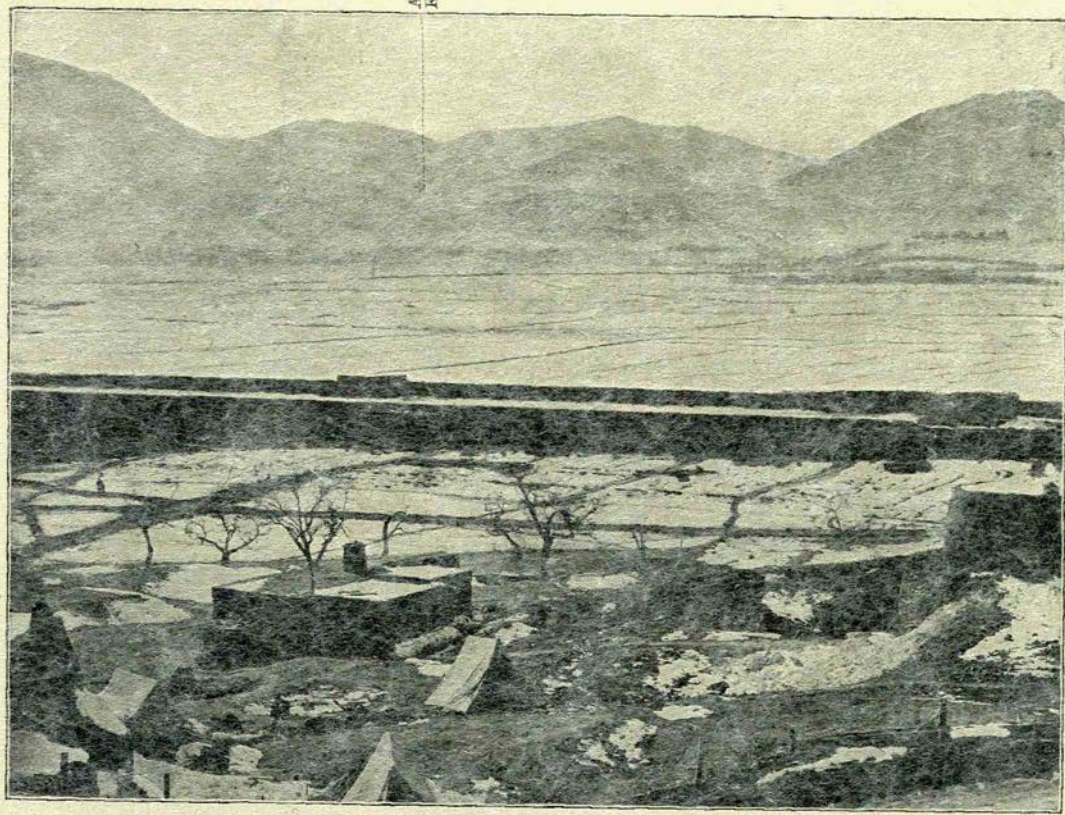
"The Commissariat Department, under Major Badcock, has worked admirably. Since the 25th of December 17,712 maunds of bhusa and 2,840 sheep have been purchased and brought in; and, with the exception of one or two articles of minor importance, the entire force is provided for for the next three months. The actual supply of bhusa in store is sufficient for 54 days only, but current expenditure is met from current collection, so this reserve is intact. Several convoys have arrived, bringing almost entirely warm clothing, with some rum and a few hundred maunds of *dhal*.

"There are now at present in Sherpur the following rounds of ammunition :

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Per field gun | 356 |
| „ mountain gun | 277 |
| „ Martini-Henry | 386 |
| „ Snider | 337 |
| „ M.-H. carbine | 202 |



TEMPORARY BRIDGE OVER KABUL RIVER AT JALALABAD, 1880 (CENTRAL AND NORTHERN PORTIONS)



NORTH-WEST CORNER OF SHERPUR CANTONMENT, SHOWING THE ALLIABAD KOTAL p. 374



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“A dispensary has been established in the city, under the supervision of Surgeon Charles Owen, in medical charge of the divisional staff. It is popular amongst the natives, and several of those who were wounded during the recent operations have attended for surgical aid.

“At present, having regard to the extent of the position which we hold, I do not feel it to be advisable to move out and take the field, and, apart from this, the country is covered with snow, and is most difficult for man and beast; and, save under exceptional circumstances, I should not feel myself justified in incurring the inevitable losses, both amongst the troops, their followers, and the transport animals, that must ensue from exposure at this season.

“As it is most desirable that I should be in a position to take the initiative and anticipate the combination which will probably be organised, I trust that the troops named in the margin and asked for by me in my confidential letter No. 1217, dated 13th instant, may be despatched so as to arrive at Kabul not later than the 15th of March.

“Should I, meanwhile, be seriously threatened, I would, of course, call upon General Bright, C.B., to send towards Kabul the movable column at Gandamak, and, if necessary, that at Jalalabad also; and as the posts *en route* are now held in strength, it is unlikely that the troops coming up would meet with sufficient opposition to prevent their moving rapidly on Kabul within five or six days.

“Should occasion necessitate the sending for reinforcements, it is tolerably certain the excitement would spread more or less along the line of communications; it is, therefore, most desirable that transport should always be kept up at Peshawar to enable sufficient troops of the reserve division to be pushed up rapidly

Some garrison gunners.
One heavy (siege) battery.
Two regiments native infantry, and details sufficient to make each infantry regiment up to 800 strong.
Artillery and cavalry in proportion.



to fill the places of General Bright's movable columns."

Sir Frederick Roberts then entered into the detail of the fortifications proposed for the Bala Hissar and the Sher Darwaza and Asmai hills, showing the number of men actually required for the defence of each; the number of guns, and where placed; the quality and supply of water; the shelter proposed for commissariat stores, troops, followers, and transport animals; the supply of fuel, and the position and capacity of proposed magazine accommodation, etc., and continued:

"XI.—During the late operations the enemy did not fail to make use of the fine natural position afforded by the Siah Sang heights, and in order to prevent this in future, and also to preserve unmolested communication between Sherpur and the Bala Hissar, I find it advisable to erect on the south-east corner of these heights a small fort, to hold a wing of infantry and four heavy guns. A good road running from Sherpur to the north-east foot of Siah Sang, and thence under cover of the fort to the Bala Hissar, is already near completion. This includes a permanent bridge over the Kabul River due south of the south-east corner of Sherpur.

"XII.—To protect this bridge and to flank the open country to the south of Sherpur, I have placed a fort,¹ known as Kala Ibrahim Khan, in a state of defence, and I propose to garrison it with three companies of infantry. These two forts will effectually block the approaches to Kabul from the east, and prevent any attack being attempted on the south face of the Sherpur cantonment.

"XIII.—The position of Sherpur has already been described. The total line of parapet to be defended is 8,000 yards; and the garrison at present consists of the whole of my force, except General C. Gough's brigade in the Bala Hissar.

"XIV.—The defences of Sherpur have been daily

¹ Afghan fortified village.



NORTH-EAST CORNER OF SHERPUR CANTONMENT



strengthened, and I have no hesitation in saying that they are now in a state which precludes the possibility of a successful attack on them.

“XV.—In order to complete the defence of this place and to prevent the enemy from again entering the city, it will, however, be necessary to erect a small but strong fort on the Asmai hill. This will not only prevent the above, but would paralyse any attempt directed on the west face of the cantonments.

“XVI.—In addition to these measures, I have ordered a committee, under the presidency of Colonel Jenkins, C.B., to consider what part in the defence of the city can properly be taken by those of the inhabitants whose self-interest can be relied on to induce them to aid us. I have not yet received the report, but it will doubtless tend to provide further measures to prevent the enemy entering the city.

“XVII.—Again, a broad gun-road has been made outside all round Sherpur to the Deh Mazang gorge and to the Siah Sang ridge, and this, with the roads already existing, will enable me to move out a force of all arms in any direction. Moreover, all the forts and enclosures within 1,000 yards of the walls of Sherpur have been levelled, so that now there is no more of that cover from which the enemy were enabled to annoy us during the late operations.

“XVIII.—Having thus effectually arranged to prevent the possibility of an attack on the south and west faces of Sherpur, it only remains to consider the north and east fronts. The north face of the Bimaru ridge is strongly entrenched, but even were it not so, I should have no anxiety for this side, the country in this direction being so open that the enemy are to the last degree unlikely to attempt to attack it.

“XIX.—The east face also causes me no anxiety, as although it was at first the weakest part of our position, it is now about the strongest; and in order to attack it, the enemy must traverse under our eyes a large extent of open country, and fatally expose his



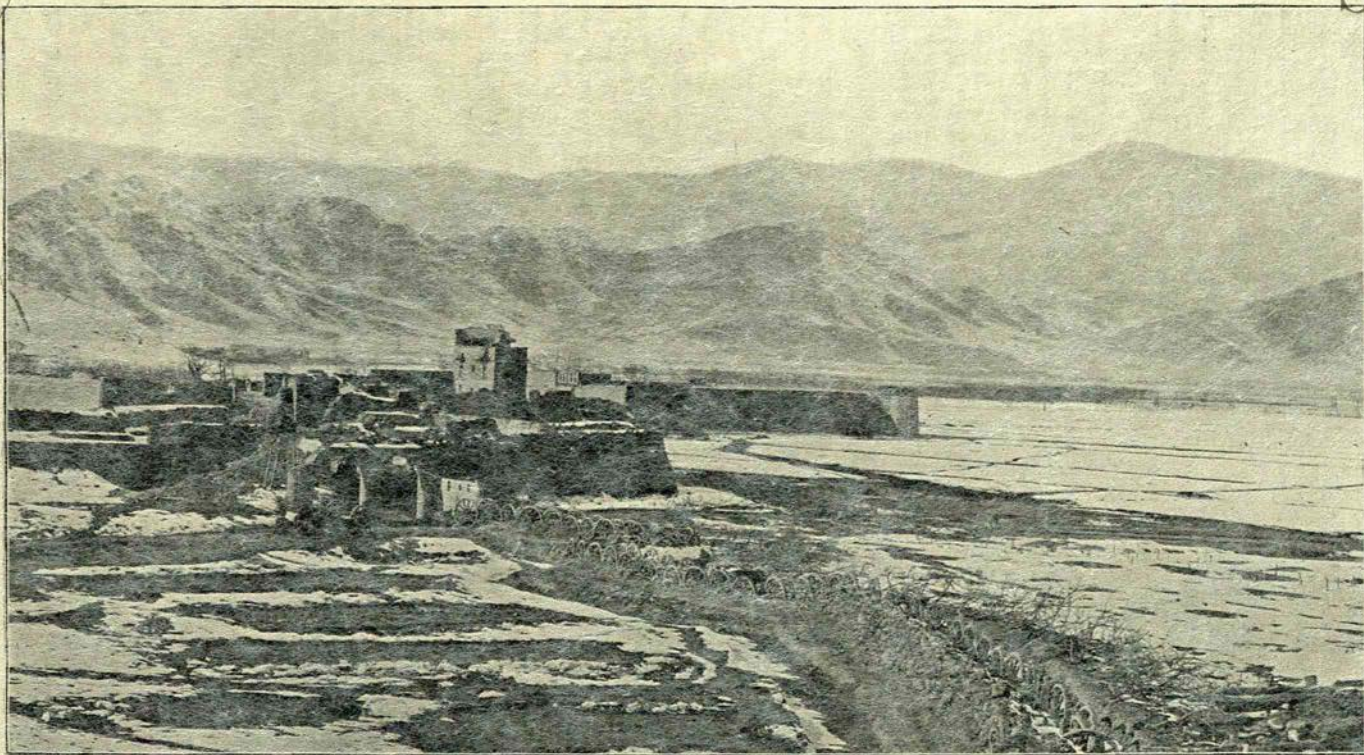
line of retreat, whether he came from Kohistan in the north or from Logar or Maidan in the south and west.

“XX.—The position thus described, though an extensive one, comprises the smallest area that would secure all requirements of the present time. The force under my command is ample for purely defensive purposes, but as in the event of another rising of the country in anything like the same strength as the last, I should be very loth to adhere to a strictly defensive attitude, I consider that my force should be increased by at least two more regiments of infantry. If this is done, and taking into consideration the greater security from attack of the Sherpur position, I should be in a position to keep a movable column always ready to sally out and attack the enemy.

“XXI.—In regard to the other points in your telegram under reply, the number of guns in position should be four heavy in the Bala Hissar, and four on Siah Sang.

“XXII.—The water-supply of Sherpur is good and ample, and cannot be cut off; that in the Bala Hissar is also ample and safe, and is now being improved. In the Siah Sang position, the ordinary supply would come from the canal from the Logar River which runs below; but as this could be cut off, wells must be dug in the low ground below, under cover of the rifles of the fort. The supply of Sher Darwaza and Asmai posts is no doubt difficult, but arrangements, as I have said, will be made to store seven days' supply, and more can be taken up on mules.

“XXIII.—The commissariat stores are at present situated within the Sherpur cantonments, and are well protected, being surrounded by an entrenchment and 'laager.' Hereafter they will all be placed in the Bala Hissar. The same remarks apply to the ordnance stores, and to the stores of fuel, which latter are ample for all requirements, while any amount now is easily procurable.



CORNER OF SHERPUR CANTONMENT, NEAR BIMARU VILLAGE, SHOWING IMPROVED FORTIFICATIONS OF COLONEL JENKINS' SECTION ; PAGHMAN RANGE IN BACKGROUND



“XXIV.—The troops under my command are now fully and comfortably housed in Sherpur and the Bala Hissar, as also are the followers. The bulk of the transport animals are provided with shelter in the Bimaru village.

“XXV.—The amount of ammunition in store and in regimental possession at present is as follows :

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| Martini-Henry carbine | 202 | rounds per carbine. |
| Snider carbine | 200 | ” ” ” |
| Martini-Henry rifle | 386 | ” ” rifle. |
| Snider rifle | 337 | ” ” ” |
| 9-pr. guns | 356 | ” ” gun. |
| 7-pr. ” | 338 | ” ” ” |

“XXVI.—I must now proceed to consider the position which should be held when the state of the weather will permit of our taking the field. This question altogether depends upon whether it would be necessary to continue to hold Sherpur, or whether we should abandon it. I am quite of opinion that even if it were necessary to maintain our hold on it, it would not be necessary to keep up a full garrison for it, as, if another fort like that already existing on the east end of Bimaru is constructed on the west hill, it would be impossible for any enemy to hold the place for a minute. However, as it may not be possible to provide sufficient shelter elsewhere in time, I request early orders whether Government will require a force to remain at Kabul for another winter.

“XXVII.—Should this step not be contemplated, I would propose to abandon Sherpur and draw in the lines of defences closer round the city. The Bala Hissar and the Asmai positions would remain the same, and that on Siah Sang would be extended, so as to provide space for two battalions of infantry.”

The result of these communications was that on the 20th February the proposals of the Commander-in-Chief for the operations in the spring which have been mentioned (p. 368) were sanctioned by the Government of India; but the advance of Sir Frederick



Roberts, however, to Bamian was excluded from this approval, since it was considered that its necessity on political and military grounds had not yet been established. No movements were, however, contemplated before April, and the first three months of the year at Kabul were, from a military point of view, uneventful. The measures which had been undertaken for the defence of the positions occupied by the British at the capital were pushed on; arrangements were completed for sending all invalids to India in a series of convoys, and efforts were made for increasing the transport with the force, which was still seriously deficient.

On the 12th February some 200 Hazaras from near Ghazni, under the leadership of Saiad Muhammad, arrived in Kabul for the purpose of paying their respects to General Roberts. This tribe had been in constant conflict with Muhammad Jan near Ghazni, and they admitted that they were beaten in their first fight with him, but reported that they had since got the best of it, and a truce between the two parties had been agreed upon till the 21st March.

During February a corps of Mounted Infantry was formed by Sir Frederick Roberts at Kabul. For this purpose detachments of the following strength were selected from each infantry regiment in the 1st Division, and from the 45th Sikhs:

British regiment.

1 Officer.
3 Sergeants.
3 Corporals.
1 Bugler.
53 Men.

Native regiment.

1 British officer.
1 Native officer.
3 Havildars.
3 Naiks.
1 Bugler.
53 Men.

The training and superintendence of the corps were placed in the hands of a committee, of which Brigadier-General T. D. Baker, C.B., was the President, but the efficacy of the measure was largely discounted by the fact that it was only sanctioned on the under-



SAPPERS' AND MINERS' BASTION, WEST FACE, SHERPUR CANTONMENT



standing that no separate establishment of animals would be asked for, since it was an important element in the scheme that it aimed at the utilisation of transport ponies (*yabus*) when available for the purpose. Sir. M. Kennedy, the head of the Commissariat and Transport Department, therefore pointed out that, looking to the great difficulty that existed in equipping the forces in the field with transport necessary for their requirements, it could not be anticipated that there would be many surplus transport animals available for mounted infantry purposes.

On the 1st March, Brigadier-General Massy, having been recalled to India, was succeeded in the command of the Cavalry Brigade by Brigadier-General H. H. Gough, v.c., c.b.

On the 13th March the Commander-in-Chief directed that the force in Kabul, under Lieutenant-General Sir F. Roberts, should be formed into two divisions—the 1st Division to be under General Roberts's immediate command, and the 2nd Division under Major-General J. Ross, C.B. The whole force, under General Roberts, was to be termed "*The Kabul Field Force*."

Meanwhile there had been important changes in the political situation in Afghanistan. On the 9th March Muhammad Jan was reported to have gone to Wardak to confer with the Mustaufi. The latter personage, Habibulla Khan, had been Finance Minister to Yakub Khan, and after the massacre of the British Envoy he was one of the officers who were sent by the Amir to Ali Khel to try and delay General Roberts's advance. Along with all the other Afghan ministers, he was put under arrest by General Roberts on his arrival in Kabul; but the Commission which enquired into the circumstances of the massacre found so little against him that he was released on security, only, however, to be again confined during the attack on Sherpur. His behaviour at that time was greatly in his favour, as he resisted all the offers of Muhammad Jan, and advised the latter to desist from his attempt. After the defeat of the



Afghans he was released unconditionally, and showed himself anxious to aid Sir F. Roberts in bringing about a settlement of the country. With this object he left Sherpur, in the hope of bringing in all the opposing chiefs to Sherpur, to state what their views and intentions were to General Roberts, so that, if possible, some peaceful arrangement might be arrived at.

At this time the Indian Government was equally anxious to retire from Kabul in the ensuing autumn, or, if possible, earlier, and to withdraw also from Kandahar as soon as the rule of the Wali Sher Ali Khan should be established there. The immediate difficulty was to find a strong ruler for Northern Afghanistan, and in this dilemma the eyes of Kabul politicians were turned towards Sardar Abdur Rahman Khan.

This sardar was the son of Mir Afzal Khan, the eldest son of Dost Muhammad, and consequently the nephew of the late Amir Sher Ali. Since 1868, when he was defeated near Bamian by his cousin Yakub Khan, he had resided in Russian territory, and received a pension from the Russian Government of 25,000 roubles a year. According to all reports he had saved large sums out of his pension, and during February information reached Kabul that he had, with the approval of the Russians, crossed the frontier and arrived in Badakhshan. He was, by all accounts, an able soldier, and he undoubtedly possessed at this period more influence than any other chief in Afghanistan.

On the 15th March the proposal to open negotiations with Abdur Rahman was approved by the Secretary of State. On the 19th Mr. Lepel Griffin, who had been appointed Chief Political Officer at Kabul, arrived at that place, and on the 1st April the following letter was sent to Abdur Rahman at Kunduz:

*Mr. Griffin to Sardar Abdur Rahman Khan,
1st April, 1880.*

"It has become known that you have entered Afghanistan, and consequently this letter is sent to you



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by a confidential messenger, in order that you may submit to the British officers at Kabul any representations that you may desire to make to the British Government with regard to your object in entering Afghanistan."

The Mustaufi was, meanwhile, still absent from Kabul, and from time to time sent satisfactory news of his negotiations with the chiefs of Ghazni and the Wardak Saiads to Sir Frederick Roberts. Nevertheless, the month of March closed with disturbing rumours of the hostile activity of Muhammad Jan and of other Afghan leaders, and much excitement was said to prevail in Koh Daman, Maidan, and Logar. On the 4th April it was reported that the Mustaufi was in Maidan with Muhammad Jan's brother, the latter chief himself being at Ambu Khak, a village in the Langar Valley, 5½ miles west of Shekhabad. The following day the Mustaufi arrived at Kabul and stated that he had left Muhammad Jan, Muhammad Hasan Khan, Executive Governor of Jalalabad, Sardars Tahir Khan, Alim Khan, and Sarwar Khan, Generals Aslam Khan, Ghulam Khan and other leading men in Maidan, and that they were willing to attend a darbar. After some negotiations with Mr. Lepel Griffin, the Mustaufi again returned to Maidan to arrange for the attendance of representative chiefs at Kabul on the 13th April. In the meantime the Chief Political Officer had made known the proposed subdivision of Afghanistan, and the separation of Kandahar from Kabul. This announcement, it appeared, gave general dissatisfaction; and on the 11th April, the following document was laid before Mr. Lepel Griffin, in anticipation of the approaching darbar:

"We, the undersigned, as representatives of the tribes of Afghanistan, send the following representations to the British Government:

"I.—Friendship between the people of Afghanistan and the great British Government



should be re-established as of former years, inasmuch as in this way the interests and welfare of both parties would, God willing, be secured.

“II.—Our King and Ruler should be released and restored to his former power; and we the tribesmen guarantee that, by the blessing of God, he will maintain a lasting and sincere friendship towards the British Government, and that both parties will have identical interests.

“III.—The British Agent, whoever he may be, should be of the Muhammadan religion, while all British troops should be withdrawn from our country.

“IV.—The Kingdom of Afghanistan should be restored in its entirety to its King and Ruler. In this way it will be able to cope with its foreign enemies.

“V.—The British Government should furnish such assistance to the King and Ruler of Afghanistan as it may think best for the interest of both parties.

“VI.—Immediate assistance should be given to the Amir, seeing that the country has been desolated and nothing of value is left, as the British authorities are themselves thoroughly aware.

“We hope that the great British Government will grant these, the expressed wishes of the tribes of Afghanistan, as they consult the interests of both parties.

“All of us have come to the British authorities to ask that we and our Sovereign may be forgiven; our wishes are set forth in the paragraphs above.”

Dated Friday, 29th Rabi-ul-Sani, 1297 (*9th April, 1880*).



THE DARBAR

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NAMES SEALED AND SIGNED.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Muhammad Alam. | 8. Abdul Ghafur. |
| 2. Muhammad Jan. | 9. Shah Muhammad. |
| 3. Muhammad Sarwar. | 10. Muhammad Afzal. |
| 4. Ghulam Haidar. | 11. Sultan Muhammad. |
| 5. Muhammad Hasan. | 12. Lal Muhammad. |
| 6. Abdul Karim. | 13. Ghulam Haidar. |
| 7. Muhammad Tahir. | |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Suliman Khel Ghilzais | 15 in number. |
| Andar Ghilzais | 8 " |
| Ahmadzai (Suliman Khel) Ghilzais of | |
| Zurmat | 17 " |
| Saiads of Wardak | 17 " |
| Mixed representatives from Logar and | |
| Kharwar | 15 " |
| Ahmadzai (Suliman Khel) Ghilzais . . | 46 " |
| Tajiks | 5 " |
| Tajiks of Ghazni | 9 " |
| Mixed representatives from Maidan . . | 14 " |
| Mangals and Totakhels (<i>sic</i>) | 43 " |

On the 13th April the darbar took place. From various causes Muhammad Jan, his brother, and Muhammad Hasan Khan and the leading Dürani chiefs were not present, and included few except Ghilzais and representatives of the Saiads of Wardak and the other non-Durani tribesmen from Logar, Zurmat, and Koh Daman. The darbar was opened by a speech from Sir Frederick Roberts, and the chiefs were then addressed by Mr. Lepel Griffin, who, after alluding to the absence of some of the more important leaders, proceeded as follows:

"You have first asked that the former friendship between the Government of the Queen-Empress of Hindustan and the Afghan nation should be restored, that Amir Yakub Khan should be released and reinstated, and that the British armies should retire from Afghanistan.

"In reply, I would first remind you that the breach in mutual friendship was made by Amir Sher Ali Khan. The British Government not only always desired, and



CSL

ANSWERING THE DEMANDS

still desires, friendship with Afghanistan, but will not appoint any one as Amir who does not profess friendship, nor will allow him to continue Amir, unless he plainly shows himself the friend of the friends of the British Government, and the enemy of its enemies.

"For this reason the Viceroy has decided that Muhammad Yakub Khan shall not return to Afghanistan. You know whether he observed the promises that he made to the British Government. You know that he rewarded those who had opposed us in the first campaign, while those who had assisted us he turned out of their lands and appointments. You have told me privately that if Yakub be not allowed to return, you are willing to accept as Amir any one whom the Government may choose to select.

"These expressions of the wish of a large number of respectable maliks will be, at the proper time, laid before His Excellency the Viceroy, together with that of others who may wish to support the candidature of Sardar Wali Muhammad Khan, Sardar Hashim Khan, Sardar Musa Jan, Sardar Ayub Khan, or any other member of the ruling family who may be approved by a large number of the people. The Government has no intention of annexing Afghanistan, and will occupy no more of it than may be necessary for the safety of its own frontiers. But the Province of Kandahar will not remain united with Kabul, but will be placed under the independent rule of a Barakzai prince. For the administration of those provinces that remain attached to Kabul, the Government is anxious to appoint an Amir who shall be strong to govern his people, and steadfast in his friendship to the British. And if only these qualifications be secured, the Government is willing and anxious to recognise the wish of the Afghan people and the tribal chiefs, and to nominate the Amir of their choice. But no decision can be given at present. You, who have assembled here, represent but a small part of the people, and it is necessary to ascertain the views and wishes of many others, chiefs



THE BRITISH REPLY

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and sardars who are absent from Kabul. But your votes in favour of Yakub Khan's immediate family will be remembered and considered if, until the decision of the Government be given, you absolutely abstain from all hostile action. Otherwise you must not expect that the Government will consider him likely to be a friendly Amir whose friends are its persistent enemies.

"The armies of the Queen-Empress will withdraw from Afghanistan when the Government considers that the proper time has come. As they did not enter Afghanistan with your permission, so they will not withdraw at your request. When the country is again peaceful, and when a friendly Amir has been selected, the Government has no wish to remain in Afghanistan. The army came to Kabul to inflict punishment for the murder of its Envoy in time of peace, which some of you have called a regretted accident, but which the British Government considers an atrocious crime, and it will remain until some satisfactory settlement can be made."

The Chief Political Officer then alluded to the intended movements of troops throughout the country, and counselled the sardars to do what they could to assist the leaders of these, as well as to discountenance the perpetration of outrages which could only result in the punishment of those implicated. He declared that in its European as well as its Asiatic relations the British Government had shown itself the friend and protector instead of the destroyer of Islam; and he concluded by stating that such questions as the future appointment of a Muhammadan Agent at Kabul must be reserved for discussion between the Viceroy and whatever chief should eventually be appointed Amir.

All this time the supporters of Sardar Abdur Rahman Khan were rapidly gaining adherents in Northern Afghanistan. The influence of the sardar in Afghan Turkistan, of which he was practically master, was equally instrumental with his position in the Barakzai family in furthering his claims. The



news of his arrival at Kunduz had created the utmost excitement all over the country. It was said that the Kohistanis were unanimous in their support of him, and an announcement on the part of Abdur Rahman of his approaching visit to Kohistan had drawn forth a reply from Khoja Jan, Mir Bacha, and all the chiefs of Kohistan and Koh Daman, saying that they looked on him only as their sovereign, and would give no support to Muhammad Jan, Musa Jan, or Yakub Khan. Such was the position of parties when, on the 21st April, the following letter was received at Kabul :

*Sardar Abdur Rahman Khan to Mr. Lepel Griffin,
15th April, 1880.*

“Whereas at this happy time I have received your kind letter. In a spirit of justice and friendship you wrote to enquire what I wished in Afghanistan. My honoured friend, the servants of the great [British] Government know well that throughout these twelve years of exile in the territories of the Emperor of Russia, night and day I have cherished the hope of revisiting my native land. When the late Amir Sher Ali Khan died, and there was no one to rule our tribes, I proposed to return to Afghanistan, but it was not fated [that I should do so]; then I went to Tashkend, consequently Amir Muhammad Yakub Khan, having come to terms and made peace with the British Government, was appointed Amir of Afghanistan; but since after he had left you, he listened to the advice of every interested [dishonest] person, and raised fools to power, until the ignorant men directed the affairs of Afghanistan, which during the reign of my grandfather, who had eighteen able sons, was so managed that night was bright like day, Afghanistan was, in consequence, disgraced before all States, and ruined. Now, therefore, that you seek to learn my hopes and wishes, they are these : That as long as your Empire and that of Russia exist, my countrymen, the tribes of Afghanistan, should



live quietly in ease and peace; and these two States should find us true and faithful, and that we should rest at peace between them [England and Russia], for my tribesmen are unable to struggle with Empires, and are ruined by want of commerce; and we hope of your friendship that, sympathising with and assisting the people of Afghanistan, you will place them under the honourable protection of the two Powers. This would redound to the credit of both, would give peace to Afghanistan, and quiet and comfort to God's people.

"This is my wish; for the rest it is yours to decide."

To which the following reply was given :

From Mr. Lepel Griffin to Sardar Abdur Rahman Khan, 30th April, 1880.

"On the 21st April I received your friendly letter from Kunduz, and understood its contents, together with the messages which you sent by Muhammad Sarwar. Both were submitted by telegram for the information of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India at Simla, and I am now commanded by him to reply to your letter to the following effect :

"The friendly sentiments which you have expressed are cordially reciprocated, and the British Government has only one object in its communications with you, namely, to restore peace to Afghanistan, and friendly relations between that country and itself. For this it is believed that the time is opportune. An army marching from Kandahar has just occupied Ghazni, and is now pursuing its march to Kabul; while the Wardaks, who have opposed the march of a brigade sent from Kabul to co-operate with the Kandahar army, have been defeated with heavy loss. The British Government does not desire to annex Afghanistan, and will withdraw its armies from Kabul so soon as it has established an Amir who is willing to live in peace and friendship with the Government. This you



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are ready to do, and consequently the Viceroy and Governor-General, believing you to be the most capable of the Barakzai family, and most approved by the people of Afghanistan, offers you the Amirship, and will assist you to establish yourself and supply your immediate wants.

“What you said regarding Russia has been fully understood, and the Government appreciates your sentiments towards those from whom you have so long experienced hospitality, but on this point no difficulty need arise, for, with regard to your future relation with Russia, the Government desires nothing different from what has already been agreed upon between that country and Her Majesty’s Government.

“It is of great importance for you to take action at once; should you accept this friendly offer of the Government, you will do well to come to Kabul without delay, where you are assured of honourable reception and personal safety. But at no place but Kabul can final arrangements be satisfactorily and quickly made.

“This letter, in duplicate, is taken by Wazirzada Sardar Muhammad Khan, a trusted official of the British Government, who will explain other matters by word of mouth, and by Sardar Sher Muhammad Khan, who is well known to you, and who is a well-wisher of the British Government and of Afghanistan.”

It is now necessary to leave the account of the political negotiations and return to that of the military movements at the beginning of April.

On the 17th March the Quartermaster-General telegraphed to Sir F. Roberts:

“At the time of Stewart’s reaching Ghazni your movable force will be disposed as follows: It will occupy Surkai Kotal, Shutargardan, and Kushi; with sufficient force at Kushi to hold it, and, if necessary, reinforce Stewart at Ghazni. Please report for Chief’s information what disposition of the force you would make with this view. Stewart is ready to start, but



FURTHER PRECAUTIONS

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cannot do so until the Bombay troops arrive in sufficient strength. I will give you more detailed information shortly, but I suppose end of month will see him *en route*, and at Ghazni about twenty-five days later."

Again, on same date: "When your movable force takes the field, and if you only hold the Bala Hissar and Siah Sang with your reduced force, will Sherpur be sufficiently under command of these places to prevent its being occupied and held by the enemy, or would it be necessary to break the walls and otherwise render the place untenable?"

To the above, General Roberts replied on the 20th March:

"To hold Shutargardan and Surkai Kotal with safety, and to be able to meet all gatherings of the Ghilzais, not less than one mountain battery and three regiments of infantry would be required. The balance of the movable column would be available to operate in the direction of Ghazni, if necessary. But as affairs are now progressing, I think it likely that the whole, or at least the greater part, of my force will be required for political reasons at or near Kabul, and that General Stewart will not need any assistance at Ghazni. The proposed submission of the sardars and leading men now at Ghazni will ensure no opposition being offered at that place, and will require increased watchfulness and strength at Kabul. There is, of course, no certainty what aspect political affairs may assume about the time of General Stewart's arrival at Ghazni. The Commander-in-Chief shall be kept carefully informed of all political changes from day to day, to enable His Excellency to consider what the military requirements may be."

With regard to Sherpur cantonment, General Roberts replied on the 20th that the only way to render Sherpur untenable, without knocking down the walls, which would cause great delay, was to hold the posts on the Bimaru heights. Blockhouses had been erected there, and with the aid of a small movable



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column the position could safely be held; otherwise Sherpur would have to be abandoned to the enemy, which would not only increase their prestige, but would give them easy and uninterrupted access to the city. General Roberts pointed out that the retention of Sherpur depended on various circumstances which could not be foreseen, and he therefore submitted that the question should be left to him to decide at the time.

General Roberts was informed, in reply, that the Commander-in-Chief considered that Sherpur should be held as long as possible; but that the point must be settled by General Roberts when necessity arose.

On the 19th March the 24th Punjab Infantry (Colonel F. M. Norman) and the 45th Sikhs (Colonel B. Armstrong) reached Kabul, in augmentation of the force there, followed by the 17th Bengal Cavalry on the 24th and the 27th Punjab Infantry (Lieutenant-Colonel Hughes) on the 26th March. On the 22nd large reinforcements of transport animals were received, while those with the force had improved considerably in condition as the weather became milder. The Kabul Field Force now numbered over twelve thousand men, and at the close of the month the infantry was formed in two divisions, commanded severally by Sir Frederick Roberts and General Ross, in accordance with the Commander-in-Chief's orders of the 18th March (see Appendix XVIII.).

On the 27th March the Cavalry Brigade under Brigadier-General Hugh Gough, supported by the newly organised Mounted Infantry, reconnoitred beyond Chaharasia and found the country all quiet. Three days later a reconnaissance towards Arghandi showed similar tranquillity in that direction.

Major-General J. Ross arrived on the 2nd April and took over command of the 2nd Division, while Brigadier-General W. Roberts assumed command of the 1st Brigade, 2nd Division, on the 8th idem. No. 6-8 Battery (screw guns) and the 3rd Punjab Cavalry also arrived from India early in the month.



News from Sir Donald Stewart stated that his force would reach Ghazni on the 21st, and preparations were therefore pushed forward for the march from Kabul of a force which was to proceed to Shekhabad to support General Stewart's advance. Of this force General Ross was directed to take command, and its departure was fixed for the 14th April, but was afterwards postponed to the 16th to allow the sardars and maliks who had attended the darbar at Sherpur to return to their homes. At length on the morning of the 16th the column marched from Kabul, composed as follows:

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Cavalry | { | 9th Lancers (1 squadron)—Captain the Hon. H. Legge. |
| | | 3rd Bengal Cavalry—Lieutenant-Colonel A. R. D. Mackenzie. |
| Artillery | { | 3rd Punjab Cavalry (2 squadrons). |
| | | 6-B, R.A. (4 screw guns)—Major T. Graham. |
| Infantry, 2,680 rifles. | { | No. 4 Hazara Mountain Battery—Captain A. Broadfoot. |
| | | British . 2-9th Foot—Colonel W. Daunt. |
| Native | { | 23rd Pioneers—Lieutenant-Colonel H. Collett. |
| | | 24th Punjab Infantry—Lieutenant-Colonel F. B. Norman. |
| | | 4th Gurkhas—Lieutenant-Colonel F. F. Rowcroft. |
| | | No. 3 Company, Sappers and Miners—Lieutenant H. Dove. |

Total strength, 3,960, with four days' ordinary supplies, and fifteen days' tea, sugar, and rum; also ten days' tea, sugar, and rum for General Stewart's troops.

The general military situation at this time at Kabul and on the line of communications was described at length by Sir Frederick Roberts in a report to Army Head-quarters, dated April the 17th. After noticing in detail the strength of the Field Force, etc., the General proceeds:

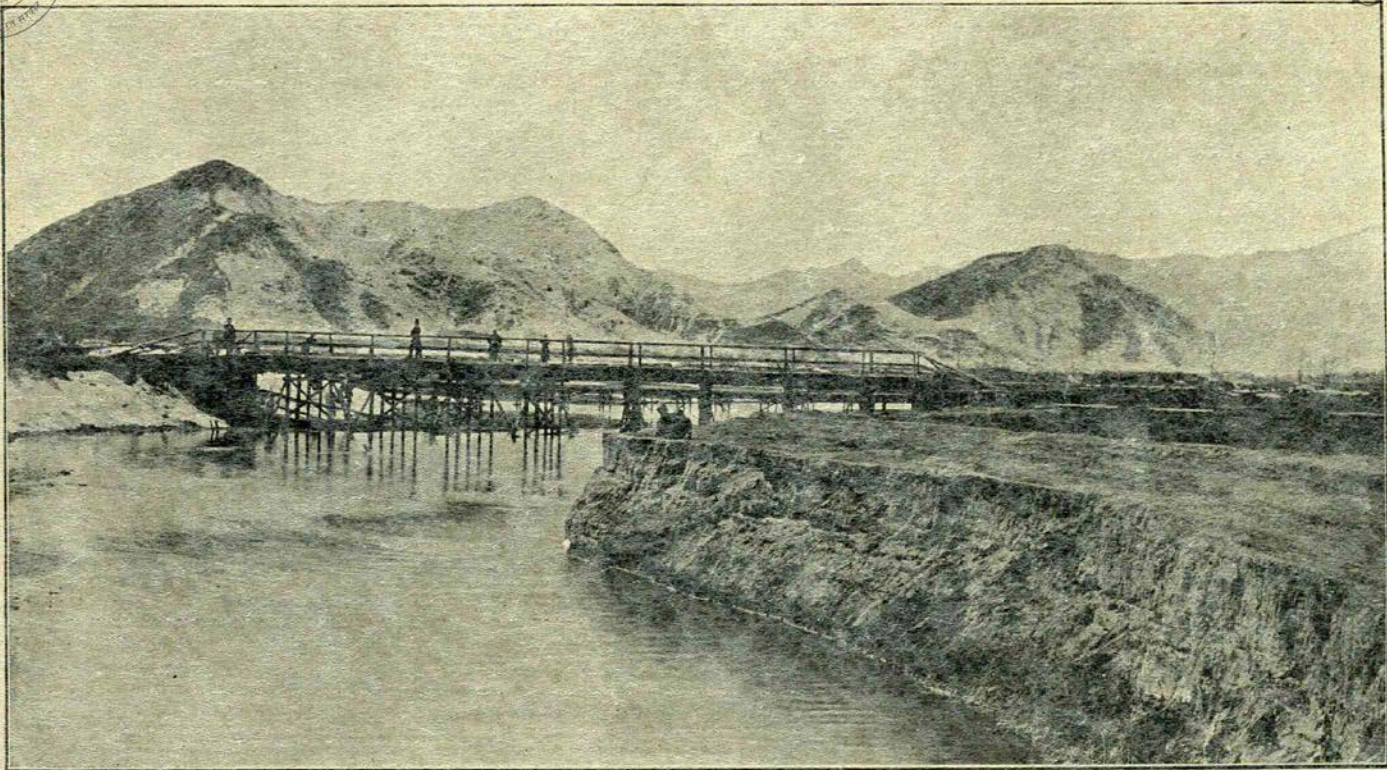
"On my first arrival at Kabul, and for some time afterwards, the passage of troops to and fro between Kabul and the Shutargardan kept the fertile valley of the Logar open, and I then drew, and am still continuing to draw, thence (but latterly in smaller quantities) a considerable portion of the supplies necessary



for my force. The disturbances of last December, the expectation that the festival of Naoroz would be the prelude to further hostilities, the rumoured approach of Abdur Rahman, and intrigues in other interests by Muhammad Jan—all combined to unsettle the country and to paralyse trade; but the steps taken politically to break up the Ghazni faction, which no doubt was brought about by the mission of the Mustaufi Habi-bulla, prevented the anticipated combination at Naoroz. The Mustaufi has succeeded as well as could be expected, but his success was attended with much delay and difficulty, owing to the scattered habitations and the conflicting interests of the sardars with whom he had to deal; and although the men who accompanied him to Sherpur cannot be considered as powerful personages, they still form a fairly representative section. Of course, there would have been no military obstacle to moving out and coercing the refractory sardars, but this would have undoubtedly frustrated the very objects which the Mustaufi was endeavouring to attain."

He then adverts to the march of General Ross's division; after which, turning to the question of commissariat, he writes:

"Up to the present no insurmountable difficulties have been met with in provisioning the troops, and I do not think that any such are likely to arise. Certain articles must be procured from India, but to these, of course, I do not refer. But though I see no reason to anticipate the occurrence of any greater obstacles than have already been successfully overcome, still this very important matter is, and must continue to be, a source of grave anxiety to any one commanding a large force in an enemy's country; especially a country like Afghanistan, where, even in a few days, and with little or no previous warning, great pressure may be successfully brought to bear against those upon whom we are dependent." (For further details as regards equipment and supply, see Appendix XIX.)



THE "PUL-I-FERINGHI" OVER THE KABUL RIVER, NEAR VILLAGE OF IBRAHIM KHAN (LOOKING UP-STREAM TOWARDS ASMAI)
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"No precautions," continues General Roberts, "have been neglected to strengthen our position at Kabul.

"All the forts and walled enclosures within a radius of 1,000 yards from Sherpur have been levelled, with the exception of Kala Mustaufi and Kala Zulfikar, at the north-west and south-east corners of cantonments respectively; these have been retained, as they give admirable flanking fire along the faces.

"The fort of Ibrahim Khan has been strengthened, and forms an excellent bridge-head at the spot where a very substantial wooden bridge (capable of bearing heavy artillery) spans the Kabul River and carries the direct road from Sherpur to Siah Sang and Butkhak.

"On the north-west corner of Siah Sang, and in sight of Fort Ibrahim Khan, a tower capable of holding twenty men has been constructed; and this tower again is visible from Fort Roberts, a strong work on the most western spurs of Siah Sang, which completely dominate the city, and from which the 40-pounders and new 6·3-inch howitzers can sweep the country in any direction.

"From here the Bala Hissar is distant not more than 1,400 yards, and flag signals can easily be read with the naked eye. In the Bala Hissar an inner line of defence has been prepared, within which all our stores are collected, and the space between this inner line and the outer wall on the city side, which was formerly a tangled network of houses, has been levelled and cleared. Three hundred feet above the Bala Hissar stands the Bala Burj, which has been repaired, and which is now capable of accommodating twenty rifles; it is practically inaccessible, has a most extensive command of fire, and is an excellent link between the upper Bala Hissar and the Sher Darwaza and the Deh Mazang gorge, and to communicate with the work on Asmai. From this point to Asmai a new line of road has been constructed, completely avoiding the city and Deh Afghan. It crosses the Kabul River near the site of the old bridge and enables the garrison of the Asmai



post to retire upon the Sher Darwaza, if it should become necessary. On Asmai is a fort to accommodate 150 rifles. This effectually covers the northern entrance of the Deh Mazang gorge, and as long as this fort and the works on Sher Darwaza are in our possession, the occupation of the city by an enemy is impossible.

"On Bimaru ten blockhouses have been constructed, in addition to a small fort on the eastern end, and another small one in Bimaru village. Various other military precautions have been taken, such as abattis, scarping where needful, entanglements, clearing the front of all cover, etc.; whilst care has been taken that each post is visible to its neighbour, and that they give mutual flanking defence. The position may now be said to be as strong as the means and time at my disposal admit of its being made."

The despatch further deals with the arrangements made by the General in case of attack and with the working of the various departments, including transport, with regard to which he reports:

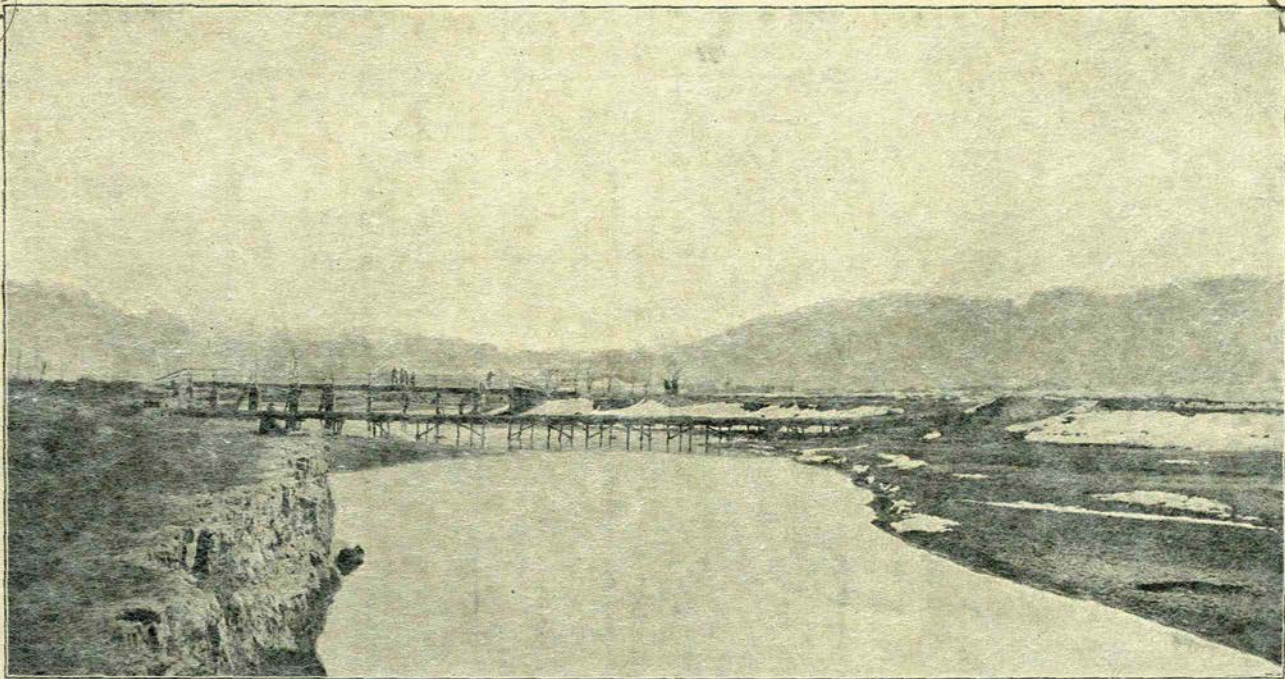
"The present state of the transport is as follows:

| | Effective. | Sick. | Total. |
|----------------------------|------------|-------|--------|
| Camels | 1,708 | 196 | 1,904 |
| Yabus | 1,625 | 439 | 2,064 |
| Mules and ponies | 5,540 | 902 | 6,442 |
| Bullocks | 749 | 87 | 836 |

Sickness is almost entirely due to sore-backs and mange, the former being in a large majority. Convoys from below arrive, as a rule, in good order; but the animals which come with regiments or drafts almost invariably contribute largely to the number of sore-backs in hospital."

Finally, Sir Frederick Roberts goes on to describe the events which had occurred on the Khyber line, and which will be dealt with in a future chapter.

General Ross's force, which left Kabul on the 16th April, camped that night at Kala Kazi, being accompanied so far by Sir Frederick Roberts. Thence it



THE "PUL-I-FERINGHI" OVER THE KABUL RIVER, NEAR VILLAGE OF IBRAHIM KHAN (LOOKING DOWN-STREAM TOWARDS LATABAND)
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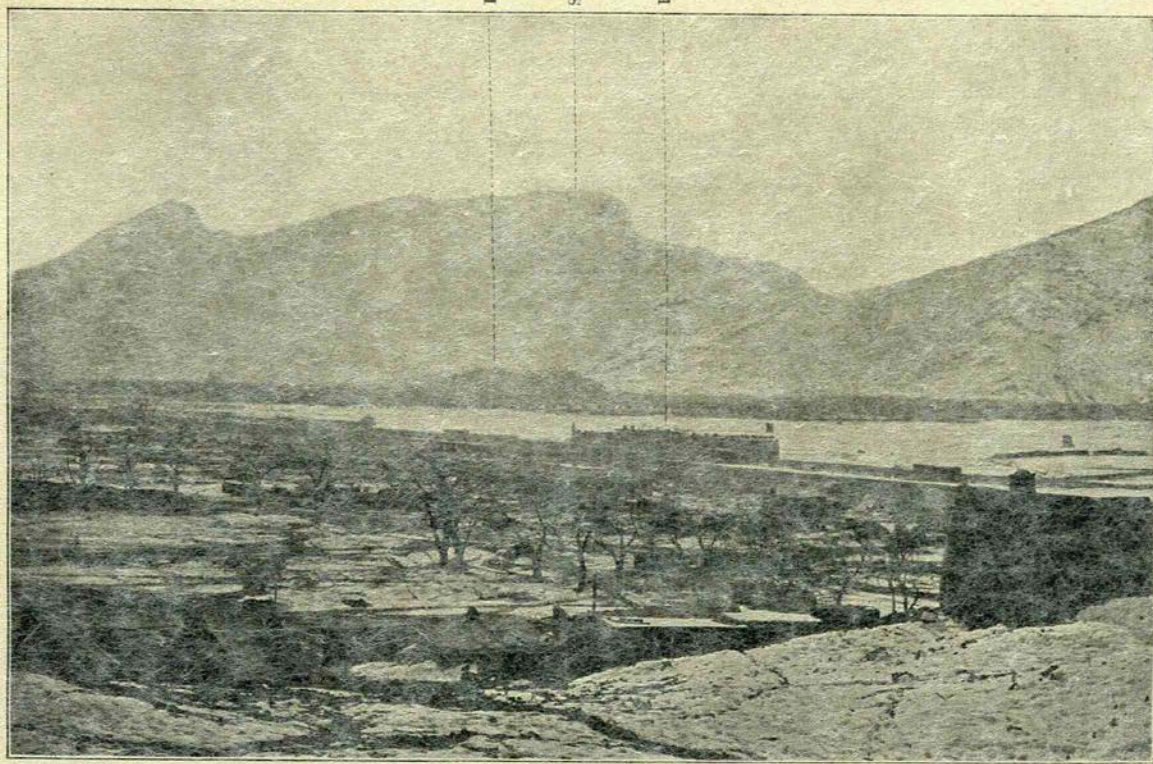


Doh-i-Afghan

Sher Darwaza

Head-Qr. Gate

CSL



WESTERN FACE OF SHERPUR CANTONMENT, SHOWING THE SHER DARWAZA



marched by Arghandi to Maidan, where a two days' halt was made. Reports were received of a hostile force coming from Logar, but no definite information could be obtained by reconnoitring parties; the people of the country, however, refused to bring in supplies, and a foraging party sent out on the 19th, under Lieutenant W. G. Straghan, 2-9th Foot, was opposed by some 500 men, supposed to be under Bahadur Khan. Brigadier-General Charles Gough proceeded to Lieutenant Straghan's support, but when he arrived it was too late in the day to take any active measures. On the same afternoon a reconnaissance party of eight sowars, 3rd Punjab Cavalry, under Captain the Hon. C. Dutton, A.Q.M.G., was fired on near the Safed Khak Kotal: one sowar was badly wounded and two horses shot.

To inflict punishment for these outrages two columns were sent out from the force on the 20th, commanded respectively by Brigadier-General Charles Gough and Colonel F. B. Norman. The towers of the offending villages were blown up and supplies collected from each, and the columns returned to camp without being molested.

On the 21st General Ross marched to Kala Durani, and on the 22nd to Top (or Sar-i-Top); shots were fired at the column from the neighbouring hills on both days, but without causing any casualties. While on the march to Top a heliographic light was seen on the Sher Dahan, in the direction of Ghazni, a kotal 8,300 feet in height, and the highest spot on the road between Kabul and Kandahar. This turned out to be from the signallers of Sir Donald Stewart's Field Force. Communication was at once established, and news received of the decisive victory at Ahmad Khel. This intelligence was sent back to Kabul by special messengers, where the announcement had a most beneficial effect in quieting existing uncertainty and excitement. A salute of thirty-one guns was fired from the upper Bala Hissar on the following morning in honour of the victory.



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From Top General Ross's force marched to Saidabad, where it halted and established regular communication with Sir Donald Stewart. Bodies of armed Afghans were several times observed on the surrounding hills, but they always withdrew without attempting hostilities when threatened by the British force. Reconnoitring parties were sent out from camp on the 24th, one over the Zamburak Pass towards the Logar Valley round by the Tangi Wardak and back by Shekhabad; a second up the Ghazni road, and a third across the hills west of the camp.

Meanwhile, on the 20th April, the following force had marched from Kabul towards Chaharasia, under the command of Colonel F. H. Jenkins, c.B., with a view to keeping in check the people of Logar, who were said to be assembling under Muhammad Hasan Khan, *ex*-Governor of Jalalabad, and were threatening the rear of General Ross's force:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------------|--|
| Colonel Jenkins, c.B. | { | Cavalry . | Corps of Guides, 2 squadrons—Lieutenant-Colonel G. Stewart. |
| | | Artillery . | F.A., R.H.A. (2 guns)—Lieutenant J. H. Wodehouse. |
| | | Infantry . | 92nd Highlanders (wing), 266 rifles—Major G. S. White. |
| | | | Corps of Guides, 600 rifles—Lieutenant-Colonel R. B. P. P. Campbell. |
| | | Total . | { 866 rifles. 250 sabres. 2 guns. |

The column encamped on the 20th at Beni Hissar and marched for Chaharasia on the following morning; here it encamped between the Chaharasia hamlets and Chihil Dukhtaran, where news was brought to Colonel Jenkins that Muhammad Hasan Khan had started with 2,000 men to attack General Ross, but on hearing of his (Colonel Jenkins's) march, he had returned and was then at Muhammad Agha or Kuti Khel, two villages on the Logar road, 12 miles ahead of the column.

On the 22nd the force remained halted at Chihil Dukhtaran. Further intelligence was received of



Muhammad Hasan's gathering, and a picquet of the Afghans was discerned on a high hill about a mile south-east. At 2 a.m. on the 25th Colonel Jenkins received warning that the enemy intended to attack him at dawn. This intelligence was at once despatched to Sherpur and preparations were made for meeting the attack. To the left and left front of the camp, and distant from 1,300 to 1,500 yards, were ranges of rocky hills, spurs of which ran down to the Logar road, 1,200 yards from the camp front. On the right and right rear, 1,200 to 1,300 yards away, were the hamlets of Chaharasia with their gardens and enclosures.

A party of Guides Cavalry was sent to reconnoitre down the Logar road, which ran due south from the camp past the spurs described above, and as day broke this party was seen retiring slowly before an advancing body of Afghans, while similar hostile forces were descried threatening both right and left flanks.

Colonel Jenkins at once ordered the tents to be struck and the baggage to be parked under shelter of a small detached hill in rear (north) of the camp, half a company of the 92nd and a company of the Guides being told off as baggage guard.

Two small fortified villages protecting the right and right rear of the camp were also occupied by detachments of the Guides Infantry, while a troop of the Guides Cavalry under Lieutenant G. K. Daly was sheltered behind the western of these.

The right centre, centre, and left of the position were held respectively by two companies of the Guides under Captain Battye, two companies of the 92nd under Major White, and two other companies of the Guides under Captain A. G. Hammond. The two guns of F-A were brought into action from their position in camp, and opened fire at about 5.15 a.m. on the enemy on the ridges. The latter seemed at first to number about 3,000 men, but they were further reinforced during the day. They speedily commenced a brisk fire on the British force, using Martini, Snider,



400 SUPPORT FROM MACPHERSON

and Enfield rifles; but though in the course of the morning their standards were brought up to within 200 yards of our position, they could not be induced by their leaders to attempt an effective charge.

As soon as the sun got high enough, Colonel Jenkins sent a heliograph message to Kabul announcing that he was attacked; in answer to which he was informed that reinforcements had already started to his support under General H. T. Macpherson. In anticipation, therefore, of their arrival, the British force retained its original position unaltered, with the exception of the withdrawal of the guns to a less exposed spot about 400 yards in rear.

Brigadier-General Macpherson had left Sherpur at 9 a.m., with the following force:

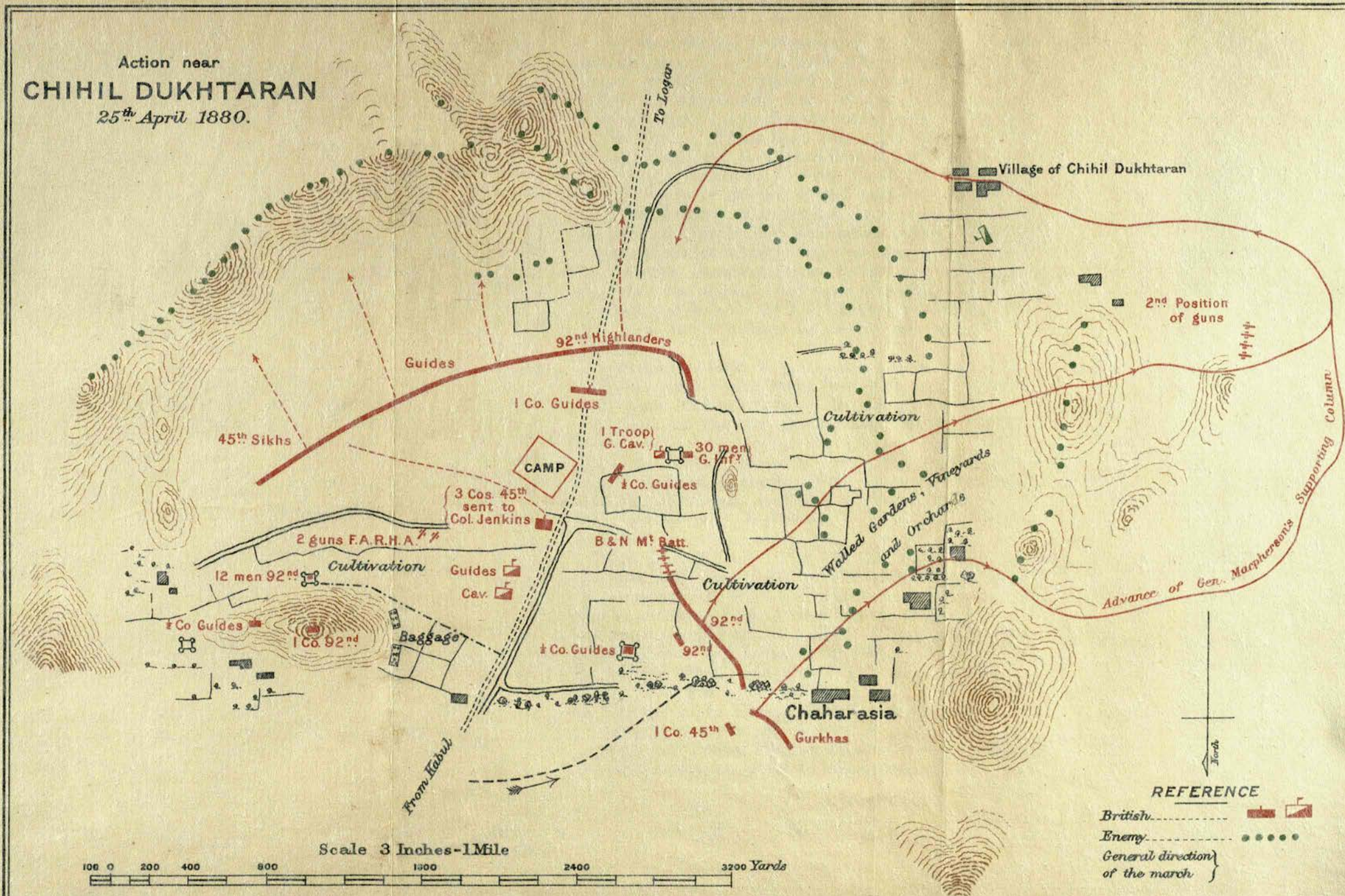
| | |
|--|------------|
| 3rd Punjab Cavalry ($\frac{1}{2}$ squadron)—Lieutenant L. S. H. Baker | 85 sabres. |
| 3-8, R.A. (screw gun, British mountain battery)—Lieutenant A. F. Liddell | 2 guns. |
| No. 2 Mountain Battery (Derajat), Native—Major G. Swinley | 2 „ |
| 92nd Highlanders (other wing)—Lieutenant-Colonel G. H. Parker | 278 rifles |
| 45th Sikhs—Lieutenant-Colonel F. M. Armstrong | 555 „ |
| 2nd Gurkhas—Captain W. Hill | 129 „ |
| | 962 |

His orders were to relieve Colonel Jenkins's force and to bring it back to Sherpur, after driving off the enemy.

Having left two companies of the 45th Sikhs to hold the Sang-i-Nawishta Pass, which commands the road to Kabul, General Macpherson pressed on, and arriving at the scene of action, his first order was to send the baggage back to Sherpur, so as to free the remainder of the force for action. He then prepared to attack the left wing of the enemy's semicircle, which occupied the walled gardens, vineyards and orchards near the villages of Chaharasia; while, at Colonel Jenkins's suggestion, three companies of the 45th were ordered to reinforce the British left, so as to allow of a forward movement at that point also.



Action near
CHIHIL DUKHTARAN
25th April 1880.





On the right the four mountain guns under Major Swinley came into action some 600 yards in rear of a line of skirmishers composed of the wing 92nd Highlanders and detachment 2nd Gurkhas, who advanced steadily towards a mound and a walled orchard occupied by the enemy. From these points the Afghans were quickly driven, and they were soon streaming over the hills in rear pursued by General Macpherson's infantry and by the fire of the four British and native mountain guns, which were advanced as the enemy retreated. The line of advance was over heavy ground, terraced fields, and walled villages and orchards, among which the enemy's standards were dotted in considerable numbers; one of these was captured with great determination and dash by the 2nd Gurkhas, and its loss was the signal for a general retreat on the part of the Afghans.

Meantime, about 3 p.m., as soon as the three companies of the 45th Sikhs had come up on the left of Colonel Jenkins's fighting line, a general advance took place of the British left and centre, Captain Hammond's companies of the Guides, supported by the 45th Sikhs, advancing over the south-eastern heights without a check. The resistance met with was not protracted, and only a few fanatics stood their ground until bayoneted or shot as the British advanced.

The head-quarters wing of the 92nd, the 2nd Gurkhas, and detachment of the 45th Sikhs cleared all the hills to the south and east, until not a man was visible, and the Guides Cavalry and the Horse Artillery continued the pursuit for 4 miles. The pursuers then made a *détour* and returned by Chihil Dukhtaran to the original site of Colonel Jenkins's camp. Here the whole force was assembled at 4 p.m. and marched for Sherpur under General Macpherson's orders. The cantonment was reached at about 8 p.m.

Brigadier-General Macpherson estimated the Afghan loss on this occasion at 200 in killed alone, while native

GENERAL ROSS'S MOVEMENT

reports made it 250. The British loss was 4 killed and 34 wounded.

To return to General Ross's movement to meet General Stewart's force.

On the 25th April part of General Ross's force was engaged with the Afghans near Shekhabad. News having been received of a large hostile gathering under Abdul Ghafur of the Langar Valley and Akhta Buland of Rustam Khel in the eastern Maidan Valley, General Ross determined to send out two parties, one to proceed direct against the enemy occupying the ridges north-west of camp, and the other to go *via* the Shekhabad road and attack the left of the enemy's position, so soon as the direct attack had developed itself.

Both columns left camp at about 11 a.m. The first was composed of :

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|--|
| Under Lieutenant-Colonel F. F. Roweroft, 4th Gurkhas. | { | 3rd Bengal Cavalry | (1 troop, 40 sabres)—Major G. W. Willock. |
| | | Hazara Mountain Battery | (Centre division, 2 guns)—Lieutenant H. M. Sandbach. |
| | | 2-9th Foot | (2 companies, 3 officers, 123 men)—Captain C. M. Stockley. |
| | | 4th Gurkhas | (Wing, 3 British officers, 5 native officers, 272 men)—Major J. Hay. |

The second party was as follows :

| | | | |
|---|---|----------------------|---|
| Under Major B. A. Combe, D. A. Q. M. G. | { | 3rd Punjab Cavalry | ($\frac{1}{2}$ troop, 1 native officer, 25 sabres). |
| | | 24th Punjab Infantry | (3 companies, 2 British officers, 3 native officers, 13 havildars, 168 rifles)—Captain P. H. Wallerstein. |

Lieutenant-Colonel Roweroft's force proceeded towards the hills to the north-west of the camp to dislodge and drive off the enemy, who had occupied in force several very commanding positions on different crests and ridges of the hills.

This duty he effected with a loss of only one killed



and four wounded, and at 3 p.m. he returned to camp. Meanwhile Major Combe's detachment, having advanced up the Shekhabad road, found the enemy occupying a ridge parallel to, and about 2 miles to the left (west) of the British advance. From this position they were driven without difficulty and without any loss by the British.

Whilst the above operations were proceeding, Major-General Hills and several other officers, with an escort of the 3rd Punjab Cavalry, rode over to Sir Donald Stewart's camp at Shashgao, and thus established personal communication with the Ghazni Field Force.

On the following morning (26th April) the signallers above General Ross's camp reported that the enemy were again assembling on the neighbouring heights; Brigadier-General C. Gough was accordingly sent out with a column composed of two guns each of 6-8, Royal Artillery, and the Hazara Mountain Battery, a wing each of 2-9th Foot and the 23rd Pioneers; another division of the Hazara Mountain Battery under Lieutenant E. C. Wace also took part in the affair from the "signal hill," west of the camp. The combined fire of the guns soon caused the Afghans to retire from the position which they had taken up, and they were hotly pursued by the infantry, who advanced without opposition for a considerable distance. The detachment returned to camp at 5.30 p.m.

On the 28th April General Ross's division moved from Saidabad to Shekhabad, and was joined here by 6-11, Royal Artillery, the heavy battery drawn by bullocks which had accompanied the Ghazni Field Force from Kandahar. The next day Lieutenant-General Sir Donald Stewart, with some of his staff, himself joined General Ross and the division marched to Top, a column having been sent under Brigadier-General C. Gough to visit Langar, to inflict punishment for the attacks lately made, in which expedition no opposition was encountered. From Top the force continued its return march towards Kabul by way of Kala Durani



and Arghandi, at which place Sir Donald Stewart was met by Sir Frederick Roberts.

The division marched into Kabul on the 2nd May. On the same day Sir Donald Stewart took over the supreme command of the Northern Afghanistan Field Force (see p. 365).

While these events had been occurring in Afghanistan, Lord Beaconsfield's Administration in England had come to an end, and the 29th April saw the announcement of the appointment of the Marquis of Ripon to be Viceroy of India in succession to Lord Lytton, while the Marquis of Hartington assumed the office of Secretary of State for India.



CHAPTER XIII

OPERATIONS OF THE NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN FIELD
FORCE, UNDER SIR DONALD STEWART, FROM MAY TO
SEPTEMBER, 1880.

THE month of May found the country in the immediate neighbourhood of Kabul fairly quiet and settled, but it was evident that where the actual presence of our armies had not been felt no influence or authority had been established by the British. The monarchy of Sher Ali had given place to a state of anarchy, in which the rival chiefs recognised no authority but their own. The one point of agreement amongst them, however, was their desire to rid themselves, as speedily as possible, of the presence of the invading troops, and the events of the past few months having shown conclusively that this object could not be effected by force, they were willing to unite in furthering the negotiations which should again establish a Barakzai prince on the throne, and thus supply an alternative government to that of the British generals.

These negotiations meanwhile proceeded slowly. Further letters were received from Sardar Abdur Rahman on the 16th May and 9th June, couched in friendly terms; but he appeared to hesitate to visit Kabul in person, and accordingly, in letters dated the 14th and 15th June, Mr. Griffin strongly urged him to lose no time in concluding final terms of friendship with the British and in using his influence to bring about a settlement with the Afghan leaders. The prolongation of the negotiations increased the existing feeling of unrest and excitement, which was further augmented



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as Abdur Rahman approached Kabul. This restlessness showed itself in the neighbourhood of the capital by frequent attacks on picquets, and by difficulty in collecting supplies from the country people. It was determined, therefore, in the latter part of June, to concentrate the British forces in the neighbourhood of Kabul. A month earlier various movements of troops had taken place, partly to relieve the strain on the Commissariat Department at Kabul and partly to protect adherents who were in danger of being coerced by the recalcitrant factions. Thus on the 8th May the following force, under the immediate command of Brigadier-General T. D. Baker and accompanied by Lieutenant-General Sir F. Roberts, proceeded to Chaharasia in the Logar Valley :

| | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| Cavalry | { | 9th Lancers (wing). |
| | { | 3rd Punjab Cavalry (2 squadrons). |
| | { | 17th Bengal Cavalry. |
| Artillery | { | 6-8, Royal Artillery (4 guns). |
| | { | No. 2 Mountain Battery (6 guns). |
| Infantry | { | Nos. 5 and 7 Companies, Bengal Sappers and Miners. |
| | { | 72nd Highlanders. |
| | { | 2nd Gurkhas. |
| | { | 5th Gurkhas. |
| | { | 5th Punjab Infantry. |

From Chaharasia the column moved along the Logar Valley to Zahidabad and Deh-i-Nao, whence a party was despatched some seven miles east on the 15th to destroy a fort belonging to the Ghilzai chief Padshah Khan, who had become recalcitrant now that he was no longer in a position to profit by the political situation in Afghanistan; thence it marched to the neighbourhood of Hisarak, but keeping to the right bank of the Logar River, and here, on the 17th May, it was but a mile and a half from the camp of the 3rd Division (late Ghazni Field Force), on the opposite bank. On the 20th May the brigade turned westwards to Baraki Rajan, Amir Kala, and Shekhabad: thence northwards to the vicinity of the Kotal-i-Takht. From the latter place, Sir F. Roberts, taking with him the



four guns of 6-8, Royal Artillery, 1 troop of the 9th Lancers, No. 5 Company of Sappers, and 2 companies of the 2nd Gurkhas, returned to Kabul by way of Kala Haidar Khan, and reached the capital on the 29th May. Another detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. McQueen, c.B., composed of 6 companies 2nd Gurkhas, and the 5th Punjab Infantry, returned to Kabul by the Chardeh Valley. The rest of General Baker's brigade remained in camp in Maidan until the 6th June, being rejoined meanwhile by 2 guns of 6-8, Royal Artillery. On that date it marched for Kabul, where it arrived on the following day, and encamped between the Bimaru hills and the lake.

Meanwhile Major-General James Hills, c.B., v.c., was appointed to command the 3rd Division, North Afghanistan Field Force, in Logar, and joined the division on the 14th May. It was encamped at the time at Hisarak, with one brigade (General Barter's) at Kala-i-Jabir.¹ On the 19th May General Hills with his head-quarters joined the latter brigade, Brigadier-General Hughes still remaining at Hisarak. On the 31st the divisional head-quarters, Cavalry Brigade, and 1st (Barter's) Infantry Brigade moved to Deh-i-Moghalan on the left bank of the river where it turns sharply northwards. Here, in consequence of the unsettled state of the surrounding country and the possibility of a hostile demonstration against the British, General Hills constructed a series of defences against night attacks, cutting the standing crops round the perimeter of the camp, erecting sangars on the neighbouring heights, demolishing two fortified villages which had harboured the enemy, and rendering the position of the division as impregnable as possible. It was evident that there was a great deal of ill-feeling against the British in the district; the sentries and picquets were fired on night after night; difficulty was experienced in collecting supplies, and all information tended to show that but little provocation was required

¹ Not on map.



GOUGH'S BRIGADE

to arouse a considerable outburst of hostility in the valley.

On the 18th June the 3rd Division left Logar, marched towards the capital, and encamped on the 20th at Chaharasia, sending in a convoy of sick and the ordnance field park which was not required to Kabul.

Meanwhile, a few days earlier, on the 14th June, a brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General Charles Gough, moved out of Sherpur and encamped at Wazirabad, preparatory to marching into the Paghman Valley. It was composed of the following troops:

| | |
|---|-------------|
| 3rd Bengal Cavalry | 451 sabres. |
| Hazara Mountain Battery | ... |
| 2-9th Foot | 690 rifles. |
| 4th Gurkhas | 639 " |
| 24th Punjab Infantry | 628 " |
| No. 2 Company, Bengal Sappers | 102 " |

On the 18th this brigade encamped in the Begtut Valley, a fertile locality at the foot of the Paghman range, about 4 miles from Kala Ghulam Haidar, and so situated that a force placed there could prevent the movement of bodies of men between Maidan and Kohistan.

Here, on the 20th June, news was received that there was a gathering of *ghazis* in Maidan, and the brigadier accordingly sent out a detachment consisting of 1 squadron of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry, 2 companies of the 9th Foot, and 4 of the 24th Punjab Infantry under Colonel F. B. Norman, to ascertain the state of affairs. This party reconnoitred as far as the Kotal-i-Safed Khak and encountered a considerable body of tribesmen, but the latter fell back without offering any serious resistance, and only a few shots were exchanged. Colonel Norman's detachment rejoined the brigade the same evening.

The next day (21st June), Gough's brigade moved to a high and commanding ridge in Paghman, where it was reinforced by the 3rd Punjab Cavalry; thence on



the 24th it marched in two columns by the Siah Bini Kotal and the Surkh Kotal to Karez Mir. On the latter date the camp was visited by Sir Frederick Roberts, who made a reconnaissance towards Kala Murad Beg, returning to Sherpur by the Kara Dushman Pass, and the Pai Minar Kotal.

Meanwhile the 3rd Division under General Hills remained at Chaharasia till the 26th June, when the increasing scarcity of supplies in the neighbourhood of Kabul necessitated the return of the division to the Logar Valley. This movement was the signal for the hasty break-up of the turbulent bands which had assembled in Logar on the departure of the British; but considerable parties of Afghans were reported to be still hanging about in the neighbourhood, at Patkao Shahana, Hisarak, and other villages. Of these the force at the first-named place was said to number 1,000 or 1,500 tribesmen from Zurmat who were awaiting reinforcements from Muhammad Jan. In consequence of intelligence to this effect the Major-General directed Brigadier-General Palliser to proceed with his cavalry brigade towards Patkao Shahana and Hisarak, and to ascertain whether any hostile gathering was present at either place or in the neighbourhood.

Accordingly, at 3.30 a.m. on the 1st July, Brigadier-General Palliser marched with the following force :

- 1st Punjab Cavalry, 231 sabres (Lieutenant-Colonel C. S. Maclean).
- 2nd " " 158 " (Colonel T. G. Kennedy).
- 19th Bengal Lancers, 188 lances (Colonel P. S. Yorke).

General Palliser's first object was to turn the river-flank of Patkao Shahana so as to cut off retreat thence towards the neighbouring enclosed country, where the action of cavalry would be hampered. On the way the news of a hostile gathering near Patkao Shahana was confirmed, and when within $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the low range of hills which concealed the village, a few horsemen were observed towards the left front, watching the advance of the brigade. The direction of the march



was thereupon changed, and the column headed towards this point, General Palliser hoping that, from the top of a ridge in front, he would be able to look down on Patkao Shahana and the lower levels adjacent; but instead of this he found a succession of undulating heights over which the scouts advanced for about a mile, while the main body of the brigade halted at the foot of the first ascent.

At length from the farthest crest the village of Patkao Shahana was visible to the right front, and to the left front the enemy could be seen in compact order but in full retreat towards the Altimur Pass; about 2 miles away a separate body of infantry was observed, estimated at 1,000, with a few scattered horsemen. The Brigadier now checked the advance of the scouts and ordered up the main body of the brigade, leaving a squadron of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, 52 sabres, to watch Patkao Shahana and to summon the maliks of that village. Then, concealed under cover of the ravines, he took ground to the left so as to get as near to the enemy as possible, and finally followed in direct pursuit with 1½ squadrons 19th Bengal Lancers and 2 squadrons 1st Punjab Cavalry in the first line, supported by 1 squadron 1st Punjab Cavalry and 1 squadron 2nd Punjab Cavalry under Colonel Kennedy.

Owing to the difficulty of the ground it was some time before the brigade came in contact with the retreating enemy, who by this time were much scattered. The Afghans fought desperately when brought to bay; Captain Seymour Barrow, 10th Bengal Lancers, galloper to General Palliser, was severely wounded on the bridle hand and right forearm, and altogether the casualties were considerably more, in proportion to the numbers engaged, than is usual in combats with Afghans, the totals being three men and eight horses killed, twenty-nine men and twenty-five horses wounded.

The pursuit was continued for a space of two hours,



and extended over 7 or 8 miles from Patkao Shahana to within a few miles of the Altimur Pass near the village of Oucha Khan. The enemy were so much disorganised and scattered that the supporting squadrons were engaged as much as those in front.

At length at 9 a.m., seeing that the country became more rugged as the mountains were approached, and as the horses were getting tired and footsore, General Palliser collected his squadrons and retired, carrying off the killed on horses, and those severely wounded on improvised litters made with *lungis* and lances; the whole force then returned to Patkao Shahana, which place was reached by noon. Here the horses were watered and fed, and after a halt of two hours the march back to Zargan Shahar was commenced. Camp was reached at 6.30 p.m., the brigade having covered about 40 miles in the course of the day.

The enemy in this affair numbered about 1,500 infantry, chiefly Ghilzais of the Zurmat district. They left fully 200 on the field, and, but for the unfavourable nature of the ground, their losses would have been much heavier. Their dispersal had a most excellent effect in the district: the hostile combination against the British was entirely broken up, and Logar was once more freed from the presence of the ghazis; more than this, it deterred Muhammad Jan from joining the gathering, which he was on the point of doing when the action took place.

The month of July passed uneventfully. Gough's brigade in Koh-i-Daman remained at Karez Mir till the 12th, when it marched about 4 miles north-east to Pai Nao and thence on the 14th to the neighbourhood of Zimma. On the 26th it returned to Kara Dushman, south of Mama Khatun Kotal, 11 miles from Kabul, and on the 29th to Kala Haji. No changes took place in the brigade except the exchange of the 2-9th Foot for the 67th Foot from Sherpur on the 21st. The latter regiment had been rather sickly and the change was carried out for their benefit.



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The 3rd Division, meanwhile, remained in camp in Logar, nor did any movements occur in the division except the march, on the 12th July, of the 19th Bengal Lancers, one squadron of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, and the 15th Sikhs to Kabul, the first regiment for duty at Field Force head-quarters, in relief of the 17th Bengal Cavalry, which was returning to India, the remaining troops on escort duty. The march of this detachment, with the convoy under its charge, was covered by the movement of General R. Barter's (1st) Brigade from the main camp of the division at Zargan Shahar to Saiadabad. There the brigade remained till the end of the month, the remainder of the 3rd Division moving, on the 28th July, from Zargan Shahar to Mirza Khel.

From Kabul, on the 9th July, the following force under Brigadier-General Macpherson moved out to Abdul Ghafur in the Chardeh Valley, about 6 miles from Sherpur :

9th Lancers (1 squadron).
No. 2 Mountain Battery (4 guns).
92nd Highlanders.
28th Punjab Infantry.
45th Sikhs.
1 Company, Bengal Sappers.

These troops were to remain there some little time, as their presence was intended to act as a check upon the movements of the gathering which, with fluctuating strength, still existed in Maidan; whilst they were also within easy distance of General Gough's brigade, which had moved to Sofian, 3 miles south of Baba Kuhkar.

At Head-quarters preparations were in train for the withdrawal of the troops from Afghanistan by way of the Khyber; ¹ arrangements (which were subsequently stopped) were made for the destruction of the defences about Kabul and Sherpur; all sick and weakly men

¹ The original intention of withdrawing part of the force *via* the Kurram Valley was eventually discarded, owing partly to the necessity of despatching a large force from Kabul to Kandahar, and partly to the desirability of using the most direct route in order speedily to leave Northern Afghanistan to the new Amir.



NEGOTIATIONS WITH ABDUR RAHMAN 413

from the three divisions, as well as excess of camp followers, were collected at Sherpur and marched for India on the 28th and 29th July; schemes were prepared for the withdrawal of General Bright's troops from the Khyber, and for the retrograde movement from Kabul.

During this time the negotiations with Sardar Abdur Rahman had been proceeding without interruption. On the 3rd July the Sardar was at Khinjan, on the 16th he reached Tutam Dara in Kohistan, having previously sent a letter to the Kohistan maliks announcing that he came with friendly intentions towards the British, and calling on them to refrain from hostile gatherings or disturbances. His approach to Kabul and the negotiations between him and the British naturally excited the keenest interest in Afghanistan. On the 22nd July a darbar was held at Sherpur, at which many sardars and maliks attended to hear Mr. Lepel Griffin's announcement that the British Government had arrived at satisfactory arrangements with Sardar Abdur Rahman Khan, and that the troops would very shortly evacuate Afghanistan. Sir Donald Stewart concluded the proceedings by expressing a hope that the Afghans would sink all private quarrels, and unite in preserving peace and order in Kabul and the country after the departure of the British.

About the same date a despatch was received by Sir Donald Stewart from the Government of India saying that the arrangements for withdrawal from Afghanistan might now proceed, and indicating the attitude to be adopted by General Stewart preparatory to that movement. With this despatch was enclosed the following letter to Sardar Abdur Rahman Khan, to be delivered to him after his recognition as Amir:

*To His Highness Sardar Abdur Rahman Khan,
Amir of Kabul.*

(After compliments.) "His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council has learnt with pleasure that Your Highness has proceeded toward Kabul in



414 LETTER TO ABDUR RAHMAN

accordance with the invitation of the British Government. Therefore, in consideration of the friendly sentiments by which Your Highness is animated, and of the advantage to be derived by the sardars and people from the establishment of a settled government under Your Highness's authority, the British Government recognises Your Highness as Amir of Kabul.

"I am further empowered on the part of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India to inform Your Highness that the British Government has no desire to interfere in the internal government of the territories in the possession of Your Highness, and has no wish that an English Resident should be stationed anywhere within those territories. For the convenience of ordinary friendly intercourse such as is maintained between two adjoining States, it may be advisable that a Muhammadan Agent of the British Government should reside, by agreement, at Kabul. Your Highness has requested that the views and intentions of the British Government with regard to the position of the ruler at Kabul in relation to foreign powers should be placed on record for Your Highness's information. The Viceroy and Governor-General in Council authorises me to declare to you that since the British Government admits no right of interference by foreign powers within Afghanistan, and since both Russia and Persia are pledged to abstain from all interference with the affairs of Afghanistan, it is plain that Your Highness can have no political relations with any foreign power, except with the British Government. If any foreign power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the dominions of Your Highness, in that event the British Government would be prepared to aid you to such extent and in such manner as may appear to the British Government necessary in repelling it: provided that Your Highness follows unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to your external relations."



Such was the position of affairs when, on the 29th July, on the day on which the distant sound of musketry, saluting the arrival of the new Amir at Istalif, reached General Gough's camp, now at Kala Haji, the bazaars of Kabul, crowded as they were by armed supporters of Abdur Rahman, were thrown into the greatest excitement by wild rumours of a fight at Khushk-i-Nakhud between the troops of Wali Sher Ali of Kandahar and those of Sardar Ayub Khan from Herat, resulting in the defeat and flight of the former. Within a few hours the particulars of the disaster at Maiwand reached Sir Donald Stewart from Simla. This intelligence completely deranged all previous plans for the withdrawal of the troops and materially altered the complexion of affairs as well in Eastern Afghanistan as in the province of Kandahar.

General Stewart's first action was to order the 3rd Division to march slowly towards Kabul, where a camping ground was chosen for it, and General Macpherson's brigade was at the same time recalled from Chardeh.

But neither these movements nor the disturbing news from Kandahar were allowed to interfere with the arrangements for the reception of Abdur Rahman. The Sardar had now arrived from Charikar at Ak Sarai, and 2 miles from that place and 16 north of Kabul the first interview took place between him and the Chief Political Officer on Saturday, the 31st July. The event was one of considerable interest and importance; that the result was satisfactory was evident on all sides. The impression made by Abdur Rahman's appearance and bearing was most favourable. The Amir-elect was thus described in a letter from Mr. Lepel Griffin to Sir Donald Stewart relating the circumstances of the meeting:

"The darbar tent was pitched on a hill affording a good outlook on all sides; and His Highness was accompanied by only 200 or 300 horse and a few infantry, while a large number of followers, estimated at