

At 11 A.M., the head of the advanced guard reached the Shagai Ridge; and as a large body of the enemy were now visible on the Rotas Ridge to my right, a part of the 4th Brigade was detached to occupy the intervening ridges.

The advanced guard threw out parties to its right and left, and one of 100 rifles was sent on in advance to occupy a rocky ridge some 200 yards in front, and to cover the working party employed in making passable for guns the descent between it and the Shagai Ridge into the Khaibar Stream.

We had occupied the Shagai Ridge half-an-hour or more, and had made our dispositions without opposition, when the enemy opened fire simultaneously from the fort, from a gun on a peak to the right of Ali Masjid and overlooking it, and from three other guns below the fort, but invisible to us.

The practice was excellent, shot after shot hitting the ridge; but our little force in the front was well sheltered, and only suffered slightly. The fire continued about an hour without our replying to it.

In the meantime I-C., Royal Horse Artillery, had come up and taken up a position to our right, out of the line of fire; and shortly after, I ordered up two guns from that battery on to the ridge and opened fire. The other four guns subsequently came into action; and the fire was continued till the heavy battery came up at 1.30 P.M., and opened fire at 2,800 yards. Our firing was good, and was kept up all day.

The fire from the 40-pounders seemed at first to cause the enemy's fire to slacken; but after a short respite it recommenced as warmly as ever.

Hoping that my detached brigades might be nearing their destination, I, at 2.30 P.M., ordered an advance. Brigadier-General Appleyard was to descend and cross the Khaibar Stream at Lalla China, and, under shelter of a spur, to work round towards the line of the enemy's intrenchments to our left; our right to advance on to the ridge in front of Shagai; 11-9th Royal Artillery (Mountain Battery) to take up a position there also and open fire; and I-C., Royal Horse Artillery, with the escort of the 10th Hussars, to descend into the Khaibar Stream and take up the most suitable position to aid in silencing the enemy's fire.

About 3.30 P.M., my right was in sharp conflict with the enemy's left, which occupied an inaccessible position along the face of a precipitous cliff, and on one point of which they had a gun in position. No further advance could be made on this side beyond pushing on a small party in the right centre, which, from the nature of the ground was well protected.

In the meantime, the Heavy Battery and E-3rd Royal Artillery, taking the place of the Horse Artillery, kept up a constant fire on the enemy's position, and I-C., Royal Horse Artillery, having descended and advanced to the bend of the stream, came into action there at 1,000 yards.

As the day was closing in, I send word to Brigadier-General Appleyard not to advance beyond an indicated ridge; but before my orderly officer could reach him to deliver the order, his skirmishers had advanced, and had arrived close on the enemy's position, when a sharp fire was exchanged within a very short distance. At this point Major Birch and Lieutenant FitzGerald, of the 27th Punjab Infantry, met their death whilst gallantly leading their men. Here also Captain Maclean was wounded, and many casualties took place in the 14th Sikhs and 27th Punjab Infantry.

Darkness now stopped further operations; and

Brigadier-General Appleyard withdrew his men to the ridge I had previously selected for him to hold.

In these positions we bivouacked for the night; and up to this time I had failed to receive any intelligence of the movements of my two brigades, which, as has been previously indicated, had been detached to turn the enemy's flank.

During the night I decided to reinforce Brigadier-General Appleyard with the Mountain Battery and some infantry from my right, so as to attack the enemy's right defences the following morning, after the artillery has shelled the position well for half-an-hour.

When it was daylight, I observed the Mountain Battery, which was on its way to join Brigadier-General Appleyard, crossing the stream unmolested, where, on the previous evening, I-C., Royal Horse Artillery, had been under a sharp fire; and there being also no reply to the three guns which then opened on the fort, I concluded it was abandoned. Further firing was therefore stopped; an advance was ordered; and, as supposed, the fort and entrenchments were found to be abandoned. The camp was standing, and there was evidence of a hurried flight, nothing whatever having been carried away. Twenty-four guns and large quantities of ammunition, both ordnance and rifle, fell into our possession.

The prisoners, of whom a number were captured by the turning brigade, stated that the cavalry, at about 5 P.M., first attempted to escape, but were checked at Kota Koosta by the Guides and the 1st Sikhs, and that they were followed by a portion of the infantry, who laid down their arms after receiving a volley. The main body of the garrison, finding the direct line of retreat cut off, fled by the Pesh Bolak track, which lay through their right entrenchments. The fight appeared to have commenced when it became dark, but the Pass Afridis, who had been watching the combat during the day from the neighbouring heights, were soon in pursuit, and robbed the enemy of all they possessed, securing a great number of rifles.

The Mir Akhor and other Sardars, it is stated, escaped by this route.

I remained during the 22nd at Ali Masjid, and opened communication with my two advanced brigades. On the 23rd I marched for Lundi Khana with I-C. Royal Horse Artillery, the 10th Hussars, the Guide Cavalry, and the 14th Sikhs, arriving there at 3.30 P.M. The Guide Cavalry, accompanied by Major Cavagnari, C.S.I., I ordered on to Dhaka, ten miles further on, and which place they reached and occupied at 6 P.M.

Brigadier-General Appleyard followed the next day with the 3rd Brigade and 11-9th Royal Artillery to Lundi Khana Kotal where they have remained. The 1st and 2nd Brigade came on to Dhaka.

The 4th Brigade under Brigadier-General Browne, with 3rd Royal Artillery and the Heavy Battery, I left at Ali Masjid, the 11th Bengal Lancers remaining also in the vicinity, in view to keeping open my communication at the lower end of the Pass.

The above is a general report of the proceedings of the force under my command from the time of leaving Jamrud to the occupation of Dhaka. Subsidiary reports will be submitted when I am in receipt of them from the officers commanding brigades.

I trust the result of the operations will be deemed satisfactory.

I can now only further add that the whole of the troops, officers, and men, did their duty in a