

be made at a Drawing Room excepting by a Lady actually attending that Court, it is also necessary that an intimation from the Lady who is to make the presentation, of her intention to be present, should accompany the presentation card above referred to, which will be submitted to The Queen for Her Majesty's approbation. It is Her Majesty's command, that no presentations shall be made at the Drawing Room, except in accordance with the above regulations.

It is particularly requested that in every case the name be *very distinctly written* upon the cards to be delivered to the Lord Chamberlain, in order that there may be no difficulty in announcing them to Her Royal Highness.

It is not expected that Gentlemen will present themselves at Drawing Rooms, except in attendance on the Ladies of their families.

Any Gentleman who under these circumstances should desire to be presented, will observe the same regulations as are in force for Her Majesty's Levees.

The State Apartments will be open for the reception of Company coming to Court at two o'clock.

HERTFORD,  
Lord Chamberlain.

*India Office, February 19, 1879.*

THE following Despatches have been received at the India Office:—

From Major-General F. S. Roberts, C.B., V.C. Commanding Kuram Column, dated 16th December, 1878, to the Quartermaster-General in India.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for the information of his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and of the Government in India, the following report of the reconnaissance which I have lately made to the summit of the Shutar Gardan Pass.

2. I may be allowed to state that I considered it very desirable to complete the defeat which the Afghan Army had suffered on the 2nd instant by marching troops to the Shutar Gardan, as this movement would show the determination of the British Government to establish its power to the watershed of the Kuram Basin, and would moreover be likely to bring over to our side the Ahmadzai section of the great Ghilzai tribe, who were believed to be willing to join us if they saw clear evidence of our intention to remain in the country.

3. It was also very important, from a military point of view, to obtain an exact knowledge of the present nature of the road from Ali Kheyl to the Shutar Gardan, which would form the route of the Kuram Field Force should it advance towards Cabul next spring.

4. These considerations, and the settled appearance of the weather, determined me to make this reconnaissance, although the season was far advanced, the cold intense, and the troops fatigued from previous hard marching and exposure.

As the head men of the Ghilzai were known to be in Cabul, and as the route for some distance lay in Ghilzai territory, I sent messengers in advance of the column and took every means to keep myself informed of the state of affairs in our front.

6. It will be remembered that after the capture of the Peiwar Kotal height on the 2nd December,

the troops remained halted at Zabardast Killa to allow of the large stores of ammunition and supplies which had been abandoned by the enemy being collected and sent to the rear.

7. On the 6th December the following troops marched under my command to Ali Kheyl:—

4 guns F-A Royal Horse Artillery on elephants.

No. 1 Mountain Battery.

Wing 72nd Highlanders.

5th Goorkhas.

2nd Punjab Infantry.

5th Punjab Infantry.

23rd Pioneers.

8. On the 7th December, leaving the remainder of the troops at Ali Kheyl, I marched with the following reconnoitring column to Rokian:—

No. 1 Mountain Battery.

250 men 72nd Highlanders.

250 men 5th Goorkhas.

The 2nd Punjab Infantry and 5th Punjab Infantry being ordered to follow us to Rokian the next day, and halt there as a support.

9. On the 8th instant the reconnoitring column moved to two miles beyond Jaji-Thana.

10. On the 9th December, I left the camp standing in charge of 100 men from the detachments of the 72nd Highlanders and 5th Goorkhas, and marched to the top of the Shutar Gardan, returning to camp in the evening.

11. The next day the troops returned to Ali Kheyl.

12. The road from Ali Kheyl to the foot of the Surkai Kotal lies in the bed of the Hazar-darakht torrent, sometimes ascending for a short distance the hill-side, but as a rule passing over the rough stony bed of the nullah. The ascent is gradual throughout, and it would not be difficult at this season of the year to make the route passable for wheeled carriages. From Ali Kheyl to Rokian the valley is wide and well cultivated, and several villages are met with. Beyond Rokian there are no habitations of any sort, except the police-station at Jaji Thana, and the valley varies in width from a defile of 200 yards, with high precipitous sides, to an open valley bounded by sloping hills of comparatively easy accessibility, and of about half a mile or less in breadth.

During the summer months, when the stream is full of water from the melting snows, the passage of this route by troops would no doubt be more difficult than it is in the winter, but I can see no reason why it should not be always practicable, and as a matter of fact we know that caravans of camels do traverse this road at all seasons of the year. The force of the stream when in flood must be considerable, as its bed is now strewn with large rocks and trunks of trees that have been washed down from above, and it has cut its way at some places through thick beds of hard conglomerate.

The sides of the valley from Rokian to the Surkai Kotal are sparsely clothed with weather-beaten juniper trees, with a few deodars scattered amongst them, but in no place is the forest thick enough to impede military operations.

At Surkai Kotal the road leaves the river bed and mounts by a short but steep zig-zag ascent up the northern side of the valley. It then passes round a hill on which is perched a watch tower of the Ghilzais, and enters an open valley devoid of trees, and presenting an altogether Thibetan aspect of sterile desolation. Crossing the plain the road passes through the small hamlet of Kasim Kheyl, and winds through rounded open hills by the side of a now frozen torrent, and by a