

gentle ascent to the summit of the pass. At no place in this part of the route would there be any great difficulty for the passage of wheeled guns.

13. The view from the pass towards Cabul is very extensive and commands the whole of the valley of the upper Sagar, which was seen to be richly cultivated and thickly studded with villages; but the country had assumed its wintry aspect, and the colouring of the landscape was entirely composed of various shades of brown and red.

14. I was met near Jaji Thana by the Ghilzai officials of the Surkai Thana, who tendered their submission to the British Government, and accompanied me throughout the day's journey. The inhabitants of Kasim Kheyl also welcomed the approach of the troops, and preceded our party up the pass.

15. The troops remained halted near Kasim Kheyl, and for the remaining two miles, to the top of the pass, our escort entirely consisted of friendly Ghilzais, lately the subjects and officials of the Amir.

16. The top of the pass was found (by aneroid) to be 11,200 feet above sea level, and not 13,500 feet as had been previously estimated.

17. Throughout the march from Ali Kheyl to the Shutar Gardan and back again, we experienced no hostile demonstration of any kind, nor was a shot fired.

18. The marching was fatiguing for the troops, and the cold was very severe. The thermometer stood 5° Fahr. at seven A.M. at the camping ground near Jaji Thana, being 27° of frost.

19. The cheerfulness and spirit of the troops have never flagged in spite of the hardship they endured, and I desire again to bear witness to the high military spirit which animates the officers and soldiers of this force.

From Major-General F. S. Roberts, C.B., V.C.,
Commanding Kuram Field Force, dated 18th
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 of India, the following report of the march of a brigade of troops under my command from Ali Kheyl to Fort Kuram.

2. It had been ascertained that, besides the regular route through the Peiwar Kotal, two roads connected these above-mentioned places, one following the course of the Hazar-darakht stream till its junction with the Kuram, and then passing down the valley of that river; the other cutting off the angle thus formed by crossing the range of hills, which at this point runs south from the peak Sita Ram.

3. As it was important to have an exact knowledge of the lines of communications between the Kuram Valley proper and the Trans-Peiwar district of Hariab in which Ali Kheyl is situated, I determined to explore one of those alternative routes.

4. I selected that which passed through the hills—first because it was the shorter of the two, and secondly, because it had been used by the Amir three years ago when sending a mountain battery to Fort Kuram.

5. The route was described as easily practicable for camels, and was known to be entirely in the territories of the Jagi and Chakmani tribes, whose head men were in camp.

6. On the 12th December the following troops

marched from Ali Kheyl for the village of Sapari:—

No. 1 Mountain Battery.

Wing 72nd Highlanders.

5th Goorkhas.

23rd Pioneers.

7. The route lay for the first four miles along the river valley, and then turned sharp to the left, leading up a narrow glen thickly wooded with pine trees (chiefly the edible pine), till an open elevated plateau was reached on which stood the hamlet of Sapari.

8. When I arrived at the village of Karmanah, about three miles from Ali Kheyl, the head men came to pay their respects, and informed me that it was probable the force would be annoyed by the men of the Mangal tribe when passing through the defile which lay between Sapari and the next halting place Kiraiyah, on the Kuram River.

9. Although I was anxious not to come to blows with the Mangals, yet it was now too late to turn back. I therefore determined to occupy the head of the defile that evening, and to march early the next morning, so as to get as much baggage as possible over the Kotal before the Mangals should have time to collect.

10. The 23rd Pioneers accordingly bivouacked for the night at the head of the pass, which was about 2½ miles beyond our camp at Sapari, and at two A.M. on the morning of the 13th December the baggage was sent on in advance of the column in charge of Captain F. T. Goad, Assistant Superintendent of Transport.

11. Although it was a bright moonlight night, the camels were able to make but slow progress owing to the steepness of the ascent, and at daylight not a single camel had reached the summit of the pass, though all the mules had crossed over. The camels were much delayed by their slipping on the frozen surface of a stream which frequently crossed the road.

12. Being desirous that the progress of the column should not be delayed, I directed four companies of the 23rd Pioneers to form the advance guard and the remainder of the regiment to assist in guarding that part of the baggage which had already crossed the Kotal. The 5th Goorkhas were ordered to act as rear guard, and the 72nd Highlanders and No. 1 Mountain Battery were passed to the front.

13. I proceeded myself with the 23rd Pioneers. We observed a few men moving about the hill tops, but no shot was fired at us, though their hostility was shown by their cutting down two camp-followers of the 23rd Pioneers, who had unfortunately lingered behind the baggage guard.

14. About 11 A.M. the last of the camels had passed over the Kotal, and as the long column of animals was descending the steep and narrow valley, the Mangals (of whom nearly a hundred men had now collected, and who subsequently increased considerably in number) commenced firing into the baggage-guards and pressing the 5th Goorkhas.

15. From this time till nearly four P.M., when the column cleared the hills, the Mangals never ceased annoying the rear guard, and sometimes became so bold in their attacks as to oblige the Goorkhas to charge up the hill and drive them back.

16. It was about this time that Captain Goad, who had been most active in keeping order in the baggage train, received the wound from the effects of which I deeply regret to say he subsequently died. I desire here to record the high value which I placed on the services of this officer. Belonging to the 5th Regiment of the Infantry of the Hyderabad Contingent, Captain Goad volunteered for active service, and owing to his experience of