

they were directed to follow the column in the evening.

27. Starting from Dakka at 12-30 P.M. Brigadier-General Tytler bivouacked in a grassy plain about eight miles distant, and resumed his march at 5 A.M. on the 20th instant, as soon as the moonlight enabled him to see the way.

28. By sunrise he reached the village of Chunar, which a column under his command had destroyed on the 10th instant. The headman came out to make his submission, and he was taken with other villagers as guides. The column was joined at this place by the guns and the detachment of the 27th Native Infantry,

29. From Chunar the path turns abruptly to the left in a south-easterly direction. After a march of three or four miles the column at 9 A.M. approached the Sistobi villages, against which Brigadier-General Tytler had been directed to operate. The road passes along a valley of average breadth, and, over a slightly rising ground to the right, the village becomes visible. As soon as Brigadier-General Tytler had reconnoitred the position, he lined the heights on either side of the road commanding the villages with infantry posted within easy rifle range (from 300 to 700 yards); he then sent on the Chunar guides to bring in the headmen.

30. Some of the villagers had begun to escape up the opposite hill-side. The Chunar men, however, shortly returned with the headmen of each of the five villages composing the district.

31. These men professed their adhesion to our cause, and gave offers of help. Brigadier-General Tytler therefore promised them protection from damage, and moved the troops to the stream of water between the villages and halted them for breakfast, directing the two most intelligent headmen to attend him, on his further advance, as guides.

32. The march was resumed about 12.30 P.M., the road continuing in a south-east direction up a valley with a stream of water. The valley was well cultivated and here began to be wooded; after a mile and a half the road turned to the right up a zig-zag path, where men could only march in single file to the top of the kandao or pass of Sistobi. The ascent was estimated at 1,200 feet, and the hill-side covered with oak forest. From the top of the pass a great portion of the Bazar plain was visible, extending apparently ten or twelve miles in length and varying in breadth from two to five miles, and studded with numerous trees. A similar zig-zag path led the column through a gorge into the plain.

33. Continuing in a south-east direction the march was directed towards the largest tower, at the foot of the opposite hills, about four miles distant. This place was reached about four in the evening, and was found to consist of a large cave-village of about sixty dwellings, entirely deserted.

Large quantities of grass and bhusa were found stored for winter use; other supplies had been removed.

Brigadier-General Tytler decided upon bivouacking here for the night, and soon after received my communication from Wallai, alluded to in paragraph 15 of this report. My camp was about three miles to the east.

34. Early on the morning of the 21st, Brigadier-General Tytler gave orders to Lieutenant-Colonel W. D. Tompson, 17th Foot, for the destruction of this and two other villages in the vicinity, and directed the principal towers to be mined. He then rode over to my camp to confer with me, as mentioned in paragraph 17, and received my

instructions to destroy the village of Nekai, four or five miles to the westward of his bivouac, whilst my force moved, as before mentioned, on the village of China. I also supplied his force with a quarter day's rations for Europeans, and ordered him, after destroying Nekai, to return to Dakka.

35. Accordingly Brigadier-General Tytler, at 11 o'clock on the same day, blew up the two towers that had been mined, and, after completing the destruction of the neighbouring villages, marched for Nekai, which he burnt, securing some bags of atta, which were afterwards issued to the native troops and followers.

36. It was now too late to reach the Sistobi Pass before night, and there was no water nearer than the Sistobi villages; but learning that there was water and a camping-ground some few miles off in another pass, called the Tubbai Pass, by which Dakka could be reached, Brigadier-General Tytler resolved to pass the night there, and move by the new route on Dakka next day. This appeared desirable for the purpose of opening up and exploring the country.

37. The road shortly entered a wooded valley, with a gradual ascent for about four miles. About 4.30 P.M. the column reached the camping ground above mentioned, which consisted of several grassy plots in wooded ground, the water coming from a nullah 100 yards to the right. The ground was commanded on all sides by hills, and these were at once occupied with outlying picquets. It was evident that the enemy were now beginning to gather around. The rear-guard, coming up the valley, was sharply attacked close to the camping ground, and one man of the 17th Foot shot through the leg.

It was chiefly owing to the careful disposition of the numerous picquets that the column was quite undisturbed during the night, and the troops obtained the repose so needful for the arduous operations of the following day.

38. Brigadier-General Tytler had no doubt that the tribes were gathering during the night to molest him on his retreat. He carefully examined the guides as to the nature and direction of the roads. The top of the pass was about a mile distant, and from there one road diverged to the left to Pesh Bolak, while the other turned to the right to Dakka. The road up to the pass was overhung on the left by a high precipitous mountain, inaccessible from this side; on the right the road was commanded by a series of hills of practicable access.

The guides stated that there was little risk of attack from the left, but that the right should be carefully guarded.

39. As the Afridis notoriously attack the baggage-guard in preference to any other force, General Tytler determined altogether to change the usual order of march, and issued orders for each corps to take its own baggage with it, and the artillery and sappers, being most encumbered with mules, were to follow close to the advanced guard, and a very strong rear-guard to be left behind, quite unencumbered with the charge of baggage, to resist pressure from the rear.

40. Shortly after daybreak on the morning of the 22nd, Lieutenant H. N. M'Rae, 45th Sikhs, was ordered with his detachment to occupy the heights to the right of the pass, and the Brigade-Major, Major A. H. A. Gordon, 65th Regiment, was sent to point out the positions for these flanking parties. Lieutenant M'Rae was directed to occupy the heights on the right in advance of the advanced guard, each party to rejoin the rear-guard as it passed.