

had remarked that, though no disturbance had occurred, an uneasy feeling was apparent among the inhabitants.

Some of the most influential maliks had not come to pay their respects until sent for; and others who met us on the road had asked for permission to return to their homes before they had even accompanied me to our camp. It was very evident, in short, that the arrival of a British force was not a welcome event to the inhabitants of the country; but I hoped that after a time the people would become reassured, and that, as had happened with the Turis and Jajis, our presence would be accepted as inevitable, and even ultimately as a change for the better.

12. The cause of this state of feeling soon became apparent. After my arrival at Matun fort, Muhammad Akram Khan took an early opportunity of informing me that the mullas, of which this province possesses a large number famous for their learning and fanaticism, had been actively engaged in raising religious prejudices against us, and in calling on the people to collect, attack our camp, and endeavour to expel us from the country.

13. There can be no doubt that such exhortations were powerfully aided by the apparent weakness of our force, the small number of which seemed, in the popular judgment, quite inadequate for the occupation of an extensive country such as Khost. The mullas, moreover, securely counted on the assistance of the neighbouring hill tribes, and in this they were not disappointed.

14. Muhammad Akram Khan stated that he had received information of large numbers of Mangals assembling, that they were being joined by some of the inhabitants of the Khost Valley, and that it was very probable our camp would be attacked that night.

15. I therefore strengthened the usual picquets, and took every military precaution that the circumstance seemed to require.

16. I also sent for the maliks of the neighbouring villages, and requested Colonel Waterfield to address purwanas to them to the effect that if our camp was attacked, summary and severe retribution would be exacted from all who had given admittance to Mangals or other persons having hostile intentions towards us. This measure had the desired effect, for before midnight nearly all the Matun maliks came into camp, and informed me that the Mangals had departed for their homes, and that they themselves would remain in our camp as hostages for the good behaviour of the villagers. The night passed quietly.

17. On the following morning I sent some of the maliks to ascertain whether the Mangals had really dispersed. They returned with the information that the men had started for their homes as they had promised, but being met by large numbers of their tribesmen on the way to Matun the men had returned; and that considerable numbers of Mangals and other hillmen were now present in the valley; that before long several thousands would be collected; and that our camp would certainly be attacked at night.

18. On receiving this intelligence, I sent out a troop of the 5th Punjab Cavalry under Major J. C. Stewart, accompanied by Captain F. S. Carr, Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General, to endeavour to ascertain the real position of affairs. The troop had not ridden two miles from our camp when it was fired upon, and soon after the first shots were heard it became clear that the enemy, numbering certainly several

thousands, had collected round three sides of our camp.

19. It was evident to me that the time had arrived when prompt and vigorous action was required to ensure our safety. The strength of the column, which amounted to about 2,000 men, all told, was insignificant in comparison with the number we might find arrayed against us; we were separated by many miles of difficult country from our nearest support; and I judged it to be a matter of urgent necessity that the tribes who had dared to organise an attack on our camp should receive speedy and severe punishment.

20. In the first instance I reinforced Major Stewart's troop with all the cavalry at my disposal, under Colonel Hugh Gough, C.B., V.C., retaining in camp only 25 Sabres of the 5th Punjab Cavalry. I also sent six companies of the 28th Punjab Native Infantry and No. 2 Mountain Battery in support of the cavalry.

These troops operated to the north-west of the camp, where the enemy appeared to have the greatest strength.

21. The right or eastern flank of the camp was protected by a wing of the 21st Punjab Native Infantry, under Major F. W. Collis, and two guns of No. 1 Mountain Battery.

The other wing of the 21st Punjab Native Infantry, under Captain J. G. T. Carruthers, and the remaining two guns of No. 1 Mountain Battery covered the rear of the camp; while the front and left flank were defended by the wing of the 72nd Highlanders, under Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. J. Clarke.

The whole of the troops in and around the camp were placed under command of Colonel Drew.

22. I directed Colonel Drew merely to hold his own until Colonel Gough had disposed of the enemy in his front.

23. This task Colonel Gough performed in a very admirable manner. Dismounting part of his force, he engaged the enemy, drove him up into the higher ranges of the hills, and kept him well in check until the infantry and guns arrived. Colonel Gough then assumed command of all the troops in that part of the field, retired his cavalry under cover of the infantry and artillery fire, and formed them up in the plain ready to cover the withdrawal of the infantry when the time for doing so should arrive.

The squadron of the 10th Hussars under Major T. J. W. Bulkeley did good service on this occasion, and killed many of the enemy by their carbine fire.

The conduct of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, under Major B. Williams, was not less steady.

The guns of No. 2 Mountain Battery under Captain G. Swinley were extremely well served, and their fire was very effective.

The 28th Punjab Native Infantry, who were commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel J. Hudson, had my orders not to follow the enemy into the hills. The regiment executed to my satisfaction the duty of keeping him in check.

24. Having satisfied myself that we had completely repulsed the enemy on our north-west side, I returned to the camp and ordered Colonel Drew to carry the villages on our right and rear, from which the enemy had fired on the troops, and to burn them as a punishment to the inhabitants for having given shelter to our assailants.

25. During this operation the troop of the 5th Punjab Cavalry under Major Stewart, which I had brought with me from Colonel Gough's