

to within 1,100 yards of the top of the Bokhar Pass, about five miles, he contested every hill-top. The enemy was forced to abandon each successive position, owing to the judicious advance of Brigadier-General Tytler; and I was enabled to get a good view of the pass and the surrounding hill before returning.

At 1.15 p.m. I gave the order to return, and the retirement was carried out by Brigadier-General Tytler in the same careful manner as the advance had been; and the rear of the troops reached camp just at dusk, the enemy not venturing beyond the high ground near Halwai.

Our loss on this occasion was one private of the 4th Goorkhas, killed; and Lieutenant Holmes, 45th Native Infantry, one sergeant of No. 11-9th Royal Artillery, one kahar of D-A, Royal Horse Artillery, and one kahar of the Mhairwarra Battalion (since dead) wounded.

I afterwards ascertained that the loss of the enemy was allowed to have been 15 killed.

On the same day, 28th, Captain W. Atkins, 6th Native Infantry, took empty camels back to Ali Musjid for a further supply of provisions. This party was attacked below the Prang Durrah heights; but owing to Captain Atkins' judicious arrangements, not a man or camel was touched, while four of the enemy were seen to fall.

17. On the 29th, I detached 450 men, under Colonel Thompson, 6th Native Infantry, to blow up the towers of Halwai, where fire had been first opened upon us the day before.

The enemy showed in greater numbers than on the previous day. The towers were blown up; and on Colonel Thomson's return through the low hills to the south of our camp, the whole place at once became alive with them.

That officer skirmished with them on the way back, and inflicted a loss estimated at 20 on them, losing himself one private of the 2nd Goorkhas, killed; and one private of the 25th Foot, one private of the 2nd Goorkhas, one private and one kahar of the 24th Native Infantry, and one private of the 45th Native Infantry, wounded.

18. On the same day (29th) Lieutenant-Colonel Low, 13th Bengal Lancers, by my direction, reconnoitred with a squadron of his regiment towards the Sasobai Pass to discover, if possible, a site for a camp, with water, near the Bara passes. He got as far as a point north of where we had reached the previous day without finding a site, when, finding the hills beyond occupied on either flank by strong parties of the enemy, and the ground becoming unsuitable for cavalry, he, according to my instructions, very properly returned to camp, having lost one horse killed. On this occasion Lieutenant A. R. Murray, 13th Bengal Lancers, behaved with considerable gallantry in going to the rescue of the sowar whose horse was hit.

19. It was now becoming apparent to me that, notwithstanding the assurance of the Political Officer that no combination of other sections than those of the Zakka Khel was at all likely, in the absence of specific instructions from Government, a grave responsibility rested on me, lest, in forcing my way to Bara, the commencement of an Afridi war might develop itself.

I mentioned the subject to Brigadier-General Tytler and to Colonel Macgregor, who had both had experience of the hill tribes, and they fully concurred in my opinion as to the probability of an Afridi war being commenced, if I advanced. Although nothing could exceed the energy displayed by Captain Tucker, Political Assistant, who was with me, in endeavouring to get the best information and to settle matters, I felt that

in what appeared to me a matter of great delicacy I required, before I pushed on, the opinion of a political officer of higher standing than Captain Tucker. I therefore telegraphed to Major Cavagnari, requesting he would come to me, if possible—mentioning my reasons for doing so. He replied that he could not leave Jellalabad.

20. On this evening (29th) I received your letter No. 327 K., dated 26th January, reminding me of the terms of the Viceroy's proclamation of the 21st November, 1878, and requesting me to bear in mind that the British Government has declared war, not against the people of Afghanistan or adjoining tribes, but against the Amir and his troops. This letter further directed me to use my utmost endeavours to avoid provoking unnecessary collisions with the tribes and other inhabitants of the country, and to render its occupation as little burdensome to them as may be possible, the British Government being anxious to remain on friendly terms with the people of Afghanistan.

This letter, though in the form of a circular, was addressed to me by name; and as it was dated four days subsequent to the telegram approving of my expedition, and no memorandum was attached to it to the effect that its contents were not applicable to my present situation, I felt more than ever the responsibility attached to my position.

21. On the 30th my position was as follows:—A limit of ten days, of which that was the seventh, fixed by Government for my expedition; conciliation, which I gathered from your letter No. 327 K to be the wish of Government, to be adopted; the hostile attitude of the tribes rendered an advance impossible without resistance by a combination of tribes; my conviction that this was not the time when Government would wish to risk an Afridi war. I therefore determined to ask for more explicit orders, which I did that day.

22. On the evening of the 30th, Captain Tucker stated to me that, although on the previous day he had informed me that only sections of the Zakka Khel were assembled to dispute our advance, he had since learned that members of other tribes had assembled, some from a considerable distance, and were still assembling, to combine with the Zakka Khel to oppose us.

I therefore instructed him to endeavour to break up the combination, and that I should report the circumstance and wait for orders. It subsequently transpired that detachments from the Kuki Khel, Aka Khel, Kumbher Khel, Malikdin Khel and Sipah Afridis, as well as from the Sangu Khel Shinwaris and the Orakzais, were assembled in the Bara passes. These detachments were seen by Jemadar Yusseer Khan, 24th Native Infantry, when he went out to endeavour to establish friendly relations with the headmen of the Zakka Khel.

23. Whilst negotiations were going on, on the 31st a convoy of provisions arrived in camp.

It was on this occasion that Lieutenant Reginald C. Hart, R.E., and some men of the 24th and 45th Native Infantry belonging to the rear-guard of the convoy, seized the opportunity of performing an act of conspicuous gallantry in going under a heavy cross-fire to the rescue of a wounded sowar, the details of which I have made the subject of a separate report.

24. On the 31st a still further complication arose by my receiving a telegram from Sir Samuel Browne, dated the 29th, urgently calling for the return of Brigadier-General Tytler's troops, as he had received information that an attack on