

Jellalabad and Dakka by Mohmands and Bajouries was expected on the 7th of February.

My orders have been throughout to support Sir Samuel Browne. I therefore felt bound to comply with his requisition, which would materially decrease the strength of my force.

It was not the military difficulties of the enterprise that made me anxious, but the conviction that, once I became engaged, it would be difficult to say how far the combination would spread.

25. Just then it transpired that the enemy had suffered severely in the skirmishes of the last few days, and that, in consequence of our protracted occupation of their valley, they were well disposed to open negotiations.

On the 1st February a deputation from all the sections of the Bara Zakka Khels came into my camp and expressed themselves desirous of opening friendly relations, bringing in with them some of the camels that had been taken from us in the Khyber Pass some time before.

On the 2nd, the Political Officer reported to me that he had come to terms with them which he considered satisfactory; and thus I was enabled late on that day to give orders for the return of all the columns on the 3rd.

26. That evening (2nd) I received your telegram, dated the 1st, in reply to mine dated the 30th and 31st, informing me that the instructions of Government regarding avoiding unnecessary collision with the people of Afghanistan are accepted as general, and applicable more particularly to tribes which have hitherto been directly under Afghan rule; that my expedition was undertaken entirely on the desire of the local and political authorities, with a view of more efficiently controlling the Khyber and its tribes. Also that Mr. Macnabb, invested with full political authority, had been directed to at once join me, and, in consultation with him, I was left entirely free to act on my own judgment in carrying out the intention for which the expedition was planned.

Had I been able to detain Brigadier-General Tytler's force I should certainly have waited for Mr. Macnabb's arrival; but as I could not do so, and it must have marched next morning to arrive in time at Jellalabad and Dakka, and as the Political Officer expressed himself satisfied with the terms made, I decided to carry out my original intention of the whole force to march next morning.

27. On the 3rd, the different columns left the Bazar Valley,—Brigadier-General Tytler by the Sitsobi Pass for Dakka, Brigadier-Generals Blyth and Appleyard by Chura for Jamrud, and Ali Musjid respectively,—reaching their destinations on the 4th.

I had expressly informed the Political Officer that I did not consider any settlement of the case satisfactory if the columns were fired at on their return, and that he was to inform the Zakka Khel that if shots were fired the force would sooner or later to a certainty return. I think it may be taken as a proof of the sincerity of the submission of the Zakka Khel that, contrary to Afridi custom, they refrained from molesting any of the columns.

28. Although the operations which were thus concluded did not afford the troops opportunities for the display of much gallantry, they were not by any means wanting in giving them chances of showing the possession, by both officers and men, of high military qualities; and if I particularise the following, it is because the fortune of war brought their services into prominence.

All ranks showed the greatest anxiety to meet the enemy on all occasions; and whenever they did, although the enemy had the advantage of cover and an intimate knowledge of the country, our troops invariably drove them before them and obliged them to relinquish position after position. The precision and steadiness of our fire, added to the long range of the Martini-Henry rifle, had the effect which might be expected on the enemy of making him more cautious than ever and unwilling to leave cover.

I wish to mention the following officers:—

Colonel C. M. Macgregor, C.S.I., C.I.E., Deputy Quartermaster-General, on special service: his great experience, general knowledge, and sound judgment were at all times at my disposal, and were most valuable. Brigadier-Generals F. S. Blyth and F. E. Appleyard, C.B., were zealous in carrying out their respective commands. Brigadier-General J. A. Tytler, C.B., V.C., commanded the troops covering the reconnaissance on the 28th in a very judicious and careful manner.

Colonels J. A. Ruddell, 25th Foot, and G. H. Thomson, 6th Native Infantry, commanded detachments with skill and judgment.

To Lieutenant-Colonel F. B. Norman, 24th Native Infantry, and his fine regiment, my thanks are due for their spirit and soldierly bearing.

Subadar Allum Khan and Jemadar Yusseef Khan materially assisted in bringing about friendly relations with the Zakka Khel.

The manner in which Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Low, 13th Bengal Lancers, conducted the cavalry reconnaissance on the 29th deserves commendation; nor do I forget the gallant and devoted spirit of those of his men who ran the gauntlet of the enemy carrying letters.

Major A. Battye, 2nd Goorkhas, showed great judgment in command of the rear-guard on the 26; and his knowledge of the people was very useful.

Lieutenant-Colonel Mark Heathcote, Assistant Quartermaster-General, whose services I much regret to lose, displayed great activity and readiness on all occasions; and Captain M. G. Gerard, Cavalry Brigade Major, who was acting in the Quartermaster-General's Department, was most useful on several occasions.

The services of Brigadier-General J. E. Michell, C.B., Colonel the Honorable D. M. Fraser, C.B., commanding the Royal Artillery of the Division, Major C. A. Sim, R.E., and Major G. Hatchell, Assistant Adjutant-General, were cheerfully given when required.

Lieutenant B. E. Spragge, 51st Foot, and his signalling party, were most active in obtaining and conveying intelligence.

The arrangements for the comfort of the sick and wounded were ably conducted by Surgeon-Major J. A. Hanbury, Principal Medical Officer of the Division. Those of the Commissariat by Colonel W. C. R. Mylne, Principal Commissariat Officer, were also generally satisfactory.

29. It will be observed that the final breaking up of the force was in a measure caused by the sudden recall of Brigadier-General Tytler's force. Had I had my infantry brigades complete—that is, a regiment in place of the 81st Foot, sent back on account of ill-health, and the Bhopal Battalion under my orders—I should not have required to draw upon Sir Samuel Browne's Division, and could have remained at Bazar until Mr. Macnabb joined me. I also wish to mention that the 1st Division has two mountain batteries on its strength, whilst my