

escort of cavalry to examine personally the pass and the ground beyond.

Before, however, these arrangements could be carried out, and almost before any report could be received from the cavalry patrols, all doubts as to the intention of the enemy were dissipated. Troops could be seen in large numbers and regular formation crowning the crest line of the hills, which extended from the narrow defile of the "Sang-i-Nawishta" (both sides of which were held) on their extreme left, to the heights above the Chardeh Valley, which formed their right.

No hurry nor confusion marked the movements; positions were taken up and guns placed with so much deliberation and coolness, that it was evident a large number of regular troops were massed against us. Soon afterwards I received reports that our cavalry patrols had been fired upon and were retiring slowly.

11. It was imperatively necessary that the enemy should be dislodged from the strong position before dark. Their occupation of the heights intervening between Charasiab and Kabul was a menace that could not be brooked; a warning that could not be disregarded.

Behind these heights lay the densely crowded city of Kabul, with the scarcely less crowded suburbs of Chardeh, Deh-i-affghan, &c., and the numerous villages which lie thickly clustered all over the Kabul Valley. Each and all of these had contributed their quota of men to assist the troops collected to fight us, and it did not require much experience of Affghans to know that the numbers already opposed to us would be very considerably increased if the enemy were allowed to remain in possession of their stronghold for a single night.

12. About this time a report was received that the road in our rear was blocked, and that the march of General Macpherson's Brigade, with its long string of baggage, would be opposed; whilst on the hills on both sides of our camp, bodies of men were seen assembling, and as I afterwards heard, were only waiting for nightfall to make a general attack upon the encampment.

Notice was sent to General Macpherson to keep a good look out and to reach Charasiab if possible before dark; at the same time he was reinforced by a squadron of cavalry.

13. To Brigadier-General Baker, C.B., I entrusted the difficult task of dislodging the enemy, and placed at his disposal the troops marginally noted making a total of about 2,000 men\*.

Orders were now sent to the troops who had proceeded towards the "Sang-i-Nawishta" defile, whose strength is noted in the margin,† to take up a position of defence, and to consider themselves under the command of Brigadier-General Baker.

14. Up to this period all my operations had led the enemy to expect that our attack would be directed against their left, the Sang-i-Nawishta defile, and they were seen to be concentrating their forces in that quarter. This position was so strong, and could only have been carried with such loss, that I determined the real attack should be made by an outflanking movement upon the

right of the enemy, while their left continued to be occupied by a feint from our right.

15. General Baker, who had re-inforced his main attack by 450 men of the 23rd Pioneers, assembled his little column in the wooded enclosures of Charasiab, a collection of detached villages, in the most convenient of which he selected a place for his reserve ammunition and field hospital, heliographing to me to increase the strength of the small guard he was able to leave there in charge. One hundred bayonets of the 5th Punjab Infantry were sent at once, followed by the remainder of the regiment as soon as sufficient transport could be procured for its ammunition. This only left for the protection of camp between 600 and 700 infantry, and about 450 cavalry.

16. After leaving Charasiab, General Baker advanced over some bare undulating hills, forming a series of positions easily defensible, and flanked by steep rocky crags varying in height from 1,000 to 1,800 feet above the sloping plane which our troops had to cross. The main position of the enemy was at least 400 feet higher. It commanded their entire front, and was only accessible in a few places.

17. Seeing the very difficult nature of the ground in front of him, General Baker ordered the party on his right, which now consisted of three guns G-3 R.A., under Major Parry, R.A., 2 squadrons of cavalry made up of detachments 9th Lancers, 5th Punjab Cavalry, and 12th Bengal Cavalry, under Major Hammond, 5th Punjab Cavalry, a wing 92nd Highlanders, under Major Hay, and 100 rifles of the 23rd Pioneers under Captain Patterson, the whole commanded by Major White, of the 92nd, to continue threatening the "Sang-i-Nawishta," to prevent the enemy occupying any portion of the Charasiab village to advance within artillery range of the enemy's main position, and when, but not before, the outflanking movement was thoroughly developed, and the enemy were in retreat, to push the cavalry through the pass and pursue.

These instructions were most successfully carried out by Major White, under whose orders a subsidiary movement made by Captain Oxley, of the 92nd, freed General Baker's right from considerable annoyance.

18. General Baker now moved forward his force, one company of the 72nd Highlanders under Captain Hunt, extended to crown the heights on the left, and speedily became engaged. The main body of the regiment attacked the enemy in front, their advance being well covered by two guns of the Mountain Battery; owing, however, to the obstinate resistance of the enemy, and the extremely difficult nature of the ground on the left flank, the advance was somewhat checked; the company of the 72nd was therefore reinforced by two companies of the 5th Goorkhas, under Captain Cooke, V.C., whilst two more companies of that regiment commanded by Major FitzHugh, and 200 men of the 5th Punjab Infantry under Captain Hall, were pushed forward to strengthen the direct attack.

19. As it had now become evident to the enemy that the real attack was being directed against their right, and their troops were seen to be moving in hot haste in the latter direction, it became imperative to carry their position before it could be further reinforced. At 2 p.m., after two hours fighting the ridge on the left of this position was seized and the retreating enemy exposed to a cross fire which inflicted very heavy loss; the general advance was now sounded and the first position

\* 4 Guns No. 2 Mountain Battery under Captain G. Swinley, R.A.; 2 Gatling guns under Captain A. Broadfoot, R.A.; 7th Company Sappers and Miners under Lieutenant C. Nugent, R.E.; 72nd Highlanders under Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. Clarke; 6 Companies 5th Goorkhas under Major A. FitzHugh; 200 5th Punjab Infantry under Captain S. Hall.

† 2 guns No. 2 Mountain Battery; 9th Lancers, 20 sabres, under Captain H. W. Apperley; 5th Punjab Cavalry, 1 squadron, under Major F. Hammond; 92nd Highlanders, 1 wing, under Major G. White; 23rd Pioneers, under Lieutenant-Colonel A. A. Currie.