

to break up the combination before it came to a head, and to deal with the advancing forces in detail.

16. With this intent, I despatched, on the 8th December, Brigadier-General H. T. Macpherson, C.B., V.C., with a column as per margin,* towards the west, viâ Killa Aushar and Arghandi, in order to meet the enemy and force him back on Maidan.

17. On the following day, I ordered Brigadier-General T. D. Baker, C.B., to proceed with a small force† viâ Charasiah and Lallidandur towards Maidan, and thus place himself across the line by which the enemy, after defeat by General Macpherson, would have to retire. To give time for the completion of this movement, and to draw the enemy forward by an appearance of hesitation, I halted General Macpherson at Killa Aushar on the 9th, and on that day a cavalry reconnaissance by Lieutenant-Colonel W. S. A. Lockhart, Assistant Quartermaster-General, discovered that large numbers of the enemy were moving northwards from Arghandi and Paghman towards Kohistan.

18. At the same time I heard that a considerable force of Kohistanis had collected at Karez Mir, about ten miles to the north of Kabul, and feeling how desirable it was to disperse them before they could be joined by the enemy hastening from the west, I directed General Macpherson to change his line of advance and attack the Kohistanis, and as their country was unsuited to horse artillery and cavalry, I ordered him to leave this portion of his column at Killa Aushar.‡

19. On reaching the Surkh Kotal, about two miles short of Karez Mir, General Macpherson found that his arrival was well timed, that the enemy from the west were still below him in the Paghman Valley, and that it was in his power to deal with the Kohistanis before a junction could be effected.

He accordingly attacked the Kohistanis vigorously and promptly, and drove them back with heavy loss.

Our casualties were 1 officer, Major A. Fitz-Hugh, 5th Goorkhas, slightly wounded, and 6 men wounded—2 severely.§

20. The enemy advancing from Maidan seemed inclined at first to ascend the Surkh Kotal from the Paghman Valley and assist the Kohistanis, but on seeing that our troops held all the commanding positions, and probably hearing of the defeat of their allies, they retreated towards Arghandi.

21. General Macpherson informed me of this by heliograph soon after noon on the 10th, and I at once ordered the horse artillery and cavalry from Killa Aushar to try and cut in on the enemy's line of retreat, strengthening the cavalry by two additional squadrons from Sherpur, and placing the whole under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel B. L. Gordon, Royal Horse Artillery.

* General Macpherson's Force.—4 guns, F-A, Royal Horse Artillery; 4 guns, No. 1 Mountain Battery; 6 companies, 67th Regiment (401 men); 509 men, 3rd Sikhs; 393 men, 5th Goorkhas; 1 squadron, 9th Lancers; 2 squadrons, 14th Bengal Lancers.

† General Baker's Force.—2½ squadrons, 5th Punjab Cavalry; 4 guns, No. 2 Mountain Battery; 25 men, Sappers and Miners; 450 men, 92nd Highlanders; 450 men, 5th Punjab Infantry.

‡ General Macpherson took with him—1 squadron, 14th Bengal Lancers, leaving at Killa Aushar, 4 guns, F-A., R.H.A.; 1 squadron, 9th Lancers; 1 squadron, 14th Bengal Lancers.

§ Casualties, 10th December.—Wounded.—Major Fitz-Hugh, 1 man, 5th Goorkhas; 4 men, 3rd Sikhs; 1 man, 67th Regiment. Total, 7. Officer, 1; rank and file—1 British, 5 Native. Total, 7

This movement was unsuccessful, for as soon as the cavalry appeared, the enemy took shelter in the villages and on the skirts of the high hills which surround Paghman.

22. General Macpherson encamped on the night of the 10th at Karez Mir, and General Baker who had steadily pursued his march by a very difficult road, halted a short distance to the west of Maidan.

23. During the day orders were sent to General Macpherson to march very early on the 11th, to follow the enemy observed retreating south and west by the Paghman Valley, and to endeavour to drive them towards General Baker; he was informed at the same time that the horse artillery and cavalry under Brigadier-General W. G. D. Massy would leave Killa Aushar at 9 A.M., and that he was to join them on the Arghandi road.

24. General Massy's orders were to advance from Killa Aushar by the road leading directly from the city of Kabul towards Arghandi and Ghazni; to proceed cautiously and quietly, feeling for the enemy; to communicate with General Macpherson, and to act in conformity with that officer's movements, but on no account to commit himself to an action until General Macpherson had engaged the enemy.

General Massy had with him four guns, F-A., R.H.A., and three squadrons of cavalry (two of the 9th Lancers and one of the 14th Bengal Lancers).

25. Instead of gaining the Ghazni road by the ordinary route, General Massy started across country, intending to strike that road beyond the village of Killa Kazi. He sent one of the troops of the 9th Lancers under Captain J. J. S. Chisholme to communicate with and ascertain the movements of General Macpherson, while a second troop, under Captain Bloomfield Gough, was used as an advance guard. Captain Chisholme's troop did not again join General Massy.

26. Although, on nearing Killa Kazi, General Massy's advance guard reported to him that the enemy were in considerable force on the hills on either side of the Ghazni road, some three miles in advance, he still moved on. Shortly afterwards further reports were received by him that the enemy were coming down into the plain with the evident intention of attacking him. He then directed the horse artillery to open fire, in order to check their advance and detain them until he could hear something of General Macpherson's column.

27. Major Smyth-Windham commenced firing at a distance of 2,900 yards, but as this had not the desired effect, General Massy ordered the guns to be moved 400 yards nearer, and finding that the enemy continued advancing, he directed the guns again to move forward. They came into action for the third time at 2,000 yards, and in this position remained until the opposing force arrived within 1,700 yards' range.

The enemy still maintaining a steady advance, General Massy dismounted 30 of the 9th Lancers, who commenced firing as soon as carbine range was reached. The enemy were in such force (General Massy reports 10,000) that the fire of the dismounted lancers "had no appreciable effect."

28. About this time I arrived on the ground, having left Sherpur with the intention of taking command of Generals Macpherson's and Massy's united forces.

Seeing the inutility of continuing a cavalry and horse artillery action against an enemy in such an overwhelming strength, and on ground so unfavourable, I ordered General Massy to