

No. 1810-A—"Field Operations—Miranzai,"—dated Fort William, 16th March, 1891.

From Major-General W. Galbraith, C.B., Adjutant-General in India, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for the consideration of the Government of India, a despatch from Brigadier-General Sir W. S. A. Lockhart, K.C.B., C.S.I., recently commanding the Miranzai Field Force.

2. The force was practically unopposed; but the country was extremely difficult, and the labours of the troops were much enhanced by the rigour of an unusually severe winter, many of the men being attacked by pneumonia and frost-bite, the result of toilsome marches in rain and heavy snow-storms.

3. The General Officer Commanding has brought to the favourable notice of the Commander-in-Chief the good services rendered by all staff and regimental officers, making special mention of the Assistant Adjutant-General, the three Commanders of columns, the Principal Medical Officer, and the Political Officer with the force.

4. I am desired to add that His Excellency considers much credit due to Brigadier-General Sir William Lockhart for the skill and energy he displayed in the conduct of operations, and to all ranks under his command for the soldier-like spirit with which they encountered hardships of no ordinary kind.

No. 309-C-M—"Field Operations—Miranzai,"—dated Camp Kohat, 2nd March, 1891.

From Brigadier-General Sir W. S. A. Lockhart, K.C.B., C.S.I., Commanding the Punjab Frontier Force, and the late Miranzai Field Force, to the Adjutant-General in India.

I HAVE the honour to report on the late operations north of the Samana Range.

I. The object of the expedition was to punish five sections of the Orakzai tribe for offences committed against British subjects, and to bring them to submission.

II. The Miranzai Field Force was concentrated at Kohat by the 12th January, and its advance across the border was ordered for the 19th. Heavy rain, however, delayed the forward movement, which did not take place until the 26th.

A reconnaissance in force was made on the 24th January up the Khanki Valley as far as the villages of Gwada and Jandasam, the reconnoitring party being fired on from those villages, and from others east of them, without suffering loss.

III. The Field Force consisted of three columns, viz. :—

FIRST COLUMN.

Colonel A. McC. Bruce, 4th Punjab Infantry, Commanding.

Troops.

No. 4 (Hazara) Mountain Battery.
5th Punjab Cavalry (headquarters and three troops).

Half of No. 5 Company, Bengal Sappers and Miners.

23rd Bengal Infantry (Pioneers),—headquarters and half battalion.

29th (Punjab) Bengal Infantry.

1st Punjab Infantry.

4th Punjab Infantry.

SECOND COLUMN.

Lieutenant-Colonel A. H. Turner, 2nd Punjab Infantry, Commanding.

Troops.

No. 3 (Peshawar) Mountain Battery.

Half of No. 5 Company, Bengal Sappers and Miners.

2nd Punjab Infantry.

5th Punjab Infantry.

THIRD COLUMN.

Lieutenant-Colonel C. C. Brownlow, 4th Sikh Infantry, Commanding.

Troops.

23rd Bengal Infantry (Pioneers),—half battalion.

3rd Sikh Infantry.

IV. The First Column advanced from Shahu Khel to Khaori, in the Khanki Valley, on the 26th January, with orders to reach Gwada on the following day.

The Second Column marched from Togh to Darband on the 25th January, with orders to cross the Samana on the 26th, and to reach Saifalmela, whence it was to cover the passage of the First Column through the defile east of that place on the 27th, and to go on to Gwada the same day.

The Third Column marched from Hangu to Darband on the 26th January, with orders to reach Gwada next day via Tsalai, and thence by any path found practicable, sending the baggage by the Saifaldarra route.

These movements were carried out as ordered, except in the case of the Third Column, whose baggage could not cross the Samana owing to the Saifaldarra route having become impassable from heavy rain.

The Third Column accordingly marched to Tsalai on the Samana crest on the 27th January; left in that place a garrison of Border Police; destroyed the towers and hamlet of Serimela in co-operation with the Second Column; and returned to Darband the same day, joining the remainder of the force at Gwada via the Saifaldarra route on the 29th January, after halting the night of the 28th at Saifalmela.

V. The next few days were devoted to reconnoitring to the north and west; to destroying towers and villages belonging to the principal Rabia Khel offenders, Makhmuddin and his associates; to improving the Saifaldarra road over the Samana; to sending away the sick under escort of such troops (5th Punjab Cavalry and 5th Punjab Infantry) as could now be spared and whose removal from the Khanki Valley would make the strain on the Commissariat Department less severe; and, finally, to the laying in of supplies for a projected march into the Shekhan country, and for the garrison to be left at Gwada.

The weather hitherto had been as a rule had. The field force had crossed the frontier in rain which soon turned into snow, the result being that frost-bite and chest complaints began to attack the troops.

VI. On the 4th February the towers of Gwada were blown up, and the Second Column, under Colonel Turner, marched down the Khanki Valley for the Shekhan country. This column had been joined by the second half of No. 5 Company, Bengal Sappers and Miners, and a half battalion of the 23rd Pioneers, whilst the 3rd Sikh Infantry was added to replace the 5th Punjab Infantry.

The route followed was—4th February, Khaori; 5th, Mir Asghar Mela; 6th, Drand. Three miles short of Drand word was brought to the column that Makhmuddin's family and cattle had just left the village, going westwards. Parties were sent in pursuit by the two western