

Gurkhas and 28th Bombay Pioneers. The enemy were never in very great strength, and information goes to show that there were not more than 700 or 800 men, with whom both the Hadda Mullah and the Sufi Mullah were present, but the former left at the beginning of the action. There was, however, considerable opposition to the advance of the 20th Punjab Infantry and 2-1st Gurkhas, but the enemy were driven from ridge to ridge by the 20th, the firing line being led most energetically by Captain P. G. Walker. The leading regiment was well supported by the Maxims, which kept up with the firing line. No. 3 Mountain Battery, Royal Artillery, had very bad ground to contend with, but gave great assistance to the infantry.

By 10.30 the 20th Punjab Infantry had, without a check, pushed on to a hill with a sungar on it (5,500 feet) and 2,700 feet above the Bedmanai Pass, which it completely commanded, and the enemy had retired in different directions, mainly to a higher peak with a strong sungar. In the meantime the batteries in the gorge had been shelling and clearing the heights on the right of the pass and its summit. The enemy had been seen coming up to the top of the pass in some strength, but did not stand before artillery fire. By 11 A.M. the 20th Punjab Infantry and 2-1st Gurkhas had seized the key of the position, a peak on the east of the pass (6,760 feet) nearly 4,000 feet above Kuz Chinari, the Maxims were firing on the retreating enemy, and the Pioneers and No. 3 Mountain Battery, Royal Artillery, were on the 5,500 feet peak.

The casualties were—

20th Punjab Infantry, 2 sepoy wounded.

2-1st Gurkhas, 1 sepoy killed, 1 sepoy wounded.

The pass was now occupied by the Queen's and 22nd Punjab Infantry, and I ordered up all mule baggage; but, as the road was bad, decided not to bring up camels that day. Camp was placed in the village of Karmanzai, about one mile beyond the pass, and was not disturbed at night.

The position was a very strong one, and necessitated the crowning of the 6,950 peak, nearly 3,000 feet above the pass itself; had a determined defence been made by a strong body of the enemy, the losses of the attacking force must have been very great. That the resistance was so slight was due to the heavy losses incurred by the enemy in their attack on the 3rd Brigade camp on the night of the 20th, which caused a large part of the Mullah's gathering to disperse, and also to the fact that the enemy were uncertain up to the last movement whether we meant to attack the Bedmanai Pass or the Mittai Valley on the 23rd. The effect of the advance of the Mohmand Field Force appears to have been first felt on the 20th, when I occupied Nahakki in force. No doubt the fear of being cut off and the approach of a strong force influenced the Mullah's gathering to make a supreme effort, and led them to attack the 3rd Brigade camp on the night of the 20th.

On the 24th the 1st Brigade moved on to Sarfaraz Kili, in the Bohai Dag, and the whole of the baggage and supplies were brought through from Kuz Chinari.

The 3rd Brigade, Malakand Field Force, had returned to Kuz Chinari on the 23rd, and aided by the 1st Patiala Regiment, were engaged in punishing the Mittai and Suran Valleys on the 24th and 25th.

On the 25th the force marched to Jarobi. The route led for six or seven miles up a stony valley running under the Ilazai Mountain. The Jarobi Glen, called the Shindara in its lower part, runs down from the back of Ilazai, and is 400 to 500

yards at the mouth, gradually narrowing as you get into the hills, with steep rocky mountain ridges and cliffs on each side. The cavalry were fired at near the entrance by parties of the enemy. Seeing that it would be impossible to take the force up to Jarobi and camp there, I ordered camp to be formed near the entrance, as much in the open as possible, and decided to move up and punish the glen during the afternoon, returning before dark. The distance to the Mullah's mosque was about four miles, and the gorge took a sharp turn at $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

The Somersetshire Light Infantry, 28th Pioneers and No. 5 (Bombay) Mountain Battery were left in position at the mouth of the gorge to cover the retirement; the 2-1st Gurkhas (four companies) crowned the rocky hill on the left (west), commanding the turn in the glen. Four companies of the 20th Punjab Infantry and No. 3 Mountain Battery Royal Artillery, pushed up the gorge with half No. 5 Company, Bengal Sappers and Miners, to the turn. Here the main village of Tola Kili was seen filling up the gorge on a small hill three-quarters of a mile in front.

No. 3 Mountain Battery was here brought into action and four companies of Gurkhas brought up, whilst the 20th Punjab Infantry pushed on up the gorge to the Mullah's mosque about half-a-mile beyond the village. Four companies of Gurkhas were pushed on to Tola Kili in support, and the 28th Pioneers ordered up on firing taking place. The advance of the 20th was unopposed until they reached the Mullah's mosque, which Lieutenant-Colonel Woon describes as being a little more than a cowshed, when fire was opened from both sides and from the front, and about a dozen ghazis charged from the mosque on to the leading party of the 20th. Six of these men were shot down, and the rest bolted. This was about 3 P.M. No. 3 Mountain Battery was in action covering the 20th by fire on to the hills to the left. As the whole gorge from its winding character, narrowness, and the precipitous hills on each side formed a regular trap, I sent an order by Lieutenant Elles, Aide-de-Camp, at 3 P.M., to retire without fail at 3.30, as I was determined to get all troops clear of the gorge by dark. There is no Jarobi village, but the village of Tola Kili, the chief one, and three fort villages in the gorge had been destroyed, and there was nothing to gain by remaining. Orders had been given before the expedition that all mosques were to be respected.

Lieutenant-Colonel Woon carried out the retirement very steadily, and suffered no more casualties, and was supported by the Gurkhas; the Pioneers in turn covered them when they had passed through and had a few casualties, but any following up ceased two and a quarter miles before the entrance was reached, being checked by the 2-1st Gurkhas on the hill to the left.

The whole retirement was most steadily carried out by the troops under Brigadier-General Westmacott's orders in one of the nastiest gorges I ever saw. The steepness of the hills may be judged by the fact that the top of the Ilazai Mount is only two miles distant horizontally from the Mullah's mosque, the drop being 4,400 feet in that distance. The enemy were chiefly Musa Khel from Mittai, for the Jarobi Glen is only separated by a low pass from the Mittai Valley. Ten of the enemy are known to have been killed; it is not known whether they had further loss.

Our Casualties were—

20th Punjab Infantry—1 sepoy killed, 1 havildar and 3 sepoy wounded.