

(dated Fort Lockhart, the 30th September, 1897).

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India, that the camp at Sadda was attacked on the night of the 16th and 17th September.

Colonel G. L. R. Richardson, C.I.E., commanding the Flying Column, had established himself in a well entrenched camp and high ground overlooking Sadda. About 10.30 p.m. on the 16th a *lashkar*, consisting of Massuzais and Chamkannis, numbering about 2,000, collected in the Khurmanadarra and attacked a picquet of the 5th Punjab Infantry about a hundred yards outside the south-east corner of the camp. The picquet had to abandon their *sangar* and retire into camp, losing the havildar in so doing. The moon was obscured by passing clouds, and the noise of the water rushing in the *nullah* prevented the patrols of the 5th Punjab Infantry and 1-5th Gurkhas hearing or seeing the approaching enemy.

The enemy's attack was pushed to within twenty or thirty yards of the stone wall with which the camp was surrounded with a certain amount of resolution up to midnight, after which it slackened off considerably. In no case did the enemy come to close quarters, though two standards were brought up to within fifty yards of the camp. They seemed to have lost heart at the last moment in the face of the steady fire which was brought to bear on them.

The expenditure of ammunition was as follows:—

	Rounds.
15th Sikhs .....	525
5th Punjab Infantry ....	1,200
1-5th Gurkhas .....	373
Total ....	2,098

The usual casualty returns have been already forwarded.

From Major-General A. G. Yeatman-Biggs, C.B., Commanding the Kurram-Kohat Force, to the Adjutant-General in India—(dated Fort Lockhart, the 30th September, 1897).

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 27th August last a large gathering of Orakzais appeared on the Samana Suk, and heavy firing was heard in the direction of Shinawari, which was held by the Border Police. This was reported to me at Kohat.

Reconnaissances were made from Gulistan towards the Samana Suk, and from Hangu to Shinawari.

The enemy was found to be about 4,000 in number, strongly posted on the Samana Suk. In this reconnaissance, I regret to say, Lieutenant A. K. Blair, 36th Sikhs, was wounded in the chest. Reinforcements were sent from Fort Lockhart, but soon after their arrival at Gulistan information was received that the enemy's *lashkar* was assembling to the east of Fort Lockhart, so Lieutenant-Colonel Haughton, 36th Sikhs, commanding on the Samana, decided to return to Fort Lockhart.

The officer commanding the reconnaissance made by a squadron of the 18th Bengal Lancers to Shinawari returned the same day to Hangu, and reported all well. This was the second reconnaissance made from Hangu to Shinawari (a distance of over 20 miles) within the last few days.

The following day the enemy were discovered to be holding the Chagru Kotal as well as the Samana Suk, on the west of the Samana Range,

and the Sarmela spur on the east end of the range, and during the day they burnt the posts of Gogra and Tsalai, which had been evacuated by the Border Police.

In order to anticipate the enemy, should a second attack be made on Shinawari, I ordered two companies of Gurkhas to march to reinforce the garrison there. One squadron of cavalry accompanied them, with orders to return to Hangu as soon as the Gurkhas had reached the post. Reliable reports were received on the morning of the 29th August that Shinawari had been evacuated by the Border Police, and the post burnt by the tribesmen the previous evening, so the troops *en route* to reinforce the garrison were recalled.

The Orakzais held a *jirga* this day, and decided that the Alikhel, Mamuzai, Alisherzai, and Akhel should attack Gulistan on Friday, September 3rd, whilst the Mishti, Sheikhan, Mallakhel, and Rabiakhel attacked Hangu.

During the night of the 29th the post of Sangar was fired into, and a sepoy of the Border Police deserted from the adjacent post of Dhar with his rifle and ammunition. This post was therefore reinforced by one Native officer and 37 sepoys of the 36th Sikhs, so that all posts on the Samana should be held by Sikhs.

The three following days the enemy remained on the east and west ends of the Samana, but made no further move.

On the 3rd September a *bhisti* from Dhar was murdered by the enemy, and his three mules stolen. Mr. D. Donald, Commandant of the Border Police, proceeded to Dhar to make inquiries into the circumstances, and he and his escort were fired on.

As the tribesmen were reported to be advancing on Gulistan and Saragarhi in force, these posts were reinforced from Fort Lockhart. Towards evening the enemy, in considerable force, established himself in and about Picquet Hill, 400 yards west of Gulistan, and set fire to the thorn edge which had been placed as an obstacle a few yards outside the horn-work of the place. The fire was extinguished by volunteers, whose names have been brought to notice by me in a separate letter. At 8 p.m. the bonfire, which had been previously prepared between the horn-work and Picquet Hill, was lit by volunteers, whose names have also been mentioned in the marginally-noted despatch.\*

The enemy kept up a hot fire until midnight, when they finally retired.

Lieutenant-Colonel J. Haughton and Lieutenant and Adjutant R. G. Munn, of the 36th Sikhs, strove hard, with their little handful of men from Fort Lockhart, to succour the many small posts scattered over the Samana Range that were beset on all sides by overwhelming numbers of the enemy.

I attach the usual casualty return on Army Form B 103. The expenditure of ammunition between the 27th August and the 3rd September on the Samana was—Rifles, 410; rounds expended, 3,649.

I have not considered it necessary to attach any sketch, as the whole ground is so well-known, and has already been mapped by the Survey Department.

Return of Casualties in Action on the Samana Range, from the 27th August to the 3rd September, 1897.

36th (Sikh) Regiment of Bengal Infantry.

Summary.

Officers—Killed nil, wounded 1, missing nil.

\* Despatch of 21st September.