

destroy the village of Dargai, while by a simultaneous flanking movement I seized the heights overlooking the valley to the west, and cleared out the lower villages referred to above. Although I was aware of a hostile gathering in the Khanki Valley, the information I had received through native channels led me to believe that the Orakzais, other than the Alikhel section of that tribe, did not intend seriously to oppose my advance until I had reached Karappa, and that the Afridis were too busily engaged in fortifying the Sampagha and Arhanga Passes to be able to assist the Orakzais in any considerable strength.

4. During my stay on the Samana, Major-General Yeatman-Biggs had been in indifferent health, and though he was able to move to Shinaori on October the 17th, while the troops to be employed were drawn almost exclusively from the 2nd Division, I thought it better to spare him the fatigue of conducting the operations designed to clear the road and punish the Alikhels. These operations I accordingly entrusted to Lieutenant-General Sir A. P. Palmer, Commanding the Line of Communications.

5. The front attack on Dargai was directed by Brigadier-General Westmacott, C.B., D.S.O., who had the following troops placed at his disposal:—

No. 5 (Bombay) Mountain Battery.
Rocket Detachment, Royal Artillery.
2nd Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers.
1st Battalion, 3rd Gurkha Rifles.

The main column employed on the flanking movement was commanded by Brigadier-General Kempster, D.S.O., and consisted of the following troops:—

No. 8 Mountain Battery, Royal Artillery.
Machine Gun Detachment, 16th Lancers.
1st Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment.
1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders.
1st Battalion, 2nd Gurkha Rifles.
15th Sikhs.

No. 4 Company, Madras Sappers and Miners.
Scouts of the 5th Gurkha Rifles.

This column was accompanied by Lieutenant-General Sir A. P. Palmer, K.C.B., with an escort of one company of the 3rd Sikhs.

Brigadier-General Kempster's column left Shinaori at 4.30 A.M., and Brigadier-General Westmacott's at 5 A.M. On the latter reaching the Chagru Kotal at 8.30 A.M., it was joined by No. 9 Mountain Battery, Royal Artillery, and the 1st Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment from Fort Lockhart. At 9 A.M. the attack was commenced, the 1st Battalion, 3rd Gurkhas leading, with the 2nd Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers in support and the 1st Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment in reserve. At the same time a working party under Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Thurnburn, Commanding Royal Engineer Line of Communications, consisting of the 21st Madras Pioneers, the Sirmur Imperial Service Sappers, and the hired labourers, was pushed forward beyond the *kotal* to improve the road.

6. The advance of the troops, which was covered by No. 9 Mountain Battery, Royal Artillery, and No. 5 (Bombay) Mountain Battery, was necessarily slow, the slopes being extremely steep and affording but little cover. The enemy at first kept up a vigorous fire from the walled terraces and rocks in front of the village, but shortly before noon, when the flanking movement began to develop and the tribesmen's line of retreat was threatened, the opposition slackened and the position was carried by a company of the 3rd Gurkhas under Major Rose. About 20 of the enemy's dead were left on the ground, a sure

indication of the heavy loss which had been inflicted.

7. Meanwhile the main column had moved in a north-westerly direction, along a track which had been reported as practicable for baggage animals. At the fifth mile, however, the road was found to be impassable for mules, and No. 8 Mountain Battery, Royal Artillery, with all laden animals, had to be ordered back to Shinaori, escorted by the 1st Battalion Dorsetshire Regiment and two companies of the 15th Sikhs. The remainder continued their march, led by the Gurkha scouts, a few of the enemy's marksmen firing at the advancing troops and wounding two riflemen of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Gurkhas.

At 11 A.M., heliographic communication was established with Brigadier-General Westmacott's column, and shortly before noon the 1st Battalion, 2nd Gurkhas, which was leading, reached a commanding position at Khand Talao, about two and a half miles west of Dargai, thus causing the tribesmen hastily to evacuate that village as well as the villages in the valley below. During their retirement the enemy, estimated to number some 800 men, came under the fire of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Gurkhas, and suffered considerable loss.

8. At this point, owing to the great difficulties of the road, the main column had to be halted to allow of the Gordon Highlanders and 15th Sikhs closing up, and also to cover the return to camp at Shinaori of the mountain battery and its escort. At 2.30 P.M. the concentration had been completed, and the main column began to move towards Dargai in order to join Brigadier-General Westmacott's force, which in the meantime had destroyed that village. The path was extremely difficult, and in some places precipitous, so that progress was slow, and it was found impossible to reach the villages below Dargai which it had been intended to deal with, and near which the water supply of Dargai was situated. The track to the water was afterwards found to be about three miles in length, so commanded from the adjacent heights that water could not have been obtained in the presence of an enemy, unless these heights as well as Dargai itself had been held.

9. At this time a hostile force, numbering about 4,000 men, was observed advancing from the Khanki Valley up the Narik Darra towards Khand Talao, while another body of the enemy began to ascend the Dargai heights from the same direction. It was clear, therefore, that the gathering of tribesmen near Karappa, having heard the sound of the guns earlier in the day, had resolved to reinforce the Alikhels who had just been driven out of Dargai and the neighbouring villages. But before the enemy could come within fighting distance, the junction between the two columns had been effected, the 15th Sikhs covering the climb of Brigadier-General Kempster's column along the rugged path described above, and the retirement of the Sikhs being in turn covered by the Gordon Highlanders and two companies of the King's Own Scottish Borderers, who took up a strong position just below the village of Dargai.

While this was going on, Brigadier-General Westmacott began his withdrawal to the Chagru Kotal, having first posted No. 5 (Bombay) Mountain Battery near the *kotal* itself, and sent No. 9 Mountain Battery, Royal Artillery, with the 1st Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment, to a position on the Samana Suk, which flanked the road from Dargai to the crest of the pass. The enemy pressing on, a hot engagement ensued between them and the rearguard, our guns