

been badly broken down by the enemy during the night, and while it was going on the artillery and the Buffs and the 3rd Bombay Light Infantry kept up a steady and well-directed fire on the pass-ridge, which prevented the enemy from showing otherwise than by ones and twos, and altogether demoralized them. Ultimately, about noon, Lieutenant-Colonel Woon was approaching his objective, while Brigadier-General Meiklejohn was also ready, I directed the last-named officer to deliver the frontal attack, which was carried out in fine style by the infantry under his command,—the Royal West Kent and 16th Bengal Infantry, preceded by a detachment of the 4th Company, Bengal Sappers, under Lieutenant D. M. Griffith, Royal Engineers, moving by the pass-road, the 21st Punjab Infantry on their left up two very difficult spurs, and the Highland Light Infantry up a third spur still further to the left. At about 1.30 p.m. Lieutenant-Colonel Woon had driven the enemy from the north-western peak with the loss of two standards and some fifteen killed, and at about 2 p.m. Brigadier-General Meiklejohn's battalions crowned the pass-ridge within a few minutes of each other. Before this, however, the enemy, finding that they could not impede our frontal attack without exposing themselves to a murderous fire from the artillery and infantry on the spur in their front, and that Lieutenant-Colonel Woon was pressing and outflanking their right, did not wait for our men to close with them, but retired precipitately down the valley on Kingargali and the hills beyond it, suffering some loss from the fire directed upon them by the infantry after they had crowned the ridge. The Royal West Kent were sent on at once to Kingargali, and were followed soon afterwards by Brigadier-General Meiklejohn with the Highland Light Infantry and the 20th Punjab Infantry. The 21st Punjab Infantry rejoined their own brigade at Sanghao in the afternoon, and the 16th Bengal Infantry remained for the night on the top of the pass, where the 4th Company, Bengal Sappers, under Lieutenant H. R. Stockley, Royal Engineers, and the 5th Company, Queen's Own Sappers, under Captain E. P. Johnson, Royal Engineers, also spent the night after working on the road until dark.

11. The road over the pass turned out, as I expected, quite impracticable for mules; but as I had provided coolie transport in view of this contingency, the troops in advance underwent no unusual hardships in the interval that elapsed before the pass was regularly opened for mule transport, which was done most successfully on the 10th January, after nearly three days' excellent and energetic work by the Royal Engineers and Sappers under the orders of Lieutenant-Colonel W. Peacocke, C.M.G., the Commanding Royal Engineer of the Force.

12. Only one casualty occurred on our side in this action; the causes of this fortunate result being that the accurate fire of our artillery, and of our infantry at long range, made it impossible for the enemy to bring an effective fire to bear on our advancing troops, or even to roll down stones on them to any great extent; and that the unfavourable nature of the ground in the rear of the enemy's position rendered it imperative for them, as soon as it appeared clear that they would have ultimately to retire, to do so in good time, before it was possible for them to try conclusions with the sword.

13. The endurance of our infantry, and the careful and judicious leading of their officers, were conspicuous throughout the day. The signalling arrangements, under Captain E. V. O.

Hewett, Royal West Kent Regiment, were perfectly carried out, and were of the greatest value, as they enabled me to time the various movements with an accuracy which would not have been otherwise possible, and which was of course one of the causes of our easy success. I have already alluded to the fire of the artillery, under Colonel W. Aitken, C.B., which left nothing to be desired in regard to accuracy and sound management.

14. The strength of the enemy present was about 2,000 men, and considerable reinforcements were on the way to help them, but retired without taking any part in the action. It is now reported that the long-range volleys fired by the Buffs had a most demoralizing effect, as the bullets arrived before the sound of the discharges, whose smoke also could not be seen; so that the volleys could not be "dodged." The enemy's casualties, as reported up to date, included about 50 killed.

15. While the operations described above were in progress, the force under Lieutenant-Colonel Adams, V.C., at Rustam and Pirsai [see paragraph 2 (b) *ante*] was not idle. On the 6th January the cavalry\* reconnoitred the Pirsai, Malandri, and Ambela Passes, finding some 40 men on the first named, and 800 to 1,000 on each of the others. On the afternoon of the same day the infantry† of the force under Lieutenant-Colonel H. N. McRae marched from Rustam to Pirsai village, where they bivouacked for the night; and at 7.30 next morning advanced against the pass, which they took with slight opposition. At 11 a.m., the cavalry commenced to cross the pass, which was found exceedingly difficult for horses, especially on the north side, where a great deal of ice and hoar frost was met with, ultimately Lieutenant-Colonel Adams, V.C., reconnoitred in person with infantry towards Bampokha as far as Kuai, and then returned for the night to Chorbanda, below the pass. Next day, the 8th, he opened communications with Brigadier-General Meiklejohn at Kingargali and reconnoitred to Tursak, and towards the south-east, finding a gathering of the enemy on the hills near Tursak. On the evening of this day Lieutenant-Colonel Adams and the cavalry joined the 1st Brigade under Brigadier-General Meiklejohn at Kingargali, Lieutenant-Colonel McRae also joined General Meiklejohn on the 10th with his infantry and sappers, after three days' very hard work in getting his baggage over the pass.

16. The movement thus successfully carried out by Lieutenant-Colonel Adams, V.C., was of very great value, as the sudden appearance of five squadrons and two battalions in the middle of the Buner country, in addition to the brigade which came over the Tanga Pass, helped most effectually to prevent the enemy from being encouraged to make fresh resistance, as they might have been otherwise in consequence of the delay which necessarily took place before I could bring supplies enough over that pass to enable me to advance.

17. On the 9th January, as I found it hopeless to make the Tanga Pass fit for camels in any reasonable time, and as water was very scarce at Sanghao, I moved Brigadier-General Jeffreys from that place to Katlang with the portion of

\* Two squadrons, Guides Cavalry, under Captain F. G. H. Davies; three squadrons, 10th Bengal Lancers, under Major F. A. Blyth.

† The Guides Infantry under Major F. Campbell; the 31st Punjab Infantry under Major A. Wallace; a section of the 4th Company, Bengal Sappers, under Lieutenant J. M. C. Colvin, Royal Engineers.