

5. I am much indebted to Brigadier-General Palliser, C.B., for the success obtained on this occasion, and I have much place in endorsing the opinions expressed by him regarding the conduct of the affair and the behaviour of all those who had the good fortune to take part in it.

Dated Camp, Saif-u-din, 5th January, 1879.  
From Brigadier-General C. H. Palliser, C.B.,  
Commanding the Advance, to the Assistant  
Quartermaster-General, Field Force.

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Lieutenant-General Commanding, an action yesterday, the 4th January, between the advanced forces under my command and the enemy.

2. Pursuant to Field Force orders, the left column of the advance under my immediate command (strength as per margin)\* was marching across the Mel Valley from Shah Pussand's village; near Hauz-i-Ahmed, to encamp at its present position in the Tukt-i-Pul Valley, and the right column under Colonel T. G. Kennedy, 2nd Punjab Cavalry, was simultaneously moving from Killeh Futteh-colla to encamp at the three water karezes fronting the Ghlo Pass, leading from the Mel to the Tukt-i-Pul Valley.

3. I had already despatched through the Kurkonna Pass (my line of route) into the Tukt-i-Pul Valley a reconnaissance consisting of 100 sabres of the 15th King's Hussars and 28 sabres of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, the whole under the command of Major G. Luck, 15th King's Hussars. About 1 P.M. I received a note from that officer, saying that he had exchanged shots with the enemy's scouts, and that they were retiring before him.

About the same time a letter from Colonel Kennedy reached me, to the effect that he had information of the intention of the enemy to oppose us in the Tukt-i-Pul Valley, and suggesting that a reconnaissance in force should be made from both columns through the passes in our respective fronts. I assented to this proposal, and ordered him to carry it out on his side, and at the same time sent word to Major Luck to fall back and draw the enemy on to the fire of our guns, which were coming on.

4. Taking all the available cavalry and the two guns, A-B, Royal Horse Artillery, under the immediate command of Lieutenant C. H. H. Mayne, acting under the orders of Captain R. G. S. Marshall, the officer commanding the battery, who was present, we trotted through the pass. The road being very rough and stony, I then ordered the guns to come on at a steady pace, and galloped forward with my Brigade Major, Captain H. R. Abadie, 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, and Major C. S. Maclean, 1st Punjab Cavalry (Colonel R. H. Sankey, R.E., and Major A. Le Messurier, R.E., also accompanying me), to join Major Luck, who was halted about a mile on this, the north, side of the pass. He reported that he had tried to draw the enemy on, but that they would not engage, and kept at a distance. He had dismounted some of his men, who used their carbines with effect, having emptied several saddles and captured one prisoner and some baggage.

5. Throwing out a line of scouts, we advanced

parallel to the course of the Cadani River, over very undulating ground (steep-sided and stony ravines); and presently sighted the enemy in detached groups of horsemen on the ridges, about a mile distant. We were endeavouring to get near them, they retiring as we advanced, when artillery fire was heard from the Ghlo Pass on our right. Concluding that Colonel Kennedy was engaged, and that an opportunity would offer itself of attacking the rear of the enemy opposed to him, we changed our direction for the north end of that pass.

At the same time I sent orders as follows:—

To Captain Marshall—

For the guns and escort to continue on the kafila road (the ground we had been going over being impracticable even for horse artillery).

To Lieutenant-Colonel N. Barton, 25th Punjab Infantry, commanding the Infantry—

To bring the baggage through the pass; to hold it (the pass) with the 32nd Pioneers, under Lieutenant-Colonel H. Fellowes; and to push on the remainder of the infantry to the guns.

6. Continuing at as rapid a pace as the nature of the ground would admit of, after going three miles, we neared the mouth of the Ghlo Pass; as if coming from the Kandahar direction—one troop of the 15th Hussars, commanded by Captain H. Hall, and the detachment of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, led by Captain J. R. B. Atkinson, in the first line, supported by a troop of the 15th Hussars, commanded by Lieutenant A. G. Holland; Major Luck being in command of the squadron of Hussars.

7. I found the enemy debouching from the Ghlo Pass to the number of not less than 300 cavalry, in compact bodies, moving steadily in a northerly direction along the foot of the mountain, and presenting their left flank towards us.\* I was very doubtful on approaching the enemy, who were in three squadrons, as to whether they were friends or foes, being half inclined to think by their steady movement that they might be Colonel Kennedy's cavalry; but doubt did not last long, for Major Luck, who had joined his own scouts, raised his sword, and gave a cheer. This being responded to heartily by our whole body, Hussars and Sowars, showed, on the other hand, to the objects of our gaze, that we were not the friends coming to their aid which they seemed to take us for. On our nearing them at a charging pace, the enemy gave us a volley, which killed two horses of the Hussars. Our determined attack soon, however, changed their show of resistance to a complete rout: they were pursued along the base of the hills, suffering as heavy a loss from our men's swords as the tired condition of our horses and the stony ground enabled them (the men) to inflict. Not knowing but that more of enemy might still be in the pass, I ordered Captain Hall to rally his troop, while Majors Maclean and Luck, with their men, continued the pursuit some distance further.

8. Presently a body of cavalry issued from the pass, and approached us. Owing to a dust-storm which was then blowing, it was difficult to distinguish whether they were Afghans or not. Captain Hall dismounted some of his men, with the intention of giving them a volley prior to attacking them; if foes; happily before this could be done, it became evident that we were being joined by Colonel Kennedy and his force of cavalry and horse artillery (the latter having

\* Left Column, A-B, R.H.A., 2 guns; 15th Hussars, 123 sabres; 1st Punjab Cavalry, 219 sabres; 25th Punjab Native Infantry, 419; 32nd Pioneers, 539; 2nd Biluchis, 266; 4th and 9th Companies, Sappers and Miners, 117.

Right Column, A-B, R.H.A., 2 guns; 15th Hussars, 79 sabres; 2nd Punjab Cavalry, 200 sabres; 3rd Sind Horse, 30 sabres.

\* Force engaged on north of the Ghlo Kotal:—

4 Staff Officers; 100 sabres 15th King's Hussars; 30 sabres 1st Punjab Cavalry.