

numbers had steadily but rapidly diminished, until at the commencement of the month of September there remained about 1500 mules, 500 sickly camels, and 800 bullocks, or barely sufficient to enable the Commissariat to feed the force, which it was presumed would remain in the Kuram Valley for the winter. It is true that a large number of pack bullocks had, prior to the occurrences which led to the advance on Kabul, been despatched for the Commissariat service in the valley, but of these many had either been knocked up by the journey from the Punjab, or were suffering from semi-starvation to such an extent as to be practically useless.

5. Local carriage, drawn from the Turis and Jagis, had to some extent made up for our deficiencies in this respect; and aided by a proportion of Ghilzaie carriage, had enabled the Commissariat to collect a considerable amount of supplies at the Shuturguridan, quite sufficient to relieve any anxiety as to the immediate wants of the troop left there, and to move still larger stores forward for the force advancing upon Kabul.

6. Reports too reached me at this time, that several of the regiments that had been concerned in the attack upon the Embassy at Kabul, had had left the capital, and with some guns marched towards the Spiga district of Zurmutt, with the design of harassing our left flank as we passed through the Hazar Darakht defile on our way to the Shuturguridan.

The knowledge of this action on their part necessitated increased vigilance on mine, for from the place "Gardez," (in the Zurmutt country) for which these troops had made, descents were possible at several places along our line of communication, namely, upon the Kuram Valley itself, by the river side through Chumkuni and Kariab; upon the Peiwar Kotal, by the crest of the ridge which runs S.W. from that place towards the Kuram River; and between Dreikullah and the Shuturguridan, more especially in the narrow defiles of the Hazar Darakht.

As an instance of the length to which religious feelings may be worked upon, I may mention that the bodies of two sons of Allyar Khan, an influential Zurmutt Chief, who had been slain during the attack on the Embassy, were carried by the mutinous troops to "Gardez," and there buried amidst a scene of great popular excitement, the people, who had assembled in large numbers, vowing to be revenged for their deaths.

I was informed that these tribes would resort to no hostilities until the fast of "Ramzan" was over, that is, not before the 20th or 21st of September; and subsequent events proved the correctness of this information.

7. Passing over the detailed operations and movements of troops, which have already been from time to time communicated to Army Head Quarters, it will I think be sufficient to state that by the 18th September the force marginally noted* was collected at, and firmly established upon, the crest of the Shuturguridan, under command of Brigadier-General Baker, C.B., who had proceeded there from Ali Kheyl on the 13th of September. In addition to the above, 200 bayonets of the 5th Punjab Infantry had been put into the nearly completed walled seraie at Karatiga, a mile and half on the Hazar Darakht side, Sirkai Kotal.

In the Kuram and Hariab Valley the position

* No. 2 Mountain Battery, 72nd Highlanders, 7th Company Sappers and Miners, 5th Goorkhas, 23rd Pioneers.

of the troops had been altered to meet existing circumstances, as follows:—

Half Battery C-4th R. A., to Kuram from Kohat.

2 Companies 8th Foot, to Kuram from Kohat.

11th Regiment Native Infantry, to Kuram from Badesh Kheyl.

9th Lancers (1 Squadron), to concentrate at Kuram.

14th Bengal Lancers, to concentrate at Kuram.

G-3rd Royal Artillery, to concentrate at Kuram.

F-A Royal Horse Artillery, to Shuturguridan from Kuram.

28th Punjab Native Infantry, to Shuturguridan from Kuram.

92nd Highlanders, to concentrate to Ali Kheyl.

3rd Sikhs, to Shuturguridan from Thull.

5th Punjab Infantry (Head Quarters), to Ali Kheyl from Shalozan.

Gatling Guns 2, to Ali Kheyl from Kuram.

8. The next few days were devoted to strengthening the position on the Shuturguridan, to collecting carriage for the onward movement of the troops already named, and the storage of supplies both at Ali Kheyl and Shuturguridan.

9. On the 14th of September, Nawab Sir Gholam Hassan Khan, K.C.S.I., who had started from Kandahar to Kabul, but who, having heard of the outbreak there turned off towards the Kuram Valley, passed through our outposts on the Shuturguridan and subsequently reached Ali Kheyl.

Brigadier-General Baker reconnoitred on the 16th from the Shuturguridan towards Kushi, and reached the Shinkai Kotal, a short distance beyond the village and fort of Dobandi. No resistance was offered, and inspection proved that the difficulties both of this Kotal and the far famed Akhoond Kheyl Gorge, had been rather over-estimated; though, doubtless, if held by a resolute and skilled foe, their passage would be attended with difficulty.

10. I regret to have to state that on 22nd September a combined attack was made by Mongals and Ghilzaies, numbering from 200 to 300 men, upon a telegraph party whilst on the march between the Sirkhai Kotal and Karatiga. It appears from the detailed report of the occurrence, which has been submitted to me, that soon after 6 A.M. on that day, a party consisting of one telegraph lines-man, 22 telegraph coolies, 40 muleteers, and 84 mules, escorted by 1 Naik and 10 Sepoys of the 5th Punjab Infantry, left Shuturguridan, without the knowledge of the Brigadier-General Commanding there, for the purpose of bringing up telegraph poles from Karatiga. About 9 A.M., intelligence reached Shuturguridan that not only had this party been attacked, but also that a heavy fire had been kept up upon the detachment consisting of 1 British officer and 50 non-commissioned officers and men stationed in a block house on the Sirkhai Kotal. As many of the 72nd Highlanders as could be spared from Kasim Kheyl, at once proceeded to the spot, but the marauding band had disappeared, and attempts to follow them up proved fruitless. One man of the detachment at the Sirkhai Kotal was surprised and cut up, whilst the loss of the telegraph party amounted to one Naik and 6 Sepoys of the 5th Punjab Infantry, one lines-man, 12 muleteers, and 5 coolies killed; 1 Sepoy 5th Punjab Infantry and 2 muleteers, wounded; and 1 muleteer, 2 coolies and 84 mules missing.

Brigadier-General Baker, C.B., informs me that he had issued orders that no escort of a less strength than 25 men per cent. of animals in a convoy should be sent out, but this order does not