

enemy had gained possession of it. Their numbers were overwhelming; and though the Highlanders, Guides, and 5th Punjab Infantry, made a most stubborn defence, and Captain N. J. Spens, of the 72nd Highlanders, sacrificed his life in a heroic attempt to stem the advance of the enemy, it was of no avail; our troops retreated quietly and steadily down the eastern slope of the hill, unable to bring away two guns* of No. 2 Mountain Battery, that up to the very latest moment had played upon the enemy.

No blame for the loss of these guns is in any way to be attached to the officers or men of the battery. On the other hand, every credit is due to Major G. Swinley, the late Lieutenant C. A. Montanaro, and Lieutenant A. F. Liddell, the Native officers, the non-commissioned officers and men of the battery, for the gallant manner in which they stood to their guns to the last.

Surgeon J. Duke, in medical charge of the battery, was conspicuous for his unremitting attention to the wounded under a heavy fire; and amongst many who distinguished themselves on this occasion, I would specially mention Major G. Swinley, R.A., Jemadar Abdul Rehman, 5th Punjab Infantry, and Lance-Naicks Dillia and Lehun, of the Guides Infantry.

61. Whilst the events above narrated were in progress, numbers of the enemy were observed (as was the case on the previous day) to be collecting on Siah Sang, and proceeding round the eastern flank of cantonments in the direction of Kohistan.

I therefore dispatched a small force of cavalry and two guns of F.A., Royal Horse Artillery, under the command of Brigadier-General Hugh Gough, C.B., V.C., to disperse them. The ground, however, in that direction was so intersected by deep watercourses that the advance of the guns was necessarily slow, and by the time the obstacles had been overcome the enemy had got so far on the road towards Kohistan, and so close to the hills, that pursuit was hopeless.

A party of the 5th Punjab Cavalry, under Captain W. J. Vousden, met with better success. This regiment was quartered in the King's garden, about a third of the way between Sherpur and the city, and I had in the morning sent orders to Lieutenant-Colonel Williams to be on the look-out for any enemy that might pass in that direction. About 1 p.m., some 300 or 400 were observed moving along the left bank of the river, and Captain Vousden, who, with one troop, was out on reconnaissance, most gallantly charged into the middle of them, and notwithstanding that only twelve of his men were able to follow him, six of whom were wounded (the remainder being stopped by a heavy fire which was opened on them from behind some low walls), he succeeded in dispersing the enemy, and in inflicting severe loss upon them, killing five men with his own hand. It was a most dashing little affair, and reflects great credit on Captain Vousden.

62. My object throughout these operations had been either to break up the combination against us by dealing with the enemy in detail, or at least to prevent their getting command of the hills to the north and west of Kabul; and thus gain possession of the city and Bala Hissar. Up to this time I had no reason to apprehend that the Afghans were in sufficient force to successfully cope with disciplined troops, but the result and determined manner in which the conical hill had been recaptured, and the information sent to me by Brigadier-General Macpherson from the ~~advance and to having been recovered~~ ~~These guns were eventually recovered~~ ~~from Sherpur~~

signal station on the Bala Hissar that large masses of the enemy were still advancing from the north, south, and west, made it evident that the numbers combined against us were too overwhelming to admit of my comparatively small force meeting them, especially on ground which still further increased the advantages they possessed from their vast numerical superiority. I therefore determined to withdraw from all isolated positions, and to concentrate the whole force at Sherpur, thus securing the safety of our large cantonments, and avoiding what had now become a useless sacrifice of life.

63. The measure was one which I was most reluctant to order, for it, of course, involved the temporary abandonment of the city and the Bala Hissar, a loss serious in itself and likely to produce a bad effect on the country at large. Under the circumstances, however, I considered that no other course was left me but to remain on the defensive, and wait until the arrival of reinforcements, or the growing confidence of the enemy should afford me a favourable opportunity for attacking.

Orders to retire were accordingly issued to Brigadier-Generals Macpherson and Baker.

64. The withdrawal from the Bala Hissar and Asmai heights was accomplished in a manner high creditable to the officers in command and to the discipline of the troops.

General Macpherson's brigade had to pass through a portion of the city and the suburb of Deh Afghan; his rear guard was harassed and his troops were subjected to a heavy fire as they moved along the narrow streets and through the numerous gardens and orchards, but the Brigadier-General brought off his men and baggage in perfect order and with comparatively little loss.

65. I am much indebted to Brigadier-General Macpherson, C.B., V.C., for the good services he has performed throughout the campaign, and to the following officers, whose conduct the Brigadier-General particularly brings to notice:—

Lieutenant-Colonel C. B. Knowles, commanding the 67th Regiment, who was greatly distinguished during the retirement.

Lieutenant-Colonel G. N. Money, commanding the 3rd Sikhs.

Lieutenant-Colonel A. FitzHugh, commanding the 5th Goorkhas.

Major J. M. Sym, of the 5th Goorkhas.

Captain J. E. Blundell, of the 66th Regiment.

Captain R. E. C. Jarvis, of the 67th Regiment.

Captain H. R. L. Morgan, R.A.

Captain C. W. N. Guinness, 92nd Highlanders (Brigade Major).

Captain A. D. M'Gregor, 92nd Highlanders (Orderly Officer).

Lieutenant C. H. Ferguson, 72nd Highlanders.

Lieutenant R. L. Milne, 72nd Highlanders.

Brigadier-General Macpherson also brings forward the gallant conduct of Hospital-Assistant Nihal Chand, attached to the 3rd Sikhs, in going under a heavy fire to the assistance of the wounded.

Lieutenant R. B. W. Fisher, 10th Royal Hussars, is reported as having behaved in a conspicuously cool and gallant manner while in charge of the transport animals during the withdrawal from the Bala Hissar hill.

66. The retirement of Brigadier-General Baker's troops down the eastern face of Asmai, under a very heavy fire, was most ably conducted by that distinguished officer, Colonel Jenkins, C.B., who speaks with great admiration of the example set to their men by Lieutenant-Colonel Brownlow, C.B., and Major C. M.