

chief, had come from Lughman with a large gathering, and proposed an attack on Jagdalak in conjunction with the Ghilzais of Hisarik and Auzangani under Mozoolla Khan and Syud Khan of Hisarik (with whom was Abdul Kureem, who led the enemy against us at Charasiah). Later on, as it was getting dark, the enemy came pouring down from the hill tops and opened a desultory and long-range fire from every direction upon the camp, fortunately without inflicting any loss. This was continued for some hours, our men remaining steady at their posts and only returning the fire when it could be done effectually, and in order to drive the enemy from positions which caused us some annoyance. My force at Jagdalak now amounted to 961 infantry, 73 sappers, 4 guns of the Hazara Mountain Battery, and 224 cavalry.

On the 16th the enemy showed a disposition to harass my position, and occupied posts on the hills, from which they could open a long-range fire. I therefore sent a party of 50 men of the 9th Foot, under Lieutenant Mayne, to dislodge them. This duty was most effectually performed by Lieutenant Mayne, who drove them with some little loss to the highest peaks of the mountain, maintaining his position till nightfall, when he withdrew under cover of darkness, thus preserving the troops from the annoyance and possible loss the enemy might have occasioned. Parties were subsequently sent up every morning and withdrawn in the evening for the same purpose. During the day the position at the fort was immensely strengthened, so as to make it tenable by a small force. My cavalry patrols moving towards Pezwan found the road occupied by the Ghilzais, and after this no communication could be kept up with Gandamak except by heliograph, also unfortunately interrupted by clouds, or by forcing the road with troops.

On 17th December I sent Major Macnaghten, commanding the 10th Bengal Lancers, with two companies of infantry and 40 cavalry to reconnoitre the road towards Pezwan, and ascertain the enemy's strength on that line. Major Thackeray, V.C., commanding at the Kotal, was requested to hold the heights, whilst troops were sent from the fort to crown the heights along the pass. Major Macnaghten found the enemy, over thousand men, posted across the road about two miles south of the Kotal. He attacked them vigorously with his small force, supported by a company of sappers placed at his disposal by Major Thackeray, and drove them back some distance, completely clearing the road, and inflicting some loss on them. Major Macnaghten did his work well, and spoke very favourably of the conduct of Lieutenants Bolton, of the 4th Goorkhas, and Lombe, of the 9th Foot, who were always in front and controlling the fire of their men. He also mentioned the assistance he received from Major Thackeray, V.C., commanding the Sappers, who accompanied him, but would not deprive him of the command with which he had been entrusted, although his senior officer. Colonel Norman, commanding the 24th Punjab Native Infantry, who had arrived at Pezwan, was requested to move out and attack the enemy from his side and co-operate with Major Macnaghten; but in consequence of the divergent retreat of the Ghilzais the troops did not meet. Colonel Norman found more bodies south of the road, attached them, and bivouacked out for the night.

On the 18th, as it was essentially necessary that the road should be clear and reinforcements and supplies most urgent required to enable me to advance on Kabul be brought up, I heliographed an order to Colonel Norman to advance with as strong a force as he could collect from Pezwan,

and co-operate with troops from Jagdalak to drive the Ghilzais from the neighbourhood of the road, and I sent Major Rowcroft, commanding the 4th Goorkhas, with 300 infantry, 80 cavalry and two mountain guns from Jagdalak. I also sent back a number of camels and transport animals to fetch up supplies. Colonel Norman and Major Rowcroft advancing towards each other met the Ghilzais retiring before our troops. On this occasion I also wrote to Colonel Norman to advance next day to Jagdalak and bring up the 24th Punjab Native Infantry and the wing of the 2nd Goorkhas, as also the two guns of the Hazara Mountain Battery which were at Pezwan; this I was enabled to do, as more troops from Gandamak had now arrived there.

Accordingly, on the 19th, Colonel Norman advanced with 481 men of his own corps, 187 of the 2nd Goorkhas and two guns, to Jagdalak, with as large a convoy of supplies as he could obtain, and I sent a force similar to that under Major Rowcroft to meet him, and to attack and disperse the Ghilzais who assembled every day, threatening the road below the Kotal. This force was under command of Major Roberts, 9th Foot. He found the enemy posted near their usual place and an engagement took place, the Ghilzais attempting to get round his flank; this was met by Major Roberts, and immediately after Colonel Norman came up, and bringing his guns into action enfiladed the enemy's whole line, forcing them to retire with considerable loss, including, as it was subsequently reported to me, their leader Syud Khan and his son among the wounded. Major Roberts then covered the passage of Colonel Norman's convoy, which came into camp without the loss of a single animal, although the Ghilzais from the north side made a daring attempt to get at it whilst coming through the pass west of the Kotal, which was defeated by the steadiness of the rear-guard. Major Roberts mentions Captain Broadfoot, commanding the Hazara Mountain Battery, for the very able and judicious manner in which he handled his guns, Captain S. E. Becher who commanded the detachment of the 2nd Goorkhas on his right; and Lieutenant Lombe, 9th Foot, who by his coolness and presence of mind contributed greatly in checking the enemy's attempt to turn his flank; also Captain Barrow, 10th Bengal Lancers, who acted as his orderly officer, and Surgeon-Major Walsh, 9th Foot, for his care of the wounded in the field.

This reinforcement brought my strength up to—cavalry 242, infantry 1,679, sappers 73, and guns 6, Hazara Mountain Battery. Colonel Norman also informed me that he had arranged for another large convoy for the next day, 20th, with warm clothing and supplies.

Early on the morning of the 20th I received an order from the Lieutenant-General, which was heliographed from Kabul to Lataband and sent on thence by special messenger, directing me to advance at once on Kabul, and take up the Lataband detachment with me; at the same time Colonel Hudson commanding at Lataband informed me that he had supplies only up to the 22nd, and that his men were on half rations. The reinforcement I had received on the 19th and the supplies expected this day, the 20th, put me in a position to carry out the Lieutenant-General's order, and I detailed the following troops for the advance:—9th Foot, 487 men; 2nd Goorkhas, 372; 4th Goorkhas, 375; details of the 72nd Highlanders, 45; and Guides, 7: total—Infantry 1,286, No. 5 Company Sappers, 71 men, and four guns of the Hazara Mountain Battery,—leaving at Jagdalak to hold it and re-establish communica-