

range occupied by the enemy was observed to be swarming with men along a front of nearly two miles, a body of horsemen that formed the enemy's right outflanking the left of our line.

8. The guns had scarcely opened fire when, in an incredibly short space of time, an enormous mass of men with standards formed on the hill-top, a considerable number of horsemen riding along the ridge with the intention of sweeping to the rear of our line to attack the baggage. From the central mass out rushed successive waves of swordsmen on foot, stretching out right and left, and seeming to envelop the position. The horsemen turned the left, now strengthened by a squadron of the 19th Bengal Lancers, and, pouring down two ravines which formed a V, struck the Lancers before they could charge, forcing the leading squadron to its right and rear; while the 3rd Goorkha Regiment, the infantry of the left, formed rallying squares. The situation during this temporary success of the enemy was rendered critical, as the squadron could not be rallied till it had passed to the right of the line of infantry, then hotly pressed and giving way.

9. The onslaught of fanatic swordsmen was at this time so rapid, and was pushed with such desperation, that during the few minutes which followed it became necessary to place every man of the reserve in the firing line,—the two sapper companies with half a battalion of the 19th Punjab Native Infantry reinforcing the left, while a half battalion of the 19th Punjab Native Infantry, with the two companies serving on the Lieutenant-General's escort, supported the guns on their left. The enemy, however, continued to push on, and approached within a few yards of the guns, when, the whole of their case-shot being expended, both batteries were withdrawn a distance of 200 yards. The gallantry with which the batteries maintained their ground till the last moment, and the orderly manner in which the retirement was effected, reflected the greatest credit on officers and men.

At this time the infantry of the right was forced back and a fresh position was taken up, two guns of G-4th Royal Artillery, being detached to the left centre, whither the remainder of the battery was subsequently moved.

The 2nd Punjab Cavalry relieved the escort with A-B Royal Horse Artillery, and the remainder of the regiment moved to the left of the line, the 19th Bengal Lancers and two squadrons of the 1st Punjab Cavalry being pushed to the right towards the river, while some well directed shell from the 40-pounder guns with No. 6-11th Royal Artillery, checked the forward movement of the enemy's horsemen round our left flank.

10. The fighting lasted for one hour, during which the troops under Brigadier-General Barter had come up and reinforced the right centre.

11. At 10 o'clock I ordered the "cease fire" to be sounded, the enemy's attack having been effectually defeated, their entire body spreading broadcast over the country. The necessity for protecting efficiently the large parks and baggage train formed in rear of the column forced me to retain the cavalry to cover the right flank, and pursuit was checked. The regiments on the right had, however, been closely engaged.

12. The troops halted two hours, during which time the dead were buried, and the wounded received necessary attention. At 12 o'clock, however, the entire force, with its baggage in close formation, moved forward and passed over the enemy's position, completing a march of seventeen miles to Nani, where camp was pitched. My advanced cavalry entered Ghazni next day.

13. The casualties during the engagement amounted to—killed, 17; wounded, 124, of whom nine are officers. More than a thousand dead bodies of the enemy were counted on the field, and their loss is estimated at from 2,000 to 3,000.

14. Taking into consideration the character of the attack, led as it was by swarms of fanatics determined to sacrifice their own lives, the conduct of the troops engaged was beyond praise.

15. I now desire to bring to the notice of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and of the Government the excellent service performed on this occasion by Brigadier-Generals R. J. Hughes and C. H. Palliser, C.B., on whose brigades the brunt of the action fell. The resolute firmness with which the key of the position was held by the 2nd Sikh Infantry and the 3rd Goorkha Regiment under Brigadier-General Hughes' direction, when the right of the line was pushed back, is evidence of that officer's soldierlike qualifications.

The judicious and vigorous manner in which the cavalry was handled in the open country on the right of the line reflects the highest credit on Brigadier-General Palliser, C.B. I am much indebted to Brigadier-General R. Barter for the rapidity with which he brought up his brigade, a distance of six miles from the rear, although the infantry portion of this reinforcement did not come into action until the enemy were in full flight, the celerity of advance enabled me to follow up our success by making a forward movement of importance.

To Lieutenant-Colonel E. F. Chapman, Deputy-Adjutant and Quartermaster-General, I am much indebted for the able assistance which he uniformly affords me in his responsible office. My thanks are also due to Major A. G. Handcock, Assistant Adjutant-General, Captain A. Gaselee, Assistant Quartermaster-General, and Captain L. T. Bishop, Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General, whose zeal and activity merit high commendation. At the most critical period of the action I observed Captain Gaselee encouraging the retiring line, and I believe that the gallant example he set the men by advancing towards the enemy and calmly shooting down some of the most forward of them had the very best effect on the soldiers.

I have to thank Colonel A. C. Johnson, Royal Horse Artillery, commanding the Royal Artillery, for the admirable disposition of the batteries under his command.

The arrangements for the immediate care of the wounded reflect the highest credit upon Deputy Surgeon-General A. Smith, C.B., the Principal Medical Officer with the Force; and the exertions of the subordinate medical staff deserve my warmest acknowledgments.

To Captain E. M. Larmie, R.E., officiating Commanding Royal Engineer, Major C. Cowie, R.A., Commissary of Ordnance, and Captain R. F. C. A. Tytler, Deputy Judge-Advocate, I am much indebted for the ready assistance they have always given me in their respective departments. Captain Tytler has, moreover, been most useful to me as an orderly officer in action.

My Aide-de-Camp, Captain N. R. Stewart, Bengal Staff Corps, has performed his duties to my entire satisfaction; and I desire to thank him as well as Lieutenant J. E. Dickie, R.E., Superintendent of Army Signalling, for their services in conveying my orders.

To Captain W. V. Ellis, Provost-Marshal, as well as to Captain W. A. Lawrence, General Transport Officer, and his assistants, I am under special obligations; for it was by their unremitting attention that the enormous mass of transport animals and followers was kept under control.