

river rose suddenly and brought down large logs of timber which broke the bridge, and as the current increased at the same time to such an extent as to make a raft-bridge useless, it was seen at once that the only resource was to make a suspension-bridge. A suitable place, about two miles down stream from the site of the raft-bridge, was accordingly selected, and a design was adopted by which the cables of the bridge were to be made of many strands of telegraph wire. Work was commenced immediately, but the bridge could not be expected to be ready for three or four days. The site selected being, as I have said, about two miles down stream, a new road was required along the hillside on the right bank back to the mouth of the Bajaur Valley, which road could only be commenced when men could be passed over the river.

Meanwhile, on the morning of the 13th, the Guides Infantry had received orders to march down the right bank of the Panjkora river, and punish certain villages on that side from which men had been persistently firing on the transport, which, till the completion of the Kamrani route, was forced to use the Shngo Kas defile road. The whole of the route which should have been followed by the Guides Infantry was in full view of the left bank, and could easily be protected by infantry posted thereon. By some mistake, which can never now be accounted for, Lieutenant-Colonel Battye, commanding the Guides Infantry, led his battalion up the Ushiri river into Bajaur. At noon he sent a message by heliograph that two large bodies of the enemy were advancing against him. His battalion could not be supported, as troops could not cross the river to do so. It was therefore ordered to retire to its entrenched post, and the 2nd Brigade at once lined the high banks overlooking the Panjkora river to cover its retirement. The battalion retired most deliberately, and this retirement was covered first by artillery fire from the left bank, and afterwards, as the enemy approached nearer, by fire of the infantry and Maxim guns. The enemy were in considerable strength, probably about 4,000 all told, and, I do not doubt, had heard of the broken bridge, and thought that our troops on their side of the river might be cut off. With the knowledge that troops could not be sent to his assistance, the visible strength of the advancing enemy, and the distance of his battalion from the covering fire of the troops on the left bank, it would undoubtedly have been wiser if the Officer commanding had retired at once without waiting for orders. However, the disinclination to retire is a fault on the right side, and the retirement as it was carried out was a splendid performance. It is deeply to be deplored that when the battalion had reached the level ground, and was about to cross the Ushiri river to its entrenched post, Lieutenant-Colonel Battye was killed. In his death the Corps of Guides has lost an able commander, and the State a gallant and valuable Officer. After the Guides reached their post, they were reinforced by a company of the 4th Sikhs, which crossed on rafts, and the enemy did not attack with any boldness, but contented themselves with long range firing, which they continued up to about 11 P.M. The loss on the enemy's side was reported by their own people afterwards to be over 500.

On this day, 13th April, Lieutenant Edwardes, 2nd Bombay Grenadiers, who had been a prisoner, was sent in by Umra Khan to my camp.

13. On the 14th the gathering of the previous day gradually disappeared, but not before we had to lament the loss of another valuable Officer, viz., Captain Peebles, Devonshire Regiment, in charge

of the Maxim guns, who was mortally wounded in the entrenchment whither he had crossed the previous evening with one of his guns, on a mussuck-raft.

14. During the 14th the remainder of the 4th Sikhs was crossed on mussuck-rafts, and joined the Guides Infantry, and a strong position on spurs on the other side of the river and to the north of the Ushiri stream was occupied by these two battalions. The crossing on the few small rafts at my disposal became every moment more difficult and slower, owing to the river continuing to rise. On the night of the 14th very bad weather set in, and rain continued all that night, and through the day and night of the 15th, much delaying work on the suspension bridge, and the rising water approached nearer and nearer to its piers.

On the morning of the 16th, with the Swat river in my rear, reported also to be steadily rising, and the bridge over it, on which I depended for supplies, hardly completed and of doubtful stability, with the Panjkora river in front of me rising into a tremendous torrent, and threatening the new suspension bridge, the two remaining rafts (one had been overturned and two damaged by bullets) unable longer to pass over supplies, the situation was one of grave anxiety.

The Guides Infantry and the 4th Sikhs with them had the previous evening been ordered, as the only means of feeding them, to be ready to park their ammunition and baggage in the entrenched post of the Guides Infantry, and make their way to the suspension bridge, so that they might re-cross before the bridge was swept away, and things looked so serious on the morning of the 16th that they were ordered to commence this movement. When, however, I visited the bridge, early on the morning of the 16th, I was informed that no further rise had taken place in the last three or four hours; and, during the time that I was there, the water, if anything, fell, and the rain ceased. I therefore sent orders to the Guides Infantry and 4th Sikhs to stand fast. At noon it was clear that the water was falling, and that the danger was over for the time. But the necessity for a bridge above high flood-level was evidently urgent, and the Commandant, Royal Engineers, put it in hand at once; and I trust it may be ready before the river rises again.

Lieutenant Fowler, Royal Engineers, was on this day sent in by Umra Khan.

15. On the morning of the 17th the two brigades were ordered to advance. One squadron of the Guides Cavalry marched at an early hour to reconnoitre up the valley towards Miankila, under the orders of Brigadier-General Blood, C.B., and the 11th Bengal Lancers and the two infantry brigades followed across the river.

At 10 A.M., after the troops of the 3rd Brigade (which was leading) had crossed, I received a message from Brigadier-General Blood that the enemy were in sight near the village of Miankila, and were advancing from thence. The road on the right bank of the Panjkora river from the bridge up to the open valley was only a footpath fit for mules, over which every man and animal had to go in single file, horses having to be led, and it was clear that both brigades could not hope to get across and move up to the scene of action during the day.

I therefore directed Brigadier-General Waterfield to pass over the baggage of the 3rd Brigade which could reach that brigade before night, and then only to cross the bridge with his own brigade and its transport, and to join me the first thing next morning.