

Then pushing on myself, I reached Ghobani just as the 3rd Brigade were going into action. The enemy occupied the hills on the left or southern side of the valley, and held the villages of Gulderi and Andak to the west on some bluffs above the river and the hills to the south of the Ushiri. The 4th Gurkhas were directed up the southern hills and then to move along them to the west; the Seaforth Highlanders being on the slopes below them, and the 25th Punjab Infantry in support. Two companies of the Buffs occupied the hills to the north, with No. 2 (Derajat) Mountain Battery in action on a knoll in the centre, and the remainder of the Buffs in reserve. While the infantry cleared the southern hills, the 11th Bengal Lancers advanced up the centre of the valley to a small village, Gosam, where their horses got protection from the enemy's fire, but the cavalry got no opportunity of charging, the ground in their front being too broken. The enemy on this occasion did not show the bold front of previous days, but retired as the infantry advanced, and though the guns were sent forward about 1,000 yards to hasten their retreat, the loss of the enemy was not great. Throughout the action the troops were well handled by Brigadier-General Gatacre, D.S.O.

16. On the morning of the 18th Brigadier-General Waterfield with the 2nd Brigade joined me, and the 2nd and 3rd Brigades advanced against Miankila and Mundar. The latter, a fort on the left bank of the Jandol river is the home of Umra Khan, and it was expected that he would make a final stand at one of these places. Both were, however, deserted, and it was reported that Umra Khan had fled towards Asmar, and had asked for an asylum from the Amir of Kabul. I may add that he has been a fugitive ever since.

17. The same afternoon Brigadier-General Gatacre, with the Buffs, the 4th Gurkhas, half of No. 4 Company, Bengal Sappers and Miners, No. 2 (Derajat) Mountain Battery, and the two Maxim guns of the Devonshire Regiment, pushed on to Barwa, *en route* for Dir and Chitral, with twenty days' supplies; and the remainder of the brigade, viz., the Seaforth Highlanders and the 25th Punjab Infantry, were taken on by me on the morning of the 20th to Kambat (called Chashma at first) at the foot of the Janbatai Pass.

18. On the afternoon of the 20th April, Brigadier-General Gatacre sent a message back to me that Major Deane, Chief Political Officer (who accompanied him), had received news that the garrison of Chitral was reduced to great straits, and that the mines of the enemy had reached to within 10 yards of the walls of the fort, and he suggested that he should advance rapidly with a small body of 500 men. To this I consented, as being the only way of passing quickly through the intricate country we were now traversing, and the only chance of rescuing the garrison. To support him while out of communication, I sent forward on the 21st the Seaforth Highlanders with all the supplies I could collect, and arranged to move on myself with the 25th Punjab Infantry when more supplies arrived. On the following day, 21st, reassuring news came regard-

ing the garrison of Chitral Fort, viz., that it was holding out on the 17th, and later that Sher Afzal had abandoned the siege and had absconded; this was confirmed on the following day, the 22nd.

At that time it was not known whether the relief of Chitral Fort had been effected by Colonel Kelly, or by the occupation of Kila Drosh by the Khan of Dir acting under my orders, or by the advance of my force and the defeat of Umra Khan. Probably it was the result of all three, but it is now known that Colonel Kelly was the first to arrive at Chitral, on the 20th April.

19. When this news was received, Brigadier-General Gatacre was directed not to advance hurriedly, but with due consideration for his troops. The Janbatai Pass (7,400 feet) was found to be a very difficult one, and the hills beyond it were very much more difficult to traverse than any that had yet been passed over, and it was only possible to move over this pass by single battalions at a time.

20. On my arrival at Dir on the 25th April, Brigadier-General Gatacre was crossing the Lowarai Pass, which was accomplished by the Buffs and half a battalion of the 4th Gurkhas on the 26th and 27th without any loss, though it was only done by all the troops following the example of Brigadier-General Gatacre himself, and exhibiting the most determined perseverance and energy. The troops above-named, viz., the Buffs and half a battalion of the 4th Gurkhas, are now at Ashreth in Chitral, where they have been ordered to halt pending further orders, as with the capture of Sher Afzal, who was brought into my camp a prisoner on the 27th, peace in the Chitral Valley is re-established.

21. I would before concluding allude to the message sent to the troops of this force by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India, published in Divisional Orders of the 21st April, as also those from Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen Empress of India, and His Excellency the Viceroy, published in Divisional Orders of 29th April, which congratulated them on the success which had so far attended their efforts, and praised them for their endurance. These messages were much appreciated by the troops, and assuredly they were never better earned, as His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief is aware. The troops of this force had unavoidably to start in lighter order than I believe any large body of troops have ever done before in India. They have been exposed to great hardships, owing to the month being an unusually stormy one.

When not fighting or marching, every man has laboured with the greatest cheerfulness all day on road-making, and altogether the month has been one of continued exertion, and cheerful self-denial and devotion, under circumstances of unusual difficulty and hardship.

I cannot speak too highly in this respect of the conduct of all ranks, both British and Native.

In a later communication I shall have the honour to bring to the notice of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India the names of the Officers whose services in connection with the above detailed operations seem worthy of his special consideration.