

from Kabul with arms and ammunition. On the 13th May a cavalry force, consisting of the 1st Cavalry Brigade and one regiment of the 10th Cavalry Brigade, which had been concentrated in readiness at Jamrud, advanced through the Khaibar and occupied Dakka without opposition. This force was followed next day by the headquarters and two battalions of the 1st Infantry Brigade, and on the 16th by the remaining two battalions of the 1st Infantry Brigade, a mountain battery and a company of sappers and miners. A reconnaissance on the morning of this date from Dakka towards Hazarnao disclosed the Afghans in large numbers, and our troops were closely followed up during their withdrawal to camp. Fighting took place at close quarters, the British squadrons executing several charges before the enemy was successfully beaten off. The enemy now established himself on the hills above Robat Fort to the west of the camp, but was unable to advance into the plain. On the following morning Brigadier-General Crocker attacked with the 1st Infantry Brigade, supported by aeroplanes and the fire of horse artillery, mountain, and machine guns. As in the previous actions, the enemy held stoutly to his position along the crest of precipitous hills. During the action two battalions of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, with field and mountain howitzers, arrived from Landi Kotal, under the command of Major-General A. Skeen, C.M.G., and finally forced the enemy to retreat with heavy loss. The manner in which the attack was carried out reflects great credit on the commander and troops employed, and the results of the action were far-reaching; for the enemy retreated in great disorder, losing large numbers by desertion, and it was long before he was able to reorganise his units. The value of high explosive shell, and particularly of the 3.7 inch mountain howitzer, in dislodging an enemy from an inaccessible position in mountainous country, was well demonstrated in this action; indeed, these weapons have been of the greatest service throughout the operations.

36. While these operations had been taking place the state of unrest prevailing in the Peshawar area had given cause for much concern. On the 8th May Peshawar city was quickly and successfully surrounded by a cordon of troops, and several leaders of the anti-British party, including the Afghan Postmaster, were arrested. It was found necessary to institute martial law and to keep a large body of infantry permanently on duty in the city. Raiding into the Peshawar cantonment and in the district was at this time very prevalent, and communications up the Khaibar, particularly in the neighbourhood of Ali Masjid, were subjected to constant sniping and attacks by tribesmen. The Khaibar Rifles, in whose hands the guarding of the road through the Pass had at first been left, became unreliable, and after frequent desertions had occurred they were replaced by regular troops, the corps being disbanded. Additional posts were also established in the lower Khaibar, and this, and other measures taken by Major-General Sir C. M. Dobell, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Commanding the 2nd Division, quickly resulted in the security of the communications. On the 15th and 16th

May the 6th Infantry Brigade carried out operations near Ali Masjid to secure the heights south of the Khaibar stream and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. By the 19th May the 2nd Division was holding the line from Landi Kotal to Peshawar, with the 1st Division, less two field batteries, concentrated at Dakka and Landi Khana, two of the three Infantry Brigades being at the former place, where the force was temporarily under the command of Major-General Skeen. On May 12th I placed the 16th Division from the Central Reserve at General Sir A. A. Barrett's disposal, and on the 14th I directed him to make preparations for a forward move of four marches from Dakka.

37. In the north successful operations had been carried out by the Chitral garrison in conjunction with the Chitral Scouts and His Highness the Mehtar's Bodyguard. On the 12th May the Afghans occupied Arnawai, in the Chitral Valley, and advanced rapidly up the river. On the 14th the Chitral Scouts drove back the enemy's advanced parties near Kauti. On the 20th Lieutenant-Colonel F. C. S. Samborne-Palmer, Commanding at Chitral, moved down the Chitral River with a small mobile column, and on the 23rd the column and scouts attacked and drove the enemy from Arnawai, destroying the force opposed to them and capturing four guns. The 11th Rajputs particularly distinguished themselves in this action. The mobile column returned to Drosh on 5th June. During the remainder of this month successful raids into Afghan territory were made by the Chitralis, resulting in the capture of a large quantity of live stock.

38. For some days prior to the 20th May reports had been received of the presence of Afghan troops on the Mohmand-Afghan border, and on the evening of that day they were reported to have reached Ghalanai in Mohmand country to the west of Shabkadr. A brigade of the 16th Division, with some of the divisional troops of the 2nd Division, under the command of Brigadier-General W. M. Southey, C.M.G., was despatched from Peshawar to Shabkadr and Michni for the defence of that portion of the frontier. The Afghans did not advance, nor did the Mohmand gathering assume large proportions; and after being bombed on two days by aeroplanes the enemy withdrew.

39. The 31st Squadron, Royal Air Force, under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel F. F. Minchin, D.S.O., M.C., Commanding the 52nd Wing, carried out concentrated bombing raids on Jalalabad on the 17th, 20th and 24th May with marked effect; large portions of the military quarter of the town were burnt out, including the Afghan headquarters, and on one occasion a parade of 2,000 Afghan troops was bombed with good results. In the panic which followed these raids the neighbouring tribesmen entered the town and secured large quantities of loot in the shape of arms, ammunition and treasure. On the 24th, Captain Halley, R.A.F., in a Handley-Page machine, performed a notable feat by bombing Kabul; and there is little doubt that this raid was an important factor in producing a desire for peace at the headquarters of the Afghan Government.

40. Meanwhile, preparations for an advance from Dakka were nearing completion, but