

Typescript diary formed of extracts from letters by Surgeon Captain Alfred E. Master, Army Medical Service, re campaigning with the Queens Regiment against the Afridi tribes on the North-West Frontier of India (The Tirah Campaign)

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EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS
THE TIRAH CAMPAIGN
N. W. FRONTIER 1897-98
BY
SURG. CAPT. A. E. MASTER, A. M. S.

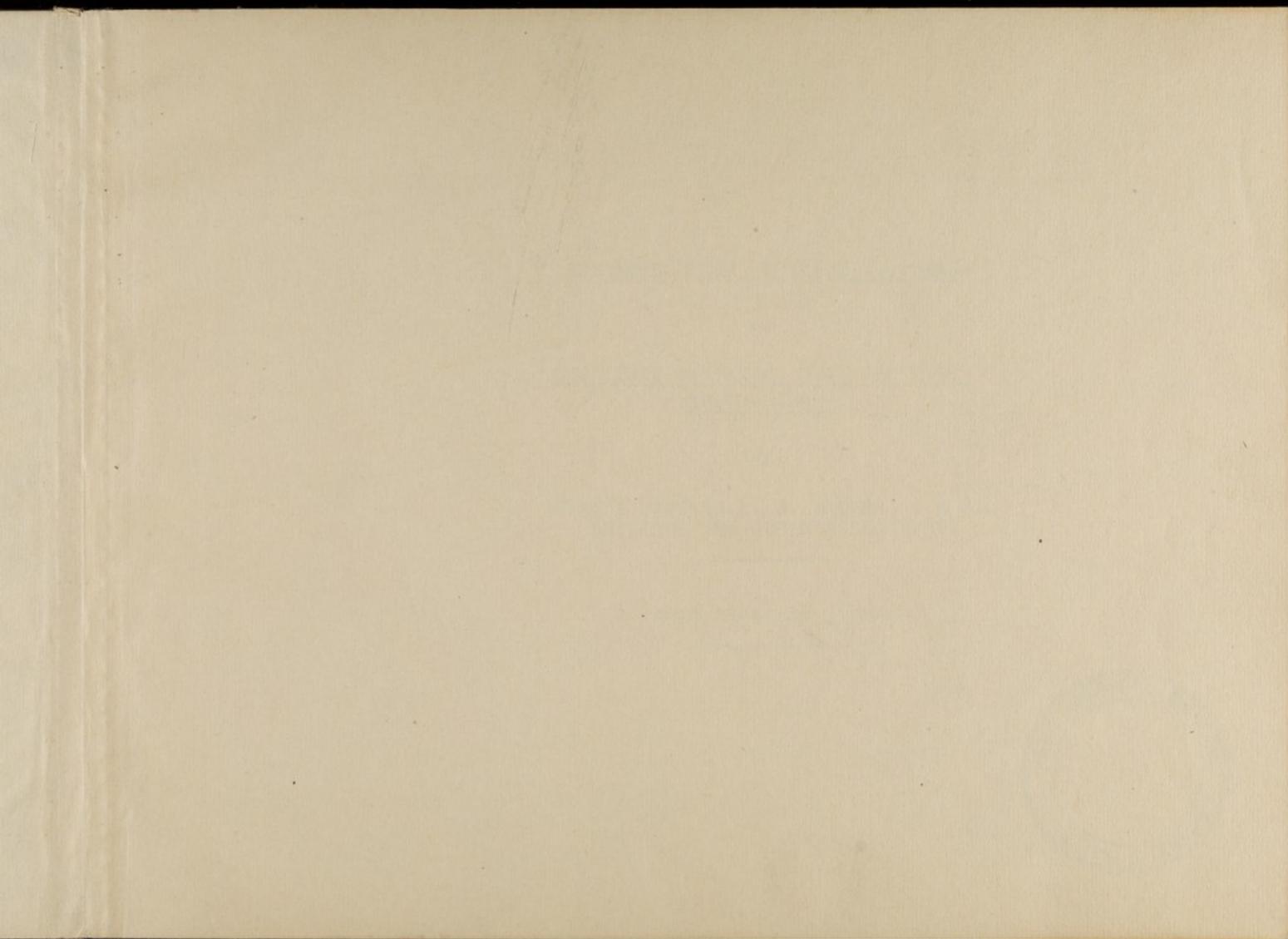


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EXTRACTS FROM PRIVATE LETTERS

re

THE TIRAH CAMPAIGN, N.W. FRONTIER,
1897 - 1898,

by

SURGEON CAPTAIN A. E. MASTER, A.M.S.,
ATTACHED THE QUEEN'S REGIMENT.

—————
A rough personal journal.
—————



8A

The Officer commanding
Royal Army Medical College,
Millbank,
London. S.W.

Librarian
For safe custody
please. For Service
of the Librarian & Commandant

Dear Sir

I venture to forward a typescript copy of a personal diary
(extracted from letters home) of the TIRAH expedition, when I was
attached as M.O. to the Queen's Regiment.

I should esteem it a great honour if this diary could be added
to the archives of the Corps in the library of the College.

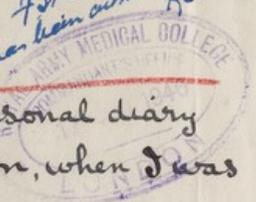
Trusting you will pardon my presumption, and me for troubling you.

Yours sincerely

Alfred Maclean

17 Torquay Road
Bristol

(R. Col. P. H. C. 1202)





KOHAT. Oct. 16th '97.

I was suddenly ordered to prepare to accompany the Queens who were to march next day at 7 a.m.

On the 10th we marched for this place by 3 marches going through some peaceful Afridi country and down here on the 3rd day, settling down for 4 or 5 days in camp here while the brigades were getting together and getting transport, which is to be entirely mule. General Symonds commands the Division and General Goslee the Brigade we are in.

What we are going to do is not yet properly known, but we are supposed to march off on Monday 18th for HANGU and SHINWARI, down the KANKI river and up to the SANPAGAH Pass, which ought to get us into the middle of Afridi land close to the TIRAH plateau: but what is going to happen after that the lesser lights are not permitted to know, in fact it will depend upon what happens what we shall do altogether, as the Peshawar Brigade will come in some time later on.

This place is at present an enormous camp and very little else, everything being transport and stores.

The actual peace garrison here is a very small one from all appearances, a couple of forts and outlying defensible posts bordering on Afridi territory which is quite close by.

The days are still pretty hot, but nights getting cold, and as we get higher up they will get much colder still.

The Troops and Followers are being served out with warm clothing which will be badly needed.

This regiment has just returned from the MOHMUND expedition, where they were in the brigade that had 5 hours of the hottest night-firing from the enemy that has been known for a long time in frontier warfare. They seem a very nice lot of fellows.

The Camp, SHINWARI. Oct. 22nd '97.

I am sending off from here. My last from KOHAT just before leaving there. Since then we have had 4 marches to USTAZAI, NANGU KAI and last SHINWARI.

The day we got here we heard that the other division (2nd) had had a great fight to get the pass and had lost 4 officers and 100 killed and wounded altogether.

This same division has moved on to KARAPPA in the KHANKI valley about 6 miles direct from here and had occupied Karappa without opposition.

We, that is Gen. Symonds' division, is at present halted here for want of transport, which has not come up to the required strength and fitness.

The weather is fairly hot during the day and gradually getting colder at night as we get to higher ground.

From this place onwards we are to be without tents, which will make matters rather trying for the general health of the troops. I am at present living in a 40 lb. kit which does not allow of much superfluous, more esp. as we have to be provided for the cold of the month, or months, in front of us in the Tirah plateau.

This will account for my writing on my bed lying on a great-coat.

I have nothing very much of importance to chronicle up to date as we have simply marched to the beginning of the true expeditionary country.

When we get over the pass here we get into Afridi country properly. Opposition is more esp. expected at the SANPHAGA Pass at the entrance to the Tirah plateau.

Certainly, up to date discomfort has not been as great as I had expected.

The country we have been coming through from Kohat reminds me of parts of Scotland, with hills covered naturally with scrub bush which in the distance gives one the idea of larches. The valley is cultivated and fruitful, although rather bare in parts. The road is undulating and very dusty, although for the part of the world a well made road.

This place is an enormous base camp spread over several miles of country with innumerable camps and stores, etc., on different hills with the valley between unoccupied. This is the place where stores are being collected before being sent on to the Troops as they go ahead.

Camp, MUSTRANADI. 30.10.'97. (P.C.)

SANPAGHA Pass taken yesterday. My regiment, Queens, in the front line and with 4th Gookhas and 3rd Sikhs took the pass. Very steep, about 2000 feet up from our Camp at KARAPPA. Gradually getting into shape. Transport bad, no food or baggage last night and less today. Pleasures of campaigning. Burning villages all around. Casualties 2 killed, 18 wounded. 1 killed and 8 wounded of the Queens. Bullets flying about merrily yesterday.

MAIDAN, TIRAH. Nov. 15th '97.

My last letter from Shinwari has not been followed by others as soon as I had expected. I left Shinwari on Oct. 25th as medical assistance to the rearguard with doolies, etc. Instead of leaving at about 10 a.m. we did not leave till 1 p.m. on account of the absolute want of management of the transport department: a long uphill about 1500 feet brought us to CHUGRUKOTAL, where the fight had been about a week before and which I told you about in my last, about 5 p.m. when the day was beginning to wane. From

here a sharp descent brought us down a valley, the pack animals dropping loads and falling over in this descent was pitiful to see and in addition darkness settling in and not knowing in the least where one was and how soon we might be attacked by some gentle Afridis. To make matters worse, at the bottom of the hill we got into a nullah, or bed of a water-course (dry) with no pretensions to a path and with big boulders strewn and lying about anyhow.

After meandering in darkness (no moon) for about 3 hours, I saw a light and made up my mind friend or foe to stop till daylight. Just as I got to the light the voice of one of our regimental majors (than which I was never more glad to hear in my life) sang out in the darkness, "You can't go any further, you must stop for the night."

A zereba was formed of commissariat boxes, etc., and in the bitter cold and no food, we lay down to sleep and shiver. I am thankful to say we did not have any circumstance of importance to interrupt our rest and at daylight re-loaded our baggage on the transport animals and made our way slowly into Karrapa valley, getting in about 2 p.m.

Just before leaving our night's resting place a Gookha came in to say that one of our men was lying dead beside our track about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile back; I went along, being the only medical present, and found a man about 20 feet from the track we had followed, evidently dead about 6 hours from the result of cold on that of a great booze of rum that he had got hold of somehow out of the Comm. Stores which had fallen by the wayside. We took him into Karappa and was buried with another poor fellow who had been caught in the night by some Afridis and been cut about and left stark on the road, rifle and all gone.

On arrival at Karappa we spent 2 or 3 days quiet, and on 28th went out for a reconnaissance in force to explore the Sanphaga Pass, which was next day our point of attack. We (Queens) were in reserve and only went out about 3 miles and came out one and pitched our camp about 2 miles from Karappa.

On 29th started off at 5 a.m. and went up a nullah with two other

regiments of our brigade, 3rd Sikhs and 4th Gookhas, who were to be the attacking line with mountain guns in support.

We got to the bottom of the hill going up to the Pass about 6.30 a.m. and then spread out to commence the ascent of nearly 2000 feet and also to do the attacking. The 4th Gookhas on our left and 3rd Sikhs on our right.

The ascent was very stiff in places and also the enemy had certain critical points controlled by their fire but had not fortified the hill, as we had heard, with trenches and sangars (about a 3 ft. wall of stones). The first quarter of the ascent was peaceful, then the music began. The guns opened fire on the enemy where they could be seen about 2000 yards. This made them gradually retire meanwhile firing straight down on the 3 regiments. Having got over an important shoulder we had to go up a very stiff bit indeed and at this point an officer was wounded and 3 men and one man killed of my regiment. After getting on the top of this bit the enemy retired to about the furthest crest of the Pass and we gradually pushed on with a very stiff climb to the summit.

After getting to the summit the regiment got into a bit of a line on the crest, but at this point although actually above the Pass itself proper was yet controlled by higher ridges, behind from which a few of the enemy still continued to plug at us and while resting as I thought under cover of fire close to the Pass a man about 20 yards away and on the other side of me a man about (?) were shot by what was evidently a cross-fire on the actual Kotal or Pass from distances of getting on for 800 yards at least.

Total casualties were - in my regiment - 1 officer and 7 men wounded and 1 man killed. Total for the fight: two killed and about 18 wounded. They were all collected at the top of the Pass and seen to fairly soon after the fight before going on to our next camp.

After getting about halfway up the hill another mountain battery came up and helped us for the upper half of the ascent, in fact I do not know what we could have done without them. Another battery (mule) was being brought to

go into action higher up when the Captain (De Butt) leading it was shot, and died in 10 minutes, from some very much higher point and apparently from a point almost to which our advancing line must have got to.

On arrival at the top of the Sanpagma Pass one looked down on to an enclosed valley, fertile but with little or no woods and with burning villages all the way up shewing the track of the retreating enemy, who had set fire to their straw, etc., in their retreat so that we could not get hold of it.

We rested on the top for regiments of other brigades to go over and through the pass and form camp in the valley. We followed about 3 p.m., the pass having been taken at 10.30 and all firing stopped soon after.

The next camp, about 600 feet only below the Sanpagma, was MASTURA where we stayed 2 days. The first night we had no kits except what we carried and no food, so when night came on and we retired to bed we lay in among the straw of Indian corn (boosa) but soon found it too cold and had to rig up a stack as protection against the wind and sat round a big fire for the night to keep ourselves warm, but with little or no success.

Being about 1500 feet higher than our last camp and being the cold weather for this part of the world it was and is increasingly cold at night.

Rested one day at Mastura whence I despatched a card to you. Next day we went out with rest of the brigade as reserve to another brigade who were to tackle the ARANGA Pass leading into TIRAH, the place we wanted to get to.

We started off at about 8 a.m. and had as it happened simply to go up a nullah and up a steep bit of hill and waited for about 3 hours till we were told to move. This we did and about 2 p.m. moved to one side and down a steep decline to the other side of the pass into a very deep ravine leading down from the pass into Tirah itself where our next camp is to be. We got down to our camping ground about 5 p.m., just as it was getting light. At one place on the road after leaving the ravine a gentleman in a tower perched away high up amused himself shooting at us while we passed; next day his

tower was demolished.

After getting into camp my sick, etc., had to be seen, and we rested for the night. At 7 a.m. next morning we were ordered to go up and protect the pass (Arhanga), which we had been close to the day before, while the convoy of baggage came over.

Towards 6 p.m. our own regimental baggage came up to the top of the pass and watched it pass. At 8 p.m. when it was quite dark we heard shots down the ravine and shouting and calculated that the convoy of baggage was being attacked and most probably our own in particular. The end of the convoy was however detained at the top where we were till daylight.

The night spent on the top of the pass was exceedingly cold, as we had only what we carried and a limited supply of food.

Next day on arrival in camp we heard that 75 of our mules had been taken, 3 soldiers killed and 4 wounded, and a tremendous lot of kit and ammunition lost, the kit being very important as it was getting so cold and cannot be replaced on active service.

I am thankful to say both my kit and my native bearer escaped, being behind that part of the convoy that was attacked, and we were lucky not to have lost the entire regimental as the conveying business and guards were very badly arranged (not regimentally) and the fact of passing baggage down a dangerous gorge in the middle of the night in an enemy's country was too silly for words. These lessons are learnt very dearly.

The next few days we spent quietly in camp except for an occasional shot during the night into camp.

The Tirah valley was a great disappointment in appearance to what one had expected from reading the papers. The land is very fertile and well cultivated, each house is built as a protection against the attacks of a man's neighbours.

Trees are only thick on the sides of the slopes of the valley and a few round each house, mostly walnut and apricot, but no trees are cultivated at all for appearance or protection against the wind or weather.

The whole valley is about 10 miles long and about 3 miles broad. The streams in deep water-courses (nullahs) running down to the middle and out by a gorge in the middle of one side. The whole valley giving the idea of the crater of a volcano which I think it originally was.

About the inhabitants I can tell you nothing as I have only seen one and he was dead lying beside the road, having been caught on a trip with about 20 others by our people on the Mastura side of the Arhangha pass.

Having got such a number of animals we have to get forage and this is not unattended with danger, not to the foraging party, but to the troops who cover them as protection. The enemy, who hide about in the hills, allow us to come quite close up and forage and then when they begin to retire back they come down from the hills and shoot at us in a very unpleasant accurate way and at very long distances on account of the goodness of their own rifles and those they have taken from us, as undoubtedly many of them have been in our own native army and others have deserted during this present business to help their fellow-countrymen.

On one or two of these foraging parties we have got into very hot corners as the hills under which we have had to forage are so close.

About 10 days ago the holy place of the Afridis called the "Burgh" was sacked and the sacred trees stripped of their bark so that they will die.

I have not been out to that part of the valley as it is not in the direction of our end of the camp.

On Nov. 7th, Sunday, 4 companies of the regiment had orders to go back 2 marches to Karappa to pick up and bring along our heavier baggage, i.e. Tents, which we have been without in all this cold and frost (it freezes

every night now) and other heavier kit to Maidan (Tirah).

Our convoy going was only empty animals, coming back full ones. We camped going and coming at a nice warm spot at Mastura and in an exposed place at Karappa.

It was very hard to realize the Sanpacha again from what we had seen 10 days before, terraced and graded road up most of the way, made by regiment of Pioneers and the old original path where useful improved into a decent track and made as good as one could expect. This was very useful on our way back with laden animals and made the difference between a nice or unpleasant journey.

On the way back at Mastura I met the two Wigrams again, Clive 18th Bengal Lancers, Kenneth the Bombay Pioneers. Both very well and flourishing.

My journalistic account must be closing now as I have very nearly finished to date.

Two foraging parties, in one of which while retiring one of our men was killed just at the very end and had to be brought away under fire at first. The other might have been a very awkward one had it not been that the enemy whose village we were foraging in knew they would get no money for the forage which we have taken to giving them last week. If they began to fire and if they had we should have been in a very awkward position as we had to retire by a deep nullah to the top of which they could have rushed and simply fired into us together, and that more especially we were out too late in the day for wisdom, not reaching camp till about 4.30 p.m. when the sun begins to get below the hills to the left of us.

As I am finishing this up we have to go out for the night to the top of the Arhanga pass where we were a fortnight ago.

It was not quite so cold this time as we had it before.

Camp Bagh, TIRAH. Nov. 25th '97.

To continue my last letter despatched from here on 16th of this month. I will try and depict how we are progressing in this apparently unglorious campaign from the date at which I left off to go to post.

On our foraging expeditions it has been very clear that the inhabitants of this country are a rum lot, as each single house is built in the style of a fortification, in this way each house is square with only one door or other means of exit. Above a story where evidently the inhabitants reside mostly, the lower part being for storage and the third story is practically only a look-out place to spot when their neighbour is going to attack them. It seems evident that each man is his neighbour's enemy.

The second floor is loop-holed in most cases and it is said that most of the year a man dare not venture out of his house except during reaping time when all feuds are temporarily brought into a state of truce.

In one house I saw a loop-hole about 4 feet up and the only use it could ever have was to form a place to shoot into a corresponding loop-hole in a neighbour's house.

A funny lot of people they seem to be.

The forage which we mostly find has been the straw of Indian corn, a little barley, a good deal of Indian corn and walnuts from time to time and red haricot beans.

In the houses are mostly pumpkins and weaving implements but no guns or rifles or implements of war which they have carefully taken away with them.

The consequence of this state of internal feud seems to be that they are very good shots indeed especially at long ranges nearer than which they dare not as a rule approach, as they have a great idea of keeping themselves hid, thus making this a regular guerilla warfare in which very many of the enemy

are never seen at any one time or place. Their excellency of shooting largely making up for this.

We are having it very cold here now, 4 inches of ice in a can or tub in the morning when one wakes up, but owing to the dryness of the climate one does not seem to feel it in the same way as in England, and very little wind luckily till the early morning when it becomes very cold indeed just as one is turning out for parades, etc.

On 19th we changed our camp from Maidan to this place BAGH (Barg). When coming along to get into camp we were fired on and had to capture a hill close by, in keeping which during the afternoon we had one man killed and 5 men wounded, 3 officers of the mountain battery with us were shot through the clothes.

We had eventually to stop up all night without any extra night equipment and it was a frightfully cold night; at 10 a.m. next day we were glad to find ourselves relieved, as it was a very unpleasant place to be from the point of view of being attacked.

While we were up there the new camp was formed and during its formation a constant fusillade about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile off was kept up to prevent us settling here. This firing has gone on every night since more or less.

This place Bagh is the holy place of the Afridis, how far this may be may be judged from two facts, the first that religiously they are looked down upon by all the border tribes on account of their irreligion, and secondly their holy place being a walnut tree with two mud graves underneath with a low mud wall round.

From the graveyards about that one sees, their system of grave mounds is much the same as ours, with a wooden head and foot piece with one or two things roughly carved on them.

Since our arrival here we have been foraging, escorting convoys, etc.,

and nothing very particular.

One brigade went to a place down the gorge, leading out of the valley on the north, about 5 to 7 miles, where they found the gorge too difficult for transport, so that probably no one will leave the valley eventually when(!!!!) we do go away finally on our way to Peshawar.

At present it is rather poor fun staying quiet in one place instead of moving about fairly constantly, as we ought to give these people the greatest amount of trouble with looking after and watching us.

25th Nov. Just heard that the mail goes tonight and that we shall be out of the way of postal arrangements for about a fortnight, so I am closing up in haste to catch the post.

Dec. 15th '97.

We left Nov. 26th and marched up the valley towards a pass and halted for camp about 4 miles away. A certain amount of opposition which was easily overcome, one man of the regiment being killed only and two Gookhas wounded. Next day we continued over the pass. This pass was quite unknown to white men and was found very difficult and very steep indeed, with no road and only fit for cow transport, which is what the natives use for transport mainly. It is called the CAS Pass. Owing to the pass the heavier part of the baggage had to follow next day and we rested for the night in a village out of which the natives had cleared and in which we found a quantity of loot in the way of muckee (Indian corn straw), grain, flour, chickens, and any quantity of other articles of diet and loot. This night was very cold as we had no kit and had to do as well as we could to keep ourselves warm with fires, there being plenty of wood in the construction of the houses.

Next day we moved on down the pass, five miles, a narrow defile where

the enemy if they had been to hand could have cut us to pieces. Fortunately it belonged to a tribe that was submitting at our approach, the MASSOUSI section of the ORAKSAIS.

We halted at the mouth of the defile in open country for a day to let the transport catch up. We were now in a valley running down to a narrow defile which itself opens in the KURRAM river at SUDDA close to the Afghan border. This valley was peaceable and so we had a quiet march to ESOR about 7 miles where we joined hands with Colonel Hill's Kurram movable column, which up to date had been absolutely immovable owing to the peculiar composition of the force, that is to say having cavalry in it which were quite useless in the country which we have been working over.

At ESOR we spent one day in making a geographical expedition to see the LAZAKA pass, over which we had been supposed to have come two days before. Very little was seen of the pass as it was too long a defile up to it. We were met at one point as we were marching along by 6 men who brought in 6 rifles as their share of the fine of the tribe.

Next day a large body of troops moved out about 5 miles to burn the capital of a neighbouring lot of people, the CHUMKUNNIS, who had been very resisting to our people on the Kurram for a long time and had to be as severely punished as possible. Their capital and several villages in an adjacent valley were burnt as the tribe would not bring in a fine or their arms.

The country where this capital lay was very difficult to work in as it was so much surrounded by hills that were infested with the enemy.

Next day after this we moved by two marches partly back the way we had come and then on to a new line and reached KHANKI BAZAAR about 10 miles from Karappa through which we had passed on our way to Tirah originally.

We went up a very narrow pass through country in which the inhabitants had given in, namely the MAMOUZAIS.

This was a very bad pass and had to have a great deal done to it to make it fit for transport; resulting in our not getting over till 3 p.m., so that we had to camp half a mile the other side to allow the baggage, field hospitals, etc., to catch us up, especially as we had got back into Tirah valley again whence we had started, although the tribe who had the country at the pass and just below had submitted and went so far as to put out a protecting piquet of their own people for our defence and partly to stop us burning their houses.

On leaving this camp at the foot of the pass, the SUKKU pass, we got on into Bagh again after about an eight day absence and found a new camping ground most suitably situated for our next move, which was to return to MASTURA, the next place on the way back, the way we had originally come.

We were joined by the other brigade of our division. Meanwhile the other division, accompanied by General Lockhart, went away down the BARA Valley and since that date up to date we have heard nothing of them at all.

Their route has been through the ZAKKAKHEL tribe of the Afridis: our way through the ORAKZAIS country. These Orakzais have submitted and given in their arms and fine, but apparently it was considered necessary to march through their country to make at least a demonstration. So that now for 3 marches after leaving Mastura we have been through their country.

At Mastura we had a slight shower and a hard frost following with white frost as the result. Next day but one we had consecutive rain for 24 hours which soaked everything we had as we have no tents and have up to now slept and lived entirely in the open, which is rather trying on account of the cold, but when rain comes as well it becomes very much worse. This last day of rain fell as snow in the higher peaks and we were lucky to only get rain, although being 6000 feet above sea level where we were.

Following down from Mastura we have been on the Mastura branch of the Bara River to a point lower down on which we have eventually to come within about 6 miles of Peshawar.

At our camp where we are the day I write this, this Bara Mastura river is just beginning to run in a narrow gorge with very high hills on each side and just room for the river below, which consequently will not admit of our passing. We therefore at this point strike across a pass and get into the Bara river valley proper and ought to find ourselves at the next camp within 5 or 6 miles of Bara itself and comparatively close to Peshawar, but whether our wanderings and fightings end then remains to be seen.

Our Camp here is in a narrow valley opening into the main river valley and the whole of the ground of the hillsides is covered with holly and ilex, which is a contrast to the other parts where we have been where the main tree was the larch. This holly we have cut down anyhow for fuel as we have needed fires night and day to keep anything like tolerably warm, and if we don't get out of here soon we shall get snowed up and feel very miserable.

Whatever we may be going to do we shall be bound to get tents, which will help to a certain extent to mitigate the discomfort of living in the cold in the open and frost with snow.

Dec. 17th. We left our camp in the valley and went over a high pass not so much from the distance up as the distance down, when we must have fallen about 2000 feet odd and got into a very much warmer and pleasant climate.

Our march down this valley was peaceable except for a few shots from a neighbouring hillside one time when we had halted at midday.

We gradually worked down and got in touch with the other brigades who had left us at Bagh and had a bad time of it down the Bara valley. We reached the last hill camp on the 15th and found ourselves next day within sight of Peshawar, which was about 12 miles away.

We halted at a camp at ILANGUDR and here met General Hammond's brigade who, in all the two months we had been working around, had only moved 10 miles.

Today we are at BARA and halt for a day or two when the idea at present in view is that we move to JAMRUD at the mouth of the KYBER - one portion of the force going up the Kyber and another up the BAZA valley in more or less parallel routes to meet up the Kyber at LANDI KOTAL, unless the one tribe of the Afridis who are holding out give in in the meantime, as we hear their women and children and cattle are dying in great numbers, presumably from starvation. This new development would it is thought, if undertaken, occupy about a fortnight.

Jamrud: Went on the BAZA expedition and returned here in 6 days.

JUMROOD. Jan. 9th 1897.

On Dec. 19th we shifted camp from Bara to Jumrood about 8 miles. Here we stayed 5 days for rest and to make up our transport and get prepared for a short visit to the BAZA valley, which was intended for a 10 day business.

On Dec. 24th our brigade left Jumrood for ALI MUSJID through the first part of the celebrated Khyber Pass. Fort MAUDE which overlooks the entrance of the Khyber was a shell, having been burnt out. It was a long gradual uphill at first and then downhill to our camp in the bottom of a nullah below Ali Musjid, which appeared to look much as photos: pictures represent it perched on the top of an inaccessible rock with very steep sides and impregnable as far as the fort is concerned, unless shelled by hill guns from hills higher than it.

Here we stayed for the night and next day moved to our next camp at CHURA, said to be 6½ miles distant, turning out to be at least 10. I left with the rearguard at 3 p.m. (N.B. This was Xmas Day.) Our progress was very slow as we had to see all baggage of the brigade, which included 10 days supplies and a herd of driven cattle, in front of us to camp. We rose by an easy ascent to the pass, getting up about 5.30 (sun sets at 5). Our way

down was in gradually increasing darkness, in fact the last two miles it was pitched dark as there was no moon. Just before getting in to camp we had to go up the bed of a stream for about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile as being the only track. Feet wet and about 8.0 p.m. Not a cheerful Xmas night.

We had a bit of dinner and retired to rest. Next day we continued up this stream for about 6 miles and then got on to a bit of flat open tableland, and owing to the distances being mis-reckoned we went right to our destination at CHENA in the actual Baza Valley.

Our rearguard just as it got on to this tableland was set upon by a few of the enemy well hidden in the hills, and 2 men were killed and 6 wounded. Personally, just as I was within sight of camp, I was ordered back with doolies to help bring these into camp, which we managed to do comfortably.

Opposition to our entering Chena had been expected, but not a single shot was fired and it was only the rearguard action that happened that day.

Chena itself consisted of about a dozen large houses with towers and cultivated land round, with a hill in the background. The inhabitants appear to have cleared out behind this hill and waited till we had got well settled before they began to fire on our piquets on the top of the hill; they continued firing on them till about midnight, when I suppose they found it too cold to continue.

We were originally going to have halted one day here, but as these towers could be blown up in an hour we were ordered off next day back the way we had come.

Two regiments were on rearguard as we knew we should probably not get out without a good deal of worrying. As long as we were on the plateau they could do very little harm to us as they don't care about appearing in the open. But directly we got into the nullah and our flank piquets gradually retired as the rearguard went by, the enemy began to give it us hot in the nullah where we were more or less at their mercy. Luckily we escaped with

very few casualties. 3 of the 3rd Sikhs were wounded and 4 of my regiment, one of whom died on his way to camp, after I had despatched him back, having received two bullet wounds, one in the leg harmless, one through the middle of the back into the abdomen fatal.

We got back into our old camp at Chura at 3.30 p.m. and occupied the same ground again; on the way down we had a shower or two.

Next morning we started out in advance in the dark when it was beginning to rain; this it continued to do all the way back to Ali Musjid, where we got in about 3 p.m., again wet through. Encamped on fresh ground, quite wet, the rain continuing all night and until about 8 a.m. next day, when it allowed us to get away with clothes and bedding wet through. Jumrood again at 3.30 p.m. in the fine, having been away 6 days instead of ten, and whole expedition being a miserable failure except for our loss of killed and wounded and very little damage to the enemy.

JAMROOD. Feb. 23rd 1898. Attached The Queens.

I was up the Khyber pass accompanying a road making, or rather repairing, party and it was so cold standing about that I set to and wielded a pick and shovel myself, although a medical, to dig I am not ashamed and found myself all the better for the exercise and warmth derived therefrom.

During the rain the camp got pretty well under water as we are on the lower ground, but by trenches we managed to get most of the water away. The wind for two days dried up the place pretty well.

We are supposed in a few days time to be moving up again towards Tirah but as yet we have had no particular orders, only rumor. If we do move it will probably be only very slowly and make the road as we go along for the benefit possibly of wheeled transport.

JAMROOD. March 16th '98. Attached The Queens.

We still remain here in much the same condition as before, except that the weather is getting hotter. All the important sections of the Afridis have come in and surrendered their arms and fine except the Zukka Khels and we are now waiting daily for them and if they don't shew up within the next few days we shall be obliged to go up to their country again gradually and by easy stages, so as to get up there when the crops are beginning to show up well above the ground, which they probably will very soon after the snows have melted.

JUMROOD. March 16th '98. Attached The Queens.

There is a very strong rumor about this week that we are going to move on the 18th if all the fine of rifles and money is not in on the 17th. This move will, as far as we are concerned, probably be the road we went before as far as CHENA and then on to the head of the BAZAR valley where we should be in close touch with the people in the BARA valley above SWAIKOT and BARKAI. Whether we should move any further would I suppose depend upon the total payment of fines and money.

The main object as far as one can see will be for the transport animals to eat up the growing crops, as forage, as we have destroyed almost everything there is to be destroyed as far as houses and places are concerned.

There are a number of 'Jirgahs' now about 200 men odd in all, very fine men with dirty clothing and grass shoes for their feet. They all have a certain Jewish look about them, as all Pathans have, and some are quite fair skin although dark in hair. They present upon the whole a most ruffianly aspect. They appear to be half starved and have a very distant acquaintance with the commodity known as water. It is quite refreshing talking and looking at them after the cringing Hindoo, who is such a miserable specimen

as a rule. One can't help admiring their independent and careless air. Each section has slight differences in clothing, but mostly they wear white linen loose knickers coming midway between knee and foot, and a sort of plaid or shawl of grey cloth and a turban of the same colour with a sort of skull cap, thick with grease and dirt, under the turban.

The pictures in the papers give a very erroneous idea of them, in fact they are mostly done by fanciful draughtsmen in Fleet Street. Their average height is about 5'10 but many are over 6 feet and one or two 6'4 to 5, splendidly built in proportion, with a long steady swing of a gait while walking.

JAMROOD. March 23rd '98.

After much haggling and trouble on the part of two tribes, hostages have been given for the rifles still owing. These 68 hostages departed from here on Friday last, 18th, by road for Peshawar and then by rail to Attock, where they will be kept in captivity till the rifles are paid up. The dirtiest set of looking scoundrels you ever saw.

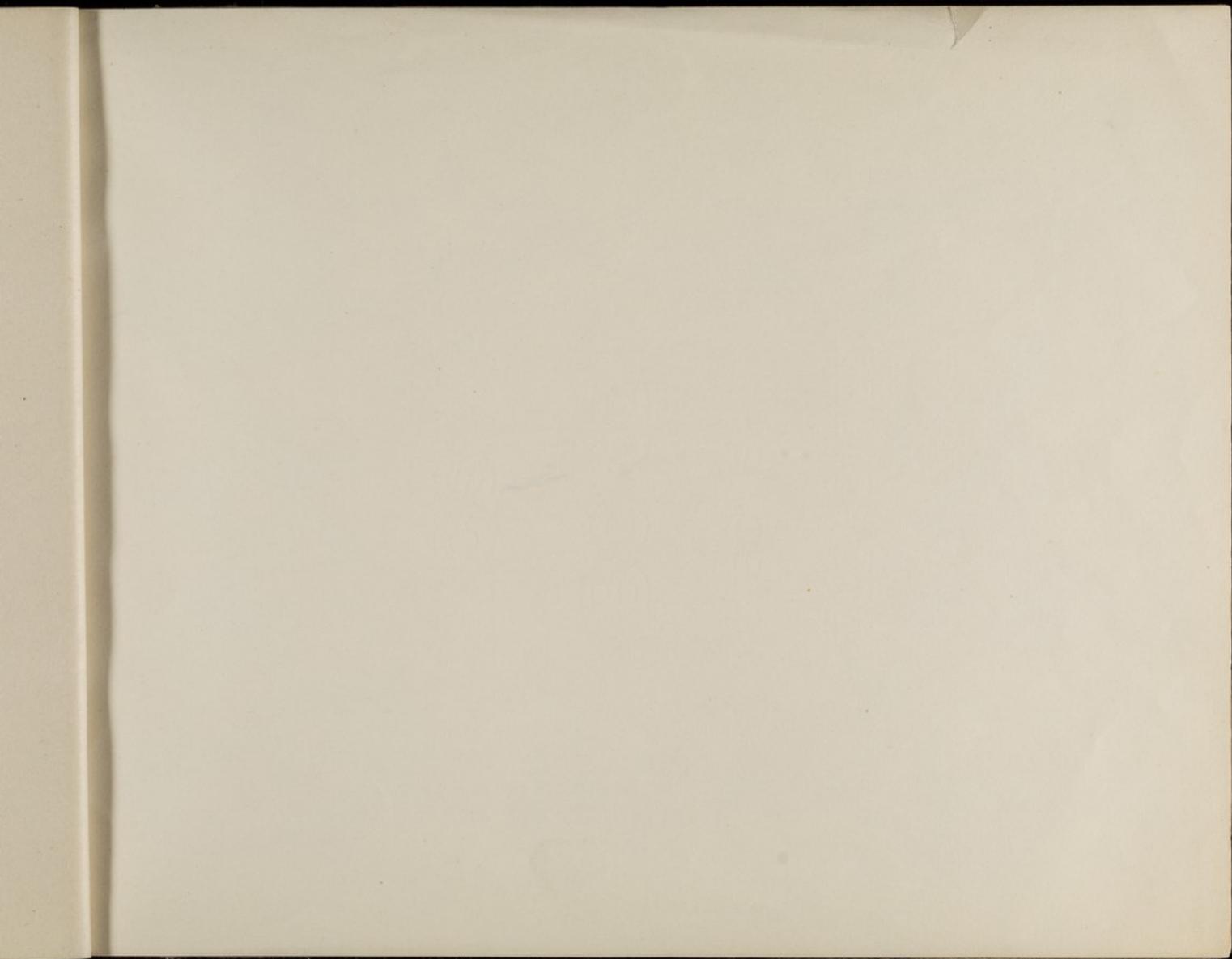
One tribe, the Zukka Khels, still remain to pay up. So far they have paid about 20 out of 150 rifles and no money fine at all. This delay is due to two headmen having got into Afghanistan and being afraid of coming in with a special pass and escort. If these two gentry don't take care their own people will do for them at their next merry meeting.

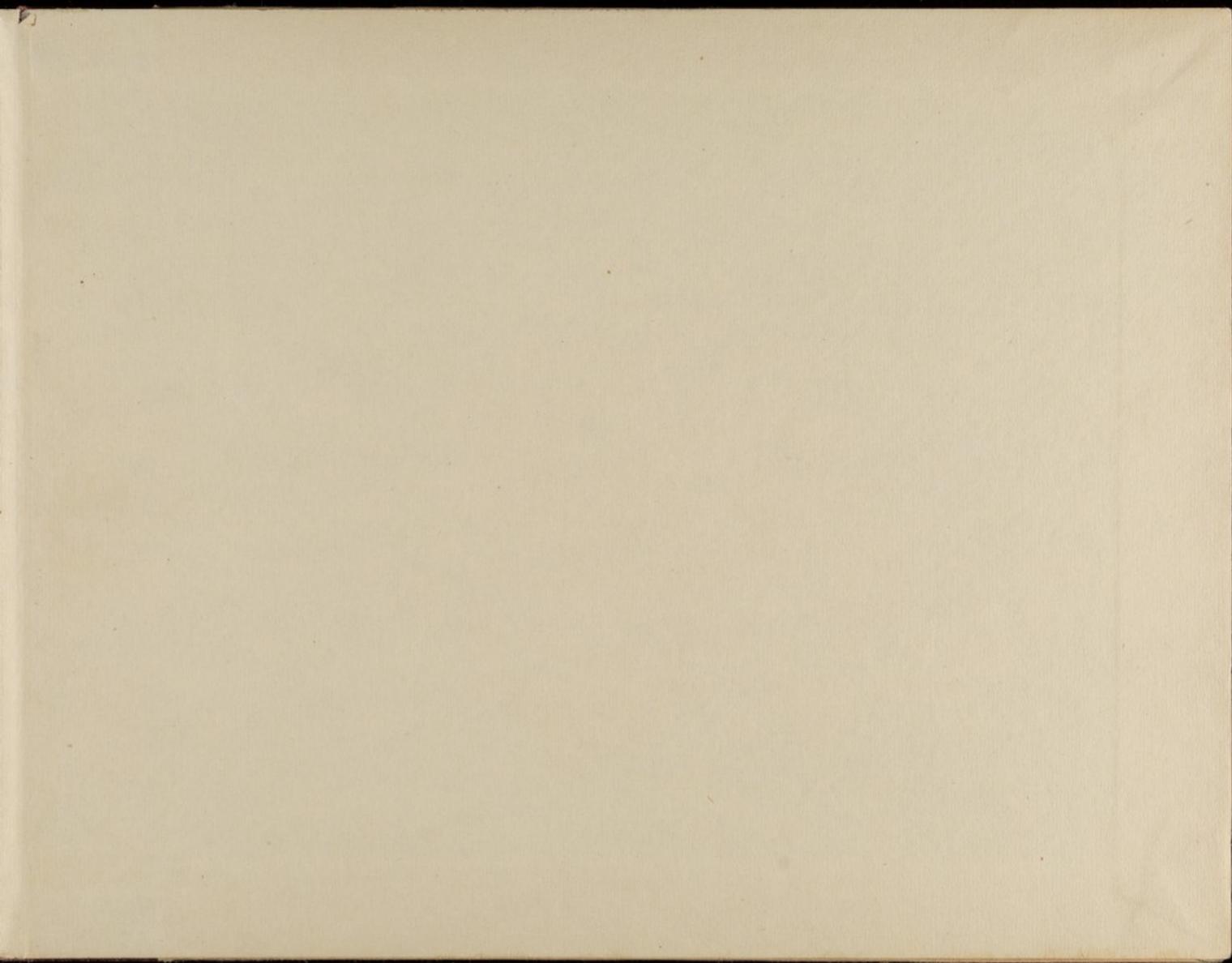
All the Khyber Rifle deserters of last August have come in and brought their rifles with them, which all looks as if they (the Z.K's.) were really intending to come in but wish to give as much bother as possible and submit in as long a time as possible.

JAMROOD. April 6th '98.

As you see we are still here although the force is being broken up and Regiments, Batteries, Hospitals, are going down to Peshawar, en route to their Station.

Three brigades are being left at present, one LUNDI KOTAL, one half ALI MUSJID and half JAMROOD, and one at ILAM GWDER. The Queens remain here with probably the 3rd Sikhs for an indefinite time longer. We may possibly move into the Fort, but anyhow in a day or two we shall be able to shift camp here to another site. The weather is steadily warming up and by the time another month is over will be "stinking hot".





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