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KITCHENER'S REPORT.

How the Sirdar Describes the Great Battle.

The London Gazette publishes the following despatch from Major-Gen. Sir Herbert Kitchener, Sirdar, to Lieut.-Gen. Sir Francis Grenfell, G. C. M. G., K. C. B., commanding in Egypt:—

On 24th August the troops began moving by successive divisions to Jebel Royan where a depot of supplies and a British communication hospital of 200 beds were established.

On 28th August the army marched to Wadi el Abid, and on the following day proceeded to Sayal, from whence I despatched a letter to the Khalifa warning him to remove his women and children, as I intended to bombard Omdurman unless he surrendered.

Next day the army marched to Surrab, and, on 1st September, reached the village of Ggeiga, two miles south of the Kerreri hills and within six miles of Omdurman. Patrols of the enemy's horsemen were frequently seen during the march falling back before our cavalry, and their outposts being driven in beyond Egeiga, our advanced scouts came in full view of Omdurman, from which large bodies of the enemy were seen streaming out and marching north.

At noon, from the slopes of Jebel Surgham, I saw the entire Dervish army some three miles off advancing towards us, the Khalifa's black flag surrounded by his Mulazemin (bodyguard) being plainly discernible. I estimated their numbers at 35,000 men, though, from subsequent investigations, this figure was probably under-estimated, their actual strength being between forty and fifty thousand. From information received I gather that it was the Khalifa's intention to have met us with this force at Kerreri, but our rapid advance surprised him.

The troops were at once disposed around the village of Egeiga, which formed an excellent position with a clear field of fire in every direction, and shelter-trenches and zaribas were prepared.

At 2 p. m. our vedettes reported that the enemy had halted, and later on it was observed that they were preparing bivouacs and lighting fires. Information was received that the Khalifa contemplated a night attack on our position, and preparations to repel this were made; at the same time the Egeiga villagers were sent out to obtain information in the direction of the enemy's camp with the idea that we intended a night attack, and, this coming to the Khalifa's knowledge, he decided to remain in his position; consequently we passed an undisturbed night in the zariba.

Meanwhile the gunboats, under Commander Keppel, which had shelled the Dervish advanced camp near Kerreri on 31st August, proceeded at daylight on 1st September, towing the Howitzer Battery to the right bank, whence, in conjunction with the Irregulars under Major Stuart Wortley, their advance south was continued. After two forts had been destroyed and the villages gallantly cleared by the Irregulars, the Howitzers were landed in a good position on the right bank, from whence an effective fire was opened on Omdurman, and after a few rounds the conspicuous dome over the Mahdi's tomb was partially demolished, whilst the gunboats, steaming past the town, also effectually bombarded the forts, which replied with a heavy but ill-directed fire.

At dawn on the following morning (2nd September) our mounted patrols reported the enemy advancing to attack, and by 6.30 a. m. the Egyptian cavalry, which had been driven in, took up a position with the Horse Artillery, Camel Corps, and four Maxims on the Kerreri ridge on our right flank.

At 6.40 a. m. the shouts of the advancing Dervish army became audible, and a few minutes later their flags appeared over the rising ground, forming a semicircle over our left and front faces. The guns of the 32nd Field Battery opened fire at 6.45 a. m. at a range of 2,800 yards, and the Dervishes, continuing to advance rapidly, delivered their attack with all their accustomed dash and intrepidity. In a short time the troops and Maxims on the left and front were hotly engaged, whilst the enemy's riflemen, taking up positions on the slopes of Jebel Surgham, brought a long-range fire to bear on the zariba, causing some casualties, and their spearmen, continually reinforced from the rear, made attempt after attempt to reach our lines.

Shortly after 8 a. m. the enemy's main attack was repulsed. At this period a large and compact body of Dervishes was observed attempting to march round our right, and, advancing with great rapidity they soon became engaged with our mounted troops on the Kerreri ridge. One of the gunboats which had been disposed to protect the river flanks at once proceeded down stream to afford assistance to the somewhat hardly pressed mounted troops, and coming within close range of the Dervishes inflicted heavy loss on them, upwards of 450 men being killed in a comparatively circumscribed area. The artillery and Maxims on the left face of the zariba also co-operated, and the enemy was forced to retire again under cover of the hills.

All attacks on our position having failed, and the enemy having retired out of range, I sent out the 21st Lancers to clear the ground on our left front, and head off any retreating Dervishes from the direction of Omdurman. After crossing the slopes of Jebel Surgham they came upon a body of Dervishes concealed in a depression of the ground; these they gallantly charged, but finding, too late to withdraw, that a much larger body of the enemy lay hidden, the charge was pressed home through them, and after rallying on the other side, they rode back, driving off the Dervishes and remaining in possession of the ground. Considerable loss was inflicted on the enemy, but I regret to say that here fell Lieut. R. Grenfell (12th Lancers) and 20 men.

Meanwhile I had ordered the Army to follow in echelon of brigades from the left. At 9.30 a. m. the front brigades having reached the sand ridge running from the west end of Jebel Surgham towards the river, a halt was ordered to enable the rear brigades to get into position, and I then received information that the Khalifa was still present in force on the left slopes of Surgham; a change of front half right of the three leading brigades was therefore ordered, and it was during this

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movement that MacDonald's Brigade became hotly engaged, whilst taking up position on the right of the echelon.

Learning from Gen. Hunter, who was with MacDonald's Brigade, that he might require support, I despatched Wauchope's Brigade to reinforce him and ordered the remaining brigades to make a further change half right.

No sooner had MacDonald repelled the Dervish onslaught than the force which had retired, behind the Kerreri Hills emerged again into the plain and rapidly advanced to attack him, necessitating a further complete change of front of his brigade to the right. This movement was admirably executed, and now, supported by a portion of Wauchope's Brigade on the right and by Lewis's Brigade enfilading the attack on the left, he completely crushed this second most determined Dervish charge.

Meantime Maxwell's and Lyttelton's Brigades had been pushed on over the slopes of Jebel Surgham, and, driving before them the Dervish forces under the Khalifa's son, Osman Sheikh ed Din, they established themselves in a position which cut off the retreat on Omdurman of the bulk of the Dervish army, who were soon seen streaming in a disorganized mass toward the high hills many miles to the west, closely pursued by the mounted troops, who cleared the right front and flanks of all hesitating and detached parties of the enemy.

The battle was now practically over and Lyttelton's and Maxwell's Brigades marched down to Khor Shanbat, in the direction of Omdurman, which was reached at 12.30 p. m., and here the troops rested and watered. The remainder of Hunter's Division and Wauchope's Brigade reached the same place at 3 p. m.

At 2 p. m. I advanced with Maxwell's Brigades and the 32nd Field Battery through the suburbs of Omdurman to the great wall of the Khalifa's enclosure, and leaving two guns and three battalions to guard the approaches, the 23rd Sudanese Battalion and four guns (32nd Field Battery) were pushed down by the north side of the wall to the river, and accompanied by three gunboats which had been previously ordered to be

ready for this movement, these troops penetrated the breaches in the wall made by the howitzers, marched south along the line of forts, and turning in at the main gateway found a straight road leading to the Khalifa's house and Madhi's tomb; these were speedily occupied, the Khalifa having quitted the town only a short time before our entry, after a vain effort to collect his men for further resistance.

The gunboats continued up the river clearing the streets of Dervishes, and having returned to the remainder of the brigade left at the corner of the wall, these were pushed forward and occupied all the main portions of the town. Guards were at once mounted over the principal buildings and Khalifa's stores, and after visiting the prison and releasing the European prisoners, the troops bivouacked at 7 p. m. around the town, after a long and trying day throughout which all ranks displayed qualities of high courage, discipline, and endurance.

The gunboats and Egyptian Cavalry and Camel Corps at once started in pursuit south; but, owing to the exhausted condition of the animals and the flooded state of the country, which prevented them from communicating with the gunboat carrying their forage and rations, they were reluctantly obliged to abandon the pursuit after following the flying Khalifa for 30 miles through marshy ground. The gunboats continued south for 90 miles, but were unable to come in touch with the Khalifa, who left the river and fled westward towards Kordofan, followed by the armed friendly tribes who took up the pursuit on the return of the mounted troops.

Large stores of ammunition, powder, some 60 guns of various sorts, besides vast quantities of rifles, swords, spears, banners, drums, and other war materials, were captured on the battlefield and in Omdurman. The result of this battle is the practical annihilation of the Khalifa's army, the consequent extinction of Mahdism in the Sudan, and the submission of the whole country formerly ruled under Egyptian authority. This has reopened vast territories to the benefits of peace, civilization, and good government.

On September 4 the British and Egyptian flags were hoisted with due ceremony on the walls of the ruined Palace of Khartoum, close to the spot where General Gordon fell, and this event is looked upon by the rejoicing populations as marking the commencement of a new era of peace and prosperity for their unfortunate country.

WOODSTOCK, N. B., Oct. 24th, 1898.

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