

improved roads and the increased supplies of articles of food, turned into great luxuries by a period of privation, which were stored in the fortified ports of Antalo and Addigerat.

All local information led me to believe that there would be no danger of floods before the middle of June, but owing to the extraordinary severity of the spring rains, a succession of floods during the early part of May did much damage to the Sooroo defile road.

On the 19th of May, with hardly any warning, a heavy flood, coming from a lateral tributary which enters above Sooroo, filled the Sooroo defile channel so suddenly that seven camp followers and some cattle, not being instantly removed from the waterway, were swept away and perished.

On the 30th of January full precautionary instructions were issued to secure the safety of the troops in the Pass, and I had no apprehension on their account. The losses of the 19th arose from avoidable causes, and were not likely to recur.

In case we might be detained during the rainy season, an alternative line, turning the Sooroo defile, had been surveyed by Lieutenant De Thoren, 45th Regiment, Quartermaster-General's Department, by which a safer though less even path might have been opened.

By the exertions of the garrison of Sooroo, directed by Captain Chrystie, Royal Engineers, the damage to the road in the Pass was rapidly repaired after each flood.

The severe weather in the high mountains, with the reaction after excitement and the scanty food, naturally increased the sick lists, but there are few bad cases.

The wounded are rapidly recovering, and although the total number of sick ultimately amounted to two hundred and sixty, no member of the force, however humble, has failed to obtain transport when required.

The whole force have returned in safety to the coast, and the greater part have already re-embarked.

It is now my duty to lay before Her Majesty's Government a statement of the services of the troops under my command, and of the General, Departmental, and Personal Staff.

Those who first claim notice are the Pioneer Force, who landed in Zoulla in October last, and consisted of Major Maret's Mountain Battery (Native), the 3d and 4th companies of Bombay Sappers and Miners under Captains Leslie and Leacock, the 3d Bombay Light Cavalry, commanded by Colonel Graves, and the 10th Native Infantry, under Colonel Field, who commanded the whole.

Their labours were not commenced under very encouraging circumstances; a barren shore, so shelving that the troops had to wade several hundred yards daily in landing stores; a supply of water so scanty that it disappeared immediately, and a temperature so sultry that any exertion was oppressive, but the spirit of the troops never flagged, encamping grounds were cleared, twenty miles of the road were made from the coast to Koomeylee, and towards Sooroo, a depot was established at Senafe, and huts erected for the Muleteers.

Lieutenant Beck's Company of the Bombay Marine Battalion was the first party of Infantry in Abyssinia, amongst the earliest labourers in the Sooroo defile, and throughout the campaign performed most valuable service as Pioneers in sinking wells, and opening and maintaining the road to Senafe.

The left wing of the 10th garrisoned Senafe, and had a large share in the works which made

the depôt a model of neatness, and of convenience in its water supply.

The right wing of the 10th formed part of the advanced pioneer column, and shared in all its labours; after five months of work it had an unwilling rest at Antalo, and was soon again in the front, and at the capture of Magdala.

The next arrivals in the country were Murray's Armstrong Battery, the 33d Regiment, under Colonel Dunn, V.C., and Beville's Belooch Battalion.

Captain Murray, during a long detention of his battery at Koomeylee, sought occupation for his men in every way that could aid our progress. It mattered little whether they cleared the obstruction in seven miles of road, carried water for six miles to support a working party, moved stores for the Commissariat, broke in mules to harness, or fitted them with pack saddles; everything was done with the same ability and zeal that has carried the battery over eight hundred miles of mountains in efficient condition.

The 33d Regiment furnished a detachment of two companies to Koomeylee for sinking wells. They were the first British Infantry in Abyssinia; they furnished heavy fatigue parties for all the works at Zoulla. In the absence of a sufficient number of the Land Transport Corps, the men converted themselves into extemporary muleteers, and re-caught and saved large numbers of mules which would otherwise have perished. They then proceeded to Senafe.

The Belooch Regiment went to Koomeylee where Major Beville, with the right wing joined Sturt's Bombay Sappers in making the admirable road in the Sooroo defile. Major Hogg, with the left wing, made the scarcely less difficult one at Rary Guddie. The Beloochees then garrisoned Addigerat, and raised much of the entrenchments there. The right wing partook of all the labours of the advance, and was present at Arogie and Magdala. The left wing, long delayed for carriage, at length pressed to the front, and by hard marching was present at Magdala on the 13th April.

The 10th Company Royal Engineers, under Major Pritchard, composed of a body of highly instructed and valuable soldiers, arrived from England, and was amongst the first to land at Zoulla.

The well sinkers, directed by Lieutenant Le Mesurier, the signallers under Lieutenant Morgan, and the telegraphers and photographers, have rendered excellent service throughout the campaign. The head-quarters of the 10th Company has always accompanied the leading column in the advance.

The 4th King's Own Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Cameron, with the 3d and 25th Bombay Native Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonels Campbell and Little, on arrival at Zoulla, were immediately put to work upon the railway, on landing water and stores for the force, and on the embankments to protect the Commissariat stores, which were liable to be inundated at spring-tides; all these were heavy labours, which left no soldier unemployed.

Nothing could exceed the spirit with which these regiments worked in order to hasten the advance. The work on the foreshore fell chiefly on the native troops. Little could the mud-bespattered labourer with his basket be recognized as the smart sepoy of the parade ground.

Major Chamberlain's pioneers, on arrival, at once took their place on the works; they brought the energy and the spirit of their race, together with their organization for skilled labour, to bear