

cult marching did not afford any opportunity for recruiting, and the mules are not in such high condition or so fine in appearance as those of A Battery; they have however carried their loads well, and no accident involving loss of stores has occurred. B Battery did not cross the Bashilo until the afternoon of the 10th April, and was not therefore engaged on that day, but having been brought to the front on the following morning I had the honour of commanding both batteries together on the 13th April at the capture of the Fortress of Magdala. On this occasion eighteen to twenty rounds per gun were fired at ranges from 1,300 to 1,500 yards, common and double shell only being used; 15 rounds of the latter were fired with 4-oz. charges, at a range of 1,400 yards, and carried well to that distance; the common shell were used in shelling the defences of the Gate of Magdala, and the precision of the fire could not be excelled. The shells were observed to burst regularly and without failure. No difficulty was experienced in loading, or in boxing and fixing the fuzes; and that the intended effect was produced was manifest from the fact that the defenders of the gate were observed to retreat in large numbers some time before the advance of the assaulting party was ordered.

The storming party having secured an entrance, one battery was advanced, and at my suggestion one gun, with a small supply of ammunition, was carried by the gunners up the steep ascent, through the narrow entrance, and brought into action within the fort. No further occasion for its services arose, but I would venture to point to this service as one of vast utility in the future of these mountain guns. It will be a rare occasion when the ascent to a breach will offer greater difficulties than those of the ascent to the Gate of Magdala.

On the 10th and 13th April, 25 Hales' Rockets were fired; they acted well, and I consider them in all respects good and efficient.

Having reached Ashangi, on the return march, I obtained the permission of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to fire a few rounds over the lake, with a view to observe the action of the fuzes in ricochet, and to afford foreign officers and others an opportunity of witnessing the effect of the bursting of the different natures of shells.

It is with much gratification I have to report that the result was eminently satisfactory, confirming my opinion as to the perfect serviceability of the fuzes, establishing the fact that they are not extinguished on striking the water, and demonstrating what a formidable projectile can be thrown from a miniature piece of ordnance, with an insignificant charge of powder.

In conclusion, I beg to record my opinion that the value of the 7-pounder steel mountain guns, with their projectiles and equipments, is successfully established, that in the hands of good gunners, with batteries of sufficient strength, and mules in good condition, they are capable of carrying into any country which can be traversed by an army, an artillery fire far more effective than any which has been hitherto attained in mountain warfare.

I have, &c.,

T. W. MILWARD, Lieut.-Col.,
Royal Artillery.

No. 7.

(Major-General George Malcolm, C.B., Commanding 2d Division Abyssinian Expeditionary Force, to the Deputy Adjutant-General, Abyssinian Expeditionary Force.)

Camp, Ashangi,

May 5, 1868.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to request that you will be so good as to bring to the notice of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief the efficient assistance I have received from Major George Bray, Assistant Adjutant-General, and Captain Watts, Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General, in commanding the 2d division Abyssinian Expeditionary Force, and in preserving the line of communication from Senafe to Antalo, and latterly to Ashangi.

2. The march of regiments, detachments, and convoys, passing in constant succession through this division to the front, required on the part of these Officers most careful attention and much trouble from the difficulties of transport, and also in enforcing the stringent orders of the Commander-in-Chief with regard to the reduction of followers, camp equipage, and carriage. I believe that their exertions materially assisted the general arrangements. I have also to thank them for the assistance in the disposition of the various posts which were necessary to secure our communications.

3. I am much indebted to Brigadier-General Collings, Commanding at Antalo, and to Brigadier-General Stewart, Commanding at Senafe, and Lieutenant-Colonel Little, Commanding at Addigerat, for their able support in all matters. It is difficult to enumerate the many subjects which had to engage their attention in collecting and forwarding supplies, pushing on troops, maintaining order and security along the road, and the more delicate arrangements for native carriers, on whom the army was so very dependent for its food. I could in many cases only give general instructions, and much was left to their judgment and discretion. The commands of Brigadier-General Collings were especially important. Before my arrival on the highlands he commanded at Senafe; and at Addigerat and Antalo he was required, in a great measure, to act on his own responsibility.

4. The garrisons of Senafe, Addigerat, and Antalo have been, until the last two months, chiefly composed of regiments and detachments which marched to the front; during their stay in the division the conduct of all was good. Among the few complaints made by the natives, I am not aware that any have been brought home to either British or Native soldiers. The 25th Regiment Native Light Infantry, under Major Fairbrother, and the wing of the 3d Native Infantry, under Captain Strutt, have had heavy convoy duty, which they have performed most cheerfully and satisfactorily. The former regiment also improved the road from Addigerat to Facado, and completed the entrenchments at the former station. I do not mention the heavy duties of the various companies of sappers, and of the detachment of the 21st Bombay Native Infantry, under Lieutenant Beck, of the 10th Native Infantry, under Major Pierce, of the 33d Foot, under Captain Johnstone, all of which are known to His Excellency.

There have been few instances of collision between soldiers of escorts and natives attempting to plunder, in all of which the troops and officers have shewn great forbearance and judgment.