

No. 2.

(Major-General Sir C. Staveley, K.C.B., to the Deputy Adjutant-General, Abyssinian Expeditionary Force, Magdala.)

*Camp before Magdala,
14th April, 1868.*

Sir,

WITH reference to General Orders of the 11th instant, I have the honour to report that I received orders to proceed on the morning of the 10th instant with the 1st Brigade, under Brigadier-General Schneider, strength as per margin,* from the Dalanta Plateau across the Bashilo River, and occupy the height above the latter, in front of Magdala; also to cover a reconnoissance by Colonel Phayre, Deputy Quartermaster-General of the Force.

Four companies of Sappers were ordered to make a road for elephants up the height, and the A (3rd battery 21st brigade) Mountain Battery, under Lieutenant-Colonel Penn, and the Rocket Batteries, Naval Brigade, under Commander Fellowes, R.N., were to ascend the plateau, when a road was reported practicable by Captain Goodfellow, R.E., senior Engineer Officer.

The march proved a most distressing one for the troops, laden as they were, for want of transport; with great coat, waterproof sheet, and blanket. The ascent is very long and steep, and the animals carrying water being unable to keep up with the column, the troops suffered severely from thirst.

The Deputy Quartermaster-General having sent me a report that the King's road up the Arogié Pass on our left was secure for guns and baggage, and which I forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief, his Excellency ordered them to proceed by that route, escorted by three companies of the 4th (King's Own) Regiment, one of the 10th Bombay Native Infantry, and one of the 23rd Punjab Pioneers. I had just arrived at the end of the ridge overlooking the road leading to the entrance of the pass, about one mile distant, when I was joined by his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, who directed me to move the 23rd Bengal Pioneers, under Major Chamberlain, to the left, the more effectually to protect the head of the pass. This regiment had no sooner got into position than the guns from Fala and Selassie (two of the three ambas which form the defences of Magdala) opened fire, and large numbers of men were seen streaming down the mountain. One portion of the enemy advanced with great confidence direct on our position, and another towards the pass, to attack the artillery and baggage now coming into sight.

His Excellency having sent me orders to prepare the troops to receive the enemy, I directed Brigadier-General Schneider to cause them to lay down their packs and advance; the 4th (King's Own) Regiment in skirmishing order, supported by the wing of the Belooch battalion, a small detachment of Royal Engineers, and four companies of Sappers, covered by the Naval Rocket Brigade, which had just come up.

Our troops had to cross a narrow dip in the ground, and the 4th (King's Own) Regiment, while in the act of extending on the other side, came close on the enemy, drove back and dispersed him with great gallantry, killing and wounding a large number. The enemy came on with great courage, little anticipating the rapid effect of the Snider rifle and dash of our troops.

To the left the enemy pressed close up to the 23rd Bengal Pioneers, under Major Chamberlain, and the advancing Mountain Artillery and baggage under Lieutenant-Colonel Milward, R.A. He was received and driven back by the Pioneers with much loss, and the Mountain and Rocket Batteries on mules, under Lieutenant-Colonel Penn, R.A., and Commander Fellowes, R.N., which the enemy no doubt mistook for baggage, coming into action at this moment supported by a company of the 4th (King's Own) Regiment under Captain Kittoe, and another of the 23rd Bengal Pioneers under Captain Paterson, in skirmishing order, caused great destruction. Lieutenant Sweny, 4th (King's Own) Regiment, the baggage master, lost no time in parking the baggage, and the escort of the two companies 4th (King's Own) Regiment, and one company 10th Native Infantry, coming into action under Captain Roberts and Lieutenant Durrant, 4th (King's Own) Regiment, assisted materially in driving off the enemy. This portion of the enemy being moreover in a hollow on the left of the position of the 4th (King's Own) Regiment, I directed Brigadier-General Schneider to move two companies to the edge of the plateau, thus taking him in flank.

Two of Lieutenant-Colonel Penn's guns, under Lieutenant Taylor, R.A., the Belooches, Royal Engineers, and Sappers, came into action towards evening, and assisted the Naval Rocket Battery to dislodge some sharpshooters who were annoying us from some cover on our right front.

Night coming on, and the enemy having almost disappeared, I withdrew the troops to a position selected by the Commander-in-Chief, where they bivouacked for the night. The 2nd brigade joined us there towards morning.

I enclose a return of our wounded, all of whom were brought in early, and everything done for them that could possibly be required by Staff-Surgeon Madden, in charge of the field hospital of the 1st brigade. A number of Abyssinian wounded were also brought in and attended to.

I cannot ascertain with any degree of accuracy the enemy's loss, but as 375 dead, including King Theodore's Commander-in-Chief, were counted on a small part of the field, it is not unreasonable to estimate the killed and wounded at 2,000 men. The Galla Chiefs who had men in the enemy's ranks, admit 700 killed.

Brigadier-General Schneider was most energetic in carrying out the orders conveyed to him. He mentions the assistance he received from the officers of his staff, viz., Captain Beville, his Brigade-Major; Captain Hogg, Deputy-Assistant-Quartermaster-General; and Lieutenant J. G. McKrae, Aide-de-Camp.

The following officers of my staff were most active during the action, and afforded me very valuable assistance. Lieutenant-Colonel Wood, Assisting-Adjutant-General; Major Baigrie, Assisting-Quartermaster-General, and Lieutenant Saunders, 20th Hussars, Aide-de-Camp. My extra Aide-de-Camp, Captain G. Arbuthnot, R.A., whom I had detached in the morning, also rendered good service.

I wish to recommend to the favorable notice of the Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant-Colonel Cameron, Commanding the 4th "King's Own"

	Officers, and Rank and File.
* A (3rd battery 21st brigade) Royal Artillery	94
Royal Naval Brigade	87
10th Company Royal Engineers	21
4th King's Own Royal Regiment	473
1st Company Madras Sappers	77
Head Quarters (3 Companies) Bombay Sappers	288
23rd Punjab Pioneers	600
27th Belooch Regiment, Head Quarters (Wing)	260