

The southern extremity of this plateau is about a mile from the railway, and is nearly parallel to it. To have marched over this plateau upon the enemy's position by daylight, our troops would have had to advance over a glacis-like slope in full view of the enemy, and under the fire of his well-served artillery for about five miles. Such an operation would have entailed enormous losses from an enemy with men and guns well protected by entrenchments from any artillery fire we could have brought to bear upon them. To have turned the enemy's position either by the right or left was an operation that would have entailed a very wide turning movement, and therefore a long, difficult, and fatiguing march, and what is of more importance, it would not have accomplished the object I had in view, namely, to grapple with the enemy at such close quarters that he should not be able to shake himself free from our clutches except by a general fight of all his army.

I wished to make the battle a final one; whereas a wide turning movement would probably have only forced him to retreat, and would have left him free to have moved his troops in good order to some other position further back. My desire was to fight him decisively where he was in the open desert before he could retire to take up fresh positions more difficult of access, in the cultivated country in his rear. That cultivated country is practically impassable to a regular army, being irrigated and cut up in every direction by deep canals.

I had ascertained, by frequent reconnaissances, that the enemy did not push his outposts far beyond his works at night, and I had good reason for believing that he then kept a very bad look out. These circumstances, and the very great reliance I had in the steadiness of our splendid infantry, determined me to resort to the extremely difficult operation of a night march, to be followed by an attack, before daylight, on the enemy's position; the result was all I could have wished for.

At dawn on the morning of the 12th instant, accompanied by all the Generals and Brigadiers, I inspected the enemy's works, and explained to them my intended plan of attack, and gave to each a sketch, showing the formation in which it was to be effected. (Copy enclosed, marked B).

As soon as it was dark on the evening of the 12th instant, I struck my camp at Kassassin, and the troops moved into position, the left near the point marked "Ninth Hill" on sketch A, where they bivouacked.

No fires were allowed, and even smoking was prohibited, and all were ordered to maintain the utmost silence throughout the night's operation. At 1.30 A.M., on the morning of the 13th instant, I gave the order for the advance of the 1st and 2nd Divisions simultaneously. The night was very dark, and it was difficult to maintain the desired formation, but, by means of connecting files between the battalions and brigades, and between the first and second lines, and through the untiring exertions of the Generals and the Officers of the Staff generally, this difficulty was effectually overcome.

The Indian Contingent\* under Major-General Sir H. Macpherson, and the Naval Brigade under Captain Fitzroy, R.N., did not move until 2.30 A.M. To have moved them earlier would have given the alarm to the enemy, owing to the number of villages in the cultivated land south of the Canal.

Telegraphic communication by means of an

\* 7 | 1 Royal Artillery (Mountain Battery), 1st Battalion Seaforth Highlanders, 3rd Battalion Native Infantry, made up of detachments of 7th Bengal Native Infantry, 20th Punjab Infantry, and 29th Beloochees.

insulated cable was kept up through Kassassin all through the night between the Indian Contingent on the south of the Canal, and the Royal Marine Artillery, with which I moved in rear of the 2nd Division.

In moving over the desert at night, there are no land marks to guide one's movements, we had, consequently, to direct our course by the stars. This was well and correctly effected, and the leading Brigades of each Division both reached the enemy's works within a couple of minutes of one another.

The enemy were completely surprised, and it was not until one or two of their advanced sentries fired their rifles, that they realized our close proximity to their works.

These were, however, very quickly lined with their infantry who opened a deafening musketry fire, and their guns came into action immediately. Our troops advanced steadily without firing a shot, in obedience to the orders they had received, and when close to the works went straight for them, charging with a ringing cheer.

Major-General Graham reports "The steadiness of the advance of the 2nd Brigade\* under what appeared to be an utterly overwhelming fire of musketry and artillery will remain a proud remembrance."

The 2nd Brigade was well supported by the Brigade of Guards, under H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught.

On the left the Highland Brigade,† under Major-General Sir A. Alison, had reached the works a few minutes before the 2nd Brigade had done so, and in a dashing manner stormed them at the point of the bayonet, without firing a shot until within the enemy's lines. They were well supported by the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and the 3rd Royal Rifles, both under the command of Colonel Ashburnham of the last-named corps.

In the centre, between these two attacks, marched seven batteries of Artillery, deployed into one line, under the command of Brigadier-General Goodenough, and, after the capture of the enemy's works, several of these batteries did good service, and inflicted considerable loss upon the enemy, in some instances firing canister at short ranges.

On the extreme left the Indian Contingent and the Naval Brigade, under the command of Major-General Sir H. Macpherson, V.C., advanced steadily and in silence, the Seaforth Highlanders leading, until an advanced battery of the enemy was reached (it is not shown in sketch A), when it was most gallantly stormed by the Highlanders, supported by the Native Infantry Battalions.

The squadron of the 6th Bengal Cavalry, attached temporarily to General Macpherson, did good service in pursuing the enemy through the village of Tel-el-Kebir.

The Indian Contingent scarcely lost a man, a happy circumstance, which I attribute to the excellent arrangements made by Major-General Macpherson, and to the fact that starting one hour later than the 1st and 2nd Divisions, the resistance of the enemy was so shaken by the earlier attacks north of the Canal, that he soon gave way before the impetuous onslaught of the Seaforth Highlanders.

The Cavalry Division, on the extreme right of the line, swept round the northern extremity of the enemy's works, charging the enemy's troops

\* 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment, Royal Marine Light Infantry, 2nd Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment, 1st Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers.

† 1st Battalion Royal Highlanders, 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders, 1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders, 2nd Battalion Highland Light Infantry.