

at once formed up the troops in a defensive position on a favourable piece of ground having a clear space in front, and as there was now barely an hour of daylight left I directed the Engineers and pioneers of battalions to form a zeriba around the camp by cutting down the prickly mimosa bushes which grew plentifully about.

About six P.M. the Cavalry with Mounted Infantry were sent back to Baker's zeriba with instructions to bring in the convoy that had been previously signalled for.

About half-past six P.M. this convoy arrived safely, consisting of 245 camels carrying two days' supplies of water for men, 4,400 rations, forage for 1,200 horses, and reserve ammunition.

Before this the enemy had fired a few rifle shots at us and had shown in some numbers on a ridge about 1,000 to 1,200 yards distant. By way of checking this, and to show the power of our guns, I ordered out two of the 9-pounders under Major Holley, R.A., and fired four rounds of shrapnel, two of which burst with great accuracy. Captain Rolfe, R.N., also opened with a Gardner gun and the enemy disappeared.

About ten P.M. Captain Rolfe informed me that he had just returned from an expedition to the front, where he had been to see the effect of our fire. He had found one or two dead bodies, and had come across some of the enemy's sentries fast asleep. Further back the natives were shouting and dancing around fires.

About a quarter to one P.M. there was an alarm and the enemy opened a distant dropping fire, which continued throughout the night, causing but few casualties, but disturbing the men's rest.

I had two of Naval Brigade machine guns run out, but as the range was (by interval between flash and sound) estimated at 1,400-1,500 yards, and no men showed themselves, it seemed to me better to treat the enemy's fire with silence, in preference to making an inefficient reply.

Our casualties were one man killed, York and Lancaster; one Officer and four men wounded, besides two camel-drivers and some horses struck.

About 7 A.M. the Cavalry arrived, and at 7.30 Brigadier-General Stewart ordered out the Mounted Infantry to feel the enemy.

There was a native with us who had lately been a prisoner in Osman Digna's camp, and who informed me that the bulk of their force would be in a deep khor or dry watercourse, the sides of which would serve as an intrenchment. I therefore directed the advance to be made to the left of this position, where the ground rose a little, and from whence I hoped to be able to sweep the ravine with Artillery fire before attacking.

The advance was made by the two brigades in direct echelon of brigade squares from the left.

The 2nd Brigade was in the following formation:—On the left flank, four companies of 1st Royal Highlanders, in open column of companies; on front face, three companies of 1st Royal Highlanders, and, at an interval of 30 yards, three companies of 1st York and Lancaster; on right flank, three companies of 1st York and Lancaster; the Royal Marines forming the rear face of square. Inside the square were the guns of the Naval Brigade, ready to run out where required. The 9-pr. battery, with transport animals, moved in rear of the right front of the square.

The 2nd Brigade advanced from the place of formation about half-past eight A.M., and, owing to some delay in getting the 1st Brigade forward, were somewhat further in advance than I had intended when they first came in contact with the enemy.

This occurred about nine A.M., when a large

number suddenly appeared from the edge of a ravine in the immediate front of the brigade. These were soon cleared off; the Royal Highlanders distinguishing themselves by the gallant manner in which they cheered and charged up to the edge of the ravine; but at this moment a more formidable attack came from another direction, and a large body of natives, coming in one continuous stream, charged with reckless determination, utterly regardless of all loss, on the right hand corner of the square formed by the 1st York and Lancaster. The Brigade fell back in disorder, and the enemy captured the guns of the Naval Brigade, which, however, were locked by officers and men, who stood by them to the last.

When first coming into action, the 9-pr. battery of four guns, under Major Holley, R.A., had been ordered outside the square on the right flank, and, when the disordered retirement took place in the 2nd Brigade, this battery was for a time unprotected by infantry, and exposed to the assault of the enemy, now coming on in crowds. Yet Officers and men stood firmly to their guns, raking the advancing enemy with case, which told with deadly effect.

The 1st Brigade was attacked about the same time, but stood firm, and the Cavalry moved up to protect the flank of the 2nd Brigade, which was soon rallied, and advanced to retake the guns of the Naval Brigade.

The zeriba was also threatened, but the little garrison stood to its arms and drove the enemy back.

After this there no more serious fighting, and the enemy retreated sullenly, making an occasional stand, towards the camp and village of Tamai, which was occupied by the 1st Brigade, about 11.40 A.M., when I despatched a telegram to Admiral Hewett announcing the victory.

The 2nd Brigade held the heights above the springs where the Cavalry watered. Ambulances and mule cacolets were sent for to bring away the dead and wounded, all being brought into the zeriba occupied the previous night, where tents and all necessary medical requirements had already been brought up. The Cavalry returned again to Baker's zeriba.

The night was undisturbed by any fire from the enemy, but voices were heard shouting and wailing from the battlefield.

On the morning of the 14th I sent the Cavalry on at once to the watering-place, where piquets of mounted Infantry were posted on the heights. The enemy offered no opposition beyond sending a few dropping shots, which were replied to by selected marksmen.

The whole force was moved out except the Naval Brigade, and the 1st Infantry Brigade crowned the heights above Osman's camp and village, whilst a fatigue party were employed collecting the ammunition preparatory to firing the huts. An escaped Egyptian soldier, one of the garrison of Tokar, informed me of a gun being there, but only the carriage could be found, which was destroyed, together with large quantities of ammunition.

After the men's dinners the retirement commenced, the Cavalry going straight to Suakim, leaving only a squadron to cover the Infantry, who marched to Baker's zeriba.

The advanced zeriba had been cleared. 200 sailors of the fleet, who had been promptly sent by Admiral Hewett, and two Companies of the 1st Royal Highlanders, together with the ambulance and mule cacolets, being employed to carry the wounded.