

peaceful discussion, and charged the disorganized square. Lieutenant Blackwood and Messrs. Hillary and Scott fell fighting at the point of impact. Dr. Ellis, Medical Officer, was severely wounded, and was helped out of action by Sergeant Gosling, the only other European present. Twenty-five rank and file out of 69 were killed, and the greater part of the remainder were panic-stricken by the death of their officers, and the *mêlée* caused by their bolting horses and the overwhelming numbers of the fanatical though ill-armed enemy. Their discipline and courage were, however, vindicated by the gallant action of two men, Privates Moma Wurrikin and Moma Zaria, who, regardless of their own lives, endeavoured to save Mr. Scott (and nearly succeeded in doing so), and finally rescued Dr. Ellis and placed him on a horse, beating off their assailants with great coolness and courage meanwhile. The native Sergeant-Major, Adamu Yola, also collected all whom he could find, and retired slowly and in good order.

4. Sergeant Slack, R.A., had been left in the fort at Sokoto in charge of his gun detachment. On receiving the news of this disaster he put the defences in order, summoned assistance from the Emir of Sokoto, and advanced towards the scene of the action, meeting Dr. Ellis and the other fugitives. He is reported as having behaved with coolness and discretion in this crisis. The Native Administration responded with the utmost loyalty. Though at first it appeared as if the troops had been exterminated, and only a British sergeant (whom the Sultan had never even seen) was left alive, the horsemen of Sokoto, headed by the Sultan's and the Wazeri's own sons, assembled immediately for the defence of the fort, a message was at once sent to Jegga, some 90 miles distant, where there was a detachment of infantry under a British non-commissioned officer, summoning them to the assistance of Sokoto, and stating that a "new Mahdi had arisen," and that the Mounted Infantry Company had been "annihilated." The telegraph, which I had been pushing forward by concentrated efforts for many months past, had already reached Ambrusa, 25 miles from Jegga, and these messages were at once sent on to wire-head and transmitted to me. They reached me late on the 15th, within 36 hours of the occurrence of the disaster. Meanwhile the Jegga detachment marched at once (3 A.M.) accompanied by Mr. McAllister, Assistant Resident, and were joined en route by 150 loyal horsemen from Tambawel. The fact that these various messages from Sokoto to Jegga, and thence to wire-head were carried with such rapidity, necessitating fresh horses in villages passed through, that the loose horses of the mounted infantry were all caught and brought in (the total loss of horses being only 4), and the way in which the chiefs from Tambawel to Sokoto rallied to our assistance, is significant of the loyalty of the people. The Emir of Gando was alone disaffected. Major Burdon, the Resident, had only left Sokoto en route to headquarters a day or two prior to these occurrences. Messengers overtook him and he hurried back, and assumed the direction of affairs. The Jegga troops arrived safely, and the fort was rapidly placed in a thorough state of defence, while chief after chief arrived with his following to assist, and undertook the scouting day and night within a radius of some five miles.

5. Meanwhile the Sokoto chiefs had assembled a following of some 3,000 men, and marched on Satiru. So great, however, had the prestige of this rabble become, owing to their success against our troops, that the Sokoto people dared not face

them, and their leader narrowly escaped with his life, being saved by the intrepidity of the same two soldiers whom I have mentioned above, who had been allowed with a few others to accompany the Sokoto Army.

6. This is the first reverse experienced by the West African Frontier Force since I raised it in 1898, and it came at a singularly unfortunate moment. The military forces of the Protectorate admit of the mobilization of a striking force of about 500 rank and file. This force, increased to rather over 600, with an exceptionally strong proportion of officers, had been dispatched to restore order and release the captives taken by the Munshis in their unprovoked attack upon the trading station of Abinsi, on the Benue, over 300 miles from Zungeru, which is itself 250 from Sokoto. The nature of the disaster and the terms of the early telegrams were such as to cause me very grave anxiety, for, apart from the safety of the other British officers in Sokoto, it was impossible to predict what course the victorious rebels might adopt, and what the effect of such a loss of prestige might be. In order to forestall any spread of the disaffection, and eventual grave emergency, I requested the Governor of Southern Nigeria to lend me what troops he had available and I recalled the Munshi Expedition, but neither of these could arrive in time to deal with the present crisis.

Before describing the steps taken to deal with the situation thus created, I desire to record my sense of the great loss which this Protectorate has experienced by the deaths of Messrs. Hillary and Scott, and Lieutenant F. E. Blackwood. The former lost their lives, as I have described in paragraph 3, by an endeavour to avoid bloodshed, while Lieutenant Blackwood died in the gallant attempt to save them. I trust that your Lordship may see fit to bring the action of this brave young officer to the special notice of the Army Council.

7. To relieve Sokoto I at once sent 75 rifles from Zungeru—all that were available—which would be reinforced by 75 more from Kontagora en route. The command was entrusted to Major Goodwin, Royal Artillery, in whose ability and level-headedness I had the greatest confidence; I had found his advice and soldierly promptitude of the greatest value. The 75 rifles left Zungeru within 24 hours of the receipt of the news by me from Sokoto, and the whole party of 150 reached Sokoto on March 1st (214 miles in 8½ days) having been treated with the greatest hospitality and friendliness by the villages passed. Another 100 rifles were ordered up from Lokoja, and reached Sokoto on March 8th. Wire-head had at first been abandoned, and for some 10 days after the receipt of the first telegrams I received no further news, but I later heard that the enemy had made no hostile movement against the fort, and had contented themselves with raiding the neighbouring towns, killing a great number of people and burning the villages. I was able, therefore, to dispatch 200 Mounted Infantry from Kano with 11 officers and British non-commissioned officers, who arrived at Sokoto on March 4th.

8. On March 10th Major Goodwin advanced on Satiru with a force of 21 officers, nine British non-commissioned officers, and 517 rank and file. I submit to your Lordship that the concentration of such a force at so remote a place as Sokoto within 24 days of the disaster, and in spite of the absence of the Munshi Expedition, indicates a