

by van Deventer with his usual dash and resourcefulness, had secured important results at a trifling cost. Within a month of the battle of Kahe we had taken possession of the high, healthy and fertile plateau which connects Aruscha with the Central Railway, and had occupied the dominant strategic points for any further advance, whether that was to be in the direction of the Central Railway, or westward to Tabora, or even eastward towards Handeni and the Eastern Usambara.

(12) Meanwhile, by the middle of April, the rainy season had set in with the greatest violence in the whole area from Taveta to Kondoa Irangi. The numerous rivers came down in flood and swept away almost all our laboriously built bridges, the roads became impassable mud tracks, and all transport became a physical impossibility. The rains fell steadily day after day, sometimes as much as four inches in one day, and the low-lying parts of the country assumed the appearance of lakes. Fortunately, the railway had by this time reached Taveta, where sufficient supplies could be dumped for our resting troops. The extension of the line was energetically continued to join the Kahe-Moschi railway, although for long distances the track was practically under water and the attention of thousands of labourers was constantly required to prevent its disappearance in the mud. Van Deventer's Division in the interior was cut off, and managed to live for weeks on such supplies as could be collected locally, or could be carried by porters from Lolkissale for a distance of 120 miles. The strain and privation were, however, bound to be reflected in the general state of health of the troops.

(13) Meanwhile, also, the enemy had realised the tremendous threat which this expedition constituted against his whole scheme of defence, and, thanks to the onset of the rainy season bringing General van Deventer's movement to a standstill, he was able to take measures to avert the danger to his rear by hurriedly transferring a great part of his force from the Usambara to the Central Railway, moving by rail to Mombo, thence by road to Morogoro or Kilossa, and again by rail to Dodoma. This movement placed him in a position to concentrate some 4,000 men against the 2nd Division, which was at the time so weakened by sickness and unavoidable detachments that it could barely dispose of 3,000 rifles in its isolated position at Kondoa Irangi. The enemy, perceiving this, felt encouraged to assume the offensive, and advanced from the Central Railway in the early days of May, arriving on the 7th within six miles of Kondoa Irangi.

General van Deventer gradually withdrew his advanced posts in face of this movement, keeping touch with the enemy, and finally disposed his force in defensive positions on a perimeter of about five miles frontage round Kondoa.

(14) On the 9th the enemy drove in our outlying picquets south-east of the village, and at 7.30 p.m. began an attack which lasted for nearly eight hours. This attack was pressed with determination, the enemy making four separate onslaughts, the brunt of which fell on the 11th South African Infantry, supported by the 12th South African Infantry. In some places the enemy repeatedly charged right up to our positions. Firing finally ceased at 3.15 a.m. on the 10th, when the enemy withdrew, leaving three whites and fifty-eight *askaris* dead on the ground, and five wounded as prisoners.

There were numerous signs on the ground of further casualties. Our own losses were two officers and four other ranks killed, one officer and seventeen other ranks wounded. From information obtained as a result of the fighting it was found that the enemy had about twenty-five companies engaged, under the personal command of Colonel von Lettow, the German Commander-in-Chief. His force was organised as three battalions and one smaller detachment. One battalion commander, Von Kornatzky, was killed, and another, Von Bock, wounded.

(15) With this defeat, the enemy's last hope of successful resistance to any large portion of our forces was extinguished. He continued in position round Kondoa during the remainder of May and the greater part of June, keeping for the most part to the thick bush, and engaging in desultory fighting and occasional long range bombardment. General van Deventer was unable to assume the offensive on any large scale on account of his weakness in horseflesh, the heavy sick rate amongst his men, and the great difficulties of supply over a line of communication of two hundred miles of quagmire; and had therefore to content himself with minor operations and enterprises while reorganising his forces and calling in his detachments from elsewhere. The 10th South African Infantry Regiment and 28th Mountain Battery arrived from Umbulu on 22nd May. I had already decided to strengthen the 2nd Division with two more battalions, the 7th and 8th South African Infantry Regiments, and additional artillery and machine guns, all from the 3rd Division, and these reinforcements eventually reached the Division on 23rd May and following days.

Occupation of the Pare, Usambara and Handeni Areas.

(16) Such was the position when, towards the end of the second week in May, the rains abated, the ground once more began to harden, and it became evident that a general movement would soon again be possible. The direction of that movement was settled for me by the necessity of clearing the enemy from the Pare and Usambara mountains before the further invasion of German East Africa could safely proceed. The general conception was to move Eastward along these mountains and at a point opposite Handeni to swing South and march towards the Central Railway in a movement parallel to that of van Deventer. The concentration of the enemy forces in front of Kondoa now made the occupation of the Pares and Usambaras comparatively easy, but the advance had to be rapidly executed to forestall any return movement of the enemy from Kondoa to the Handeni or Usambara area. Moving through the Masai Steppe along the old caravan route from Kondoa to Handeni, the enemy could reach the latter place in twelve days, and in two or three days more could be on the Tanga Railway at Korogwe. It was therefore advisable for my advance to reach the Western Usambara in a fortnight; further, if it could reach Handeni before the arrival of strong enemy reinforcements I would have a second force almost the same distance from the Central Railway as that at Kondoa, and it would be impossible for the enemy to make effective resistance to the simultaneous advance of both columns situated 170 miles apart. The nature of the country was, however, such as almost to preclude all rapidity of movement. The Pares and Usambaras are huge blocks of