

B.

PROCLAMATION by His Excellency Lieut.-General Sir R. Napier, G.C.B., K.C.S.I., to all the Chiefs and People of Abyssinia, dated 27th April, 1868.

We proclaim that Dajazmaz Gobaze is the friend of the British. He appointed Dejach Mashasha his representative here. Those who would be treated as friends by the British Commander should obey Dajazmaj Gobaze, the officers appointed by him, and no other. We desire there should be peace in the country.

C.

Translation of a Letter from Negus Menelek of Shoa to General Napier, Chief of all the invading English Armies.

HAVING heard that you have come to Abyssinia, I was first willing to send to you in a suitable manner, but my enemies who are between us are stopping the road, and divide us, and so it became difficult to send a person of note, together with a man knowing the country.

Now I send you one of my servants with this letter, to make acquaintance with you. Far from being the enemy of the Queen of England, I am her friend. Before, I had intended to liberate the captives and come very near Magdāla; but as the business seemed impossible, and my Army had no more provisions, I returned to my country. Now I am far off, but I have no hesitation (to help). I like to help you, and want in nowise to trouble you.

As to my friendship with the Queen, it is not a matter of to-day. I had sent to London, and have received a friendly answer; perhaps you have heard it.

May God give you full welfare.

(L.S.) No date.

Copy of Translation of Letter from his Excellency Lieut.-General Sir R. Napier, to Menelek, King of Shoa, dated 28th April, 1868.

WE have received your letter with much pleasure. We had before heard of the endeavours made by you to effect the release of the European captives detained in Magdāla, and thank you much for them. We also thank you for the offers of help your friendship for our Sovereign the Queen of England prompts you to make. But we have now to convey to you the good tidings that the British Army entrusted to our command completely defeated the Army of Theodore at Arogie on the 10th April. The European captives were all then released; and on the 13th, Theodore having unwisely refused to submit to the mercy of the Queen of England, the amba of Magdāla was stormed and taken, and Theodore was found dead within. By our order, Magdāla was burned, and left a blackened rock, as a warning to all who injure subjects of Her Majesty the Queen of England. We should have been glad to have met you, but you are far off; and the object of our coming having been by God's blessing completed, we are now marching again to the coast. By Theodore's death, many Chiefs of Abyssinia have also been relieved from long confinement, amongst others, a relation of yours, Doorgeeh, and other natives of Shoa. We invited the good offices of Masteeat, the Queen of the Gallas, to provide him with safe escort to your country. Her promise was given, and we look to hear of

3 M 2

his reaching you safely. Your letter to Her Majesty the Queen was sent to London, and a reply forwarded to you by your messenger from Aden. This will have reached. May God have you in his keeping.

D.

Copy of Translation of Letter from his Excellency Lieut.-General Sir R. Napier to Dajazmaj Gobaze, dated 15th April, 1868.

How are you? Are you quite well? Thank God, I am well. I have to-day received your letter of the 2nd April, and congratulate you on your complete success over Tisso Gobaze.

I have now to inform you that Magdāla is in my possession, and all the Europeans held in captivity by Theodore are safe in my camp. Theodore is dead. His army was defeated by my troops at Arogie on the 10th of April, and on the 13th the amba was stormed and captured, Theodore being found dead within. Being well assured of your friendly feelings, I have sent for your deputy, Dejach Mashsha, and will, in the name of my Sovereign the Queen of England, give possession of Magdāla to him for you, in proof of my conviction of your sincerity, and in the confident expectation that the gift of this strong fortress, requiring so many troops and such great labour to obtain possession of, will lead you to acquiesce in the request I shall make to you when we meet, and in which the good of your country is largely concerned. I regret to have to inform you that my people have been molested, and the instructions for assistance you issued have not been carried out by the chiefs of Attala, Ashangi, Lat, Marawa, and Dildi. In all other places your orders have been well acted up to. I am about to return with my Army by Lasta, Womberat, and Wojerat. I should be glad to see you, and would request that a meeting may be arranged somewhere on that road between this and Wojerat.

E.

Copy of Translation of Letter from his Excellency Lieut.-General Sir R. Napier to Dajazmaj Kassai, dated 21st April, 1868.

After compliments.

We have now great gratification in informing you that on the 10th instant our Army met and utterly routed the Army of Theodore in the Arogie Plain, near Magdāla.

All the Europeans, with their families, who had been so long unjustifiably detained in captivity by Theodore, were released; and Theodore persisting in refusing to submit himself to Her Majesty the Queen of England, the amba was stormed and taken on the 13th, Theodore being found dead inside. Magdāla has since been destroyed and burned by our order, and left a blackened wreck. Many chiefs of Abyssinia were found in chains in the amba. These have been liberated and permitted to return to their homes. Amongst them were some of Tigré. On their arrival in your country we would commend them to your care and generous consideration. Having accomplished the objects for which we were sent, we are now about to return with our Army by the same route that we came.

We purpose on the way to have an interview with Dajazmaj Gobaze, and will not then forget what passed at the private interview with you at Hauzen, and trust our endeavours will produce results beneficial to the peace and welfare of all Abyssinia.

No. 3.

From Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Napier, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., Commanding the Expeditionary Force in Abyssinia, to the Secretary of State for India.

*Commander-in-Chief's Office, Head-Quarters,
Camp Antalo, May 12, 1868.*

Right Honourable Sir,

On the 3rd April, when encamped on the Wadela Plateau, I received intimation from the Chiefs of Talanta that Theodore, having moved from Magdāla and encamped on the plain of Arogie, was preparing for an expedition; letters from the captives also warned me to be on my guard.

Between the British Force and the Plain of Talanta lay the Jedda Ravine, 3,400 feet deep. As the passage of this formidable obstacle, so easily defensible, could not have been effected in the face of an enemy without serious loss, I made a forced march of 18 miles, crossed the Jedda, and established myself on the Plain of Talanta. The mere distance in miles gives little idea of the labour and fatigue of the march; the excessively steep descent and ascent, and the great heat, were very distressing for troops heavily weighted.

Cross the
Jedda, and
encamps
on Talanta
Plateau.

Theodore, however, did not cross the Bashilo, but plundered and burnt the villages between that river and Magdāla, which has always been faithful to and trusted him.

From the edge of the Talanta Plain I obtained a distant but clear view of the position of Magdāla and its approaches. I was able, with a good telescope, to appreciate the formidable character of the whole position, and became aware that I should require all the Infantry that I could possibly collect to make the attack effective, and that every Cavalry soldier that I could bring forward would be necessary for the investment. Even with all the force that I could hope to gather up, I felt I could not complete the investment by sending a column to close the Kaffir Ber or southern gate of Magdāla, but I deputed an officer of the Intelligence Department, Meer Akbar Ali, to Masteeat, the Queen of the Wolla Gallas, to engage her to bring every man she could muster to close all escape on that side. Meer Akbar Ali's report will be forwarded, and will show how effectually he accomplished his mission.

Mission
to Queen
Masteeat.

Reluctant as I was to incur any delay so near to Magdāla, these considerations, and the necessity of having supplies sufficient to carry me through the operations against that fortress, obliged me to defer crossing the Bashilo for several days.

I had not overlooked the probability of the unstable Abyssinian people despising the small postal detachments and the pacific demeanour of our troops, but the various difficulties of our transport and scarcity of our supplies kept me without sufficient troops to make the posts of communication as strong as the circumstances required. Each day, however, was bringing forward some accession of strength; and in the meantime I had endeavoured, by liberality and every means of conciliation, to engage the petty chiefs between Antalo and the Takazze River to maintain their friendly assistance in forwarding native convoys of supplies. It was the only course that gave chance of success; unfortunately it succeeded but partially.

Relieved from the pressure of our main force, the chiefs commenced to interfere with the Abyssinian carriers of our supplies, and to make attacks on our posts and convoys. The local carriage, which had enabled me to advance from Antalo, was suspended just at the time when its maintenance was most important: thus it happened that on the 4th of April I had only five days' supplies to depend upon.

The Force had left all its baggage at Lat, 100 miles in rear, taking on merely the

clothes in which they marched, and carrying greatcoats, blankets, and waterproof sheets; they had no other encumbrance than a bell tent for 12 officers or 20 soldiers; the daily storms which we experienced renders this shelter indispensable. The carriage so released was sent back for provisions to the points where native transport was doubtful, and gave me sure hope of ultimate relief from my commissariat difficulties, but the immediate urgency was pressing.

On the 2nd instant, I deputed Brigadier-General Merewether to the Tacazze, to arrange with the Chiefs there to bring in supplies of flour.

Major Grant was directed to return to Lat, and Captain Moore to Lake Ashangi, to remove obstructions which had arisen at those places. Captain Speedy and Mr. Münzinger proceeded, the former to Daont, the latter to the borders of Talanta that had been ravaged by Theodore, and through the exertions of these officers I was enabled to feed my cattle, and to obtain flour enough for 11 days' supply at 8 ozs. for each soldier. The native followers received wheat in the grain instead of flour.

Relying on the admirable spirit of my Force, I was prepared to commit myself against Magdāla with these means.

Description
of Magdala.

Besides the view which I had obtained of Magdāla and its approaches, I received most valuable information from a chief named Beitwuddun Hailo, who had recently deserted from Magdāla. Having engaged in some intrigues with Menelek, King of Shoa, he knew well that his lot would be instant death on his master's arrival.

It is difficult to give, by description alone, a sufficient idea of the formidable position which we were about to assail. The fortress of Magdāla is about 12 miles from the right bank of the Bashilo, but the great altitude and the purity of the atmosphere exhibited the whole outline distinctly.

The centre of the position is the rock of Selassie, elevated more than 9,000 feet above the sea, and standing on a plateau called Islamgie, which is divided into several extensive terraces, with perpendicular scarps of basalt. A saddle connects these terraces with the hill called Fahla. Fahla is a gigantic natural bastion, level on the top, entirely open, and commanded by Islamgie. It domineers completely at an elevation of 1,200 feet over all approaches to Islamgie. The sides appeared precipitous, and the summit surrounded by a natural scarp of rock, accessible only in a few places, and from 18 to 20 feet in height.

Nearly concealed from view by Selassie and Fahla, the top of Magdāla was partially visible.

The road to Magdāla winds up the steep side of Fahla, subject to its fire, and to the descent of rocks and stones. One part of the road is so steep that few horses, except those bred in the country, could carry their riders up or down it. The whole road is flanked by the end of Selassie and the broad side scarp of Islamgie. Altogether, without taking into account Magdāla itself, the formidable character of its outworks exceeded anything which we could possibly have anticipated from the faint description of the position which had reached us.

The refugee chief, Beitwuddun Hailo, was very anxious that I should try the south side, at the Kaffir Bur (gate), from the opposite range, called "Tanta," saying, "If you want to take Selassie, go from hence; but if you want Magdāla, you must go from 'Tanta.'" This, however, would have been impossible; I had not force enough to divide, and I could not place this vast combination of natural fortresses between me and my direct line of communication. I also perceived that the real point to be taken was not Magdāla, but Islamgie, where Theodore had taken post with all his guns, and that Fahla was the key to the whole.

On the 7th I descended to the bed of the Bashilo, and reconnoitred the crossing.

The ordinary approach to Magdāla is by the Arogi Ravine, which commences under Islamgie, and is bounded on its right by a spur which extends from Islamgie, in a serrated ridge, to the Bashilo. A similar spur from Fahla stretches to the water of the Bashilo, and bounds the ravine on its left.

The highest point of this ridge is about 2,000 feet above the bed of the Arogi Ravine.

The grand features of the ground rendered it impossible for me, with my small force of Infantry, to hold both sides of the ravine. I considered Fahla the key of the position, and determined to occupy the ridge, bearing, in different parts, the names of Gombage and Affijo, which leads to that imposing outwork. Established on this ridge I could operate on either side of Fahla, as might seem expedient on closer examination.

Between the 4th and 9th instant my Force was increased by six companies of the 45th Regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Parish, which, though long delayed for want of carriage, had marched from Zula in 25 days. A wing of the 3rd Bombay Native Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, was detained seven marches in rear, owing to the urgent want of carriage, and I thus lost the services of an able officer and an excellent body of soldiers, on whom I had calculated for the attack.

On the 9th the whole Force concentrated on the edge of the plateau overlooking the Bashilo, which flows 3,900 feet below it.

Major Chamberlain, with the 23rd Punjab Pioneers, supported by a wing of the Beloochees, occupied the bed of the Bashilo, and repaired Theodore's road.

The signallers of the 10th Company Royal Engineers maintained communications.

The Royal Engineers and the Madras and Bombay Sappers, under Captain Goodfellow, made up the necessary provision of sand-bags, scaling-ladders, and bags filled with powder for the demolition of gates, stockades, &c.

As the only supply of water between the Bashilo and Magdāla was under the enemy's fire, all the water-carriers of the Force were organized under command of Captain Bainbridge, Transport Corps, with two subalterns (Lieutenant Mortimer, Transport Corps, and Lieutenant Ramsbottom, Transport Corps), for the purpose of carrying forward regular supplies of water from the Bashilo.

The bandsmen and a party of Punjab muleteers were also organized under command of Captain Griffith, aided by Lieutenant Gazelee, Transport Corps, and furnished with stretchers for the removal of wounded men from the field.

ACTION OF THE 10TH APRIL.

All preparations having been completed, I placed the Cavalry* under Colonel Graves to hold the Bashilo, but ready to advance, and moved the remainder of the Force across the river, under the immediate command of Sir Charles Staveley.

The 2nd Brigade,† under Brigadier-General Wilby, to remain in the bed of the Bashilo in support; the 1st Brigade,‡ under Brigadier-General Schneider, to occupy the

Concentra-
of British
Force above
the Bashilo,
9th April.

Cross the
Bashilo.

* 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, 183; 3rd Regiment Sind Horse, 181; 12th Bengal Cavalry, 96.

† 2nd Brigade.—B Company, 21st Brigade, Royal Artillery, Captain Twiss, 103; G Company, 14th Brigade, Royal Artillery, Captain Murray, 94; Detachment 5th Company, 25th Brigade, Royal Artillery, Major Hills, V.C., 27; 33rd Regiment, Major Cooper, 694; 6 Companies 45th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Parish, 325; Wing 10th Regiment Native Infantry, Colonel Field, 211.

‡ 1st Brigade.—A Company, 21st Brigade, Royal Artillery, Lieutenant-Colonel Penn, 86; Royal Naval Brigade, Captain Fellowes, 80; 10th Company Royal Engineers, Major Pritchard, 20; 1st Battalion 4th King's Own Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Cameron, 446; 23rd Punjab Pioneers, Major Chamberlain, 575; Wing 27th Beloochees, Major Beville, 259; 1st Company Madras Sappers, Major Prendergast, V.C., Royal Engineers, 70; Bombay Sappers and Miners, Captain Macdonnell, Royal Engineers, 283.

Gunborgi spur and advance to a suitable place for encampment, and also to cover a reconnaissance by the Deputy Quartermaster-General of the enemy's position.

The Deputy Quartermaster-General reported that the ascent to Gunborgi was extremely steep and difficult, and that the King's Road up the Arogie Ravine was easy and secure for the mountain guns and baggage; they were therefore ordered to take that route.

When the leading part of the column had reached Affjo I arrived at the front.

The King's Road emerges from the Arogie Pass, at a distance of 1,200 yards from Affjo, and 700 feet below it.

I ordered Major Chamberlain's Punjab Pioneers* to be sent immediately to cover the head of the pass, and the remainder of the brigade to be closed up as soon as possible.

Action of
Arogie.

The men were greatly distressed by the heat, the severe ascent, and want of water.

Shortly after Major Chamberlain had taken up his position, the Naval Rocket Brigade, under Captain Fellowes, appeared, rising from the pass, followed by Lieutenant-Colonel Penn's steel battery, escorted by detachments of Infantry.

At this time the enemy opened his guns from Fahla and Islamgie, making good practice at the Punjabees, and at the position of Affjo.

Notwithstanding the distance, which was more than 3,000 yards, the enemy's shot ranged well into the positions, owing to the great command, and probably to excessive charges of powder; but the fire being a plunging one, no casualties ensued.

Almost simultaneously with the opening of the enemy's artillery, a large force was seen pouring down from Islamgie and the sides of Fahla, descending at speed the steep road and the faces of the mountains, until they filled the whole Plain of Arojie.

Many of the enemy were dressed in red, and almost bore the appearance of our own troops in the distance. About 500, principally chiefs, were mounted.

The Naval Brigade hastened up the road to Affjo, and as each rocket tube came into position it opened on the advancing masses of the enemy, who were startled, checked, and driven back at some points, but only to press forward at others.

I directed Sir Charles Staveley to bring forward the remaining infantry, which by this time had closed up, to repel the attack.

The 4th King's Own Regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Cameron, closely followed by Beville's Beloochees and the Royal Engineers, commanded by Major Pritchard, and the Bombay Sappers under Captain MacDonnell, R.E., descended rapidly the steep path leading down to the Arogie Plain with unrestrained expressions of delight at having at last their enemy before them.

Opening into skirmishing order they ascended a suitable slope which separated them from the Plain of Arogie, and immediately came into contact with the enemy, drove them back, in spite of the efforts of their leaders, in masses, on which the fire of the Snider told with terrible effect.

Several gallant attempts were made by the Abyssinians to rally, but many of their Chiefs fell, and they were driven down the slopes of Arogie, towards the ravines on our left front.

Retreat of
Abyssinians.

A portion of them withdrew up the sides of Fahla, and taking cover in a thicket of cactus trees, opened a teasing fire on Staveley's right, causing some casualties.

Captain Fellowes, having maintained the fire of his rockets until masked by the advance of the Infantry, had been sent to support Sir Charles Staveley.

* 10th Company Royal Engineers; 1st Battalion 4th King's Own Regiment (seven companies); 27th Belooch Regiment (wing); K Company Madras Sappers; 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Companies Bombay Sappers.

The fire of the rockets, together with some volleys from Beville's Beloochees and the Royal Engineers, supported by two of Penn's guns, under Lieutenant Taylor, cleared Staveley's flank from further annoyance.

The rockets were then turned on the summit of Fahla; they were well directed, and, as I subsequently learned, produced a very great effect.

A party of the enemy attempted to pass round the sides of Affijo to turn our right, but were checked by a few rockets, and dispersed by the K Company Madras Sappers, under Major Prendergast, V.C., Lieutenant-Colonel Loch, with a detachment of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry, accompanied the Infantry in support.

Towards the left, Colonel Milward ascended from the Arogie Pass with Penn's Battery, escorted by detachments of the 4th King's Own Regiment under Captain Kittoe, and the 23rd Pioneers under Captain Paterson, at the time when the guns opened from Fahla and Islamgie.

Engage-
ment on the
left flank.

On perceiving the troops of Theodore descending from Islamgie, Colonel Milward took up a strong position and opened fire from Penn's Battery. Major Chamberlain, who was holding the Pioneers in hand to cover the head of the pass, moved to his left and joined Colonel Milward.

A considerable body of Abyssinians bore down upon Milward's position. Notwithstanding the evident effects of Penn's guns they continued to advance with much determination and order.

Chamberlain with his Pioneers met their attack in the most prompt and spirited manner, driving them with great slaughter into the ravines to his left front; not, however, without gallant resistance on the part of the Abyssinians, who closed fearlessly with the Punjabees; the spear wounds received bore witness to the closeness of the conflict.

On the extreme left the enemy pressed in large numbers towards the head of the Arogie Ravine where the baggage had arrived.

The baggage master, Lieutenant Sweeny, King's Own Regiment, with great readiness, massed the baggage in a safe position, and the baggage guard, consisting of two companies of the 4th King's Own Regiment, and one of the 10th Native Infantry, under Captain Roberts of the former corps, until disabled, and subsequently under Lieutenants Abadie (11th Hussars) and Sweeny, were brought forward, and most effectually checked the attempt of the enemy to penetrate into the Arogie Ravine.

Arrested at the head of the ravine and driven back by the baggage guard, closed in upon by Chamberlain's pioneers and two companies of the 4th King's Own Regiment, whom Sir Charles Staveley had wheeled on to their flank, the enemy suffered most severely; large numbers were seen to fall from the admirably directed fire of the mountain guns.

Theodore's troops had advanced with the full confidence of men accustomed to victory; they had cast themselves off from their vantage ground to which there was no return.

They had been promised by Theodore that they should be enriched by the spoils of the English, and it was not without a stout resistance that they were finally driven off the field.

A heavy rain continued during the greater part of the action. The troops thoroughly wet and tired, but highly elated with their victory, bivouacked for the night, covering the road to Arogie Pass, and before daylight had re-occupied their commanding position on Affijo, from which they had descended to meet the enemy.

The wounded were promptly attended to under the direction of Dr. Currie, C.B., Inspector-General of Hospitals.

Many wounded Abyssinians were also carried off the field by our troops, and were carefully attended to in our hospitals.

The 2nd Brigade, which came up in the night, occupied the ground which had been held after the action by the 1st Brigade.

According to the best information, the probable number of the enemy was not less than 5,000, of whom at least 3,000 were the regular musketeers, and the remainder less efficiently armed. Theodore distributed new arms to his troops on the day preceding the battle.

Loss of
enemy.

The loss of the enemy cannot be correctly estimated ; 349 dead were buried in front of the left of our position alone, and exclusive of those who fell in Staveley's first attack, 30 very badly wounded Abyssinians were carried to our hospital.

Theodore's Lieutenant, Fetararee Gabsie, and many Chiefs of note, were amongst the slain.

Nearly all night the calls of the Abyssinians to their wounded friends were heard, and the greater number of the latter were carried from the field. We saw a large number of wounded when Theodore's army surrendered.

British
losses.

The British loss was only 20 wounded, two mortally ; this disparity of loss resulted from the determined and persistent attack of the Abyssinians against a better disciplined and better armed force, not better armed, however, as regarded the 23rd Pioneers, whose smooth-bore is hardly equal to the double-barrelled percussion gun of the Abyssinians.

There was no hasty flight ; the enemy returned again and again to the attack whenever the ground favoured them.

I issued orders to provide against the pursuit being carried too far up the hill, which could only have ended by our retiring and giving renewed confidence to the enemy.

Lieutenant
Prideaux
and Mr.
Flad arrive
in the camp.

On the morning of the 11th, Lieutenant Prideaux and Mr. Flad arrived in my camp, accompanied by Dejach Alema, a son in law and confidential Chief of Theodore, with a request for peace.

I replied that if Theodore would bring all the European captives to my camp, and submit to the Queen of England, I would promise honourable treatment for himself and his family.

The King
refuses
Sir Robert
Napier's
proposi-
tions.

Lieutenant Prideaux returned to Magdala with the letter containing these terms. In the course of the forenoon he returned again to the British camp with Mr. Flad, but without Dejach Alema ; he brought a letter without seal or signature from Theodore, refusing my terms. My letter was returned.

I sent back Lieutenant Prideaux and Mr. Flad to intimate that no other terms would be granted.

I considered that a fuller atonement than the surrender of the captives, when they could be retained no longer, was absolutely required, and must be exacted ; and, painful as was the thought of the possible consequences to the captives if Theodore's rage should become excited, I relied for their safety on the apprehension of a renewal of the conflict which demoralized Theodore's troops, and from which Theodore himself was not free, as was involuntarily betrayed by Dejach Alema. I relied also on my threat, which I impressed on Dejach Alema, of unrelenting pursuit and punishment of all who might in any way be concerned in the ill-treatment of the European captives. I pointed out how the power of Great Britain had already reached Magdala ; that no corner of Abyssinia, however remote, could screen anyone whom we wished to punish.

Most of the
European
captives
liberated.

Lieutenant Prideaux was met on his return to Magdala by Mr. Rassam, and the remainder of the British prisoners and several of those of other nations, all of whom arrived in my camp before evening.

My further conditions were not complied with. At the request of Dejach Alema I had promised to abstain from hostilities for 24 hours. After the lapse of 48 hours Theodore had not surrendered himself; reliable information reached me that his army was recovering from their defeat, that many soldiers who had been unable to return to Magdāla on the night of the 10th had since rejoined their ranks, that fresh defensive arrangements were being made, and that Theodore and his Chiefs even contemplated a night attack on the Second Brigade encamped on the lower ground. I therefore prepared to attack the enemy's position.

I had originally intended first to assault Fahla from the side which fronted our camp, and was screened from the fire of Islamgie and Selassie. But under the altered condition of the enemy, Theodore, having by death, wounds, and desertion lost half of his army and his bravest Chiefs, I determined to attack Islamgie by the King's Road.

All arrangements for this had been considered, and the positions for the artillery reconnoitred and fixed upon, when information was brought to me that Theodore had left Magdāla, and that many of the chiefs with their followers wished to surrender.

I agreed to accept their submission, and ordered Sir Charles Staveley to advance on Islamgie, relaxing no precautions that I had considered necessary for the attack.

The scarcity of water rendered it impossible to retain any considerable body of Cavalry before Magdāla; my personal escort, under a Native officer, only remained, and with a few details of other corps, was sent under command of Lieutenant Scott, A.D.C., to watch the west side of Magdāla, where they took up a good position, until the arrival of the Cavalry, under Colonel Graves,* who completed the investment up to the Kaffir Ber Gate, which was watched by the Gallas.

The Bashilo was held by the Head-Quarter detachment of the Sind Horse, under Major Briggs, and detachments of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, 3rd and 12th Cavalry, under Major Miller, to secure that point, and provide against the escape of the enemy in that direction by the Menjara Ravine.

A detachment of the Beloochees, under Lieutenant Beville, ascended by the spurs of Fahla, and occupied that important position, where they were reinforced from the Second Brigade by the Head-Quarters Wing of the 10th Native Infantry, under Colonel Field.

The artillery was placed in position, and the troops advanced, preceded by Captain Speedy, of the Intelligence Department, with a small escort of the 3rd Light Cavalry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Loch, to communicate with the Chiefs who wished to surrender, and to prevent any misunderstanding.

No resistance was offered.

Sir Charles Staveley effected an entrance to Islamgie and Selassie, through a difficult crevice in the rocky escarps.

It would be impossible to arrive at any correct estimate, either of the numbers of the armed men who laid down their weapons, or of the masses of people, men, women, and children, whom we found on Islamgie.

It was necessary to collect and guard the arms that were surrendered.

It was also necessary to send down all the disarmed soldiers and the miscellaneous multitude that followed them, to the plain below, before I could proceed actively against Magdāla.

Position of
troops
previous to
attack upon
Magdala.

* 3rd Dragoon Guards (173); Lieutenant-Colonel Tower; 3rd Bombay Cavalry (183), Captain Macnaghten; 12th Bengal Cavalry (96), Major Gough, V.C.

Attack of
Magdala.

Theodore, himself, having abandoned his attempt to escape, was making preparations for defence, and offering us defiance in front of Magdāla.

By three o'clock the Abyssinians having nearly all cleared away from Islamgie, I ordered the attack of Magdāla to be at once carried out.

The entrance of Magdāla is 300 feet above the terreplain of Islamgie, and the ascent is by an extremely steep and rugged path.

Viewing the very difficult nature of the approach, I made the attack as strong as possible, and massed the whole of my artillery* fire to cover it, in order to overpower the enemy's resistance and prevent the heavy casualties which I should otherwise have incurred.

The assaulting force consisted of the 2nd Brigade, led by the 33rd, Duke of Wellington's regiment, accompanied by detachments of the Royal Engineers and Madras and Bombay Sappers and Miners, with means of clearing away obstacles.

The First Brigade to be in close support.

I concentrated the fire of the artillery on the gateway and the north end of the fort, which were crowded with the houses of the soldiers, avoiding as much as possible the higher part of the interior, occupied by the Abyssinian prisoners and non-combatants.

The enemy carefully concealed themselves from view, so that the place seemed almost deserted, although, when entered by our troops, it was found to be thronged with soldiers who had thrown away their arms, released prisoners, and the numerous voluntary and involuntary followers of Theodore's fortunes.

The artificial defences consisted of stone walls, loop-holed and surmounted by strong and thick barricades of thorny stakes, with narrow stone gateways. The lower one built up in the interior, the higher one being 70 feet above the lower, and approached by a very steep narrow path winding amongst the soldiers' huts.

The attack was ably conducted by Sir Charles Staveley, whose report is annexed, and gallantly carried out by the troops. Fortunately the defences were very unscientifically constructed, and though the attack was met by a sharp fire from the enemy, yet they could not direct it on the head of the storming party without exposing themselves to the rapid and fatal fire of the Snider rifle, and our loss was, in consequence, very small.

The Royal Engineers and Sappers, and leading sections of the 33rd Regiment were long before they could force an entrance, and during that time nine officers and men of the Royal Engineers and Sappers received wounds or contusions.

At length an entrance was found by means of the ladders near the gate, and by the leading men of the 33rd, who scaled a rock and turned the defences of the gateway, the enemy was driven to the second barriade, and when that was carried all resistance ceased.

Amongst the dead near the outer gateway were found several of Theodore's most devoted Chiefs; one of them, Dejach Enjeda, had urged Theodore to massacre all the prisoners, a course from which he was dissuaded by others; close to the second gateway lay the body of Theodore.

Theodore's
death.

At the moment when the barricade was forced by the 33rd, Theodore fell, as I have since learned, by his own hand, his troops immediately fled, some by the Kaffir Ber Gate, which was found choked with arms that had been cast away in their flight.

* 4 12-pounder Armstrong guns of the G Battery, 14th Brigade, under Captain Murray; 2 8-inch mortars, manned by detachment of 5 Battery, 25th Brigade, under Brevet-Major Hills, V.C.; 12 7-pounder steel mountain guns of the A and B Battery 21st Brigade, under Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Penn and Captain Twiss; 4 rocket tubes attached to the Steel Battery; 12 rocket tubes, Naval Brigade, under Captain Fellowes.

Of these fugitives the greater part fell into the hands of the Gallas, and the remainder, seeing the fate of their comrades, and hearing the taunting invitations of the Gallas, returned to Magdāla and surrendered.

The command of Magdāla was entrusted to Brigadier-General Wilby, who held it with the 33rd and wing of the 45th Regiments.

Magdala
occupied by
General
Wilby.

So thickly was the fortress inhabited, and so great was the crowd of people, that it was no easy matter to establish order.

Guards were placed at the gates and such places as required protection.

The family of Theodore were committed to the care of Mr. Rassam, who was requested to do all that was in his power for their comfort and protection.

The Abyssinian prisoners were released from their chains, and the very numerous body of Abyssinians whose histories and condition it was impossible at the time to investigate, were collected in an open space in the centre of the fortress, where they could be protected, and where they quickly threw up small huts for themselves, and remained until their final departure.

Release of
Abyssinian
prisoners.

On the 15th, the 4th King's Own Regiment relieved the 33rd in Magdāla, and the 45th were moved to Islamgie to reinforce the detachment of the 10th Native Infantry under Colonel Field, for the protection of the captured arms and ordnance, and to furnish working parties for their destruction.

The inhabitants of Magdāla were collected at Arogie, where great vigilance was necessary to protect them from the Gallas, who were lying in wait, both day and night, for opportunities of plundering and destroying them.

Notwithstanding the friendly relations with the Queens of the Gallas, their people were so little under restraint, that it was frequently necessary to fire upon them to drive them from molesting our water-parties and carrying off the mules. A party of them, in search of plunder, even dared to make their way into Magdāla, where they were captured by the guard of the 33rd Regiment.

On the 15th and 16th, the disarmed soldiers and people of Magdāla made their exodus from Arogie.

Every consideration was shown them, and they were allowed to take all their property.

The Arogie defile was guarded by infantry; and their procession, after crossing the Bashilo, was guarded by cavalry patrols until they reached Wadela.

No doubt many of these people deserved little mercy at the hands of the peasants of Talanta, who had suffered so much misery from Theodore's troops; but, having surrendered to the British force, it was incumbent on us to protect them until they reached a point of safety, from whence they could go to their native districts.

On the morning of the 17th orders were issued to clear every one out of Magdāla by 4 P.M. At that hour the whole of the captured ordnance having been destroyed, the gates of Magdāla were blown up and the whole of the buildings were committed to the flames.

The wounded Abyssinians who had no friends to take charge of them were conveyed into our hospitals.

The elephants and heavier ordnance having been sent in advance on the 15th, on the 18th of April the force re-crossed the Bashilo, on its return to the coast.

I have the honour to enclose plans and photographs to illustrate the course of the operations.

I regret that I have not been able to complete my despatch earlier, but owing to the marching in a difficult country, which has occupied the greater part of the days, and the many demands on my time, it has been quite out of my power.

By the next mails I hope to submit the conclusion of my despatch, which will include the re-embarkation of the greater part of the force, and I shall then have the satisfaction to represent for the favourable consideration of Her Majesty's Government the services of the officers and men of the force which I have had the honour to command, of which it is impossible for me to write in too high terms, and to which I could not now do adequate justice.

NOMINAL ROLL of Officers and Men Wounded at the Capture of Magdāla, on
13th April, 1868.

Camp, near Magdāla, 15th April, 1868.

Corps.	Regi- mental Number.	Rank and Name.	Character of the Wound.
Royal Engineers	..	Major Gordon Pritchard.. ..	Two slight wounds by splinters of stones in right shoulder, with considerable contusion.
"	5957	Lance Corporal E. Wm. Hobson..	Slight splintered wound of right leg.
"	3470	Sapper H. T. Davis	Slight splintered wound of forehead.
H.M.'s 33rd Regiment	..	Serjeant Edward Jones	Gun-shot wound through right calf; severely.
"	..	Private Stephen Lake	Gun-shot wound through right leg; severely.
"	..	" T. Hayne	Spear wound over frontal bone; slight.
"	..	" P. Daly	Gun-shot wound left hand; slight.
"	..	" Hickson	Gun-shot wound of knee; slight.
3rd Light Cavalry	..	Sowar Ramjee Khan	Gun-shot wound right forearm; severely.
Madras Sappers and Miners ..	..	Havildar Koondus Swamee ..	Gun-shot wound left elbow joint; severely.

The following officers and non-commissioned officers were also hurt near the gateway, but were not returned as wounded :—

Captain Elliott, Madras Sappers.

Cornet Dalrymple, 19th Hussars, attached to Madras Sappers.

Serjeant Fielding, Madras Sappers.

Serjeant Dean, 10th Company Royal Engineers.

Lieutenant Morgan, 10th Company Royal Engineers.

**NOMINAL ROLL of Men Wounded in the Action before Magdāla, on the
10th April, 1868.**

Magdāla, 11th April, 1868.

Corps.	Regi- mental Number.	Rank and Names.	Character of the Wound.
H.M.'s 4th King's Own	..	Captain Edward Roberts ..	Dangerously; gun-shot wound of left elbow joint.
" "	672	Serjeant Musketry Instructor Michael Creedon.	Dangerously; gun-shot wound of left leg.
" "	838	Private George Kirby ..	Dangerously; gun-shot wound of left humerus.
" "	1008	Lance Corporal Richard Odwell ..	Severely; gun-shot wound of left foot.
" "	502	Private George Sinfield ..	Slightly; gun-shot wound of right hand.
" "	887	" Michael Unica ..	Slightly; gun shot wound of right hand.
" "	..	Lance Corporal Hugh Evans ..	Slightly; splinter wound of left eye.
23rd Punjab Native Infantry	375	Private Deal Sing ..	Dangerously; gun-shot wound of left femur.
Pioneer	..	" Basa Kall ..	Severely; spear wound of neck.
"	..	" Rall Sing ..	Severely; gun-shot wound of sacrum.
"	..	" Utter Sing ..	Dangerously; gun-shot wound of left femur.
"	..	" Jewal Sing ..	Severely; gun-shot wound of face.
"	879	Bugler Khosal Sing ..	Severely; gun-shot wound of right hand.
"	..	Private Jeeta Sing ..	Severely; gun-shot wound of right thigh.
"	1855	" Sunoop Sing ..	Slightly; contusion of abdomen from a bullet.
"	..	" Goorom Sing ..	Slightly; gun-shot wound of left foot.
"	..	" Hura Sing ..	Slightly; spear wound of hand.
"	..	" Jewan Sing ..	Slightly; spear wound of hand.
"	..	" Jawala Sing ..	Slightly; spear wound of thumb.
Bombay Sappers and Miners	..	C. H. Sumboo ..	Slightly; lost two teeth, upper lip divided by a musket bullet.

From Major-General Sir Charles Staveley, K.C.B., Commanding the 1st Division of the Abyssinian Expeditionary Force, to the Deputy Adjutant-General.

Attack of
Magdala :
Sir C. Stave-
ley's Report.

Head-Quarters, Camp before Magdāla, 14th April, 1868.

HAVING been directed by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to report on the disposition made of the Division under my command for the attack of Magdāla on the 13th instant, a brief description of the place will first be necessary.

The defences consist of three very steep mountains, named Fahla, Selassie, and Magdāla, each being surrounded at the top by steep and precipitous scarps. Fahla and Magdāla are joined to Selassie by saddles, and are nearly at right angles to it. A tolerably good, but in some places very steep, road leads from the British camp up the north side of Fahla, over the saddle along the south of Selassie, and over the next saddle called Islamgie, into Magdāla. A pathway branches off this road at the Fahla saddle to the left, along the foot of the Selassie scarp for some distance, and then turns up a zigzag to the top, another pathway leads direct up to Selassie from the Fahla saddle. Neither of these paths were found practicable for mules, although we had been informed that they were. The summits of Fahla and Magdāla are flat, that of Selassie slopes upwards from the scarp to the centre, and commands the other two mountains.

On the morning of the 13th instant, at seven o'clock, a detail of 50 sabres of the 3rd Light Cavalry (Bombay) and 12th Bengal Cavalry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Loch, of the 3rd Light Cavalry, was sent up to the Fahla saddle, and placed at the disposal of Captain Speedy of the Intelligence Department, to communicate with those of the King's Troops who had surrendered.

On the advance being ordered at half-past eight A.M., according to instructions received from the Commander-in-Chief, the G. 14, R.A., under Captain Murray, and the two 8-inch mortars under Captain Hills, R.A., were placed under Colonel Wallace, R.H.A., in a position covering the troops with Selassie in front and Fahla on the right, the A. 21, Mountain Battery, under Lieutenant-Colonel Penn, having ascended a short distance with the column was placed in position on a spur to the left of the road to cover the head of the ascent, whilst the B 21, R.A., under Captain Twiss, followed next in rear of the leading battalion of infantry.

The 3rd Dragoon Guards, under Lieutenant-Colonel Tower, the 3rd Light Cavalry, under Captain Moore, and the 12th Bengal Cavalry, under Major Gough, V.C., the whole under the command of Colonel Graves, of the 3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, were sent round to the south, and below the mountain, to prevent the escape of the Magdāla garrison in that direction.

The division moved up the road, the 2nd Brigade, with a ladder party of sappers, leading. A company of the Belooch Battalion was sent up the first accessible spur on the right into Fahla, and two companies of the 10th Regiment Native Infantry up the next spur.

On arriving at the Saddle the advanced guard of two companies of the 33rd Regiment were sent up the direct path to Selassie, and the remainder of the 2nd Brigade, and B. 21, R.A., by the pathway above described, to the left. The path up the zigzag was so bad that, although practicable for infantry, only three mountain guns could be passed up, and those by hand. The 1st Brigade moved along the high road to the south of Selassie, followed now by Captain Murray's battery, the two 8-inch mortars, and the Naval Rocket Brigade.

The 2nd Brigade crowned Selassie before the 1st Brigade had moved along its southern side. I mention this because Mr. Waldmaier, one of the released European prisoners, and my guide on the occasion, informed me afterwards, from information he had received, that King Theodore imagined we should advance by the high road along the south of Selassie, without first occupying Selassie, and had arranged accordingly to fall on our troops from the heights overlooking that part of the road; so far, for reasons which it is unnecessary for me to explain, no opposition was offered to our advance.

The 2nd Brigade having occupied Selassie, the King's troops were ordered to lay down their arms, and retire to the plain below; the first order was immediately carried out, and thousands of men, women, and children left the mountain so soon as the narrow exit permitted.

Some of the enemy, and amongst them the King, being observed on the Islamgie Saddle, below Selassie, a company of the 23rd Regiment, under Captain Campbell, was pushed down the slope to the Saddle, and the cavalry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Loch, advanced along the road; these parties were fired on by the enemy, but the fire being returned, and some of the King's guns being turned on him by order of Lieutenant-Colonel Loch, he soon retired into Magdāla.

Dispositions
for the
assault.

I now received the orders of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to make the following dispositions for the assault of Magdāla by the 2nd Brigade supported by the 1st.

The 33rd Regiment, ten companies strong, to advance across Islamgie, two companies skirmishing, and two in support, the remaining six companies, under Major Cooper, commanding the regiment, headed by a detachment of the Royal Engineers under Major Pritchard, and the K Company Madras Sappers and Miners under Captain Elliott, with powder bags, crow bars, and ladders, to form the storming party.

Two companies of Bombay Sappers and Miners, under Captain Leslie and Lieutenant Leacock, to follow in rear of 33rd Regiment.

On nearing the steep ascent to Magdāla gate the skirmishers to halt, and be reinforced by the supports, and keep up a fire at the gate and defences during the ascent of the storming party.

The 45th Regiment, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Parish, to advance in line in rear of the 33rd Regiment, and the 1st Brigade in column some distance in rear in reserve, except the Punjaub Pioneers, left with two companies of the 10th Bombay Native Infantry to guard the camp.

Two companies of the 10th Native Infantry, under Colonel Field, to remain on Selassie to guard the arms, and clear the Abyssinians off the mountain.

The two mountain, and the Naval Rocket, Batteries, under Lieutenant-Colonel Milward, to be placed on the north end of Islamgie, to cover the advance, and keep up a fire at Magdāla Gate.

The G. 14, R.A., and 2 8-inch mortars, under Lieutenant-Colonel Wallace, now arrived on elephants from below, to advance along the main road south of Selassie as far as practicable, and also cover the advance of the troops.

I leave it to His Excellency how far these dispositions were carried out.

There were two lines of defence, with a gate in each, at the head of the very steep and strong ascent of the point of attack; the first gate had a porch 15 feet deep, filled up as high as 12 feet with large stones. From this line of defence the enemy kept up a fire through the loop holes of a wall, topped with a strong fence, and a passage for the column could not be effected here until a ladder had been passed over a wall to the right of the gate.

In the meantime some men of the 33rd Regiment scrambled up a cliff to the right, and succeeding with much difficulty in surmounting the wall and fence, turned the enemy at the gate, and, with the head of the column, drove him to the second line of defence above; this being comparatively weak, no further resistance was offered.

On entering the second the body of King Theodore was found shot through the head by his own hand.

The only two gates by which the garrison might have moved out being watched, the one to the south by our cavalry, and the other to the east by the Gallas, the men lay down their arms, and begged for mercy; this was accorded, and not a man was injured.

I enclose a return of our wounded, all of whom were taken the night of the assault to the field hospital, 2nd Brigade, where they received every attention from Surgeon-Major Wyllie, the Medical Officer in charge.

I also enclose a return showing the number of rank and file of the corps who took part in the attack, and a return of the ordnance found on the three mountains and destroyed; also a photograph of the attack on Magdāla, from a sketch by Major Baigrie, Assistant Quartermaster-General.

I wish to bring the names of the following officers to the notice of his Excellency:—Brigadier-General Wilby, who commanded the 2nd Brigade, and led it to the assault. He mentions the very effective service rendered him by Captain Hicks, his Brigade Major; Captain James, Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General; and Captain Capel, 12th Bengal Cavalry, A.D.C.

Major Pritchard, R.E. (who was wounded), the senior officer with the Royal Engineers and Sappers, and who mentions the able assistance he received from Captain Elliott, commanding K Company, Madras Sappers.

Captain Foord, Lieutenant Bird, Cornet Dalrymple, and Surgeon Pearl, of the