

## THE RELIEF OF KOSHEH.

The following is the *Soulan Times'* telegraphic account of the engagement which took place on the Nile on the 30th December last, between the English and Egyptian troops under General Stephenson, and the Arabs:—

"The force moved out from camp at Kosheh at five this morning. The 1st Brigade, under General Butler, swept round in the desert for three miles in a south-easterly direction. The 2nd Brigade moved in echelon with the 1st Brigade about a mile from the river. A portion of the 2nd Brigade, under Colonel Huyshe, including the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders and the blacks, advanced from Kosheh Fort along the river bank. The 2nd Brigade wheeled to their right on reaching the ridge above the fortified houses which have been held by the enemy, and which are within 2,000 yards of Kosheh Fort. At 6.15 a.m. Major Whateley's battery opened fire, and the enemy replied with musketry. The Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment) then opened fire. Meanwhile, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders and the Egyptian battalion advanced in attack formation along the river bank from Kosheh. When within charging distance Colonel Whateley's battery ceased fire, and the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, with the Egyptians, took the houses at the point of the bayonet, killing about fifty of the enemy. The enemy stuck obstinately to their loopholed mud houses. Meanwhile General Butler, with the 1st Brigade, had wheeled to the right about three miles beyond the 2nd Brigade, and found the enemy in force on the ridges above Ginnis. His infantry, advancing under a heavy fire and in line, took ridge after ridge by assault, the enemy fighting with great determination and bravery, and charging to within ten yards of the infantry. Gen. Butler had despatched his cavalry to cut off the retreat of the Arabs in a southerly direction. The two brigades gradually converged upon the village of Ginnis, where the rebels had pitched their headquarters. The enemy were soon completely routed, and fled southwards, leaving all their camp and banners. General Butler captured two guns, twenty standards, and the whole of the Arab camp. The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders and the Egyptians captured one gun and two standards. The English and Egyptian artillery made excellent practice. The Egyptians behaved exceedingly well. The enemy fled in the utmost disorder, throwing away their ammunition and baggage. The force occupies Attab to-day, about three miles to the south of Ginnis. The casualties include Lieutenant Soltan, of the Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Berkshire Regiment), killed; Lieutenant Wignan, of the same regiment, wounded; one officer of the Egyptian army killed, and about fifty of the combined forces killed and wounded. The enemy's loss was very severe. The hostile Arabs on the west bank also retreated to the south."

In reporting this action to the Khedive General Stephenson congratulates him on the fine behaviour of the Egyptian troops, who, perhaps for the first time, proved themselves more than a match for the enemy in the open, and who captured all the four guns that were taken.

In his official report to the Horse Guards Stephenson's words are: "Grenfell commanded division, and to him alone is due, with those under his command, the whole credit for all arrangements and operations of frontier force, including yesterday, which have been made and carried out by him for some months past with very great skill and intelligence, and unceasing energy. Butler commanded his force remarkably well, and completely carried out his portion of plan; he had the brunt of the fight."

In addition to this formal account of the battle the *Kingston News* has published some most interesting letters from Lieut. E. Hewett, son of Lieut.-Col. Hewett, Commandant of the Royal Military College, one of the cadets who left the college last year to take a commission in the Royal West Kent Regiment, now doing duty in Egypt. As will be seen, he has had some lively experiences already, and both he and his father are to be congratulated on so auspicious an opening for his chosen career. Two letters graphically describing the country and his experiences in Egyptian campaigning precede one describing his part in the battle, which alone we can spare space to reproduce, though all are equally well written:—

Abasis on the Nile, Jan. 7, 1886.—I expect you will be rejoicing by this time over my having passed through my first battle all correct, and I think I may say with truthfulness that I did not funk once, even when the niggers charged. We left Firket and marched for three hours, then brought up within two miles of Kosheh, which we intended to relieve. There were two brigades: 1st West Kent, Berkshire, Durhams; 2nd Cameron Highlanders, Yorkshire, Black Battalion. At two the next morning we fell in and started on our march, our brigade, No. 1, to surround the village of Guinness. It was fearful work marching in the dark. The ground was stony ravines, and all the time

we were scrambling over hillocks of very crumbling rock, as we stumbled along—the men marched well. The advance was in echelon of battalions with the camels batteries and provision camels on our left. Our regiment had the lead. As daylight increased, the sight was very weird; the tall camels with the guns on their backs, or bundles of blankets, and boxes of food, stood out against the red sky, while the dark moving mass of infantry looked like a wild dream. We all have gone into red; so, officers, not having red patrol jackets, took the soldiers' red jumpers and just stuck officers' badges on the shoulder straps. There were some queer fittings among us. We were only strong enough to have an officer to each company and I still kept my command.

At 6 a.m. the first gun was fired from Kosheh fort, at the village. This was the signal to advance the second brigade, which was to attack. We wheeled to the right and advanced up the ridge. This ridge was lined at 6.30 a.m. Here the game commenced, and I got my baptism of fire. The Arabs were in swarms, from 400 to 1,200 yards distant, all along our front; and their riflemen, having previously got the range, sent a shower of bullets over the ridge. We were marching in quarter column, so we extended into line and opened fire by volleys by half companies, mostly. Just as I had ordered my company to lie down, I saw an officer of the Berkshires shot through the head. He was killed instantaneously, and more men commenced dropping all along the line and were carried to the rear to the doctors. It was here that we lost heavily, and here the toughest fighting of the day occurred. My sensations were of an intensely confined excitement, only kept down by my having to control the fire of my company. The men behaved splendidly, but they wished to be letting off their rifles all the time. We had to be walking up and down the line seeing that the men kept down; and fired steadily, while the bullets whizzed past our heads like fan. I did not see an officer duck, while for myself I would not; nor did I see any officer of my regiment lie down, and after a time I took no notice except to direct my fire more carefully. I did not feel flurried at all, or think of a chance of being shot. I suppose it was the example of our colonel, who sat on his horse, only every now and then going slowly down our line to say something to one of us youngsters. It was exciting watching the enemy dart from one shelter to another. They are magnificent skirmishers, taking advantage of every particle of cover. Soon after 7 a.m. the Egyptian camel corps surprised some of the Arabs in a ravine, and shot them all; but the noise brought down the mass of Arab spearmen, who had, previous to this, been behind a ridge out of sight. About 600 spearmen rushed out and chased them right into our lines, and, at the time, I thought they would get around the left of our line; but, luckily, Major Jones swung back his company on my left, and the Egyptian camel corps men retired through the gap. The poor bag-gurs had only twenty rounds and had expended it.

It was grand to see the rush of the fanatics, the swordsmen swinging their two-handed swords, hamstringing the camels. The Gypies fought well, slipping off the camels and bayoneting the niggers. I saw one Gypsy shoot a spearman, and, just as he was getting in another cartridge, a big Arab, with a spear like a shovel, sent it right through his side; but, at the same instant, another Gypsy camel corpsman bayoneted the Arab three times in the body, after which he again tried to send his spear into his victim, but fell back dead. I was awfully frightened that my company would fire, but luckily I kept them from it, and the camel corps men got into our lines and formed up, while we poured a volley into the Arabs, which made them rush to shelter. Several were killed behind my company. They don't seem to care for death a bit. One Arab advanced within fifteen yards of our line, brandishing his sword after his comrades had retired. The hatred between the Gypies and the Arabs is awful to see, the Egyptian camel corps blowing the brains out of dead and wounded alike. One wretched Arab was found wounded, so one of them fired his rifle into his body, so that it set his clothes on fire. The poor wretch got up and tried to show fight but three Egyptians ran up and fired three rounds into him. It was a terrible sight. The Arabs cut up every Egyptian they killed; I saw some horribly gashed. There was no quarter on either side during the battle. The Arabs cannot be trusted, for they sham dead, and when you pass they jump up and spear you.

At about 8 o'clock the enemy's fire slackened, and at last our shell and rifle fire made them retire. The whole line then advanced and wheeled to the right into the second position, and then fired volleys into the village, while the Egyptian camel gun battery poured shell after shell into it. At about 900 yards we again halted, and the Arabs again tried to rush out in swarms, but volley after volley was fired into them till they were driven back, and retreated behind the river bank, as we afterwards found out. We advanced to within 100 yards of the village, and our marksmen were told off to pick off the remaining riflemen. After waiting from ten to twenty minutes, we went into the village with