

THE ASHANTEE WAR.

THE BRITISH ADVANCE.

CAPE COAST CASTLE, Dec. 14.—On the 27th ultimo Colonel Wood attacked, with a few hundreds of his irregulars, the Ashantee rear guard, and drove them pell mell into Faisu, when the whole force under Amanquattia at once turned out, and compelled him to make a very speedy retreat. The want of disciplined troops was then most severely felt, for although the Houssas and Kussus fought most pluckily and daringly as long as their side was on the offensive, they became quite panic stricken once it became necessary to retreat; in fact, it is unfortunately too notorious that they ignominiously ran, and that all the efforts of the few European officers with them were unavailing to stop them. At length, the arrival of darkness and of a few West India troops under Sub Lieutenant Patchett put an end to the fighting, and averted what otherwise might have been a great disaster, as the Ashantees had assumed the formation of an immense horse shoe, and had almost enveloped the small force opposed to them.

The following day Amanquattia evacuated Faisu and marched further north, and today Colonel Wood's command, which has been reinforced by 100 men sent up by King George of Bonny and commanded by his son, Prince Charles, leaves Satah for that station, where it will probably be encamped for a few days until more certain intelligence of the Ashantee movements has been gained.

A detachment of fifty Europeans, consisting of the blue jackets and marines, arrived a few hours ago, and have taken up their quarters in the new huts specially built for their accommodation. All along the road from Cape Coast and at intervals of about ten miles barracks for Europeans are being constructed, some of which give promise of being very comfortable indeed. These huts are constructed of bamboo, which is plentiful in every part of the country, and are thatched with palm leaves; and it is surprising to watch the rapidity with which they are put up.

One of the prisoners lately taken near Dunquah, on being informed that it was our intention to go to Coomassie, burst out laughing and ridiculed the idea. On Col. Festing asking him what he meant and why the idea appeared to him so very absurd, he replied that no English army could ever get to Coomassie, for that the whole Ashantee nation would turn out, and that the only passage would be over their dead bodies. But, in spite of this bravado, King Koffee Kallalli, monarch of Ashantee, must by this time have begun to quake in his shoes, for it must have become evident to him that the white man's determination is not to be shaken; and that, plucky, determined, and numerous as his troops may be, they are no match for those terrible men who come against them, armed with rockets and with the rocket's "pickin'" (child)—as they have christened the Snider, thereby intimating that in their opinion it is the next terrible weapon against which they have to contend; and they ought to know, for during the last few months some thousands of rounds have poured into them. We are now barely fifteen miles from the Prah, and every step we advance facilitates our movements, as the country is becoming gradually clearer and sufficiently open to admit of troops moving through it and seeing what they are about.

The real work of the war must now soon begin. So far nothing has been done save

making preparations for the real business to come, and most effective and most thoughtful preparations they have been. Mansu is one vast storehouse and hospital, where everything necessary for the sick and wounded is to be found; but on reaching the Prah, which we shall do shortly, I presume that all preparatory measures must of necessity cease, and that the fighting, which these preparations have led up to, will then commence in earnest. If I may venture upon anticipating what Sir Garnet's plan will probably be, I should say that after having collected his troops at Prahsu he will make a dash for Coomassie and strike blow upon blow and deliver fucer upon fucer until the capital of the Ashantees be reached; for, when one comes to think of it, it would be absurd to suppose that the systematic advance which is being made on this side of the Prah can be attempted on the other if the campaign is to be finished this dry season, and we are much more likely to carry terror into the hearts of the Ashantees by following the celebrated dictum of Danton—"De l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace." If there be a leader prepared to carry that advice into effect, I am much mistaken if that leader be not Sir Garnet. During the short time he has been here he has completely won over those under his command, and speaking to an officer the other day I casually asked whether he considered that Sir Garnet was a popular leader, when he replied: "My dear fellow, he is the kind of a man a fellow would go to— for." Such a remark as that speaks volumes, and no leader capable of calling forth such sentiment could be unsuccessful.

The expedition probably will not suffer through the laying down of the railway turning out to be impracticable, for the energetic and hard-working officer in charge of the transport branch of the Control Department, Commissary O'Connor, works night and day to prevent any breakdown in that all important branch. At five o'clock every morning he may be seen in the Castle yard mustering his Amazons, giving them their loads, and despatching them to their destinations, and it not infrequently happens that just as, tired and leg-weary, he is about to tumble into bed, a messenger will come to him with a requisition for a hammock for some person going off to the front. Owing to combination of fortuitous circumstances, he is now superintending and performing single-handed the duties of the transport branch at Cape Coast Castle, and, moreover, owing to the indisposition of Controller Irvine, he had at one time the duties of senior control officer to perform in addition to his own.

Runaways report that Amanquattia and his army crossed the Prah, and are clear of Fanteeland; and it may now be accepted as a fact that Sir Garnet Wolseley, without any extraneous aid, and merely with the materials he found on his arrival at Cape Coast Castle has cleared the Gold Coast of the Ashantees, and rendered a march on Coomassie possible. The troops who have come out all appear to be in very high spirits and to be eager for the fray, as true Britons always are; and it was very amusing to see the manner in which every one boarding the *Himalaya* was outton holed by some of the fresh arrivals, and asked all kinds of questions as to what was going on; the two most important queries, as a rule, being respecting the whereabouts of the Ashantees and the amount of personal luggage they could take to the front.

The *Himalaya* has brought news that the Forty second Highlanders and the Twenty-seventh Regiment have been ordered out. This intelligence has given intense satisfaction, as if the Ashantees really intend fighting; our force, with that addition, will not be a bit too numerous after we cross the Prah. I say if the Ashantees really intend fighting; for I still adhere to the opinion I expressed long ago that when the Ashantee chiefs are fully convinced of their impotence against the army which we shall put into the field, peace will be asked for. Up to the present they have no reason to believe that they cannot contend with us with some chance of success in the bush, and particularly in their own country, where they will have abundant supplies of both men and ammunition; but if they entertain any such ideas, the first real fight will destroy the illusion, and show them the hopelessness of resistance.

Everything is now quiet, but we are gradually and surely pushing our way. The labours of the nine weeks are now beginning to bear fruit, and in the next three weeks will probably culminate with a storm upon the Prah such as we never witnessed there before.

The *Tamer* came with the Second Battalion of the Twenty third Regiment and some artillery; all well on board.

I understand that both the *Himalaya* and *Tamer* are to cruise well out to sea until the 30th instant, and if this information be correct, as I have every reason to believe it is, the Prah cannot be crossed by the main body until the end of the first week in January. The difficulty of obtaining a sufficient number of labourers for the transport department still exists; half the number required is not forthcoming in spite of most enticing wages; and although the Elminas have cried peccavimus and have sued for pardon, none of them will come forward and work. The *Adela* will leave and call at the different ports along the coast as far as the Gambia in search of recruits for the Transport Corps.—*Liverpool Post*.

LIFE IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP.

CAPE COAST CASTLE, Dec. 13th.—Before attacking the Ashantee camp at Mampon, you will remember that messengers were sent from Elmina and Cape Coast Castle to the Ashantee Commander-in-chief. I had the good fortune the other day at Elmina to fall in with the bearer of the letter to Amanquattiah from that place, and to hear his story. It is worth repeating, if only for the insight which it gives into the inner life of the Ashantee camp. It furnishes, also, an idea of the fighting at Dunquah, from an Ashantee point of view. Not much importance, it would seem, was attached to this man's mission at headquarters, and he was shortly succeeded by the more important embassy of native police men, from Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had an interview with Amanquattiah while the Elmina messenger was there. These envoys direct from Sir Garnet Wolseley were courteously treated and allowed to return. The story this man tells is as follows—

"I was called by Quamina Esserie, Chief of Elmina, and asked if I could go to the big General at the Ashantees camp. I said I should fear to go—I might be killed. He replied 'That is impossible; neither the Ashantees nor any other nation would kill or detain an ambassador in time of war.' I, therefore, agreed to go, and at three next morning he came and woke me, and sent me to the Governor of the Castle (of El-