

Cape Coast, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Festing, R. M. A. The detachments of the 2nd West India regiment were embarked on board the gunboat *Decoy* and landed before our arrival at Elmina. The marines and blue jackets of the *Barracouta* being stowed in three large troop-boats, were towed in a steam pinnace to the margin of the surf and were got on shore after some difficulty and delay. This was the only part of the business which did not work well; however, no harm was done. As soon as the men were landed the columns were formed, and at 5 a.m., the march began.

It was a clear calm morning, with scarcely a cloud in the sky, and as the sun rose above the horizon, birds sang sweetly from the bushes which covered the plain. We marched in single file along a foot path, which was sometimes of red clay, sometimes of golden colored sand; at one moment we dived into a thicket deep and dark, and the next passed out into green meadows with tall tufted grass, and large white flowers, bathing in sunlit dew. But then came a quagmire of mud, black as registration ink, and giving forth an odor compared with which the Thames at low tide is rose water; and never have I seen, such abominable haunts as the two through which we passed on our way. The country was at first tolerably open, and we could see far ahead the Houssas running along thickets and copses, to and fro, on the right, and on the left, like a pack of hounds, their officers, in Elwood helmets and shining white puggarees, plainly to be seen, and always well ahead of their men. One or two shots were heard, but still it was, by no means certain that we should find the enemy. We had marched about three miles, and I was beginning to fear that the day would be blank, when of a sudden we heard a tremendous fusillade, and a strange gleeful yelling cry, prolonged and incessant—the Houssas giving tongue. As we pushed on, we found that the jungle was before us, stretching away on both sides as far as the eye could reach. In the midst was a hill, also covered with jungle, except that on its summit was a clearing or plantation. Some men were seen crossing this patch, and Lieutenant Eyre "dropped" one at 300 yards, which probably astonished the natives. A little to the right of this clearing, and also on the top of the hill, was a village. The general and his staff, who were well in front, pushed on with the gun and rocket tube, while Colonel Wood took up a strong position in the rear. The Ashantees and their allies, as usual, employed flanking tactics, and for some time front and rear were equally hard at war; but in half an hour they were driven clear away in spite of the thickness of the bush. The seven-pounder was brought to bear on the village, and Lieutenant Allen set some houses on fire with rockets, making admirable practice. Brackenbury and Charteris were the first to enter the village, with some Royal Marine artillerymen, while Crease cleared the bush on its right. Afterwards passing through the village, he saved a child from a burning house; and throughout the severe march which followed, the Marines disputed as to who should "carry the kid." The native axemen did their work with great pluck, and Captain Buller, who was surveying the road upon the march, had a slug lodged in his leather compass case. The first shot was fired at Lieut. Grayes, and lodged in his gaiter. The wounds caused by the slugs were as a rule slight, but Colonel McNeill had a bad wound in the wrist, similar to those which are caused by fragments of

shell. Two Houssas were shot in vital parts, and have since died. Captain Free mantle was hit by a slug, which passed clean through his right arm, but he went through the whole day's work; and Captain Forbes, of the 2nd West India regiment, was wounded in the hand. Much praise was bestowed on Surgeon Adams, R. N., for his skill and promptitude. At 7.13 the heavy firing began; at 7.50 the village was taken and the enemy driven from the bush; at 8.30 the assembly was sounded; and at 9.45 the march was resumed.

It is difficult to describe the human tornado which raged for a half-an-hour over half a mile of African bush. The enemy were on all sides, and the firing incessant. The air was all flame and smoke, and filled with various sounds—the booming of the guns, the whizzing of rockets, the cracking of Sniders, shouts, groans, laughter, the whistling of slugs, the Houssas chanting verses from the Koran, English cheering, and then, as the village began to burn, the roaring of flames, explosions of powder, and blazing of ruins. The enemy fought in silence, they offered a steady resistance, but were surprised and discomfited, and had not a yell left in them. Their loss cannot be even approximately estimated, but must have been severe. Among the dead bodies found was that of a Houssa, probably an Ashantee slave.

While we were at breakfast we heard big guns. We marched through a thick jungle, almost without opposition, to Ampuena, on the beach, and destroyed that village. Ampuena lies between Elmina and Ampeneo. The wounded, in twelve hammocks were sent home with an escort, and as we had already made a severe march, only volunteers were accepted for the weary trudge along the beach to Ampeneo. As we approached that village, surfboats came off from the *Decoy*, and landed a case of claret, some lockers of water, and some bottles of brandy for which we were not ungrateful, and the following officers landed:—Commander Luxmoore, of the *Argus*, [having recovered from the wounds received at Chamab], with Lieutenants Young and Burr, Staff-surgeon Lucas, and Sublieutenant Sanderson. From the *Decoy* came Lieutenant Hext and Surgeon Fisher, with a boatswain and twenty men. We found that two villages were before us—Akimpfoo, which was destroyed without resistance, and half a mile further on, Ampeneo, which had hoisted a flag of defiance. On the beach in front of this village, lay the corpse of some poor unfortunate Fantee, with the head and right arm severed from the body. Ampeneo was burnt to the ground, but contained nothing except cats, bats and rats, which, especially the last, came out of the flames in great numbers. The enemy attacked the least extremity, and exposed themselves to a volley from the blue jackets of the *Decoy* which laid many of them low; then they tried the other end, but were again beaten off with loss, and wounding only one of our men. They had some rifles among them, as we could tell by the peculiar sound of the bullets in the air. These were probably Enfields.

The General would not allow a pursuit into the bush, the sun being low and the men fatigued. At 4.25 he embarked on board the *Decoy*, and I was kindly offered a passage. We arrived Cape Coast Castle at seven p.m.

Let us now consider what is the value of this affair. In itself, merely a day's skirmishing, it is raised to much importance by the experience it has yielded and the moral

effect it has produced. The Fantees are rejoiced to find that the new governor will lead them to battle himself, and they also admire the style in which he carried out his enterprise. The attack on Emsaman was a genuine surprise; the natives had no time to remove powder, their corn, their sheep, and their ram; muskets and drums and powder belts were found in the village; a mother ran away leaving her child behind. Thus the Ashantees, who deal in surprises, were beaten at their own cards by the white men. It was also a complete day's work. Altogether six hostile villages were destroyed. What was the consequence? The Fantees are now willing to fight; they have confidence in the man who is to lead them. Secondly, it is shown what Englishmen can do in this climate. If the fighting was small here to the heroes of Sebastopol and India, the same cannot be said of the march, which amounted to twenty-one miles on a broiling day. The marines had been three months on board the *Simoon* without going on shore, yet they did the march in excellent style. Thirdly, it is now proved that, even in the bush, the natives cannot contend with the Snider.

Of the fourth part of the work of the Prussian General Staff on the war of 1870, to which we referred last week, the correspondent of an English paper says: "The fourth volume of the German General Staff's official history of the Franco-German war has just been published at Berlin. The period it deals with is the German march upon Metz and the operations before that fortress up to the battle of Colombey-Neuvilly, which occurred on the 14th of August. The greater part of the book is taken up by the narrative of the march, and this account brings the action of the German cavalry prominently forward. The volume may therefore be looked upon in a certain sense as an essay on the duties of cavalry, illustrated by historical examples."

The *Irish Times* understands that Mr. Gladstone during the recess has devoted much time and attention to the consideration of the plans proposed for preventing the annual destruction caused by the inundations of the Shannon and its tributaries. There is, therefore, some reasonable hope that a question which has been agitated for twenty years may be at last satisfactorily dealt with.

An alternation has been made in the manufacture of the buckshot cartridges at the British Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, by the substitution of bone-dust in lieu of plaster of Paris to fill in the interstices between the shots and to solidify the charge sufficiently to preserve its cohesion. From the experiments made with the two kinds of buckshot cartridges at the targets it appears that those in which bone-dust is used make twenty per cent. better practice than the original pattern.

The Mexican government is engaged in the work of re-establishing the navy. General Foster, military commander at Vera Cruz, has been called to the capital to receive orders from the supreme government to purchase four steamers in England for the navy.

Sir Stafford Northcote presided at the general court of the Hudson's Bay Company, when a report for 1872 was submitted, and an interim dividend declared of 6s per share. The governors and committee were re-elected.

Mr. Baring has left Lord Northbrook, the present Governor of India, one million and a quarter pounds sterling.