

versed and Coomassie was still six miles away, it was evident that if the Ashantis continued to fight with the same desperation, and if the baggage had to be carried on step by step from village to village, the force would not get half-way on to Coomassie by nightfall.

The instant the baggage was all in, preparations were made for a fresh advance. Rait's guns, as usual, opened to clear the way, and the 42d this time led the advance. The enemy's fire was very heavy and the Highlanders at first advanced but slowly, their wounded straggling back in quick succession into the village. After twenty minutes' work, however, they had pushed back the enemy beyond the brow of the hill, and from this point they advanced with great rapidity, dashing forward at times at the double, until the foe, scared by the sudden onslaught, gave way altogether and literally fled at the top of their speed. War-drums and horns, chiefs' stools and umbrellas, littered the next village and told how sudden and complete had been the stampede. As the 42d advanced troops were from time to time sent forward until a despatch came in from Sir A. Alison saying that all the villages save the last were taken, that opposition had ceased, and that the enemy were in complete rout. Up to this time the attack of the enemy upon the rear of the village had continued with unabated vigour, and shot and slug continually fell in the place itself. The news from the front was soon known and was hailed with a cheer which went right round the line of defence, and, whether scared by its note of triumph or because they too had received the news, the efforts of