

From Major-General Sir Herbert Kitchener, Sirdar, to Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Grenfell, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., Commanding in Egypt.

Omdurman,
September 5, 1898.

SIR,

IT having been decided that an Expeditionary Force of British and Egyptian troops should be sent against the Khalifa's Army in Omdurman, I have the honour to inform you that the following troops were concentrated at the north end of the Sixth Cataract, in close proximity to which an advanced supply depôt had been previously formed at Nasri Island.

BRITISH TROOPS.

21st Lancers.
32nd Field Battery, Royal Artillery.
37th Howitzer Battery, Royal Artillery.
2 40-prs., Royal Artillery.
Infantry Division.
1st Brigade.
1st Battalion Warwickshire Regiment.
1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment.
1st Battalion Seaforth Highlanders.
1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders.
6 Maxims.
Detachment, Royal Engineers.
2nd Brigade.
1st Battalion Grenadier Guards.
1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers.
2nd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers.
2nd Battalion Rifle Brigade.
4 Maxims.
Detachment, Royal Engineers.

EGYPTIAN TROOPS.

9 Squadrons, Cavalry.
1 Battery, Horse Artillery.
4 Field batteries.
10 Maxims.
8 Companies, Camel Corps.
1st Brigade.
2nd Egyptian Battalion.
9th, 10th, and 11th Sudanese Battalions.
2nd Brigade.
8th Egyptian Battalion.
12th, 13th, and 14th Sudanese Battalions.
3rd Brigade.
3rd, 4th, 7th, and 15th Egyptian Battalions.
4th Brigade.
1st, 5th, 17th, and 18th Egyptian Battalions.
Camel Transport.

On 24th August the troops began moving by successive divisions to Jebel Royau where a depôt of supplies and a British communication hospital of 200 beds were established.

On 28th August the Army marched to Wadi el Abid, and on the following day proceeded to Sayal, from whence I despatched a letter to the Khalifa warning him to remove his women and children, as I intended to bombard Omdurman unless he surrendered.

Next day the Army marched to Sururab, and, on 1st September, reached the village of Egeiga, 2 miles south of the Kerreri hills and within 6 miles of Omdurman. Patrols of the enemy's horsemen were frequently seen during the march falling back before our Cavalry, and their outposts being driven in beyond Egeiga, our advanced scouts came in full view of Omdurman, from which large bodies of the enemy were seen streaming out and marching north.

At noon, from the slopes of Jebel Surgham, I saw the entire Dervish army some 3 miles off advancing towards us, the Khalifa's black flag surrounded by his Mulazemin (bodyguard) being plainly discernible. I estimated their numbers at

35,000 men, though, from subsequent investigation, this figure was probably under-estimated, their actual strength being between forty and fifty thousand. From information received I gather that it was the Khalifa's intention to have met us with this force at Kerreri, but our rapid advance surprised him.

The troops were at once disposed around the village of Egeiga, which formed an excellent position with a clear field of fire in every direction, and shelter-trenches and zaribas were prepared.

At 2 p.m. our vedettes reported that the enemy had halted, and later on it was observed that they were preparing bivouacs and lighting fires. Information was received that the Khalifa contemplated a night attack on our position, and preparations to repel this were made, at the same time the Egeiga villagers were sent out to obtain information in the direction of the enemy's camp with the idea that we intended a night attack, and, this coming to the Khalifa's knowledge, he decided to remain in his position; consequently we passed an undisturbed night in the zariba.

Meanwhile the gunboats, under Commander Keppel, which had shelled the Dervish advanced camp near Kerreri on 31st August, proceeded at daylight on 1st September, towing the Howitzer Battery to the right bank, whence, in conjunction with the Irregulars under Major Stuart Wortley, their advance south was continued. After two forts had been destroyed and the villages gallantly cleared by the Irregulars, the howitzers were landed in a good position on the right bank, from whence an effective fire was opened on Omdurman, and after a few rounds the conspicuous dome over the Mahdi's tomb was partially demolished, whilst the gunboats, steaming past the town, also effectually bombarded the forts, which replied with a heavy but ill-directed fire.

At dawn on the following morning (2nd September) our mounted patrols reported the enemy advancing to attack, and by 6.30 a.m. the Egyptian Cavalry, which had been driven in, took up a position with the Horse Artillery, Camel Corps, and four Maxims on the Kerreri ridge on our right flank.

At 6.40 a.m. the shouts of the advancing Dervish army became audible, and a few minutes later their flags appeared over the rising ground, forming a semicircle round our left and front faces. The guns of the 32nd Field Battery opened fire at 6.45 a.m. at a range of 2,800 yards, and the Dervishes, continuing to advance rapidly, delivered their attack with all their accustomed dash and intrepidity. In a short time the troops and Maxims on the left and front were hotly engaged, whilst the enemy's riflemen, taking up positions on the slopes of Jebel Surgham, brought a long-range fire to bear on the zariba, causing some casualties, and their spearmen, continually reinforced from the rear, made attempt after attempt to reach our lines.

Shortly after 8 a.m. the enemy's main attack was repulsed. At this period a large and compact body of Dervishes was observed attempting to march round our right, and advancing with great rapidity they soon became engaged with our mounted troops on the Kerreri ridge. One of the gunboats which had been disposed to protect the river flanks at once proceeded down stream to afford assistance to the somewhat hardly pressed mounted troops, and coming within close range of the Dervishes inflicted heavy loss on them, upwards of 450 men being killed in a comparatively circumscribed area. The Artillery and Maxims on the left face of the zariba also co-operated, and the