

Ojesu on the morning of 31st August. The Ashantis had taken up a strong position behind stockades.

Two Vickers-Maxim mountain guns, under the Honorary Lieutenant Halfpenny, Royal Artillery, made good practice; the 2nd Battalion Central Africa Regiment, well led by Major Gordon, Gordon Highlanders, turned the enemy's right flank after sharp fighting, during which Lieutenant Burton, Royal Munster Fusiliers, was killed, and Sergeant-Major Slattery, Scottish Rifles, wounded. Captain Johnston-Stewart, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, fortunately emerged with his company from the thick bush just as the enemy were crossing his front, and punished them severely. The West African Frontier Force had meantime worked round the enemy's left flank, and Lieutenant-Colonel Brake, seeing the fight was won, sounded the charge, and all the troops of the fighting line rushed Ojesu town, the enemy clearing out as fast as they could.

Lieutenant-Colonel Brake was himself wounded in the neck, fortunately not severely, and the other casualties amounted to one officer killed, one British non-commissioned officer wounded, one man killed and twenty-nine wounded.

6. On 1st September the Ojesu column reached Kumassi, where I now had over two thousand troops, and several thousand levies of the native chiefs of Akim, Donkera, Swedru, and Bekwai. These levies were never employed in the fighting line, but followed the columns and brought in supplies, and also patrolled the country within ten miles of Kumassi.

7. From 1st to 20th September many of the rebel leaders came into Kumassi and surrendered unconditionally. I learnt from them that a number of their most prominent men had been killed in action, or died of wounds, and that the people as a whole were tired of fighting, but that Queen Ashantuah, Chief Kofi Kofia, and some others had great influence over them and would not surrender so long as they could keep together four or five thousand fighting men. There is not much use in arguing with an Ashanti when he means fighting, and I therefore decided to follow up these obstinate chiefs and keep them incessantly on the move, so as to make their own people tire of them, and induce them to give them up.

Most of the troops were much done up with many months' incessant marching, the carriers also were weary from poor food, and want of shelter; but to give the enemy time to think was to double his strength; so columns marched in every direction from Kumassi, surveying the country, collecting food and destroying such villages as were known to harbour rebels. During the process the numerous strong stockades that completely surrounded Kumassi were destroyed. The labour involved in their construction must have been immense, and it proved how determined had been the intentions of the Ashantis.

8. On 8th September, Major Reeve, Leinster Regiment, with one gun and 400 men was sent to punish the Ashantis who had attacked Captain Benson at Bohenkra. This column was away a fortnight, and destroyed Bohenkra and the neighbouring villages, recovered much Government property, and then, swinging round to the north, traversed the whole Juabin and Agogo country, returning to Kumassi by the Mampon road. There was now no enemy left in Ashanti to the south and east from Kumassi to the River Prah, and had there been a few more troops available the country to the west as far as the French possessions could have been cleared at once; but it was absolutely necessary to give some rest to

the men, and therefore not more than two big columns could at any time be spared.

9. On 20th September, Major Holford, 7th Hussars, with one Vickers-Maxim mountain gun and 500 men marched for the Northern territories, 100 miles distant, and re-opened the Kumassi-Kintampo road; he destroyed the town of Sekodomassi and neighbouring villages, as the chief had been a prominent rebel; collected a great number of firearms, and received the submission of many chiefs, including King Inkanza, of Adansi, a very old man, whose base treachery had cost us many lives and delayed the relief of Kumassi by two months. Leaving 100 men at Kintampo, this column returned to Kumassi, having marched over 200 miles.

10. At the same time I sent another force of two guns and 900 men, under command of Major Montanaro, Royal Artillery, to proceed parallel to Major Holford's column for first two days, and then to move north-west on Ofinsu, where spies reported the Ashantis under command of Kofi Kofia had again collected and meant to fight.

On the 22nd September the column was attacked whilst on the march near the village of Dinassi. The enemy were very numerous, but they had to deal with Major Montanaro, who has proved himself a first-rate soldier. The Ashantis, evidently tired of building stockades, which were invariably breached by the Vickers-Maxim mountain guns or carried with the bayonet, tried new tactics and assailed the long column in front and all along its left flank. The guns came into action to the front, and did very useful work, firing shrapnel and case. Two companies of the 1st West African Frontier Force and 2nd Central Africa Regiment worked round the enemy's left, whilst the company of Sikhs and some 1st Central Africa Regiment, under Major Cobbe, advancing steadily and using a Maxim, cleared the Ashantis out of a strong position on our left.

Major Montanaro, seeing that they were beginning to give way, ordered the charge. Major Melliss led the right and Major Cobbe the left, the enemy attempted to retire by their left-rear, and in doing so ran into our right-advanced companies and suffered considerable loss from the bayonets of the Hausas and Central Africans. Captain Stephenson, Manchester Regiment, 1st West African Frontier Force, was unfortunately killed in the final charge; Major Melliss was wounded, one man killed, and six wounded. The enemy left 35 dead behind them. The fighting lasted 40 minutes, and ended in a regular rout, our men followed the Ashantis for half a mile, but once they got on the run no regular soldier can catch them up, and the native levies will not even then attempt it. The new tactics had failed, but nevertheless 10 days later were to be employed again, and for the last time.

11. My intention was as soon as Ofinsu had been destroyed to send a column of 1,200 men to march to Berekum, via Odumassi, 100 miles north-west of Kumassi and thus leave no part of the country unsearched and if possible capture Ashantuah and Kofi Kofia; but Kofi Kofia had no intention of being captured, and notwithstanding his defeat at Dinassi only ten days before, he moved west, and collecting all the chiefs and fighting men he could muster, the total amounting to some 5,000 men, and including the famous tribesmen of Achuma, who had never yet been defeated, he planted himself near the village of Obassa, only 12 miles north-west from Kumassi, and barred the road to Berekum. The position was deliberately prepared; no stockades were erected, but the undergrowth was carefully thinned or entirely