The Sun.

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THE WAR IN THE LAVA BEDS

RESULT OF TWO DAYS' FIGHTING WITH THE MODOCS.

Col. Gillem's Troops Closing upon the Savages—One of the Bluffs Carried at the Point of the Bayonet—Capt. Jack's Retreat Cut Off—Shelling the Modoc Camp.

HEADQUARTERS MODOC EXPEDITION, CAMP SOUTH TULE LAKE, April 15.

The day opened warm and still, but was ushered in by the roar of musketry and the occasional booming of howitzers from Col. Mason's camp, which was at Hospital Rock, on the north side of Captain Jack's position and directly under that famous stronghold. Gen. Gillem, who had been waiting for the arrival of his stores and the Warm Spring Indians, issued orders yesterday for tents to be struck and drawn in a compact form to a place near the Hospital Rock; for the troops to be supplied with three days' rations and one hundred rounds of ammunition; for the cavalry to be ready to move at 2 A. M. to-day, and for Col. Mason, on the opposite side of the lava bed, to move at the same hour on the enemy. Capt. Perry and Lieut. Cressan, with the cavalry, were to move a point beyond the main cave, and conceal themselves until joined in the morning by infantry and artillery. It was hoped that when the latter companies left camp the Modocs would observe them, and in an attempt to cut them off fall into the hands of the cavalry.

COL. MASON OPENS THE FIGHT.

These movements were faithfully executed, probably hurried a little on our side by the escape of Long Jim, a Modoc who was under guard as a prisoner of war. At midnight he leaped past the guard and escaped, though many shots were fired at him. At daylight we heard a irregular fusillade on the opposite side of the lava bed, and knew Col. Mason's force or its scouts or videttes were engaged. At 6 o'clock we heard the roar of the howitzers and saw shells bursting over Capt. Jack's camp. At this time the rocks were swarming with Indians and the firing was rapid.

THE PLAN OF BATTLE.

From the north side Col. Mason was to advance his command on the right, the Warm Spring Indians on his left circling up along the ledge to join with the right of the troops in this line, leaving only the lake for the Modocs to escape by. Lieut. Greery was in camp in charge of the arms and ammunition. Capt. Trimble of the First Artillery, with twenty men, is left in charge of the camp on this side.

At three o'clock A. M. we united with Col. Perry's command in about an hour and a half after leaving camp, and soon the ball opened. Capt. Miller, Company E of the Twelfth Infantry, commanding a battalion this company being commanded by Lieut. Lovell, had the extreme right. Next to him was Capt. Mortimer's Battery M, Fourth Artillery, and Lieut. Harris's Battery K, Fourth Artillery. Capt. Egan's Company G, and Capt. Wright's Company E, both of the Twelfth Infantry, formed the centre. The cavalry were on the extreme left.

THE MODOCS OPEN FIRE.

While marching along the lake shore, just at the head of Long Cave, about a mile and a half from Capt. Jack's camp, the troops encountered the first opposition. Scattering shots were fired from the cliff at long range. The men were deployed in open skirmish order, and advanced slowly under such cover as the rocks afforded. Our right opened a gorge in the bluff, from the right bank of which two shots straggling at us, while a few fell around us from the left bank. Our skirmishers crept up, supported by the reserves, until we arrived at short range, when a severe volley was fired from the bluff, there evidently being twenty-five or thirty Indians posted there. The fire was heavy.

A GALLANT AND SUCCESSFUL CHARGE.

After standing about fifteen minutes the order to charge was given, and the men sprang forward amid most deafening yells from the Modocs. Such was the rapidity of the onslaught and so unexpected that the troops were on them before they knew it, and in a few minutes were masters of the situation, and our foreign boys were behind the rocks resting at their leisure. Gen. Gillem had sent an order to Col. Mason to strike Indians upon his side, and he let into them with a vengeance, distracting their attention and materially assisting our charge. The charge was a gallant one. Meanwhile we extricated our wounded, four in number. None were killed. Capt. Egan and his men fought gallantly. So did all engaged.

THE WOUNDED.

Capt. Egan was wounded in the arm, but would not leave the field. E. O. Connor, private of Battery K, Fourth Artillery, was shot in the leg—a flesh wound. Private J. Dailey of Battery K, Fourth Artillery, was shot in the forearm. Corporal E. Kellick, Battery K, Fourth Artillery, received a scalp wound. Private Mc. Malone, Company E, Twelfth Infantry, had his thigh crushed. P. McManus of the firm of McConnell & McManus, merchants at Yreka, ventured between the advance line held by Capt. Miller's men, who carried the bluff under orders, and in a dashing style and the Modocs, and was shot from the high bluff and left on the ground. The lines were forty yards apart, and the ground between them uncovered. When the mortars arrive, the bluff will be shelled and recovered. Mr. McManus was a volunteer. He was shot through the head by the way his mule was found to be wounded.

BRINGING UP THE MORTARS.

At 2 P. M. the order was given to advance the mortars. Major Thomas in command. Lieut. Cranston Howe, of the Fourth Artillery, and Sergeant Adams with fifteen men composed the party, and are as gallant as it is not over-praise to give them. At 4:30 the line was deployed down the lake opposite Jack's camp, and crossed the intervening open space at double quick without receiving a shot. They are now in readiness to charge the bluffs when the mortars have done their work. The mortars have arrived on the ground and taken their position. All was quiet until 5:30, when a sudden and heavy volley rattled along Col. Mason's line and continued several minutes. Just before this we were gladdened that no one had been killed or wounded. The pack train of the Warm Spring Indians has just arrived, composed of 17 mules and 150 horses.

SHELLING THE BLUFFS.

At 5:40 P. M. the first shot was fired from the mortars, planting a shell fair in the bluffs. A few shells were thrown well into part of the lava beds, apparently doing good work. Our line now extends from under the bluffs where Jack's cave is up the ledge to the south for nearly a mile. The bluffs occupied by Capt. Miller are now held. Two ledges intervene between the men and the main plateau.

Now, at 6 P. M., the mortars are being moved forward, as our men are ready to scale the bluffs. Col. Mason's line has not been disturbed by them—throw we shall be with the Warm Spring Indians and have the red fellows encircled, with but the lake left them to escape. From appearances, it would seem that the lower lake shore at Modoc has been deserted of the Indians by the flight of our men, and we easily advancing without receiving any shots. The troops will probably hold the low ledge for cover until morning.

OFFICIAL DESPATCH FROM COL. GILLEM.

SAN FRANCISCO, April 16.—The following despatch has been received here:

HEADQUARTERS MODOC EXPEDITION, CAMP SOUTH TULE LAKE, April 15, 1873.

Major-Gen. Schofield, San Francisco:

We have killed 15 Indians in all, and driven them to the south side of the lake, where we now have them in a position from which they can not escape. We have lost one killed and nine wounded. We hope to dislodge them to-day.

GILLEM, Col. Commanding.

Further news is expected by courier to-day.

THE REMAINS OF GEN. CANBY

arrived at Portland to-day. The funeral will be private and without military display. The body will lie in state at headquarters to-morrow, and at 12 P. M. will be placed in a vault for further disposition.

The Fighting on Wednesday.

LAVA BEDS, April 16.—During the night the Modoc's position remained the same as they occupied at sunset yesterday evening. This morning a hotly-contested fight took place on Col. Greene's left. The Indians endeavored to get to the lake for water, but our troops succeeded in keeping them away.

At 7 A. M. a despatch was received from Col. Mason's camp saying some Modocs had passed out on his left, and were then on his flank and rear. During the night the mortars under command of Maj. Thomas opened fire on the Modoc camp, which was kept up, and very much annoyed the Indians, who could be heard yelling and shouting an awful rate. At 2 A. M. the troops under Col. Gillem were ordered to move forward from the position they had held during the night.

ANOTHER FORWARD MOVEMENT.

The whole line started with a cheer, and before 10 o'clock had reached the top of the ridge next to Captain Jack's camp, which was so hotly contested yesterday, and which had been nearly deserted to-day. When our men gained this position cheers could be heard along the whole line. Orders were then given to sweep the lava beds. A detachment was sent by signal to Capt. Bernard, ordering him in case the Modocs had got out on Col. Mason's left to pursue them immediately with cavalry and give them no rest.

At 10 o'clock our troops had gained considerable ground, and firing was becoming more frequent, and the general impression was that the lava beds are ours. Orders have been given for Col. Mason to move his right forward rapidly, and if possible join Col. Greene's left. This will

CUT THE MODOCS OFF.

From 10 to 12 o'clock there was considerable firing from the south to the lake. Only part of the Modocs could have got out on Col. Mason's left, as the Indians can be heard in the vicinity of Jack's cave. The mortars, which have ceased firing since daylight, have been ordered to a new position within 800 yards of the cave and near the water of the lake.

About 12 o'clock Cols. Greene's and Mason's command effected a junction which entirely cuts off the Modocs from the water. After this movement was effected occasional firing was heard at different portions of the line. It was decided not to push our men on the Indian stronghold, as we might lose many men without killing an Indian, whereas, if we could keep them from the water, they would have to leave their position. We could not find them in a stronger one.

OUR LOSSES

in the two days' fight have been five killed and ten wounded. The only officer yet wounded is Lieut. Egan—a flesh wound in the left leg—and he is doing well. The junction has been formed between Green's right and Mason's left. Five Indians are reported killed. Of these we have some scalps. None of our killed or wounded have yet fallen into the hands of the Indians.

It is evident if our men can hold their position and the lake shore the Modocs will have to surrender. There is at present a heavy fire of musketry near the lake shore, and the Indians are evidently fighting for the water.

Every one who has seen our troops in action spoke of them in the highest terms.

Dropping Shells in the Modoc Camp.

YREKA, April 17.—Mr. Costello, a special courier, arrived at noon, having left Headquarters, Lava Beds, at 9 o'clock last night, with the following news of yesterday's work:

Early Wednesday morning the Modocs had a big fire in their camp. Major Thomas dropped a shell directly into it, provoking a frantic war whoop and causing the sudden extinguishing of the fire. Another shell dropped in the same locality, and was followed by yells of pain and distress. The Modocs then appeared and challenged the soldiers to come out and fight. Another shell was the answer, and they were driven back.

At 4 A. M., after another fight, the Modocs gave up the attempt to break through our line and retired. Scattering shots were fired at the men who attempted to advance on them. At 9 o'clock Gen. Gillem's command was moved forward to cut off the Modocs from the lake. Lieut. Greery was in camp in charge of the arms and ammunition. Capt. Trimble of the First Artillery, with twenty men, is left in charge of the camp on this side.

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THE LOSS OF THE ATLANTIC.

DECISION OF THE HALIFAX COMMISSION OF INQUIRY.

Capt. Williams Censured for his Mismanagement of the Ship and Commended for his Efforts to Save Life—His Certificate Revoked for Two Years.

HALIFAX, April 18.—The Commissioner convened the Court of Inquiry into the loss of the Atlantic, at four o'clock this afternoon, and rendered the following decision:

The wreck of the steamship Atlantic and the loss of life unhappily attending it, lay the causes of which this Court has been inquiring, has been one of the most frightful marine disasters of this century. A magnificent ship, one of the finest ever built, with nearly a thousand souls, and a valuable cargo on board, was run at full speed upon the rocks of our coast, and in a few minutes became a total wreck, and more than five hundred souls were hurried into eternity.

THE OBJECT OF THE INQUIRY

has been to ascertain, if possible, whether this disaster, so appalling in its consequences, was one of those mere serious dispensations of Providence, the result of causes beyond the power of human prudence, skill, and foresight to have prevented, or whether it arose from the want of that prudence, skill, and foresight on the part of those charged with the care and keeping of so much property and so many valuable lives.

During the progress of this inquiry, in which I have been assisted by Capt. P. A. Scott and Capt. George A. McKenzie, every effort has been made to obtain a full statement of the facts from such of the survivors as were in position to know any of the causes of the disaster, and the circumstances immediately attending it; but throughout the investigation the difficulty has been felt that in consequence of the total loss of all the ship's records the witnesses have had to depend upon their memory only in stating the circumstances and data upon which the judgment to be given in the case must largely depend, and it may be that under the excitement naturally arising from the circumstances of the case the evidence given on some points may not have been as simple and accurate in matters of detail as it might have been had the memory been assisted by the log book and other records of the ship.

THE NUMBER OF PASSENGERS AND CREW.

From the evidence taken it appears that the steamship Atlantic, Captain Williams, sailed on Saturday, from Liverpool on the 26th and Queenstown on the 21st of March for New York, commanded by Capt. James A. Williams, who is a superior officer and navigator; first officer, James W. Firth, holding a certificate as master; second officer, Mr. Metcalf, who was lost; third officer, C. L. Brady, certificate as master; fourth officer, John Brown, certificate as master; fifth officer, Mr. Bissell; on passengers and a crew of 111 men, making a grand total on board of 962 persons, of whom 35 were saved and 926 lost. The ship was 3,707 tons, and had been 3 years and 3 months in service, and had been 2 years and 3 months since she had undergone her last overhaul