

CHAPTER XX.

THE OPERATIONS IN NORTH PERSIA.

ALTHOUGH Mesopotamia is at a great distance from North Persia, where our troops and those of the Bolsheviks were in contact, operations in both countries were in some measure interdependent. The distance, however, and the insecurity of the line of communication between Baghdad and Qumaitu, removed all the advantages which the central position of the Capital of Mesopotamia might be imagined to possess, as the transfer of troops from one country to the other was an operation so prolonged as not to be lightly undertaken. Consequently, though frequent appeals came from Persia for help, I persistently, and as it turned out rightly, ignored them; and in this connection I may mention that, it having come to the knowledge of the British Minister at Teheran that a division had been ordered to embark for Mesopotamia, he must have felt that a favourable opportunity had at last arrived to make me disgorge some more troops for use in Persia. On the 23rd August I received, with some amusement, a reiteration of the request for two more battalions, which, it was suggested, "in case of necessity, could be moved rapidly back to Mesopotamia." But I was then almost *in extremis* where man-power was concerned, and though at heart I sympathised, I could do nothing but turn a deaf ear to the east. It was clear that the decisive rôle must be played in Mesopotamia, a fact which was recognised by the General Staff at the War Office, who left me a free hand in the matter, and that on our success or failure there depended our position in North Persia.

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I have stated earlier that I had in June countermanded the order for two Indian battalions to join Brigadier-General Bateman-Champain's force, and soon after it was clear that, had I parted with those units, the situation in Iraq, where every man available was required, would have been compromised. The lesson was one which was not to be disregarded; and although I wished to avoid the extreme step of ordering the evacuation of Persia, where the presence of my troops had a moral effect far out of proportion to their numbers, I did not hesitate later to draw on them for reinforcements.

I was confirmed in my decision by the knowledge of the indifferent quality of the troops opposed to us in Persia—little better than an armed rabble—and the excellence of my own; and when Major-General Sir Edmund Ironside at my request was sent out at a later period to command the force, he expressed himself as more than satisfied that it would suffice for the work that was required.

About the middle of July I received a letter, dated the second of that month, from Brigadier-General Bateman-Champain, whose brigade headquarters were at Kasvin, in which he mentioned that he had paid a visit a few days earlier to Manjil. He stated that my inspection there in June had borne excellent fruit, and that those on the spot now understood the proper method of defence. The road was being defended well in advance of the bridge over the Safed Rud, and other arrangements to put in force my views were being made. He added that the 2nd Gurkha Rifles, who, as I knew, had been replaced by the 122nd Rajputs, were at Loshan, twelve miles behind Manjil, where they were preparing a second position covering the bridge at that place. There they were favourably posted to deal with any small parties of the enemy who might try to work their way over the hills with a view to cutting in behind the troops at the pass.

The sequel, however, proved to be disappointing, for on the morning of the 26th July a report was received at his headquarters that the position at Manjil was being attacked by some fourteen hundred Russians and Azerbaijanis, who

had with them artillery and machine-guns. At the same time information arrived that a flank guard of one platoon from his force was engaged with a body of the enemy near Loshan, whose strength was estimated at three hundred men with two guns. The quality of the Russian troops, assuming that the numbers were not exaggerated, may be judged from the fact that on the arrival of a second platoon to aid the flank guard they were driven off.

On the 27th and 28th July the attack on Manjil, where our force seems to have acted in a purely passive manner, was continued, and was supported by a few guns. Reinforcements were asked for by Lieut.-Colonel P. O. R. Barclay, 122nd (Rajputana) Infantry, who was in command of the defence, but the system on which the North Persian Force was disposed did not admit of their despatch.

On the night of the 29th/30th a futile attack by five platoons of Indian troops was made, which resulted in a few casualties, among which were one British officer wounded and one man missing.

On the 30th a report, that came from a source which had so far always proved inaccurate, was received that two hundred Bolsheviks had been seen in the hills north-west of Kasvin. Troops were sent out to look for them, but they could not be found. On the same date General Bateman-Champain telegraphed to me to the effect that he was going to withdraw, to which I replied at once that he should not do so unnecessarily. Lieut.-Colonel Barclay, however, had already reported that he believed that the force in front of him had been reinforced, and numbered two thousand rifles, that it appeared to be working round his right flank, and that his left was also threatened. The surprising enterprise which the Bolsheviks were now stated to be displaying bore fruit in the orders which were issued by General Bateman-Champain for Manjil to be evacuated that night, and the troops to be concentrated at Kasvin, seventy miles to the rear.

The orders were duly executed, and our troops withdrew unobserved and unmolested, the bridge over the Safed Rud being blown up by the engineers after the rear-

guard left. The dispositions now adopted consisted of a line of outposts round Kasvin, with a detachment placed on high ground near Kuhin, whence an advance of the enemy could be observed. In addition, the detachment which had been sent to Zinjan on the strength of rumours of an impending attack from that direction, and which consisted of one squadron of the Guides Cavalry and half a battalion of Indian Infantry, was ordered to remain and guard the left. Should circumstances compel a retirement from Kasvin, the detachment at Zinjan would act as a flank guard for the march to Hamadan.

The commander of the Persian Cossack Division on the 7th August offered to fill the breach, and arranged for an advance on Resht by three routes, requesting the assistance of our troops and guns. Brigadier-General Bateman-Champain, who expressed his anxiety to share in the enterprise, was, however, debarred by his orders from proceeding beyond the ground he had formerly held at Manjil, but he agreed to guard his colleague's line of communication to that point and repair the damaged bridge.

The Persian troops began their movement on the 17th, but three days earlier Major A. W. Van Straubenzee, commanding the detachment at Kuhin, was ordered to make a night march and try to surprise some hostile cavalry who were reported to be about to attack his position. The Bolsheviks, who were in greater strength than had been estimated, were found to be advancing by the main Manjil road towards Kuhin, which is twenty miles north by west of Kasvin, without the ordinary measures of protection. In consequence they were surprised with a loss of forty killed and wounded and forty-three taken prisoners. Six machine-guns were captured; and a 4.8-inch howitzer, of which half the team had been disabled by a Hotchkiss gun, made its escape, but fell into the hands of the Persian Cossacks. On this occasion we suffered no casualties, a proof of the skill with which the commander handled his force and the inferior quality of his opponent's troops. Even the Persian Cossacks were more than a match for the Bolsheviks, and so successful was their advance that

by the 23rd August they had reached a point only nine miles from Enzeli, after killing many and capturing a number of prisoners, several machine-guns, and much booty. The Cossack Division commander now unwisely tried to reach Enzeli itself, but coming under the fire of several guns his troops retired to Resht, and thence in great disorder to Manjil. That place, which we had left on the 30th July, was now reoccupied, and as the Bolsheviks themselves were as demoralised as those they had driven back, it became possible to reorganise the panic-stricken Persian troops.

On the 2nd September they advanced again, supported by a troop of cavalry, a section of pack artillery, and a battalion of infantry from the North Persian Force, which troops took up a position north of the Manjil defile near Rustamabad. On this occasion the commander of the Persian Cossack Division, Colonel Starosselsky, moved in deliberate fashion, and occupied Resht on the 22nd September with scarcely any opposition.

As Brigadier-General Bateman-Champain had for some time been in indifferent health, and required a change of air, I had telegraphed to the War Office on the 8th August asking that, if possible, Major-General Sir Edmund Ironside might be sent to replace him. The latter officer was well known to me, having commanded a brigade of the 2nd Division, which formed part of my Corps for several months in 1918. Apart from his exceptional linguistic powers, his military knowledge, experience, sound judgment, and outstanding personality, he had gained, when in command at Archangel, an intimate knowledge of the Bolshevik troops, their methods, and their value in the field. Such a man was urgently required in Persia; and as General Sir George Milne was able to spare him from the post he held in the Black Sea Army, and the War Office approved of the appointment, he reached my headquarters at Baghdad on the 28th September, and next day left for Kasvin.

On the 23rd October he reported that the Persian Cossacks appeared to be in trouble, and that their commander was preparing to retire. This movement they had begun

the day before, and by the night of the 25th/26th they were all collected behind the British troops. The Russian officers with them now engaged in active Bolshevik and anti-British propaganda, and the state of the force grew so serious that all were removed from their appointments and sent out of the country and overseas. The division was placed under the command of a Persian officer, who, helped by a few British officers, succeeded in introducing some order and discipline among the troops. But this régime was not of long duration, and during the following summer the connection of the British element with the Persian troops was severed.

The Bolsheviks, who had followed the Shah's troops, shelled our camp at 2 P.M. on the 26th, and a reconnaissance made by some armoured cars, the Guides Cavalry, and the 122nd Infantry, drove in their outposts, and found them holding an intrenched position. Their strength was estimated to be from twelve to fifteen hundred rifles, with cavalry, machine-guns, and four to six field-guns. But no offensive action could be taken against them, for on the night of the 26th they retired. General Ironside now pushed forward a covering force some twenty-five miles to the north, and arranged for the troops in rear to remain in winter quarters at Manjil. Several engagements with Bolshevik patrols ensued, in which they were invariably driven off with loss.

Our policy in North Persia, which, after the withdrawal from Enzeli, had, except for action by aeroplanes, been of a defensive nature, continued so throughout the severe winter which followed; and when spring came the country was evacuated under orders from home, and the North Persian Force ceased to exist.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DISARMING OF THE TRIBES.

THE main operations in Iraq came to an end when our troops entered Samawah on the 14th October. The next phase of the campaign may then be said to have been entered on—a phase which in every war, both great and small, makes a heavy call on both patience and determination, yet one which, like the pursuit after a battle, if carried out half-heartedly, is equivalent to throwing away most of the efforts that have preceded it. The tribes, without provocation worthy of the name, had chosen to risk the arbitrament of arms; they had been overcome, and must be made to pass beneath the Caudine Forks. There could be no security for the future peace of Mesopotamia unless the punishment awarded were such as would discourage a repetition of this foolish outbreak either by themselves or by those who, through the wisdom or force of character of their chiefs, had on this occasion been restrained from actively participating. After that stage had been attained, when all hope of further resistance had been obliterated, then, and not before, the time for amnesty would come, and relations of a friendly nature could be established.

In other campaigns in which I had taken part I had had experience of the great difficulty of enforcing terms once the troops had turned their backs on the country where they had been operating. I had not forgotten the weary months spent at Peshawar in 1898 when waiting for the Afridis to hand in rifles, and how, in order to induce them to do so, every expedient, even that of making payments, was resorted to. I also remembered the long pause which

followed the signing of the Armistice between the Russians and Japanese in Manchuria in 1905.

The situation in Iraq in the autumn of 1920 was, however, different, for there we were in occupation of the country, and the tribesmen could have no reason to conclude that there we should not stay indefinitely. But no sooner had the last garrison been relieved than I had been instructed from home to ensure that all the reinforcements which had arrived to help in quelling the outbreak were embarked to leave the country not later than the 31st March 1921. Before the date named I hoped not only to disarm and otherwise punish those who had fought against us, but to deprive of rifles all who possessed such weapons for self-protection and use in inter-tribal feuds, or who might rely on such means to coerce the Arab Government which was just about to spring into existence. Doubtless the early reduction of troops was desirable from the British taxpayers' point of view, and the situation both in Europe and India would not admit of locking up large numbers of troops in a country of secondary importance such as Mesopotamia.

The total number of rifles, modern and other, in Mesopotamia was computed in 1920 to amount to not less than 300,000, and of these the tribes who had participated in the rising possessed between 50,000 and 60,000. The opportunity of enforcing a general disarmament, when in 1918 and 1919 we had a vast force in the country, had probably for cogent reasons been allowed to pass. Then the weapons in the hands of the tribesmen were fewer than when the rising in 1920 came, but far more numerous than they had been when the campaign in Mesopotamia opened in 1914. From that date onwards the rifles and ammunition in the hands of the tribesmen had much increased, the main sources being as follows:—

- (a) Loot obtained by the tribesmen from battle-fields.
- (b) Disarmament of fugitives and deserters of the opposing armies.

- (c) The issue of arms and ammunition to friendly tribesmen by the British for employment against the Turks, or by Turks and Germans for use against the British.
- (d) Consignments of arms and ammunition despatched for distribution among the tribesmen by anti-British organisations in Syria.
- (e) The handing over by Turks, after the Armistice and during their evacuation of the country, of considerable stocks of munitions to the tribesmen.
- (f) The increased wealth of tribal chiefs due to the influx of money and the boom in trade since the British occupation, which gave far greater opportunities for them to purchase rifles from the Persian Gulf and Syrian markets.

Not only had the number increased, but many obsolete weapons had been replaced by those of a modern small-bore type.

The possession of so large a quantity of arms was an undoubted danger to the maintenance of peace—a danger which was increased since our occupation by our method of rule, which set itself to settle blood feuds and paved the way for tribal combination. Yet the problem of total disarmament, however desirable, was one of great complexity. Indeed if it were possible to effect it, the open nature of the borders of Iraq, the impossibility of adequately guarding them, and the large profits and small risks attendant on the trade of gun-running, would speedily have caused fresh supplies to flow in and fill the vacuum which would be created.

So far as the insurgent tribes were concerned, it seemed possible by imposing heavy fines in rifles and ammunition to deprive them in great measure, if not entirely, of what they value above all other possessions. To do so would serve as an object-lesson to tribes in other parts of the country who had not risen, and would demonstrate the nature of the treatment which would be meted out should they at any time be tempted to take up arms against the

Government. Unfortunately the object-lesson would be transitory, and would lose much of its value as soon as it became known that the British garrison had been reduced and had returned to pre-insurrection limits. Yet, beyond setting an example to the non-insurgent tribes, no immediate steps towards their disarmament seemed possible, for the problem, as already stated, was a highly complicated one. Thus we should have to deal with—

- (a) Tribes who had been friendly, and who had assisted during the operations.
- (b) Tribes who had remained neutral.
- (c) Tribes inhabiting inaccessible marsh country, whence they issue only for purposes of raiding.
- (d) Tribes who inhabit border regions where arms for their protection are necessary.
- (e) Nomad tribes who pass a portion of the year in Mesopotamia and then move their families, flocks, and herds beyond its borders.
- (f) The Kurdish tribes.

No two of these tribes could be considered under the same heading, and each would require different treatment. I consulted the High Commissioner on the subject, and his opinion was that the question of general disarmament must be left to the Arab Government, and that it would be undesirable to extend my operations in that respect beyond the actual insurgents.

As there still seemed a possibility of the insurrection spreading beyond its present limits, should the idea prevail that a general disarmament was in prospect, it was arranged not to employ that terminology, but that when issuing terms the fines inflicted should be such as to amount practically to the deprivation of all serviceable arms and ammunition. Where these were not forthcoming by specified dates, demands would be enhanced and punitive action would follow; but in lieu of an unpaid residue, sums which considerably exceeded the market value of the articles would be accepted.

This procedure, in the case of tribes from whom more

than they possessed might happen to have been demanded, would encourage the surrender, in place of money payments, of arms and ammunition purchased from neighbouring tribes. Besides these terms, which tended towards disarmament, other and secondary demands, that included the restoration of and repayment for damage done to Government property and the refunding of unpaid revenue, would be made.

The time, however, though it had arrived in a few places and was imminent in others, was not yet favourable for a general declaration of the terms of submission, as the conditions governing operations had so far only admitted of limited areas being visited by our troops. No sooner therefore had the garrisons of Kufah and Samawah been relieved and full freedom of action been secured, than systematic operations on the Middle and Lower Euphrates were begun.

In the meantime some changes in commands had taken place, for Major-General G. N. Cory had arrived from home and relieved Major-General Atkinson on the 18th October in the command of the 6th Division; while Brevet-Colonel G. A. F. Sanders (temporary Major-General) had replaced Major-General Leslie in that of the 17th Division. Both of the new commanders were reminded that the weather was now favourable for operations, which should be more extended and carried out more quickly than was possible earlier in the year. Columns were ordered to be made as mobile as possible, and as small as was consistent with safety. Daily plans for their employment were to be thought out, and not a moment was to be wasted, so that more might be accomplished than in the great heat had been possible. Every one was urged to throw his heart into the work that remained to be done, and above all, to spare no efforts to ensure that it was done in a thorough manner.

Instructions regarding disarmament were issued on the 5th November (*vide* Appendix VII.), and in the following month, when it was found that the fines of rifles and ammunition demanded were not being paid as quickly as was

desirable, I addressed each of the divisional commanders on the subject. I had noticed that in some areas where rifle fines had been laid down, diffidulty was being experienced both in obtaining payment and ensuring that serviceable weapons were being handed in. Certain Political Officers, who, it must be remembered, have to live cheek by jowl with the tribesmen, and who no doubt felt that to impoverish them would react later against full payment of revenue, seemed to think that the fines imposed were excessive, and even surpassed what the tribesmen possessed in arms and ammunition. But as our estimate was based on information that had been furnished at an earlier date by the Civil Administration, I paid no heed whatever to their representations. Indeed I felt that if the question of payment of revenue was involved, there was a far better chance of its being paid if the attention of the late insurgents could be diverted from fighting to occupations of a peaceful kind, for so long as they were armed to the teeth the temptation to indulge in strife and loot would be irresistible. I pointed out that, under no circumstances, as had been suggested, was the payment of revenue to take precedence over or even equality with that of arms. The tribes in many instances had behaved with great brutality; the time for merey had not yet come, and the pound of flesh must be exacted. I added that I was strongly opposed to extensions of the time laid down for the payment of fines, and if in that respect the Arab was given an inch he would assuredly take an ell. He must be made to understand that just as under Darius the statutes of the Medes and Persians were unalterable, so also at the present time the demands of the British Government admitted of no more favourable interpretation. Above all, it was to be remembered that we were amongst a people of whom it might be said with truth (I quote from memory)—

‘Use ’em kindly, they rebel;
But be rough as rutheg-graters,
And the rogues obey you well.”

Any display of leniency would be immediately attributed

by them to weakness, and justice, rhadamantaine in its inflexibility, would prove to be the best and quickest road to the desired goal. That this policy, though much more difficult and distasteful to enforce than were gentleness and brotherly love, proved right will presently be seen.

I will not attempt to describe in detail the movements of all the columns, some large, some small, which at one time numbered twelve, and which operated without pause not only in the Hillah and Samawah areas, but on the Upper Euphrates and east of the Tigris towards the Persian frontier. The object with which their movements were carried out was not only to ensure compliance with our terms, but to visit the areas where in the past neither we nor the Turks had been, and so prove to the tribesmen that no physical difficulty would prevent our troops from penetrating to their most inaccessible abodes.

The first places to be dealt with were the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, on the inhabitants of which heavy fines of arms and ammunition were imposed. At first the latter city proved to be intractable, but the enforcement of a strict blockade, which added to the discomfort of the inhabitants, who were already suffering from lack of water, combined with the presence of considerable bodies of troops, portions of which swept the country in its neighbourhood and punished the inhabitants, had the desired effect. By the 8th November the fines were paid, and the blockading troops marched to Tuwarri, on the Hindiyah branch of the Euphrates.

Before this date, on the 27th October, a night attack had been made on the camp at Kufah, which failed completely, and caused the insurgents a loss of over one hundred killed and wounded. This proved to be their last serious effort in this area, for our advance on Kufah and Tuwarri, and the presence of large bodies of troops which dominated the holy cities, made their leaders realise that all combined action by the Arab tribes was futile, and that their power to continue the insurrection was at an end. If, however, visible proof were required to show their inability to withstand our arms and save their property from falling into

our hands, it was provided also on the 27th October by the work of two columns, which swept an area between Hillah and Musayib. This operation, which came as a surprise, was entirely successful, and resulted in the capture of 800 prisoners, 3180 sheep and goats, 75 head of cattle, 35 ponies, and 40 donkeys.

The arrival from Constantinople some time earlier of a squadron of aeroplanes considerably altered the situation to our advantage, and helped the operations connected with disarmament. The insurgents, who after the attack on Kufah had moved out of reach of the 55th Brigade column, were now in a country which is much intersected by water-channels, where only a large force supplied by river could safely operate. It thus became necessary to bring the 53rd Brigade column from Tuwarri and Karbala with a fleet of mahelas (native boats), when both brigade columns could operate in conjunction, one column on each side of the river. To neutralise the temporary inaction of the 55th Brigade column, to remove which from the vicinity of Najaf was not yet desirable, aeroplanes operated daily between the 22nd October and the 5th November from Hillah and Baghdad with excellent results. The effect of their action was felt to within a few miles of the Capital, and by the 5th November most of the tribes who inhabit the country south of Hillah had surrendered, and had agreed to pay rifle fines which amounted virtually to disarmament.

By the 10th November the Hillah-Kiff light railway line had been repaired, and was in working order, and on the same date the two columns met; while the 53rd Brigade column, which had been divided, moved down both banks of the Hindiyah branch from Tuwarri and reached Kiff on the 12th.

The country through which the latter column passed was found to be deserted, but large quantities of Government property and many of the transport carts captured in the unfortunate affair of the 24th July were recovered.

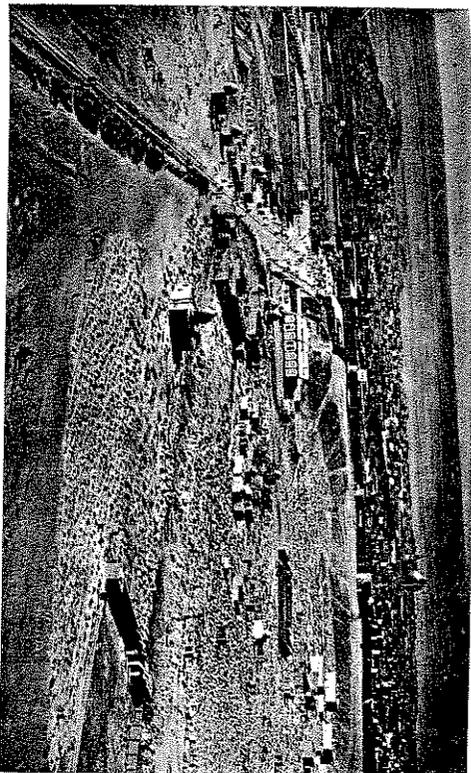
Both brigade columns were now concentrated at Kufah, except a small column from the 55th Brigade, which occu-

pied Abu Sukhair and Jaarah on the 13th, from both of which places the inhabitants had fled.

The number of troops was now sufficient to overawe the inhabitants of Najaf, and arrangements were made to deliver our terms on the 16th November. At 10 A.M. on that date the 2nd Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment, the 2nd Battalion Manchester Regiment, 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Battalion the Rifle Brigade, and the 1/15th Sikhs were drawn up facing the city from the east. Beside these infantry battalions stood three batteries of field artillery, and over the town circled ten aeroplanes. The 37th Lancers faced the Serai, where the representatives of Najaf were assembled and the terms read out to them.

On the same date the troops returned to Kutah, with the exception of a squadron of the 37th Lancers, two sections of field artillery, two companies of the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, and two of the 1/15th Sikhs, which maintained a blockade over the town.

Punitive operations now ceased in the 17th Divisional area, as all the tribes therein had surrendered. As, however, it was important, in view of the desirability of releasing the reinforcements from India, to hasten the handing in of rifles, to confirm earlier successes gained and prove to the people of the Shamiyah that no portion of their intersected country was beyond our power to penetrate, movements of several columns were organised. The work of these forces required the construction of several bridges, some of them of considerable length, as the area is crossed everywhere by canals and channels, of which a few of the latter attain to the magnitude of rivers. The result of these operations was that every part of the country in which they were undertaken was visited, and most of the inhabitants for the first time saw and believed that the British were in strength in Iraq. The surrendering of rifles continued steadily, and the weekly reports sent to Baghdad showed satisfactory results. Najaf had only paid one-third of the quota due, and, like Karbala, was difficult to deal with, as, being one of the holy shiah cities, it had been exempted from suffering what on the North-West



Najaf from the east.



Announcement of terms of surrender at Najaf.

Frontier of India used euphemistically to be called "the destruction of the defences." The presence of two brigades there did not help the requirements of the case, so the majority of these were ordered to march back to Hillah between the 25th and 29th November; while two sections of field artillery, one section of the 61st Company Sappers and Miners, the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, and the 1/15th Sikhs remained to ensure compliance with the terms.

The only areas of insurrection which had not so far been visited were the triangle, Musayib-Fallujah-Baghdad, and the Diwaniyah district. As regards the latter, the 6th Division was moving north from Samawah, repairing the railway as it advanced, and would eventually join hands with the 17th Division, which was preparing to work towards it.

To deal with the triangle above mentioned, the 77th Brigade group, under Brigadier-General B. E. C. Dent, C.M.G., D.S.O., was formed, and was mainly composed of the troops which, as the 34th Infantry Brigade under Brigadier-General Coningham, had operated to reopen the railway to Qurain, and later had been given a rest in Musayib, at the barrage, in Hillah, and on the Diyalah. Relieved by the 55th Infantry Brigade, these troops marched from Hillah on the 2nd December, the column of which they formed part being composed as follows:—

- 5th Cavalry (two squadrons),
- 97th Battery R.F.A.,
- 131st (How.) Battery R.F.A. (less one section),
- 40th Pack Battery,
- 61st Company 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners (less one section),
- 2nd Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment,
- 45th (Rattay's) Sikhs,
- 108th Infantry,
- 1/10th Gurkha Rifles,
- 32nd Sikh Pioneers (two companies),
- and some details.

Its orders were to sweep wide to the flanks of the route

of its daily march, so that the whole area should be covered during its operations.

The weather had now turned bitterly cold, in contrast to the great heat of a few weeks earlier, and as tents and a double scale of kit had to be carried, the train would have been much increased had it not been possible to use river craft for transport and supply.

The force moved in two columns, one column following the river as far as the mouth of the Yusufyah canal, fifty-six miles up-stream, where it joined the other column, which had marched along the Baghdad railway line as far as Mahmudiyah. As the advance of another force from the north to meet that coming from Hillah would have considerable moral effect on the late insurgents, a small column formed of troops of the 51st Infantry Brigade from Ramadi and Fallujah, under the command of Major T. McGowan, D.S.O., R.F.A., co-operated from Khan Nuqtah. It was composed as follows:—

- 5th Cavalry (one section) and machine-gun section.
- 96th Battery R.F.A. (one section).
- 67th Company Sappers and Miners (one section).
- 80th Carnatic Infantry (two companies).

The two forces came into touch with each other and reached Fallujah on the 10th December, no opposition having been encountered. The triangle had been swept in every part, except for a small tract fifteen miles south-west of Baghdad, and the results were soon shown by the way in which the surrender of rifles progressed.

By the beginning of December the tribes of the Diwaniyah area alone had not made submission. These had been the first to rise, and were believed to have done an immense amount of damage to the railway and Government property when Brigadier-General Coningham's troops withdrew on the 30th July.

So far as military operations were concerned I did not require the railway in order to deal with the Diwaniyah area from the north, and the repairs to it and the reconstruction of bridges would have involved much delay. The

river, if sufficient craft could be secured, would serve my purpose equally well. The 53rd Brigade group, which had originally been under Brigadier-General Sanders, before he was appointed to the command of the 17th Division, was therefore ordered under its new commander, Brigadier-General A. T. Paley, to march from Hillah for Diwaniyah on the 1st December.

His force was composed as follows:—

- 37th Lancers (two squadrons and machine-gun section),
- Arab Levies (two squadrons),
- 2nd Battery R.F.A. (less one section),
- 132nd (How.) Battery R.F.A.,
- 45th Pack Battery,
- 9th Company 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners,
- Detachment Bridging Train,
- 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade,
- 3/9th Bhopals,
- 13th Rajputs,
- 1/116th Mahrattas,
- 1/12th Pioneers,
- and certain details.

For the first three days the column marched along both banks of the Hillah channel until the mouth of the Shatt-al-Dagharah was reached, where a pontoon bridge was thrown across the river, and the column on the left bank joined that on the right. After Jarbuiyah was reached the right bank column followed the railway, moving nightly to the river for supplies and tents, which were carried by native craft. Brigadier-General Paley had much trouble in keeping his force supplied, in spite of the fact that grain and fodder were procured locally. This was due to the strictly limited number of native boats and the difficulty presented by the Jarbuiyah bridge. The bridge had been burned by the Arabs after the post there had been withdrawn, and the obstruction caused by the fallen girders prevented all passage, and forced boats which were working below it to be towed up-stream and refilled at the bridge. The effect of the operations in other places seems to have told

on the inhabitants in this area, for no opposition was met with, and the telegraph cable was only cut on two occasions, an incident which brought punishment on the nearest villages.

On the 6th December Diwaniyah was reached, where it was found that much wanton damage had been done by the insurgents to the railway station, Government buildings, electrical and other plant. The Diwaniyah and Dagharah tribes at once signified their wish to surrender, and on the 8th their formal submission was tendered, and the rifle fines which were ordered to be paid in by a certain date were announced.

Between the 8th and 22nd December the columns visited many places in the area, where they were received with every token of submission, and local supplies were obtained. A few houses and villages of the more prominent insurgents who had fled were destroyed.

On the 12th December connection was established at Imam Hanzah with a column of the 6th Division which had advanced north from Fannathah, when a transfer of certain troops took place, the 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade and the 13th Rajputs, who were about to return to India, joining the 6th Division; while the 1st Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and the 3/70th Buffs passed to the 17th Division.

Although the civil administration had not arrived at a decision on the question of restoring the Euphrates valley railway, the relaying of that line, even for the purpose of removing it altogether, should that course be decided upon, would be a necessity. No sooner, therefore, had Brigadier-General Paley's column left Hillah, at which time the state of the country had become such as practically to guarantee the platelayers from interference, than work on the railway was begun. Almost every sleeper had been removed, and the embankment, such as it was, dug up in many places, but much of the necessary material was recovered from the Arabs and replaced by them *in situ*. Thus by the 12th December the railway was relaid as far as Jarbuniyah, where repairs could not be begun on the bridge until the 30th.

This delay was due to the fact that the supply situation down-stream at Diwaniyah, which was carried out by boats, did not allow of the closing of the regulators at the Hindiyah Barrage in order to lower the level of the water for construction work.

A few days later heavy rain began to fall, which rendered operations difficult; and as the surrender of rifles was not as expeditious as was desirable, several small columns from the 55th Infantry Brigade at Hillah were despatched to the country of the defaulting tribes. This action had an immediate effect, and where the inhabitants continued to preserve a contumacious attitude as regards compliance with the terms, their sheep were seized and held as ransom.

But despite every measure that ingenuity could devise the policy of disarmament was not easy to enforce, and demanded unlimited patience, coupled with firmness.

In January the 17th Division continued operations, sending out eight columns, which were favoured by fine weather, but retarded as regards the carriage of their supplies by the abnormally low condition of the Euphrates. Far from showing signs of diminished vigour in their operations, the columns in this area, under their energetic divisional commander, continued to move from place to place with speed, and made frequent changes of camp, some of them being rewarded by the considerable number of rifles that were handed in.

West of Mahmundiyah, where the tribes had threatened an attack on Baghdad in August and interfered with the construction of blockhouses on the Hillah line, they had as yet only felt the presence of troops passing quickly through their territory.

On the 23rd January therefore a column consisting of—

- 7th Dragoon Guards (one squadron),
- 97th Battery R.F.A. (one section),
- 2/117th Maharrattas,
- 32nd Sikh Pioneers (one company),

under the command of Lieut.-Colonel E. W. Holmes, 2/117th Maharrattas, was sent to camp on the Yusufiyah

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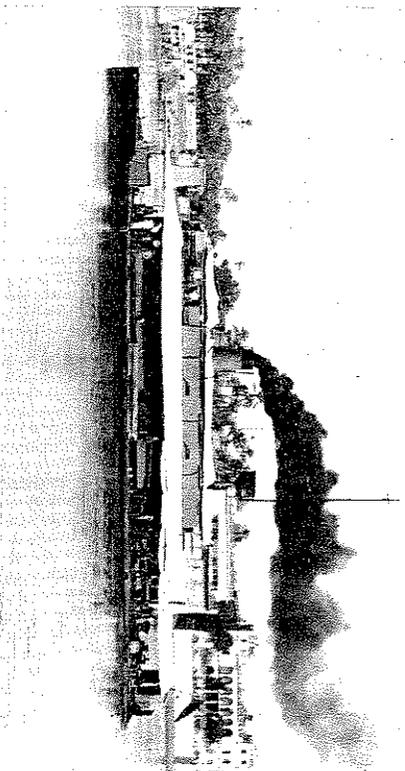
canal, five miles west of Mahmudiyah, until the full fire of rifles was complete. As usual, the actual presence of troops had the desired effect.

Further south the Shamiyah tribes, which had been heavily fined in October at the time of the relief of Kufah, had fallen much into arrears in sending in their pound of flesh. As long as troops had remained in their area rifles were surrendered freely, but no sooner were they withdrawn than payment had grown less and less. This was most noticeable among the tribes in the Mishkab, as the lower reaches of the Kufah channel below Abu Sukhair are called.

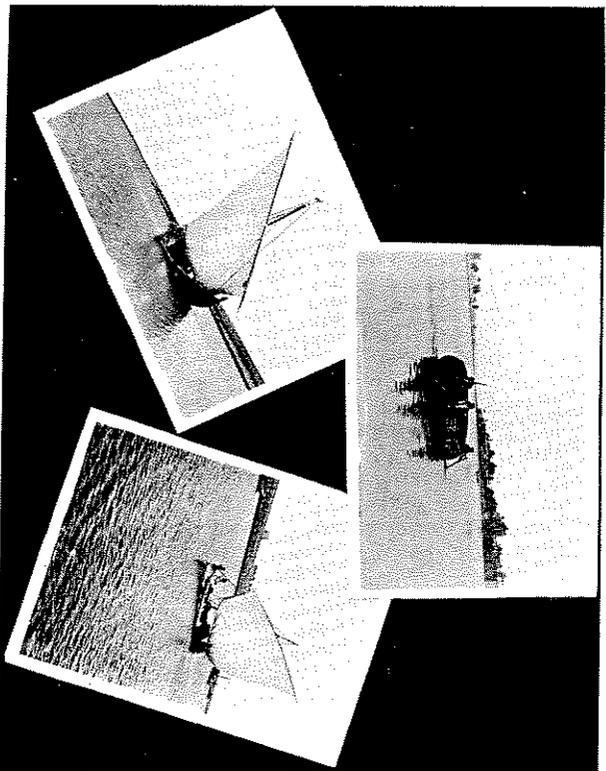
The only remedy that could be prescribed was another visitation. This took the form of a column under the command of Brigadier-General P. W. I. Davies, C.R.A., 17th Division, which marched from Hillah on the 4th December, and was composed of some troops of the 55th Infantry Brigade and other arms, viz. :—

Arab Levies (one squadron),
39th Battery R.F.A. (one section),
40th Pacl Battery,
67th Company 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners (less two sections),
Detachment Bridging Train,
8th Rajputs,
2/96th Berar Infantry,
32nd Sikh Pioneers (two companies),
Machine-gun platoon of the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles,
and some details.

Several other columns were at this time despatched from Kif, Kufah, and other centres, on which places the troops of the Division were temporarily based. To assist them to march about the country more freely and to produce the civilising influence of good communications, roads fit for motor-cars at low river season were made by the tribes from Kufah in places where difficulty of movement had been earlier experienced. The columns from Kufah, three



Defence vessel *Blackfly*.



Types of Mesopotamian boats.

in number, left that place on the 17th January and moved south, and roughly parallel to each other. They advanced slowly, visiting every locality thoroughly, halting a few days at each camp, and working at a distance from either bank of the river. The Arabs, here as elsewhere, to whom nothing but force appeals, helped in every way by closing small canals and making roads for pack transport, while the pontoons were used to bridge three or four broad canals daily for the advancing column. By the 28th January Turnumah, which is twenty-six miles south of Kutah, was reached.

No sooner did the tribes recognise that the troops could move without difficulty wherever they desired, than rifles which had been previously withheld were surrendered freely. The progress of the operations may be judged by the fact that in the 17th Divisional area, by the 15th January, 47,177 rifles had been handed in, and by the 31st these numbers had increased to 52,769.

Throughout February disarmament continued, and by that month the country had begun to resume its normal peace aspect. Canals had been reopened, cultivation resumed, and individuals could move everywhere without fear of molestation. Far from feeling any resentment at the severity of their treatment, the opposite effect was patent everywhere, and the relations which now existed between the tribesmen and the troops were excellent.

In no instance was it found impossible to reach any village in the large and difficult area of operations, and no obstacle was allowed to interfere with the rationing of troops or the carriage to outlying places of tents and the winter scale of kit. Every form of transport had been utilised, including both the metre and narrow-gauge railways, motor and other vehicles, paddle - steamers, and native craft of all sizes, from the fifty-ton mahela down to the marsh boat, capable of carrying only four men, and going over flooded areas where the water was less than a foot in depth.

Before turning to the operations of the 6th Division from Samawah, the work done east and north-east of Baghdad

must be referred to. It will be remembered that Brigadier-General Beatty had been left in the Diyalah area, where, by the middle of October, the majority of the leading shaikhs had accepted the Government terms. Tribal control here was, however, weak, and besides the difficulty the shaikhs had in obtaining compliance with the terms, they were unable to prevent raiders from causing the district to remain in an unsettled condition.

On the 23rd October I issued orders for a scheme to be prepared for the march of a column, which it was hoped would lead to a better state of affairs, for the tribesmen in the area through which it would proceed had so far seen comparatively little of our troops. To strengthen Brigadier-General Beatty's force, "F" Battery R.F.A., one of the reinforcing units from India which I had brought to Baghdad directly it landed, and some details of other arms, were sent on the 26th and 27th October to Sharaban, whence the force would start.

A proclamation was issued to all tribes on the left bank of the Diyalah, which announced the forthcoming march, and directed supplies to be collected at certain places. In this proclamation it was pointed out that the operation was not of a hostile nature, and that if supplies were provided as ordered they would be paid for. On the other hand, should they not be forthcoming they would be seized and the tribe concerned credited with an act of hostility, which would bring punishment in its wake.

On the 29th October the column under Brigadier-General Beatty left Sharaban. It was composed as follows:—

75th Brigade Headquarters,
32nd Lancers (less two squadrons),
"F" Battery R.H.A. (one section),
13th Pack Battery R.G.A.,
1st Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers,
2/11th Gurkha Rifles,
and certain details.

Balad Ruz was reached on the 30th, where a halt was made, and next day the shaikhs of the tribes whose terri-

tory is watered by the Ruz and Marut canals met the Brigadier, and in his presence signed the Government terms, by which they undertook to pay a fine in rifles by the 16th November. The column continued its march on the 1st November, and returned to Sharaban on the 4th, having met with no opposition, and obtained all the supplies required.

As the state of feeling near Deli Abbas was unsatisfactory, a section of the 13th Pack Battery and the 2/11th Gurkha Rifles (less two companies)—which unit was a reinforcing battalion from India and one which I had brought direct to Baghdad—were sent there on the 17th, and remained for four days with good effect.

A considerable reduction in the number of blockhouses held on the Qurrain line became possible at this time, and the 99th Infantry was in consequence withdrawn for other duties.

By the 15th November it had become evident that compliance with our terms was not intended by the tribes on the left bank of the Diyalah, and a combined operation throughout the area was arranged.

On that date a column from Baghdad under Brigadier-General H. G. Young, commanding 7th Cavalry Brigade, consisting of—

Headquarters 7th Cavalry Brigade,
"F" Battery R.H.A.,
7th Dragoon Guards,
8th Hussars,
35th Seinde Horse (less two squadrons),
and certain details,

had moved to Mendali, where the townspeople were giving trouble. On reaching that place on the 20th it was found that all signs of hostility had vanished, and next day the members of the insurrectionary provisional government met Brigadier-General Young and signed the terms, but not without strong protest.

As by the 22nd very little effort had been made to comply with them, the destruction of the houses of two leading

townsmen was ordered, but before the demolition preparations were completed, the sum demanded was produced; and as this represented the monetary equivalent of the balance of fines due that day, the sappers and covering force were withdrawn to camp. After the greater part of the column had marched through the town on the 23rd as a demonstration, considerable quantities of arms and money were handed in. Action of a nature somewhat similar to that taken on the 22nd had to be repeated on the 24th, after which the visit having terminated satisfactorily the column marched to Balad Ruz, where it came under Brigadier-General Beatty on the 27th in time to take its place in the combined operation.

His three columns were already in position, and their effect, combined with that of the force under Brigadier-General Young, at once hastened the delivery of fines. Many sheep were collected where rifles were not forthcoming, and in the case of the most troublesome and backward tribe, twelve aeroplanes sent from Baghdad led to the handing in of their full tale of rifles and ammunition.

By the 3rd December the operation was completed, all fines having been paid in with the exception of those due from two sections of the Bani Tamin tribe, which did not escape punishment.

The tribes on the right bank of the Diyalah next required attention, these having failed to comply with the Government terms in all respects. Early in November I had ordered preparations to be made for a march through this area and that east of Samarrah. A scheme had consequently been prepared, which involved a march through Deltawah and Dojman to Chai Khana on the left bank of the Adhaim. This river, which drains the lower hill country between Kirkuk, Sulaimaniyah, and Kifri, and in the dry season carries little or no water in the lower part of its course, runs into the Tigris in a north-easterly direction some forty-five miles north of Baghdad. The column, which was to be commanded by Brigadier-General Beatty, was composed as follows:—

32nd Lancers (one squadron),
13th Pack Battery R.G.A.,
11th Company 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners (one section),
1st Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers,
2/11th Gurkha Rifles,
and some details.

As the winter rains were shortly due it was desirable to begin the march as soon as possible, and in the meantime a proclamation was issued to the tribes that as they had failed to comply with the Government terms, to which they had signified agreement, they would now be punished by a fine of arms and ammunition. At the same time the date and place where payment would be accepted were announced.

As the column under Brigadier-General Beatty was not intended to pass through the territory of certain of the tribes on the right bank of the Diyalah, two small subsidiary columns were ordered to carry out that work. For this purpose the 2/117th Mahrattas and the 99th (Russell's) Infantry were employed.

By the 11th December the supply arrangements for Brigadier-General Beatty's column were completed, but on the night of that date rain fell heavily, and the move from Baqubah, where the troops were assembled, had to be postponed until the 17th.

Meanwhile the 2/117th Mahrattas and the 99th Infantry had been successful in collecting the total fines due from the tribes into whose country they had been sent, on which they were withdrawn to Baqubah and Sharaban respectively.

Moving one day earlier than had been arranged, Brigadier-General Beatty's column arrived on the 18th at Dojman, which is situated on the left bank of the Tigris, five miles from the mouth of the Adhaim river. Chai Khana was reached on the 20th, and on the 21st aeroplanes sent from Baghdad were helpful in persuading the defaulting tribesmen to meet their obligations. After a two days' halt Brigadier-General Beatty, following the Adhaim and Tigris,

marched to the railway line at Samarrah, which was reached on the 27th. Some trouble was experienced in collecting the fines imposed on certain of the tribes south of that place, and it was found that one shaiikh had handed in, as his own contribution, rifles which had been collected from other sections who regarded him as their leader. The matter was adjusted, and towards the end of January the column as such ceased to exist, and the troops moved to Baghdad or other destinations. Its operations, under its energetic commander, had led to the practical disarmament of numerous small tribes who occupied a considerable area north and east of Baghdad.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE REOPENING OF THE EUPHRATES VALLEY ROUTE.

WHILE the disarmament above described of the tribes in the Diyalah and Samarrah areas and those on the middle Euphrates was in progress, the operations of the 6th Division continued further south. On the 22nd October I had informed Major-General Cory that I should require the 3/5th and 3/8th Gurkha Rifles and the 114th and 2/117th Malhattas, which had been operating on the lower Euphrates, to be sent to Baghdad for work elsewhere. On the 24th I instructed him as to future plans. I directed him with the two British and seven Indian battalions and the other troops that would remain with him to continue such operations and punitive measures in the area within his reach as circumstances might require, and to inform me of his proposals. I stated that I was not yet in a position to deal with the Diwaniyah-Rumathah area, for which purpose combined operations from the north and south would probably be necessary, and that until the Hillah and Shamiyah districts had been pacified these operations must be deferred. I added that the free use of aeroplanes to break the will and *moral* of the insurgents was advisable, and that machines in addition to those allotted to him would be sent at once from Baghdad on demand.

On the 15th October, prior to the issue of these instructions, and directly Samawah had been relieved, the 3/8th Gurkha Rifles, crossing to the left bank of the river, destroyed all villages to a distance of a mile below the town, and recovered from a mud fort the 13-pdr. gun which had

been taken from the armoured train captured on the 3rd September.

As the tribes still gave no sign of responding to the proclamation calling upon them to submit, punitive measures were begun on the 17th, and the railway line was repaired and blockhouses were built to Barbuti bridge, which is about two miles north of the town. On that date, too, a column under Lieut.-Colonel H. J. Huddleston, C.M.G., D.S.O., consisting of two squadrons of the 10th Lancers, two sections of field artillery, the 3/5th and 3/8th Gurkha Rifles, and the 3/23rd Sikhs, was despatched to resume the work which had been begun by the 3/8th Gurkhas two days earlier. This was effected with slight opposition, and the column returned to Samawah in the afternoon. Two days later another column under the command of the same officer, but differently constituted and helped by aeroplanes, worked northward, and returned at night, having seen signs of insurgents near Imam Abdullah bridge. It may be mentioned here that insufficient transport necessitated the nightly return to the main camp of the columns sent out from the 6th Division, a circumstance which undoubtedly diminished the effect of its operations as compared with those of the 17th Division.

On the 20th Brigadier-General Coningham, taking two squadrons of cavalry, four guns, and three battalions, carried out punitive measures, and reconnoitred that bridge, which was found to be badly damaged by fire. A considerable number of insurgents watched the operation, and maintained a heavy but ill-directed fire on the troops, which wounded two men of the 3/8th Gurkha Rifles. The withdrawal in the afternoon to the camp was a signal for the tribesmen to advance, but artillery and machine-gun fire soon dispersed them.

As the town of Samawah was deserted, it was desirable to encourage the inhabitants to return. In order therefore to afford them an opportunity of doing so, operations were suspended until the 27th, when they were resumed, and a large number of villages in its vicinity destroyed. As a rule, when the columns which were engaged in this work

began their withdrawal to camp, the insurgents advanced with boldness and in considerable strength, and in all cases they suffered severely by coming under artillery fire, while our own casualties were inconsiderable.

Before the 6th Division began its advance northwards to come into touch with the 17th Division and cover repairs to the railway line to Jarbutiyah bridge, punishment was inflicted upon the Juwahir tribe which inhabits the neighbourhood of Khidhr, and which was responsible for the *Greenly* incident and the murder of two officers of the Royal Air Force. Time had not permitted of this proceeding during the advance for the relief of Samawah, and now that a favourable opportunity had come, the insufficient transport with which the 6th Division was equipped unfortunately limited the range of action. The force which carried out the well-merited retribution was led by Brigadier-General A. le G. Jacob, commanding the 74th Infantry Brigade. Operations took place on the 6th, 7th, and 8th November, when much damage was caused to the property of the tribe in question, besides a loss of some thirty-five killed.

Meantime a column under Brigadier-General Coningham was preparing to advance northward. It was composed as follows:—

- 37th Lancers (less two squadrons).
- 17th Brigade R.F.A. (less 13th Battery).
- 63rd and 69th Companies 2nd (Q.V.O.) Sappers and Miners.
- 26th Railway Company Sappers and Miners.
- 1st Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.
- 3/5th and 1/11th Gurkha Rifles.
- 3/23rd Sikh Infantry.

It was accompanied by a blockhouse, a construction, and a maintenance train; and it was arranged that the 3/153rd Rifles should join the column on the 11th November.

By the 10th all was ready for the movement, and the troops were assembled north of the Barbuti bridge, the repairs to which were completed that day, while

the line was laid beyond it for a distance of one and a half miles.

The day following had been fixed for this movement, and orders had been issued that it was intended to secure the damaged Imam Abdullah bridge, and occupy a general line beyond it, so as to enable repairs to be undertaken. The disposition of the troops was as follows:—

- Advanced Guard . . . 3/23rd Sikh Infantry, supported by the 1/11th Gurkha Rifles (less one company), and some details, the whole under the command of Lieutenant Colonel P. G. Carey, 3/23rd Sikh Infantry.
- Right Flank Guard . . . 3/5th Gurkha Rifles.
- Left Flank Guard . . . 1/11th Gurkha Rifles (one company).

The cavalry was ordered to move west of the Shatt-al-Suwair.

In rear the remainder of the column was to follow.

At 5.50 A.M. the advance began, generally in a northerly direction, and as the Arabs seem to have been surprised by the comparatively early hour at which the force moved, the leading troops established themselves on the far bank of the river with very few casualties.

At 9.30 A.M. brigade headquarters and the main body reached the broken bridge, and an hour and a half later some two hundred Arabs made a counter-attack against the left of the position, but turned and fled when a company of the 3/23rd Sikhs, which had run short of ammunition, charged under their commander, Major R. N. B. Campbell. The right of the position was also attacked at 5.30 P.M., when three to five hundred insurgents tried to rush a piquet of the 3/5th Gurkhas, who were on the left bank of the river and posted so as to cover a ford. The attackers came under the fire of the troops of that regiment and two machine-guns on the other bank at a range of one hundred and fifty yards, and lost some seventy killed.

On the following day, as the insurgents showed no signs of submission, the villages in the neighbourhood were dealt

with, and large quantities of railway sleepers were recovered; the railway was repaired, and blockhouses were constructed as far as the south end of the bridge. Punitive action was continued daily, and on the 18th November, as

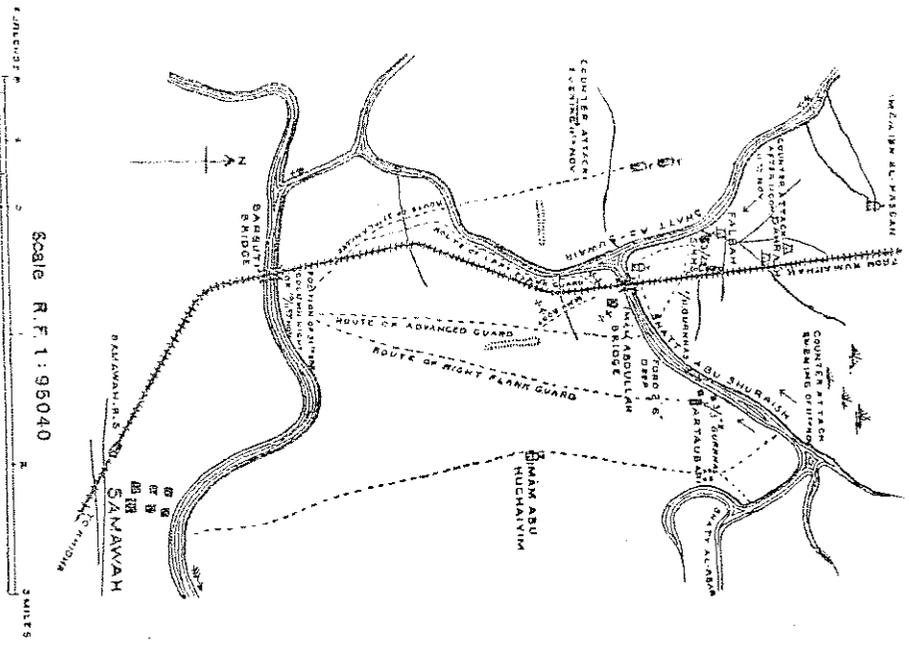


Fig. 10.—Action at Imam Abdullah, 11th Nov. 1920.

a proof of their desire to surrender, seventeen members of the crew of the defence vessel *Greenly* were brought in by representatives of practically all the tribes in the Rumaihah area.

Three sepoy of the 2/123rd Rifles, who had formed part of the escort of the *Greenfly*, also rejoined, having escaped from their captors, and it was hoped to extract from them and the liberated members of the crew information regarding what had occurred on board the vessel when the supplies gave out. The Court of Inquiry, which carefully examined many witnesses, including Arabs, failed to elucidate the mystery, and when the Divisional Political Officer, having promised immunity from punishment, tried later to obtain an explanation from some of the Juvabir tribe, who must have known the facts, not one would admit that he was present when the ship was captured or knew anything beyond the story that was current in the district regarding the missing British officer and men. Although no direct evidence was available to support the view that these latter had been murdered, it is difficult to arrive at any other conclusion regarding their fate. The fact that for several days before the ship was captured no firing took place, that women and even children were amongst those who boarded her at dead of night, that no signs of a struggle could be found beyond a dead body which bore wounds in several places, that none of the surrendered crew had suffered hurt, and that the Jemadar, with all the escort but three men, as well as a Sub-Assistant Surgeon were missing, seems to bear only one interpretation. It is my belief that neither the man who in dire straits penned a letter so manly and stout-hearted as that dated 30th September, nor his men, however exhausted they may have been, would have succumbed without a struggle which would have caused the Arabs a loss of many lives. One of the witnesses declared that on the morning after the capture he overheard the Sub-Assistant Surgeon say in Hindustani to an Arab shalikh: "Wherever you send us, do not send us to where the British are," a statement which if true supports what has been said above.

The opinion held by the members of the Court of Inquiry was that the British officer and men were first rendered harmless by poison administered in their food, and then done to death; but unless the escort and the surgeon make

their way back to India, as was done by some deserters in Mesopotamia during the war, and are there captured, the actual facts must continue to remain in doubt.

I may mention here that before the Court of Inquiry had completed its researches, Major-General Cory wrote to me to say that one of the shalikh of the Juvabir tribe who had surrendered told him that what had occurred was that, in the middle of the night, an Indian came ashore from the *Greenfly*. None of the tribesmen could understand his language, but by signs he induced one of them to accompany him. On arriving at the vessel it was seen that the British officer and the four gunners who were with him were dead. Thereupon the Arabs went in a body to the ship and looted her.

Since that time no inquiries made have added to our information regarding this unfortunate affair, but it is to be hoped that the long arm of Nemesis may some day overtake the guilty.

On the 26th November the repairs to Imam Abdullah bridge were completed, and the first train crossed it.

From that date until the 12th December, when, as mentioned, the 6th and 17th Divisions came into touch at Imam Hanzab, the tribesmen through whose country the 34th Brigade column passed became daily less hostile, and brought back railway sleepers, and, in the case of the Juvabir tribe, who signed terms on the 1st December, articles which they had looted from the *Greenfly* and elsewhere.

At Rumathah, where the insurrection had begun, the Political Officer and the railway engineer were given a friendly reception, and rifles and about seven thousand sleepers were handed over.

On the 6th, when the column occupied that place, the leading townsmen and shalikh of the neighbouring tribes made formal submission, and by that date all the tribes of the Rumathah-Samawah districts had surrendered. On the 15th the 34th Brigade column returned to Rumathah, the 53rd Brigade column of the 17th Division withdrawing to Divaniyah on the same date.