



SUPPLEMENT

TO

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WEDNESDAY, 2 AUGUST, 1916.

War Office,
2nd August, 1916.

The Colonial Office has forwarded for publication the following Despatch on military operations in the Somaliland Protectorate:—

From H.M. Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief, Somaliland Protectorate.

To the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The Residency, Berbera,
20th February, 1915.

SIR,—I have the honour to transmit a report by the Officer Commanding the Troops, Somaliland Protectorate, on the recent military operations against the dervishes at Shimber Berris, at the head of the Ain Valley.

2. It will be recollected that after the action at Dul Madoba in August, 1913, the Mullah, Mahomed ibn Abdulla Hassan, sent his followers to occupy and erect forts at this spot, whence they could dominate the country providing the chief grazing grounds of our friends. Raids against our tribes were of frequent occurrence, and the operations under review were undertaken to drive out the dervishes from this locality.

3. Shimber Berris is a natural stronghold in the Bur-dab range, and it had been strongly fortified. Six double-storied block-houses had

been erected in well-chosen positions by Yemeni Arab masons in the service of the Mullah. The walls were found to be of stone and mud plaster, some twenty feet high, twelve feet thick at the base and six feet thick at the top. Considerable military skill had been employed in construction, and the surrounding bush had been cleared to provide a good field of fire. The sides of the ravine, moreover, were honey-combed with caves affording a safe retreat for the enemy after being driven from the forts. Without modern field guns operations here involved considerable difficulties, and that they were brought to a completely successful conclusion is in consequence all the more gratifying.

4. A full account of the sharp fighting which occurred is given by Lieutenant-Colonel T. Astley Cubitt, D.S.O., in his report. On the first occasion, in November, it was found impossible to rush the main fort on the top of the escarpment, but a feature of the attack was the thrice-repeated charge of a company of the Camel Corps right up to the very walls of the fort, which was a gallant performance, reflecting great credit on officers and men. In one of these charges Captain Symons, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, was killed when within a yard of the door, and Captain Carton