

ance had been reached. On April 29th Kut surrendered.

I need not enlarge upon the bitter disappointment felt by all ranks on the Tigris Line at the failure of their attempt to relieve their comrades in Kut. It was mitigated by His Majesty the King's gracious message of May 7th, 1916, in which His Majesty expressed his feeling that his troops had done all that was humanly possible.

58. By the courtesy of the Turkish Commander-in-Chief—Major-General Khalil Pasha—I was able to arrange, on April 30th and the following days, that all the more serious cases among the sick and wounded of the garrison of Kut should be handed over to me in exchange for an equivalent number of Turkish prisoners. In this connection I should like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Captain Hon. A. Herbert, M.P., Irish Guards, and Captain T. E. Lawrence, General Staff, Intelligence, Egypt, who greatly assisted me in these negotiations.

59. This report would be incomplete without some reference to occurrences in the other parts of Mesopotamia. During practically the whole period under review, neither the Turks on the Euphrates nor the Arab tribes in the vicinity of that river have given us any trouble. When, however, in January the advance against the hostile positions in front of Kut took place, it was thought advisable to make a demonstration northwards to a short distance from our advanced post at Nasiriyah with a view to deterring as many of the hostile tribes on the Hai River as possible from joining forces with the enemy.

60. The major portion of the force at Nasiriyah accordingly moved out at the beginning of January and encamped in the neighbourhood of Butaniyah Lake. Early in February, when the object in view had been attained, the troops returned to Nasiriyah. On the return journey some of the villages, with whom friendly relations had hitherto obtained, apparently mistaking our movement for a retreat, treacherously attacked our rearguard. The attack was beaten off, a party of the Royal West Kents and the 30th Mountain Battery behaving very gallantly. A small force marched out the following morning from Nasiriyah, surprised and destroyed the offending villages in retaliation for their treachery.

Nothing of importance occurred on the Karun Line, that country and the neighbourhood of the Oilfields, as well as the country to the West and South of Basrah, remaining quiet and undisturbed throughout the period under review.

61. When my predecessor, General Sir John Nixon, submitted his Despatch of January 17th, 1916, he had had no opportunity of bringing to notice the names of those officers and men who had distinguished themselves during the actions at Shaikh Saad from 6th to 8th January and at the Wadi River on 13th January 1916. I have therefore included them in this report.

62. I desire to place on record my appreciation of the services rendered by Lieut.-General Sir F. Aylmer. Faced by great climatic and other difficulties, and unable, for reasons already referred to, to allow himself the time for reorganisation and preparation which under other circumstances he would have deemed essential, he applied himself to a difficult task with an energy, ability and determination which enabled him twice to defeat a brave

enemy at least equal to himself in numbers, and which would in all probability have carried him to success at the Umm-Al-Hannah position but for weather conditions which proved an almost insurmountable obstacle.

Major-General (temporary Lieut.-General) Sir G. F. Gorringe has rendered valuable service to the State. As Chief of the Staff to the Tigris Column from January 28th, and in command of the Column from March 12th onwards, he has shown untiring energy, ability and devotion in dealing with the many difficult situations which he had to face. He is a Commander of proved ability in the field.

Major-General C. V. F. Townshend has already shown himself a fine Commander of troops in action and a tactician of no mean ability. It was mainly his personal example of cheerfulness, courage and resource which inspired the garrison of Kut to sustain a siege of nearly five months, under every sort of trial, until sheer starvation compelled surrender.

Major-General H. d'U. Keary, after commanding his Division in France with distinction, has led it with resource and success throughout the operations under review. He could always be depended upon to handle his Division with skill in any operation with which he was entrusted.

Colonel (temporary Major-General) H. T. Brooking has displayed much ability in his administration of the Euphrates area and in the various minor operations which he has conducted.

63. This campaign in Mesopotamia has been one in which the difficulties experienced by the troops in actual contact with the enemy have been all but equalled by those which have had to be faced by the Headquarters and Lines of Communication Staffs and the Departments of the Army, upon whose exertions it depended that their comrades in the fighting line should be fed and supplied with the material they required to enable them to carry out their arduous task.

Major-General M. Cowper, as head of my Administrative Staff, has rendered most valuable service. His energy and ability, when things threatened to go wrong and an awkward emergency had to be faced, have more than once saved the situation.

Major-General A. W. Money, as my principal Staff Officer, has shown himself an exceptionally able Chief of the General Staff. With wide experience and sound judgment, his advice has always been of the highest value to me on all occasions.

Brevet Lieut.-Colonel W. H. Beach, R.E., has continued to me the valuable assistance which he rendered to my predecessor. As head of my Intelligence Section he has displayed a cool, well-balanced judgment of no mean order.

64. To Rear-Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., Naval Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, I am indebted for much useful advice and cordial co-operation. Captain Nunn, C.M.G., D.S.O., Commander Wason, and the other officers of the Royal Navy have afforded us the able assistance which we have become accustomed to receive from them.

I have referred elsewhere to the daring attempt made by the S.S. "Julnar" to run the gauntlet of the Turkish defences. Knowing well the chances against them, all the gallant officers and men who manned that vessel for the occasion were volunteers, among them