

of the Turks evaded capture, destroyed their bridge at Kizil Robot, and retreated to the right bank of the river. All our objectives were gained, and a position astride the Diala gorge, protecting the headworks of the canals, was seized and consolidated.

To ensure a perfect system of communication in the new forward area considerable work was necessitated. The main canals, *i.e.*, Khalis, Mansuriya, Khorassan, Mahrut, Haruniya, and Ruz, as well as their numerous distributaries, were rapidly bridged—often at more than one place—and this mobile bridging equipment was subsequently replaced by more permanent structures capable of carrying heavy loads. Seventy-five bridges of various sizes were built in this area alone, and the Jebel Hamrin, which prior to our occupation was a roadless tangle of hills, was gradually pierced by a very complete and convenient number of roads suitable for wheeled traffic. These roads have involved heavy work, not only in digging but in rock cutting through the hills and in metalling over the sandy flats.

4. Whilst the operations referred to in para. 3 were in progress, the 18th Turkish Army Corps on the Tigris undertook a counter demonstration against our troops on that line, and in the middle of October advanced as far as El Huweslat, 8 miles north of Samarra, where they proceeded to entrench themselves. General Maude decided to attack before they had time to consolidate their position to any great extent, and on the 24th October, after a night march, our leading division on the Tigris front captured El Huweslat, which the Turks had evacuated in haste, and then pushed north to Daur, supported by our cavalry. This position was captured on 2nd November by the 28th Infantry Brigade, who by pressing on with vigour caused the Turks to evacuate also their second line of trenches. The cavalry endeavoured to press round the western flank, but were met with heavy artillery fire, under cover of which the Turks withdrew to Tekrit. Although by this time our infantry had already marched 30 miles in twenty-four hours, it was decided to push on to Tekrit, and on 5th November the 8th Infantry Brigade assaulted the hostile position at that place, capturing the whole of their objectives and repelling two counter-attacks in force. The enemy suffered heavily, and many prisoners were taken. Meantime the cavalry, supported by the 19th Infantry Brigade, had pushed round the flank, and in the afternoon a spirited attack by the infantry, coupled with a charge by the Cavalry Brigade on the flank, threw back the Turks in disorder, who fled panic-stricken under cover of strong rearguard positions, which had previously been prepared for some miles in rear, and which held up our pursuit. During the following night the enemy withdrew the whole of their forces to Shoreimiya, and burnt large quantities of ammunition and stores. Their losses were estimated at 2,000, including 300 killed, and considerable booty fell into our hands.

The Turkish position was found to consist of an intricate system of trenches, many of which had been well and deeply dug, with numerous machine-gun emplacements, and its capture at a moderate cost redounds to the credit of all ranks.

The main portion of our troops were then ordered back to Samarra.

5. On the 19th November, 1917, the army in Mesopotamia received the news of the death from cholera of our beloved and revered Chief, Lieut.-General Sir Stanley Maude, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. Needless to say it was a bitter blow to the whole Force that he of all men should have been singled out by this fell disease, which was not in any way in epidemic form.

General Maude, whose genius had altered the whole face of affairs in Mesopotamia, was an almost irreparable loss; he had taken over an army whose moral had been severely tried by their failure to effect the relief of Kut, whose health had been sapped by a very trying climate, and consequently he had a very difficult task to restore its fighting efficiency, but in a few months by his hard work and great gifts of organisation, clear-sightedness, determination, and above all by his intense sympathy with and love of his soldiers, a very different state of affairs came into being. Strongly backed by the efforts of H.E. The Viceroy and the Government of India and by the War Office he thoroughly reorganised the transport services, and the troops were well fed and made as comfortable as circumstances permitted, though training and discipline were never relaxed. When he considered that all was perfectly ready, and not until then, he moved, and from that time this Force never looked back. When, therefore, I had the honour of being appointed as his successor the moral of the army was magnificent, whilst organisation and training had reached a high level of efficiency. The Turkish Army, on the contrary, was low in moral, and desertions from it were numerous and frequent; on the Tigris and Euphrates they had retreated out of rapid striking distance, and only on our right flank was there a good opportunity of hitting them. Towards the end of November, therefore, I determined to attack that part of the 13th Turkish Army Corps which was holding the Diala river above Mansuriya, the passes over the Jebel Hamrin and Kara Tepe.

The Turkish forces were well placed for defence, and the task set to our troops included the forcing of the passages of the Diala and Nahrin rivers, as well as the Sakaltutan and Abu Zenabil passes through the Jebel Hamrin.

The operations were entrusted to Lieut.-General Sir R. Egerton, K.C.B., K.C.I.E., whilst an independent force of cavalry under Major-General L. C. Jones, C.M.G., M.V.O., was ordered to demonstrate up the Adhaim river and prevent strong reinforcements being brought down against our attacking force from the line Tuz Kermatli-Kirkuk.

The passage of the Diala was successfully forced by night, but it was found that the Turks had flooded the whole of the low-lying ground on the right bank above its confluence with the Nahrin river, and this proved a serious obstacle. In spite, however, of the bad going, the whole of the Turkish position between Mirjana and the Nahrin river was occupied on the 3rd December, the Turks falling back northwards. During the same time an infantry brigade advanced north-west along the Jebel Hamrin and drove the enemy towards the Sakaltutan pass and Nahrin river, while another infantry brigade cleared Kishla Suhaniya, capturing 44 prisoners and two field