

organised state, harassed by the Royal Air Force and the Arabs. He was pursued by the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Divisions, and left over 5,000 prisoners and 28 guns in their hands.

I ordered Chaytor's Force to remain at Amman to intercept the troops of the 2nd Turkish Army Corps, who were retreating from the Hejaz. Maan had been evacuated on 23rd September, and had been occupied by the Arab Army, which then advanced to Jerdun, harassing the rear of the retreating garrison.

On 28th September these troops came into contact with the patrols of Chaytor's Force at Leban Station, 10 miles south of Amman. The Turkish commander, seeing that escape was impossible, surrendered on the following day with 5,000 men.

21. In addition to bringing about the retreat of the IVth Turkish Army, the total defeat of the VIIth and VIIIth Armies had removed any serious obstacle to an advance on Damascus. On 25th September I ordered the Desert Mounted Corps to carry out this operation, occupy the city, and intercept the retreat of the remnants of the IVth Turkish Army.

22. The Desert Mounted Corps was to advance on Damascus in two columns; one column by the south end of the Sea of Galilee, viâ Irbid and Deraa, the other round the north end of the sea, viâ El Kuneitra.

On September 24th, Semakh, at the south end of the Sea of Galilee, was captured by the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade, after fierce hand-to-hand fighting, in which 350 Turks and Germans and a gun were captured. Tiberias was occupied on the following afternoon.

Thus on September 26th the Australian Mounted Division was concentrating round Tiberias, and the 5th Cavalry Division was marching from Haifa and Acre to Nazareth. The 4th Cavalry Division was concentrated round Beisan.

23. The 4th Cavalry Division started on its 120-mile march that afternoon. The Australian and 5th Cavalry Divisions started the following day, the distance they had to traverse being 30 miles less. Both columns met with opposition. The Australian Mounted Division experienced considerable difficulty in crossing the Jordan on September 27th. The bridge at Jisr Benat Yakub had been damaged, and Turkish rearguards commanded the crossings. After some delay, the 5th Australian Brigade succeeded in crossing the river a mile south of the bridge; and, working round the enemy's flank, forced him to retire. Opposition was again met with on the eastern side of the Jordan plateau, at El Kuneitra, and the column was continually fired on by the Circassians who dwell on the plateau. Passing through El Kuneitra, the column entered first a plateau covered by boulders and then undulating pasture land, intersected by the numerous streams which rise in Mount Hermon. Fighting took place at Sasa, but the enemy's rearguards were driven back, and, by 1000 on September 30th, Katana, 12 miles south-west of Damascus, had been reached by the Australian Mounted Division, which was here checked for a time.

At this hour the 14th Cavalry Brigade, on the right of the Australian Mounted Division, was approaching Sahnaya on the old French railway. Further south the 4th Cavalry Divi-

sion, with the Arab Army on its right, was approaching Kiswe.

The route followed by the 4th Cavalry Division across the Jordan plateau had proved difficult, and considerable opposition had been encountered at Irbid, and again at Er Remte, where, after driving the enemy northwards towards Mezerib, the Cavalry gained touch with the Arab Army.

After its raids on the enemy's railways round Deraa between September 16th and 18th, the Arab Army had moved into the Hauran. It issued thence to attack the IVth Turkish Army, as the latter passed Mafraq in its retreat northwards, forcing the Turks to abandon guns and transport. Moving rapidly northwards, the Arabs then captured the stations of Ezra and Ghazale, between Damascus and Deraa. On September 27th they entrenched themselves at Sheikh Saad, 17 miles north of Deraa, across the Turkish line of retreat. Sharp fighting took place all day, in which heavy casualties were inflicted on the retreating Turks and Germans and in which numerous prisoners were taken. After breaking up the retreating columns of the IVth Army, the Arabs captured Deraa, and, on September 28th, joined hands with the 4th Cavalry Division near Er Remte.

The Cavalry then advanced northwards through Mezerib and along the old French railway, with the Arabs on its right flank, collecting stragglers, and pressing on the heels of the remnants of the IVth Turkish Army.

In this way a column of Turks some 1,500 strong was driven at noon on September 30th into the arms of the 14th Cavalry Brigade at Sahnaya.

Shortly after midday on September 30th the Australian Mounted Division overcame the enemy's resistance at Katana. By the evening it had closed the exits from Damascus to the north and north-west, while the 5th Cavalry Division had reached the southern outskirts of the town.

At 06.00 on October 1st the Desert Mounted Corps and the Arab Army entered Damascus amidst scenes of great enthusiasm. After the German and Turkish troops in the town had been collected and guards had been posted, our troops were withdrawn. In the meantime the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade had proceeded northwards in pursuit of bodies of the enemy, which had succeeded in leaving the town on the previous day, or had avoided it, and the cordon round it, by making a detour to the east. On October 2nd a column was overtaken at Kubbeth I Asafir, 17 miles north-east of Damascus. This column was dispersed, 1,500 prisoners and three guns being taken.

24. The advance to Damascus, following on the operations in the Plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jezreel, had thrown a considerable strain on the Desert Mounted Corps. Great results were, however, achieved.

On September 26th, when the advance began, some 45,000 Turks and Germans were still in Damascus or were retreating on it. It is true that all units were in a state of disorganisation, but, given time, the enemy could have formed a force capable of delaying my advance.

The destruction of the remnants of the IVth Army and the capture of an additional 20,000 prisoners prevented any possibility of this. The remnants of the Turkish Armies in Palestine and Syria, numbering some 17,000