

which called for the use of force on these occasions cannot altogether be attributed to unhealthy influences from outside or to any general feeling that the Government power was weakening. To a certain extent such operations are inevitable in the administration of an extensive and semi-barbarous country.

The three areas I refer to were:—

- (1) On the East Bank of the Upper Nile among the Lau section of the Nuer tribe.
- (2) The Nyima Hills in the Nuba Mountains province.
- (3) Among the Dinka tribes on the West bank of the Nile.

#### 1. *The Lau Nuers.*

For the past five or six years the Lau Nuers had shown a disposition to be insubordinate to the Government. The acquisition of rifles from across the Abyssinian frontier and a growing belief that the Government was incapable of dealing with them, encouraged them in their unsatisfactory behaviour, which culminated in an attack on a Government post near Kongor, the garrison of which, with their officer, were practically annihilated.

As neighbouring sections of the Nuer tribe were waiting to see what the result of a conflict between the Lau Nuers and the Government would be it was considered desirable to take strong measures. Accordingly a force, under the command of Major E. A. T. Bayly, D.S.O. (Royal Welsh Fusiliers), accompanied by Major C. H. Stigand (Royal West Kent Regiment), Governor, Upper Nile Province, as Chief Political Officer, was sent in February, 1917, to round up the enemy by means of driving columns, and, if possible, bring them to action in force.

This object was not fully attained, as the enemy effected no large concentration, but they were severely punished in casualties and captures, their three leading chiefs surrendered, and the neighbouring tribes who were hesitating in their loyalty were effectively convinced of the powers of the Government.

This expedition has been dealt with in detail by my despatch to Your Excellency, dated November 14th, 1917.\*

#### 2. *The Nyima Hills.*

Similarly there had been unrest for some time in various portions of the Nuba Mountains, which came to a head among the inhabitants of the Nyima group, led by Agabna Wad el Sultan Arowga. Their continued refusal to pay taxes and to give up refugees from justice led to the despatch of a company of mounted infantry to assist the Inspector of the District, Captain R. W. Hutton (Royal Marines), in restricting the influence of Agabna to the smallest area possible.

Unfortunately Captain Hutton, whose energy and ability were making a marked improvement in the district, was killed while attempting to arrest Agabna by a surprise visit to his village, and the set-back caused by this event made it imperative to send a patrol sufficiently large to clear up the situation finally.

A force of about 3,000 men was therefore gradually concentrated at Dilling by October, 1917, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel L. K. Smith, D.S.O. (Royal Scots). Major R. S. Wilson (late Lancashire Fusiliers), Governor, Nuba Mountains Province, accompanied the force as Chief Political Officer.

Owing to the nature of the ground and the fact that the enemy lived in caves, where they could practically defy direct attack, Lieutenant-Colonel Smith decided to reduce the hills by investment. These tactics were completely successful, and by the end of February, 1918, the operations terminated with the capture of Agabna and his chief lieutenant, and the surrender of 4,000 prisoners, with 700 rifles and a large number of cattle.

The expedition was described fully in a despatch from Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, which I forwarded to Your Excellency on August 7th, 1918.\*

The success was important, as these tribes had never been finally subdued. Against Derwish forces the hill strongholds were practically impregnable, and they felt themselves to be secure against attack. Under the present Government a lenient and conciliatory attitude has always been taken up, and in case of disturbance surrender had always been accepted after a light punishment and the infliction of a fine. There is no doubt they regarded this as a confession of inability to control them properly.

The reduction of the Nyima hills has completely dissipated the feeling. The behaviour of neighbouring hills has been satisfactory since Agabna's defeat, and it is hoped in time to bring about a better understanding between the tribes and the Government.

#### 3. *The Dinka Tribes.*

In 1914, a Dinka named Malwal Matiang, in the Bahr el Ghazal Province, had alienated himself from the Government and set himself up as an independent chief. By offering a harbour to criminals and malcontents he gathered a considerable number of adherents and became a menace to public security. His following was not specially dangerous as a hostile force, but he appeared likely to unsettle the tribes in his neighbourhood. He was declared an outlaw in 1917, but his prestige locally ensured his safety. Accordingly a force under the command of Major R. H. Darwall, D.S.O. (Royal Marines), accompanied by Major E. D. Bally (Somerset Light Infantry) as Political Officer, left Rumbek in March, 1918, and proceeded to Matiang's village, Lewell. Matiang fled north. The force pursued him in two columns and captured large quantities of cattle, including most of Matiang's own herd, and inflicted many casualties on his followers. The operations were extremely difficult, and for three days the troops were marching waist deep in water, maintaining the advance with great energy and endurance. Matiang had now lost all his prestige and became a fugitive, so it was considered unnecessary to take any further punitive action, as his personal capture in this extensive and difficult country was very unlikely.

The force now turned its attention to the Afak Atwots, a tribe inhabiting the south-east corner of the Bahr el Ghazal who had attacked a Government post in the autumn of 1917, and committed other acts of disorder. A patrol had been sent against them at the time, but the flooded state of the country prevented the operations being carried through. The patrol managed to capture the chief of the section, named Dio, but he unfortunately escaped while being brought back to Headquarters. In

\* Not published in the London Gazette.