

than 50-60 feet high. There were wells inside the fortifications and room within the encircling walls of "Silsilat" (i.e., "the chain") for many hundred head of stock; while the numerous stone granaries forming part of the defences were well filled with jowari from the Mullah's gardens at Gaolo, 10 miles distant. For 12 years the Mullah had been engaged on the construction of these fortifications, which, carried out under the supervision of Arab masons from the Yemen, must have entailed immense labour to his Dervish following. In an earlier part of this despatch I have recorded that 500 tribal rifles had been sent forward by Captain Gibb to Gaolo on the 19th January, with orders to watch Tale. By the aeroplane proceeding on the reconnaissance of the 1st February I sent letters in Arabic to the Somali leaders acquainting them with the position and instructing them to keep a close look-out as the Mullah and his following were in flight and now heading for Tale. On the following day I was able to communicate by the same means with Captain Gibb, who was with the headquarters of the Tribal Levy at Duhung, in the central Nogal, and I instructed him to gain early touch with the Camel Corps. As the friendlies had by this time been let loose to participate in the round-up of the Dervish fugitives and stock, and as it was impossible to distinguish between friendlies and Dervishes, Group Captain Gordon issued orders to his officers to cease bombing. But preparations were made for an aerial bombardment of Tale, and three machines left on the 4th for this objective. In the course of the raid three direct hits with 112-lb. bombs and four with 20-lb. bombs were obtained on the main position, and a 20-lb. bomb was dropped on the Mullah's own fort without, however, effecting great material damage. The machines then flew low, machine-gunning and setting fire to the Dervish huts inside and outside the fortifications with incendiary bombs, and part of the *haroun* was destroyed. The garrison returned the fire strongly from the forts. Good photographic work was done, and on the return journey the Camel Corps was located at Hudin, and messages dropped to the Commanding Officer. From this time onwards, owing to the complete breakdown of the portable wireless sets with the troops, "Z" force undertook the maintenance of communication and the carrying of despatches, which was of the greatest assistance.

18. On the morning of the 4th February tribal horsemen arrived at Duhung from Gaolo and reported to Captain Gibb that the Mullah and a few men had entered Tale fort at midnight on the 2nd/3rd February, followed in the early morning by a party of about 60 horsemen. A later message, while confirming the arrival of Dervish parties, expressed some doubt as to whether the Mullah himself had entered the fort. Captain Gibb, who had in the meantime gained touch with the Camel Corps, set out at once for Gaolo with all available tribal rifles. On the 3rd, while he was waiting at Kurtimo (lat. 8° 38', long. 47° 35') for other detachments to join him, Akils arrived to report that small parties of Dervishes were continually arriving at Tale, some of whom had been intercepted and killed, and that the tribal leaders at Gaolo were now convinced that the Mullah was in the fort and that the whole remnant of the Dervish force from

Medishe and Jidali was converging on Tale. 200 men were despatched as an urgent reinforcement to Gaolo; and the Camel Corps arrived at Kurtimo about 7 o'clock that evening. During the halt at Tagabei (lat. 8° 55', long. 48° 15'), on the morning of the 8th, a party of mounted Akils arrived from Gaolo and reported that all was well, and that the Tribal Levy had most successfully engaged a large party of Dervishes, escorting the Mullah's main caravan, trying to make their way into Tale on the evening of the 5th. Amongst the Dervishes killed in the fight were the notorious Haji Sudi (the ex-naval interpreter) and Ibrahim Boghol and other leaders, and the captures included 1,400 camels, 450 cows, 50 ponies, 51 rifles and 2,000 rounds ammunition, and 300 camel loads of supplies; while amongst the personal belongings of the Mullah which fell into the hands of the friendlies were his correspondence, clothing, and silver jewellery. Only a few of the party apparently got away into the forts. Such was the position on the morning of the 8th. Captain Gibb, with the Levy and the Camel Corps under Lieut.-Colonel Ismay, moved on to Gaolo the same evening.

19. Early in the morning of the 9th February the Mullah's second son, Abdul Rahman Jahid, and his uncle, Haji Osman, who had deserted from Tale overnight, were brought into the Camel Corps *zariba*. They confirmed the report that the Mullah was in Tale, and stated that he had made up his mind to leave the previous evening, but had been deterred from making the attempt by the presence of 200 of the Tribal Levy who had been posted in the vicinity to watch developments. They stated that the Mullah would leave that night. The Tale garrison was estimated at 250 rifles. After 200 men of the Tribal Levy had been despatched to reinforce the party watching the forts, Colonel Ismay and Captain Gibb held a consultation, at which it was decided to make a demonstration in force round Tale. It was agreed that Captain Gibb should march at 2 p.m. with his 800 footmen, and that the Camel Corps should follow an hour later. Colonel Ismay had only two days' rations in hand, and a transport column had first to be organised to bring up supplies from Hudin. Also his animals were tired, and it was hoped that by advertising the presence of the mounted column the Mullah might be induced to remain within his stronghold, where he could be shut in. Unfortunately, the Mullah forestalled this movement, and before effect could be given to the plan information was received that the garrison of Tale had made a sortie in strength against the 200 friendlies and had driven them back from their position about one and a half miles. Captain Gibb, already on the march, pressed forward rapidly, and soon heard heavy firing proceeding from the direction of Tale. On arriving within sight of the forts the Dervishes could be seen running back inside. Directly afterwards, at 5.30 p.m., he saw a party of seventy to eighty mounted men come out and ride away in a northerly direction. Presumably this was the Mullah and his personal following escaping. Word was sent back to the mounted column, the dust of which was already visible, and, advancing close to the forts and finding them lightly held, Captain Gibb attacked with all available men. A general panic ensued, men, women and children rushing precipitately out of the forts, and the