

and north-east of Mosul, there seemed every prospect of peace for some period. Mr. Bill, Indian Civil Service, an officer of considerable experience on the North-West Frontier of India and in Persia, had only joined this administration a few weeks before and had taken over the post of Political Officer of the Mosul vilayet. This officer, whose desire to understand his district was very great, had, somewhat unexpectedly, departed into a distant portion, viz., the hills east of Aqra, where certain chiefs were preparing levies to keep order in the countryside. The district in question had been orderly and contented ever since our occupation, and had not been disturbed during the earlier operations; it was, therefore, with great surprise that I learned that Mr. Bill and Captain Scott, the Assistant Political Officer at Aqra, had been treacherously murdered after a visit to certain chiefs and Civil Headquarters, and the Gendarmerie at Aqra had been attacked. As it was essential to assert our prestige, I assembled a force of three battalions of infantry and a mountain battery of artillery at Aqra, under Lieutenant-Colonel F. H. Stapleton, C.M.G., and another column in the Anadia Plateau under Lieutenant-Colonel C. P. Wynter, D.S.O. The whole operations were in charge of Brigadier-General C. E. Lawrie, C.B., D.S.O., temporarily commanding the 18th Division. Both columns advanced through a most intricate and tumbled mountain country to the scene of the murders, meeting with only trivial opposition, as the tribes would neither stand nor attack the troops. All the villages concerned in the treacherous attack were visited, the two chief instigators, viz., Faris Agha and Sheikh Ahmed of Burzan, were outlawed, and the district and tribes placed in charge of suitable successors, and for the time being the general prestige of the administration has been restored. The Sheikh of Burzan's castle was destroyed. At the same time the persistent propaganda anent Enver Pasha's menace in the hills beyond the Armistice line, and his intention to advance with Turkish troops, is likely to have further disturbing effects.

5. The arrangements made for these operations were of an intricate and difficult character, and were very well carried out by Lieutenant-Colonel Stapleton, C.M.G., and Lieutenant-Colonel Wynter, D.S.O., and the staff of the 18th (Indian) Division, and I attach a list of names of Officers and non-commissioned Officers whom I recommend for mention in despatches and of certain non-commissioned Officers recommended for the Meritorious Service Medal,\* also of certain Officers of the Royal Air Force, whose task among these mountains has always been most dangerous. The troops, who have all been engaged constantly during the summer, carried out these difficult operations in great cold and rain and with considerable endurance.

6. The incident at Deir-ez-Zor and the subsequent operations are far more important politically. Deir-ez-Zor is distant, on the Upper Euphrates, some 400 miles from Baghdad, and was included in the sphere of Mesopotamia on the withdrawal of the Turks as a necessity, *pro tem.*, for the maintenance of good order and for keeping open the ordinary trade and caravan route between

Baghdad and Aleppo. This route in normal times is constantly used by ordinary horse carriages and occasionally motor-cars, and is an integral part of the general mercantile organisation of Syria and Mesopotamia. At the special invitation of the inhabitants of Deir-ez-Zor, a Civil Administrative Staff was sent there early in 1919, local levies were organised, and to protect the road against raiders from the desert a military detachment of two armoured cars from the 6th Light Armoured Motor Battery was stationed there. For eight months this small centre maintained the districts and the routes in peace and order with the greatest ease, the next military post being far south at Ramadi, where a cavalry regiment was stationed. The eventual destination of this district has for some time been under discussion. The sequel of the events that occurred will be best understood if placed in the form of a diary:—

10th December, 1919.—Information received from Political Officer, Deir-ez-Zor, that there was serious trouble. He asked for light armoured motor-cars.

11th December, 1919.—Ramadhan Shalash, Arab Governor of Rakka, occupied Deir-ez-Zor, seized Treasury, and released all prisoners in civil jail. Imprisoned all military and civil officials and captured detachment light armoured motor-cars.

12th December, 1919.—Colonel H. G. Young, D.S.O., sent to command force on Euphrates, which was brought up to six squadrons and ten light armoured motor-cars. One battalion infantry sent to Fellujah and Ramadi. Cavalry advanced up river.

13th December, 1919.—Albu Kemal evacuated by civil officials and levies in view of advance of hostile tribes.

14th December, 1919.—All demobilisation and leave temporarily suspended.

15th December, 1919.—Colonel Young reported hostile advance appeared to be fizzling out, and suggested reoccupation of Albu Kemal.

18th December, 1919.—Copy of wire Emir Faisal to Zeid, disclaiming all knowledge of Deir-ez-Zor rising, received.

Telegram received from War Office, dated 21st November, which only arrived in partially cipherable form on 18th December, stating Deir-ez-Zor was not to be within British sphere.

19th December, 1919.—Colonel Young reached Anah. Air reconnaissance reported fired on by 100 rifles from Albu Kemal.

21st December, 1919.—Albu Kemal reoccupied with slight resistance. Two Indian other ranks wounded. Light armoured motor patrol proceeding towards Salahiya encountered fifty camelmén and fifty horsemen, who, after short fight, retired to hills. One British other ranks wounded.

22nd December, 1919.—Colonel Young instructed that no regular troops were to advance beyond Albu Kemal except on reconnaissance and to strike any small forces coming within reach. Captain Boyes and representative of Ramadhan's party arrived Albu Kemal, bringing letter of explanation. Reported that 1,000 men are holding lightly entrenched position south of Deir-ez-Zor. Lieut. Tufiq arrived on behalf of Major Raouff, who has been sent as representative of Arab Government; stated latter would not

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