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His EXCELLENCY SIR GEOFFREY FRANCIS ARCHER, K.C.M.G.

THE MAD MULLAH OF SOMALILAND

THETMAD MULLAH OF SOMALILAND

BY
DOUGLAS JARDINE, O.B.E.

(SECRETARY TO THE ADMINISTRATION,
SOMALILAND, 1916-21)

WITH A FOREWORD BY
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE VISCOUNT MILNER, K.G., G.C.B.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

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INSCRIBED WITH AFFECTION AND
RESPECT TO
HIS, EXCELLENCY
SIR GEOFFREY FRANCIS ARCHER, K.C.M.G.,
HIS MAJESTY'S REPRESENTATIVE IN SOMALILAND
FROM 1914 TO 1922
TO WHOM THE DOWNFALL OF DERVISHISM
AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH
PRESTIGE IN SOMALILAND
IS PRIMARILY DUE.

FOREWORD

BY

THE RT. HON. THE VISCOUNT MILNER,
K.G., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

THE fashion of "forewords" is perhaps being somewhat overdone. I am afraid myself of becoming an offender in this respect. But in the present case I have a special justification. For during my tenure of the Colonial Office I had great anxieties about Somaliland, and it was in my time, in the autumn of 1919, that the last expedition against the "Mad Mullah" was undertaken. I well remember the reluctance of the Government to sanction that expedition, for the thought of a fresh war, on however small a scale, was abhorrent to all of us. And in view of our growing financial difficulties, the cost of the expedition, which, to judge from previous experience, might last for months and involve the expenditure of several millions, presented a formidable difficulty. But Mr. Churchill and his advisers at the Air Ministry succeeded in persuading me that, with the help of the Air Force, the work could be much more quickly and cheaply accomplished, and of this I in turn succeeded in persuading the Prime Minister. Once the case was clearly put before him, he decided it with his usual promptness, and the expedition was sent. It lasted three weeks and cost less than £100,000. And it resulted in the complete and final overthrow of the Mullah, who had been a thorn in the side of the British administration of

Somaliland for more than twenty years. It is true, as Mr. Jardine points out, that this result was not due entirely to the Air Force. But it is certain that, but for the hopes we based on the co-operation of the airmen, the campaign would never have been undertaken, and that they contributed greatly to its success.

But the campaign of 1919 was only the last chapter of a long story—a story full of dramatic interest, of vicissitude and adventure, and "moving accidents by flood and field"—full too of instruction for the soldier, the administrator and the diplomatist. That story is here related not only with the fullest knowledge, but with what is often lacking in books of this kind, a freshness and buoyancy, which make it live. Despite the refractory nature of much of his material—the savage and repellent scenery, the uncouth and unpronounceable names—Mr. Jardine succeeds in being not only informative but entertaining. He has something to tell which is of real importance, and he tells it in a manner which is calculated to engage and retain the attention and sympathy of his readers.

MILNER.

PREFACE

THE primary design of this work is to tell the story of the adventurous career of the Mad Mullah from his rise in 1899 to his death some two years ago; but it is, of course, inevitable that any such work should resolve itself into what is, in effect, an account of Great Britain's connexion with her Somaliland Dependency. In order that this account may be as authoritative and reliable as possible, it has been necessary to refer continually to various State documents; and I have to express my thanks to the Colonial Office, the Somaliland Government, and the Foreign Office, for the courtesy and promptitude with which such documents have been placed at my disposal. My thanks are also due to Colonel G. H. Summers, C.M.G., and Bt.-Major H. L. Ismay, D.S.O., for many valuable suggestions and corrections.

I am indebted to my friend, Mrs. Arthur Noble, for the portrait of the Mad Mullah which, being based on various intelligence reports, may give the reader some idea of the personal appearance of that elusive adventurer: to Sir H. E. S. Cordeaux, K.C.M.G., C.B., for the loan of the original of the Mullah's letter which is reproduced in facsimile in Chapter II: to the War Office for permission accorded to reproduce the plans relating to the actions at Jidbali, and Illig: and to Miss Eva Godman, Sir Geoffrey and Lady Archer, Major Ismay, Lieut.-Colonel R. E. Drake-Brockman, D.S.O., and the Air Ministry for the various photographs.

Finally, I have to thank the Survey Department of Nigeria for assistance given in the compilation of the sketch map.

D. J. J.

London,
February, 1923.

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THE MAD MULLAH OF SOMALILAND

CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE : SOMALILAND AND THE SOMALIS

THIS is an age of biographies and of autobiographies. Some are accounted good, others bad. But, at least, it may be said for most biographers that they can claim some personal acquaintance, and generally a very intimate personal acquaintance, with the subject of their works. Boswell knew his Johnson, and Morley his Gladstone. Perhaps, too, Mrs. Asquith knew her Margot. But to the chronicler of the career of Mohammed bin Abdulla Hassan this all-important qualification is utterly lacking. For I have never seen the Mad Mullah; and, indeed, since his rise in 1899, no Englishman ever set eyes on him. Not that His Madness would not have been delighted to entertain me in his stately stronghold at Tale; but there was always this about him, that his sense of hospitality was apt to be somewhat crude, and my enjoyment would have been tempered by the foreboding that the inevitable climax of his entertainment would have been the roasting of an infidel over a slow fire. Not to have seen the Mullah must, therefore, be a condition precedent to writing his biography; and, if further apology be required, I can truly urge that for five

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or six strenuous years he was seldom out of my official thoughts.

There is another handicap under which the Mullah's biographer must labour. The world at large knows so little of Somaliland or the Somalis that my opening chapter must be devoted to some description of the stage on which the Mullah's twenty-one years' revolt against British rule was set, and not to the intimate and intriguing descriptions of babyhood and childhood that characterise the initial stages of most biographies.

The home of the Somali peoples is that part of North-Eastern Africa which is generally known as the "Horn of Africa."* Some 320,000 square miles in area, it lies between the Equator and the twelfth degree of north latitude. It is bounded on the north by the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, on the east by the Indian Ocean, and on the west and south-west by Abyssinia and Kenya (formerly known as British East Africa). This territory has been partitioned by treaty between Great Britain, France, Italy, and Abyssinia.

The British sphere, some 68,000 square miles in area and curiously like a ham in shape, occupies the north-central portion of the horn, being bounded on the north by the Gulf of Aden, on the east and extreme south-east by Italian Somaliland, on the south and south-west by Abyssinia, and on the north-west by French Somaliland. It has an average length of some 400 miles and a depth inland

* It formed part of the land of Cush mentioned in Genesis, and was known as the land of Punt to the early Egyptians about 1700 B.C. To the Greeks and Romans it was the *Regio Cinnamomifera*, although there is little doubt that cinnamon was never a product of Somaliland but was imported from Southern India and Ceylon to Berbera (Malao) and the other ports on the Somali coast, and there retailed to the Greeks who never traded further east or south than Cape Guardafui. To the Arabs of the sixth century A.D. it was known as Bar Ajam, the "Land of Heat."

which varies from 70 miles in the west to 100 miles in the centre. The Somalis under British protection are thought to number some 300,000.

The physical features of the Somali country are much the same wherever the traveller may land. There is first the strip of arid coast extending from Obok in French Somaliland to Cape Guardafui, and stretching inland from the sea to the maritime hills to a maximum distance of sixty miles at Zeyla and to a minimum of 200 yards in the east. Bereft of all vegetation but a few scattered thorn-bushes bristling like hedgehogs, it is destitute of wealth and forbidding in aspect. The fine burning sand is driven by rainless storms into innumerable drifts. All the world seems ablaze; and it is but seldom that a cloud obstructs the pitiless sun.

From this desert of surpassing desolation the traveller gradually ascends the passes of the foothills through country that is almost as inhospitable, known as the "Guban," i.e. burnt. Bare bituminous boulders flank deep and sandy river-beds bestrewn with rocks. Then undulating plains covered with coarse grass and intersected by broad sand-rivers are crossed, until the main mountain range (Golis) is reached. Here, at 4,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level, the climate is invigorating and comparatively equable. Grass, box trees, acacias, a variety of flowering aloes with crimson and golden blossoms, gum, myrrh, and frankincense trees are distinguishing features of the mountain slopes. In some sheltered spots, the juniper or the fig tree flourishes wild; in a few gorges maidenhair lines the rocky pools; and almost everywhere the giant euphorbia lends an artificial and stage-like effect to the scene.

From the Golis one passes to the vast undulating plateau that slopes very gradually southwards to the Webbi Shebeli. Here you find almost every variety

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of scenery. Mountains like the Bur Dab range, that suddenly and unexpectedly rise straight out of the plain ; large strips of rolling open pasture-land with grass that stands as high as a man's waist ; great areas of dense bush ; and only occasionally barren desert devoid of vegetation. It will be realised, then, that the general impression of Somaliland as an arid desert is derived mainly from the narrow coastal strip ; and that the traveller inland soon finds himself in a country that seems almost beautiful and luxuriant compared with what lies behind. Yet he who has not toiled through the desert first, with the sun heavy on his shoulders, would scarce admire the scene. The land is a land of war. Its pastures have been watered with the blood of brave men ; its barren rocks have witnessed many a savage battle.

Of the origin of the Somali people little is known. At some date B.C., which is difficult to determine, the Gallas, the stock from which the Somalis are descended, were driven from Southern Arabia into the region now known as Somaliland, where they presumably inter-married with the original negro inhabitants. In the early years of Mohammed's mission, about A.D. 616, there was a further influx across the Red Sea from the Arabian to the African coast ; and from this date onwards Arabs settled in Somaliland and inter-married with the Galla tribes, thus creating the Somali race. Whatever the circumstances attending these incursions may have been, the close affinity of the Somali language to the Arabian and Galla tongues leaves one with no doubt that they are descended from both these races. The origin of the term Somal or Somali, which of course is quite recent, is obscure. The most plausible explanation is that given by H. M. Abud in his " Genealogies of the Somal." The Somalis are a hospitable people, and milk is their staple food. Consequently, the first words a stranger

would hear on visiting one of their *kharias* (movable villages) would be *So mal*, "Go and bring milk." Other tribal names have certainly been traced to more improbable sources.*

The Somalis themselves believe that two different races inhabit their country, the Asha and the Hawiya. The former, they say, are the true Somalis, and are divided into two great divisions, the Darod and the Ishaak, both claiming descent from certain noble Arab families. The British Darod comprise the Warsangli and Dolbahanta tribes: and the Ishaak the Aidegalla, Habr Yunis, Habr Awal, and Habr Toljaala. There is no cohesion between any of these tribes and, owing to the importance attaching to the family in a patriarchal system of government, they are all further divided into innumerable sub-tribes, clans, and sections, which only unite to face a common danger. The Hawiya Somalis include the Aysa and Gadabursi tribes on the western side of our Protectorate. They have always been despised by the Darod and Ishaak as being their religious and social inferiors. It should be noticed that only those Somali tribes that inhabit British Somaliland have been mentioned in this very brief outline of a very complex tribal system.

The ethnologist has no difficulty in assigning the Somalis to the Eastern Hamitic branch of the Caucasian race which also includes the Danakil, Gallas, and Masai; and of this race the Somalis are worthy members. They are generally of good physique, with heads well set on spare but athletic frames, with proud bearing and a superb carriage bespeaking their consciousness of a racial superiority over their neighbours. Their profile is often classic; the forehead is finely rounded and prominent; the eyes are moderately large and deep-set; the nose is usually straight but sometimes snub or aquiline;

* C/. "Man, Past and Present," revised by A. H. Keane, 1920.

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the lips are not too thick, and never everted as in the Negro; and the hair is never woolly, but ringlety, and sometimes even quite straight. In colour they vary from light to dark brown and from dark brown to black, but the last is comparatively rare.

Apart from the Somalis proper, there are three outcast tribes—Midgan, Yibir, and Tomal. The origin of the Midgan and Yibir, who speak a language quite unlike Somali, is unknown. The Midgan are practically in the position of serfs, and are scattered among the Somali tribes proper for whom they act as hewers of wood and drawers of water, receiving protection and occasionally food in return. They are professional hunters and trackers of considerable skill, and they are also workers in leather, making prayer-mats, cut in the shape of the Mosque at Mecca, amulets, shoes, wallets, and straps. The Yibir are very few in number and are regarded as sorcerers. They subsist on the fees of two or three rupees which, by ancient usage, they are entitled to levy from the Somalis on marriage and at birth. In return for the fee, the Yibir supplies a charm to be hung round the woman or child's arm or neck, which is supposed to ward off the evil eye. It is generally believed among the more credulous Somalis that a Yibir at death disappears in some curious way and that no one has ever seen the corpse of a Yibir. The Tomal are the offspring of those Somalis who have demeaned themselves by marrying a Midgan woman. They are workers in imported iron and, with the help of a hammer and file, they manufacture knives, Somali swords, spears and hatchets.

The natural state of a Somali is entirely nomadic ; and his life in his own country to-day must be exactly the same as it was 500 years ago. Indeed, we can go further back and say that Ibrahim, Ishaak, and Yakoub are supporting the same sort of existence



BERBER NATIVE TOWN FROM THE AIR.

PROLOGUE: SOMALILAND

in British Somaliland to-day as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob elsewhere in the Orient in the days of Genesis. The Somali country is parcelled out among the various tribes, sub-tribes, and *rers*, or clans, who are continually moving with their camels, their most precious possession, their flocks and their herds, within their allotted area in search of fresh grass and possible water-holes. The only permanent towns of any size are Berbera, Bulhar, Zeyla, and Las Khorai at the coast, whither chosen representatives of each clan repair from time to time, but particularly between September and March, to retail their sheep, goats and oxen, and hides and skins, and to purchase with the proceeds rice from India, dates from Basra, and cotton cloth from Manchester or America or Japan. In the interior, the only townships are Sheikh, Burao, and Hargeisa, where there is permanent water; and scattered over the country may be found half a dozen *tarikas*, i.e. settlements of mullahs and other holy men. It is only round these settlements that there is any attempt at cultivation, but here jowari* is cultivated successfully enough, although the methods employed are somewhat primitive. These *tarikas* are of great importance, not only because of the influence exercised by their comparatively well-travelled and sophisticated occupants, but also because they represent the beginnings of a more settled mode of life. All other places, often shown on the maps as large as a fair-sized town in England, are nothing more than ill-defined camping grounds, named generally after some distinguishing geographical feature, but sometimes also after some sinister incident that has occurred in the neighbourhood.

Enough has been said to show that the tribe is the mainspring of the Somali's existence ; but there are many Somalis who forsake their tribes and

* i.e. *Sorghum volgare*, a kind of millet.

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leave their country to seek their fortunes abroad. As traders in Eastern Africa or Aden, as miners in Australia or South Africa, or soldiers in the French or Italian Colonial armies, or as seamen with headquarters at Port Said or Bute Street, Cardiff, they have been equally successful. But sooner or later they find their way back to their tribe with one ambition in life, namely, to be once again the normal nomadic tribesman. It is no uncommon sight in Berbera to see the Somali traveller return from abroad clad in a "stores suiting," a celluloid collar with guardee tie, and patent-leather boots, and with all the assurance of a man of the world. He will remain in the town for a few days ostentatiously entertaining his fellow-tribesmen and friends, just to show what a success he has made of his adventure; and then he will scornfully cast aside for ever the appurtenances of modern civilisation. Possessing himself of a *tobe** spear and sandals, he repairs to his tribe in the interior, and incontinently invests his all in the inevitable camels.

There is surely no native race so absolutely immune against the demoralising force of denationalisation. The result is that the traveller in Somaliland never knows but what the most obvious *jangli* (bushman) may not be one who has travelled far; and never in this connexion will the author forget a certain tribesman named Ahmed. In the good cause of "propaganda" during the War, I was endeavouring to explain to Ahmed the might of England and France and the glories of London and Paris. Ahmed

* The *tobe*, the conventional dress of the Somalis, consists of about fifteen feet of Manchester or American cotton cloth and resembles the Roman toga. Men throw it over the shoulder and give it a turn round the waist, but when working or fighting they use it as a loin-cloth, wrapping it several times round the waist, so as to leave the arms and chest bare. The women wear the *tobe* confined by a sash round the waist.

listened to my winged words for some-time and then remarked that he knew all about it and that his address in London was 14A Jermyn Street. Subsequent inquiries elicited that he had been a miner in South Africa twenty years before, and had accompanied a mining magnate home to England, where he had stayed with him as a personal servant for a year or so.

The most entertaining feature of SomaliJand is undoubtedly the Somali; and much has been written about the "Irishman of Africa." It is freely admitted by experts that of all Africans he is the most difficult and consequently the most interesting to govern or control. Indeed, to pass from the administration of Somalis to the administration of African negroes must be like bestriding a donkey on Margate sands after riding a thoroughbred at Newmarket. It is always difficult for Europeans to form a just estimate of the character of Orientals whose environment and outlook on life differ so fundamentally from their own; and the Somali's nature is so complex it is not surprising that the opinions formed of him by casual observers have varied so widely. But those who have lived with him for long in his own country will not be disposed, I think, to quarrel with the following summary of his few vices and many virtues.

His besetting sins are insatiable avarice, inordinate vanity, and excitability. For sheer grasping greed the Somali yields to no one. He is for ever hunting the elusive rupee. The construction of a motor road from Berbera to Burao at a cost of £90,000 was once under consideration; but the only contribution to the debate offered by the Somalis was an ingenuous inquiry regarding the compensation that would be payable to them if the project were carried out. But those who realise the Somali's terrible struggle **for existence in his own country do not**

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find it difficult to understand the cause of this unpleasant trait. His only wealth is his livestock, which provides him with meat and drink. Never resting long in any one spot, and for ever scanning the horizon for the rain he so seldom sees, his main occupation is to find sufficient grazing and water for his flocks and herds—a heartbreaking task in a country where grass is often far to seek and water even scarcer.

Drought, disease, a raiding party, or one of the fierce carnivora with which his country abounds, may rob him of his all at any moment, and, if this befall him and he be not young and strong enough to find employment as the herdsman of another's stock, or, better still, to loot the property of a rival tribe, there is nothing left for him but to lie down under the nearest thorn-bush and await the coming of the inevitable hyaena. For in this hard country, where, to exist, the strong must of necessity prey upon the weak, there are no charity organisations nor hope of succour for the aged poor.

If you were to take the average Englishman, deprive him of all his worldly possessions, and in return issue to him a *tobe* of Manchester cotton cloth and sandals and a spear, give him, say, ten camels and sixty sheep and goats, put him down in the average Somali country, attach him to a Somali tribe, and then challenge him to keep himself alive on the assets thus bestowed—then, given these conditions, there is little question that, should your victim still be alive a couple of years later, he would fully understand why the Somali seems so shamelessly avaricious to the well-nourished European who, comparatively speaking, has not to take thought for the morrow. *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*; and disgust at the Somali's avarice soon yields to admiration for the heart that so often rejoices despite such drab conditions

of life. A creature of paradox, he is a great spend-thrift ; and when he has ready money he will feast his fellow-tribesmen in princely style.

Avarice is a vice as common to the unsophisticated Somali in the bush as it is to his sophisticated brother, the trader or traveller or Government *employi*. But vanity is far more marked in the sophisticated. If you ask a Somali whether he knows how to do anything, he invariably replies, *tout court*, that a Somali knows everything. If you prove to him that there is something he does not know, he merely exclaims, " Wallahi ! " (By God !), as though it were altogether too surprising to be true. When in January, 1920, " Z " Squadron of the Royal Air Force arrived at Berbera, the average sophisticated Somali, instead of expressing surprise and admiration at such a remarkable invention of modern science as the aeroplane, as might not unreasonably be anticipated, gave but a passing glance to the machines and remarked that the Somali would also build aeroplanes " if he only knew how " ; and it was not long before it was generally stated in the Berbera bazaar that the *sahibs* had handed over the machines to Somali pilots and that they had done so because the Somalis could " drive " them so much better than they.

The sophisticated Somali is also very vain about his personal appearance. A man earning good wages will spend most of them on the adornment of his person. Bright turbans, shirts, handkerchiefs, and coats, all of silk, and imposing walking sticks are most popular with the wage-earner of Berbera or Aden ; and a Somali dandy will devote hours to combing his hair before a looking-glass. Nor are his efforts in vain : for the general effect of all this adornment is most attractive. A Somali with aquiline nose, small lips, large glittering brown eyes, flashing white teeth, stately carriage, and the aristocratic **look** common to so many of his race,

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makes an arresting picture when clad in gaily coloured turban and fair white *tobe*, with a criss-cross patterned shawl of orange and blue thrown casually over the shoulder.

However, the line between the vice of vanity and the virtue of self-respect is a particularly narrow one; and this should not be forgotten as one smiles at the Somali's foibles. During the Great War, a travelled Somali was once asked by a British officer which he thought were the greatest races in the world. He promptly replied that the British were the greatest. Asked which he would place next, he said the Somalis were equally great. The Arabs he placed third, and the Germans fourth; but he resolutely declined to accord places to any other nation. Asked why the British ruled over the Somalis if both were equally great, he replied that he supposed it was because the British possessed so many rupees. How much of his replies may be attributed to flattery, how much to sheer ignorance, and how much to justifiable racial pride, the reader must judge for himself.

The Somali is as ambitious for the good name of his master or employer as he is enthusiastic about his own personal abilities. He likes to think that his master is the most important personage imaginable and, above all, that he excels as a sportsman or athlete; and, even when he knows quite well that his master does not "fill the bill," nothing will induce him to admit it. A new-comer to Somaliland once over-heard the following conversation between his personal servant Ali and Ahmed, a brother officer's interpreter:

Ahmed: I don't think much of your new *sahib*.

Ali (indignantly): Wallahi! Why?

Ahmed: He does not know how to play football.

Ali: And how do you know that?

Ahmed: Because we have asked him **to play with us and the other *sahibs*** and he has refused.

Alt: Of course. My *sahib* would never play with you. For he plays football so well that nowadays he only plays with the King and Kitchener *sahib* and Wingate *sahib*.*

On another occasion, the same Ali, desiring to impress his master's greatness on a fellow Somali, showed him a picture of the Great Court of Trinity College, Cambridge, which adorned the dining-room, and told him it was his *sahib's* bungalow in his last colony. Resourceful, too, when he learnt that Her Excellency was coming to tea, Ali hastily covered with brown paper his master's print of the Apollo Belvedere, "lest the *burr a memsahib* should be ashamed."

The Somali's excitability is probably attributable to the climate in which he lives. The extraordinary dryness of the air at a high altitude, the intense heat of the sun, the extreme variations in temperature between day and night, often amounting to as much as fifty degrees, combined with a life of continual motion and unrest, cannot but have their effect on the nervous system. During the earlier expeditions against the Mullah, the Somali's excitability was always regarded as greatly detracting from his undoubted value as a soldier; but it must be remembered that the Somali levies of those days were fighting almost untrained. It was not long, however, before a more thorough training was possible; and the Somali, though naturally impatient of restraint, soon learnt to appreciate the necessity and value of military discipline. If his excitable temperament still tends to unsteadiness in action, it also gives him tremendous *elan*.

His other qualities as a fighting man include great

* The Somali's respect for Lord Kitchener was profound. In fact, he was the only Englishman who had not visited the country whose name they knew. General Sir R. Wingate, Bart., visited Somaliland on a special mission (*see* chap. VI) and greatly impressed the Somalis as, indeed, he did **all** natives.

personal bravery, amounting to foolhardiness in the heat of battle ; resourcefulness as a scout; abnormal endurance on the march despite his poor stamina ; cheerfulness under privation, and fair horsemanship and marksmanship. It is the considered opinion of many who know the country that, given able and sympathetic leadership, a definite policy, and a settled existence as a unit, a Somali regiment would be as good in every way as any coloured troops in our Imperial Army.

In civil life the Somali's excitability is a constant cause of anxiety to the political officer. Mercurial in temperament, he will be happy and contented, loyal and malleable for months on end ; and then suddenly some incident, be it small or great, will rouse him to an almost uncontrollable state of excitement in which he is not responsible for anything he may say or do. On the other hand, nothing could be more misleading than to describe the Somali as treacherous, as the newspaper correspondent in Nairobi or Aden is too apt to do. At the same time, the officer, civil or military, whose duty it is to control Somalis, must bring a special aptitude to his task. He must be tolerant and good tempered ; quick-witted and gifted with the right sense of humour; sympathetic and in close touch with native sentiment. No man can hope to dragoon a proud, independent, and sensitive race ; and any attempt to do so must most certainly lead to failure and possibly to disaster.

The Somali woman is generally of comely appearance, with good features and a slight and elegant figure. Her prepossessing exterior, however, is entirely counteracted by her loud and querulous voice ; and one feels impelled to give the lie to Burton's judgment that one of the peculiar charms of the Somali girl is a " soft, low and plaintive voice." At first sight, Eve seems to have a very unpleasant time in Somaliland. She is expected



SOMALI GIRLS. THREE METHODS OF DRESSING THE HAIR.



SOMALI Girls Putting THE FINISHING TOUCHES.

to do all the rough work, carry loads, hew wood, draw water, and tend stock, while Adam engages in politics and war. This first impression is true enough up to a certain point. For the Somali is not a sentimental creature, and he has no more regard for a woman than he has for a camel. She is a valuable asset necessary to the well-being of a tribe ; and he extends to her the same marked consideration with which he treats his camel—and for precisely similar reasons.

In actual practice, however, a clever, witty, and hard-working woman will rule the roost; and mere man will slink away time and again, like a whipped cur, before the chidings of his womenkind. The Somali women are devoted to their children ; and the affection shown by both sexes of riper age for the small child is a specially pleasing characteristic of the race. The Somali woman goes unveiled ; but otherwise in her costume she is modesty itself. Her moral sense is high judged by Oriental standards ; and the Somali man attaches the highest importance to the chastity of his womenkind. Very few Somalis can afford to maintain more than one wife.

Another charge often levied at the much-abused Somali is ingratitude. My experience is that, wherever you may go in the British Empire, the same old story of the ingratitude of the particular primitive race among whom you may be at the moment is platitudinously raised by the croakers who should surely remember that, if backward natives were able to appreciate British rule at its true value, there would be no need in their case for British rule at all. Nor, by the way, is the ingrate confined to the backward races. If the reader doubts this, let him turn to the pages of the parish magazine of any outspoken parson in the East End of London.

But, apart from these considerations, has the Somali so very much to be grateful for ? Those who know the country can best answer this question

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for themselves, bearing in mind that it has taken thirty-six years of British government to establish peace and order, that impartial justice is a boon seldom appreciated by the Oriental, that the real wealth of the country is no greater than in 1884 ; that no system of education has been established ; that agriculture and industries are still almost as non-existent as when we first took charge ; and that taxation is already very high, having regard to the poverty of the people and the low stage of development in Somaliland compared with our other tropical African Dependencies.

Of the Somali's courage and powers of endurance much has been written. The man who will coolly thrust his hand down a lion's throat to save his master's life need fear no aspersions on this score ; and his very remarkable powers of endurance are well illustrated in the following incident. In 1912, a Somali crawled into the Berbera hospital with a Gras bullet wound in his leg that had become gangrened and a spear wound right through his body, just missing the heart. He had crawled eighty miles to the hospital in this condition. The medical officer promptly placed him on the operating table and proceeded to probe the bullet wound. Whereupon the patient gasped, " Do not worry about that, but please have a look at this spear wound. It hurts me when I laugh."

The following incidents are quoted from Dr. Drake-Brockman's work *British Somaliland* :—

" I once saw a little girl of twelve walk into my hospital nursing an arm, with her dress covered with blood, while accompanying her was an old woman who was apparently in great pain, although neither even murmured. Both, on inquiry I learnt, had walked in from the jungle, about thirty miles, during the previous day and night, although the child had a Gras bullet lodged at the side of her spine after shattering the shoulder-blade and breaking two ribs, driving the broken piece of one of them into her right lung ; while the woman had a spear wound in her abdomen, through which

the intestine was protruding. On another occasion, a youngster, who formed one of a raiding party, after he was wounded in the abdomen with a spear, had to crawl for six days across the waterless Haud, traversing over 120 miles of country, subsisting on berries and the juice of a tuber for water."

Dr. Drake-Brockman also quotes the following* by Captain Hudson, I.M.S. :—

" A Somali was shot by the enemy, and the bullet penetrated just below his stomach and came out to the right of his vertebral column behind. He was then speared in five places. One spear wound ripped up his abdomen and let out twelve feet of gut, another wound cut his right thigh, and a third almost into his left shoulder point; and there were many other smaller wounds. The big wounds were six or seven inches long and two inches deep. This man crawled from twelve noon under a blazing sun, stark naked and trailing his gut behind him, until 5 p.m., when he was picked up and attended to. He recovered/'

Such incidents, illustrating alike the Somali's powers of endurance and insensibility to pain, so often found among primitive people, could be multiplied *ad nauseam*; and, marvellous as they seem to the European, they would not appear out of the ordinary to the Somalis. To travel long distances without water or food is to them part of the regular routine of life ; and their simple diet and complete abstinence from alcohol or tobacco assist to make them a nation of athletes always in training. And yet in spite of their powers of endurance, they are very prone to phthisis, pneumonia and similar diseases.

There is a very pronounced poetic strain in the Somalis, and they have a remarkable gift for impromptu verse which the poet will sing after the Somali fashion on divers occasions. Such poems may be heard at dusk after a long march when, seated beside a thorn bush and surrounded by an admiring audience, the poet will improvise and

* " Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society " (Bangalore), Vol. II, No. 1, p. 16.

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croon sad and melodious lines about the incomparable beauty of his wife, the strength of his camels, or, as often as not, his own imperishable renown as a warrior. At dances, of which the Somalis are extremely fond, and at marriages, the singing of impromptu verse is a great feature. But perhaps the most engaging entertainment the Somali poet can offer is the *dibaltiq*, which is a sort of "song and dance" on horseback, given in honour of some personage—a native chief or some British officer. If it be the latter, he will be seated in a chair in some open place with his retinue standing behind him.

As soon as everything is ready, the horsemen will advance towards him in no definite formation at the trot. One of their number, the poet, will be heard singing, as he approaches with uplifted spear. Halting his pony within a yard or two of the British officer, he will proceed to sing the latter's praises at the top of his voice. Sometimes, overcome by the excitement of the moment, the poet will abandon his main theme to criticise the policy of the Government or to drop a hint that a monetary reward would be most acceptable when the entertainment is over.

As soon as the singer is weary, he withdraws with his brother horsemen and they all ride away until they are a quarter of a mile, perhaps, from their audience. Then, turning round and digging their heels into their ponies' sides, they gallop back "hell for leather," swinging their arms, waving their *tobes*, and belabouring their ponies. When within a few feet of the audience, they suddenly draw up their ponies on to their haunches and thus come to a standstill. They shout, "*Mot! Mot!*" which means, "Hail! Hail!" and the "audience" is supposed to reply in Somali, "Thank you," but his mouth and eyes are generally so full of dust that he is incapable of articulation. Gallop and greeting are repeated several times, until the



A Dnarrig.

" audience " retires to his tent smothered in dust and full of pity for the unfortunate ponies whose profusely bleeding mouths testify to the cruelty of the Somali bits.

The Somalis are also no mean orators ; and to be a man of distinction in a tribe you must have a reputation not only as a fighter and a man of many possessions, but also as a convincing spokesman. The Somali orator is usually extremely prolix and very histrionic ; but, despite this, he is undoubtedly impressive. He possesses the first qualification of the public speaker, namely, self-confidence ; and he has the utmost scorn for any rival. The consequence is that, whenever a British officer gives an audience to the leaders of a tribe to discuss any political question, he is faced by the prospect of a feast of oratory, which often lasts for a whole day.

The most famous spokesman of the tribe will be the first to hold forth. Careless of repetitions and buoyed up with a sense of his own importance, he will state his tribe's case with an unceasing flow of words and gestures. This speech may extend to half an hour. The man whose reputation is only second to that of the first spokesman will then intervene. Convinced that the tribe's case is being mangled, he will pull the first spokesman down by his *tobe* and will himself proceed to harangue the luckless British officer in almost precisely the same terms. And so it will go on until every member of a tribal deputation has delivered his oration. It may be that the British officer will be impressed by all this rhetoric ; but his decision, based on the true facts of the case, will probably have been made before the meeting assembled, and consequently all the purple patches will have fallen on deaf ears. This is the tragedy of the Somali School of Rhetoric, but it is a tragedy shared by almost every orator, wherever he may manoeuvre, if he be not on the Government side.

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The Somali is very intelligent, and quick and eager to learn. He has a very highly pronounced sense of humour, good manners, and natural *savoir faire*. In short, he is very much the gentleman. These qualities encourage one to believe that he will take a very high place among the educated races of the East in years to come, when the country can afford a sound educational system such as exists in the Sudan. So great and important are the possibilities in this direction that every effort should be made in the future, as in the past, to prevent the introduction into Somaliland of the educational makeshifts which have ruined the morals and manners of millions of natives in so many other tropical dependencies of the Crown.

Little is known of the recent history of Somaliland since the Arab invasions of the seventh century A. D. In 1500 the Turks established themselves at Zeyla ; but in 1516 the town was captured and burnt by a Portuguese fleet. Subsequently it became subject in turn to the Prince of Senna and the Sheriff of Mocha.

In 1827 an English ship was wrecked off the Somali coast, and the first treaty between the British and the Somalis was "made. Consequent upon the conquest of Aden in 1839, which led to the development of trade between the Somali coast and Aden, a further treaty was successfully negotiated in 1840. In March, 1842, Johnston visited Berbera and described it much as a traveller might describe the native town to-day. Subsequently, in 1854, Burton, disguised as an Arab, entered at Zeyla and proceeded thence to Harrar and Berbera. When leaving Berbera for Zanzibar in the following year his party was attacked by the Habr Awal, and this incident led to a British blockade of Berbera and yet another treaty.

In 1874-75, Ismail I, Khedive of Egypt, who had already purchased Massawa from **the Porte**



A SOMALI DANCE.

[Note the small boy held in the teeth of one of the dancers.]

and established garrisons at Bulhar and Berbera, claimed jurisdiction, under the suzerainty of the Sublime Porte, over the Somali Coast as far as Ras Hafun. This claim was recognised conditionally by the British Government in a Convention signed at Alexandria in 1877. The Egyptian Government effected considerable improvements in the coast towns, constructing piers, lighthouses, and block-houses; and to them we owe the plentiful water supply at Berbera. In 1884, however, difficulties in the Sudan constrained the Egyptian Government to evacuate their Somali colony; and in October of that year a British officer, with a small force of police and sepoy, was charged with the administration of Berbera. .

Early in 1885 Great Britain concluded separate protective treaties with all the Somali tribes now living under her protection, except the Warsangli, who concluded a treaty in 1886, and the Dolbahanta, with whom no treaty has been made. Thus some 68,000 square miles were added to our African Empire, and an important littoral on the main sea route to India came under British suzerainty. Responsibility for this newly-acquired possession devolved upon the Government of India; and, like Aden, the Somali Coast was administered by the Government of Bombay. But on the 1st October, 1898, owing to Somaliland's intimate connexion with the political situation in Abyssinia, and with a view to the development of the resources of the interior, the administration was transferred to the Foreign Office. At the time hopes of peaceful and prosperous development in Somaliland ran high; for it was the only country in our East African Empire that was then self-supporting. But in the following year all such hopes were frustrated by the Somali who soon became known to the world as the Mad Mullah.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF THE MULLAH

IN the early 'seventies there was born to one Abdulla Hassan a son who was named Mohammed. The family were poor and of no account in the land. The father belonged to the Bagheri section of the Southern Ogaden, a Somali tribe nominally under Abyssinian jurisdiction; and the mother was a Dolbahanta, now a British Somali tribe. Mohammed was born and bred at Kob Faradod in the neighbourhood of Kirrit, in the Dolbahanta country, about 170 miles south-south-east of Berbera.

His boyhood was doubtless much like that of other Somali children. The monotony of a life devoted to tending the stock of the Dolbahanta around and about Kirrit would be broken by occasional visits to Berbera with his relatives. At first he would make the long journey strapped to the back of his mother who, as is the custom among Somali women on such occasions, would be marching at the rear of the camel caravan, now querulously shouting abuse to her companions, now running forward to beat into line a refractory camel. But soon it would be his fate to cover the 170 miles trail afoot in six or seven days, up hill and then down to the valleys beneath, his bare feet blistered and hardened by the scorching sand.

Occasionally, perhaps, at Berbera or at Kirrit, under the shade of a friendly tree, Mohammed sat at the feet of some Mullah who, with little erudition but much enthusiasm, would expound the Q'oran;

but there was nothing in the circumstances of his birth and upbringing to suggest the remarkable career which lay before him except, perhaps, that the Dolbahanta, his mother's tribe, can boast more than their fair share of the Somali's conceit and spirit of independence.

While yet a boy, Mohammed would voyage in some friendly dhow carrying Somali produce, hides, skins, *ghee* and sheep, to the Arabian coast; and in Aden he must have often seen the mighty liners plying between East and West, and heard something of the wonders of Europe. Be this as it may, when he was about seventeen or eighteen, he determined to see the world, and is said* to have enrolled at Aden as a fireman in a liner. His employment in this capacity would have greatly influenced his future. Not only would life on board ship teach him the value of discipline, the hardest lesson of all for a Somali to learn, but his observant eye and quick brain would reveal to him much of human nature which would have never come to his notice among his own kith and kin in the Dolbahanta country. But, above all, in the native *caravanserais* of Egyptian ports, he often would have listened awestruck to many a strange story of the Mahdi.

The adventures of the Khalifa, too, who rose from the ownership of one saddle-galled donkey to the rule of a vast empire, could not have failed to appeal to the needy and impressionable Somali tribesman. His aspirations growing with years and knowledge, Mohammed made the pilgrimage to Mecca; and so impressed was he by all he heard and saw that he made several subsequent journeys to the sacred city,

* Service on board a British liner as fireman or interpreter is part and parcel of the traditional account of the Mullah's career; but, personally, I do not think it has any foundation in fact. He knew no English and was entirely untouched by European influences. The originators of the tradition probably confused him with Haji Sudi, his chief henchman. (See page 70.)

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returning to Berbera from the last of these pilgrimages in 1895. Every visit had enhanced his sanctity and increased his influence as a holy man. At this time, he was described as tall, lithe, and full of energy, his characteristic Somali wiriness being emphasised by his thin goatee beard.

The Somalis are Sunni Mohammedans and originally belonged, as do many of them still, to the Kadariyeh sect. About 1870, however, an Arab Sheikh, Seyyid Ahmed by name, sent a representative to Somaliland, who established a *tarika* and gained many disciples. The Ahmedieh, as this sect came to be known, soon became stronger than the Kadariyeh; and a hostile feeling arose as between the two schools of thought. In 1887, however, the teaching of a certain Arab Sheikh, Mohammed Salih, penetrated from Mecca to the Somali coast and found many converts among the Ogaden and Dolbahanta.

This movement split the Ahmedieh into two branches—the Anderawieh, who remained faithful to Seyyid Ahmed, and the Salihieh, which is the name given to the sect founded by Mohammed Salih. Although the Anderawieh and Salihieh do not meet together to perform *zikr*, or religious ceremonies, they are on good terms and are both alike hostile to the Kadariyeh. With an Ogaden father and a Dolbahanta mother, Mohammed naturally became a disciple of Mohammed Salih, and sat at his feet during his pilgrimages to Mecca. The Salihieh are insignificant enough either at Mecca or in the Mohammedan world generally outside Somaliland; but, at the same time, they are extremely fanatical, and their tenets are of a harsh and uncompromising order compared with the more complaisant Kadariyeh, or Anderawieh.

When Haji Mohammed bin Abdulla Hassan (as he could now style himself) returned to Berbera in 1895, he immediately started a crusade on behalf

of Mohammed Salih, whose deputy in Somaliland he claimed to be. For a living he depended upon the alms of the charitable; and there is an old Arab woman in Berbera to-day, who up to the time of his death often wondered whether he would repay the four annas she lent him in the days of his need, should the opportunity ever offer. So far as the Government was concerned, there was nothing in his teaching at Berbera to which exception could be taken. To somewhat bored and unsympathetic audiences he denounced the Kadariyeh, and preached more regularity in the hours of prayer, and stricter attention to the forms of religion.

With all the corrosive invective of the born agitator and the recklessness of the reformer, he inveighed against the luxury of the age. He proclaimed that the Somalis were wasting their substance on riotous living, especially on tea-drinking. He protested against the immorality of chewing *kat**, or the gluttony of gorging the fat of sheep's tail. There was, and is, no reason to believe that in 1895 the Mullah had any intention of leading a political movement with the object of driving the British infidel from his country. On the contrary, he appears to have been an earnest seeker after the truth, a staunch believer in the Q'oran as propounded by his superiors at Mecca, possessed of a special aptitude for learning the tenets and dogmas of the Mohammedan faith, and imbued with a passionate desire to convert his fellow-countrymen to the asceticism and doctrines of Mohammed Salih. He gained but few adherents among the comparatively sophisticated inhabitants of Berbera and, disappointed with his lack of success, he soon repaired to the interior, where he made his headquarters near Kirrit, the home of his childhood, among his mother's people. He immediately exercised

* A herb of very stimulating qualities to which Arabs, Harraris, and a few coast Somalis are much addicted.

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a considerable influence over the Dolbahanta and a few of the Habr Toljaala inhabiting the remote south-eastern corner of our Protectorate.

At first, this influence seemed to be exercised for good. *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus* : and Mohammed was no exception to this rule. For, he settled disputes among the tribes in his vicinity, prevented them from raiding each other, and was regarded by the local Government as being on the side of law and order. From time to time he corresponded with the Vice-Consul at Berbera about tribal matters, and occasionally he would send down as prisoners to the Vice-Consular Court Somalis who had been guilty of criminal offences in the interior. Thus, he acquired very considerable influence over the tribesmen by adjusting their grievances and ensuring that his decisions were put into effect; for the Somalis were not slow to realise that his rough and ready justice was preferable to the long journey to Berbera and the prospect of the Government not being in a position to enforce Its decision in the interior, when given.

As has already been stated, the Vice-Consular Court at Berbera was in constant communication with the Mullah ; and, as time went on, the tone of the latter's epistles became increasingly truculent. On the 23rd March, 1899, the Vice-Consul sent a note to the Mullah about a trivial matter. A certain Hussein had stolen a rifle and was thought to have taken it to the Mullah. The Vice-Consul would be obliged if the rifle could be returned. The Mullah replied on the back of the Vice-Consul's letter, which he had coloured red ; and to emphasise his message, he wrote it out twice, first in large and then in smaller Arabic characters :

"There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Messenger. Nought have I stolen from you or from any other. Seek what you want from him who robbed you. Serve him whom you have chosen to serve. This and salaams.

(Sealed.) " MOHAMMED BIN ABDULLA."

در فی ربع ۲۹ مارس ۱۸۹۹
۱۹ ذی القعدة ۱۳۱۷

من حاکم ربع الى الحاج محمد عبدالله بعد السلام
بعضنا ان واحد رجل يدعى دعاه عرسى من اصحاب
المتجان كوكس هوب بيندق كان سرقة وان
الرجل المذكور اتى بالبندقى اليكم فخر هذا الكتاب
منا نخبكم انه اذا كان هذا التندق لديكم يلزم
ارساله حالاً الى بربره والسلام

M. A. C. C.

كورد و صاحب
البربره
✍



The paper containing the Vice-Consul's letter and the Mullah's reply is reproduced in facsimile facing pages 40 and 42. •

About the same time rumours became current that the Mullah was collecting arms and men with a view to establishing his authority over the south-eastern regions of the Protectorate and heading a religious expedition into Abyssinia. Inquiries were immediately set on foot; but great difficulty was experienced in obtaining any trustworthy intelligence owing to his distance from Berbera, and because his followers were bound by a solemn oath to say nothing about him. On the 12th April, however, the Consul-General*, in a despatch to the Marquess of Salisbury, was able to report that the Mullah's following was estimated at 3,000 men; that all the tribesmen within reach, who had hitherto held aloof, were being compelled by force to join his sect; and that there was no longer any doubt he was organising a movement antagonistic to the Administration. He was said to be laying claim to supernatural powers.

During the next month or so, the situation was very uncertain and difficult to gauge. In Somaliland, it has always been far from easy to obtain timely and accurate information regarding political and military matters. Vast waterless tracts and sluggish animal transport combine to make accurate intelligence travel with exasperating slowness and, failing reliable information, the Somali mentality delights in inventing and disseminating every conceivable type of rumour. Moreover, Nature has endowed the Somali with little idea of time and place, and still less of numbers. For some time, therefore, it was impossible to estimate the extent of the movement or to advise whether it would best be combatted by a military expedition, by a military promenade, or by letting it subside of itself if it would.

* Colonel J. Hayes-Sadler (afterwards Sir James Hayes-Sadler, K.C.M.G., C.B., *ob.* 21st April, 1922).

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In the meantime, the Mullah, paramount among the Dolbahanta, was making overtures with varying success to the Habr Toljaala and Habr Yunis tribes, with a view to extending his authority towards the central area of the Protectorate. In August, 1899, with a force of 5,000 men, of whom 1,500 were mounted and 200 armed with modern rifles, he arrived at Burao, a position of considerable strategical importance, commanding as it does the dry season water supply of the Habr Yunis, Habr Toljaala, and Dolbahanta. The rebellion was open. Immediately on arrival, Mohammed declared himself to be the expected Mahdi and proclaimed a holy war against the infidels. His followers styled themselves Dervishes, and all Somalis who had not joined him were denounced as Kaffirs or infidels and commanded to acknowledge his sway forthwith.

Had this appeal—or blackmail, call it what you will—met with any large measure of success, he would undoubtedly have made some attempt to drive us into the sea, if only to maintain the high standard of his pretensions and claims. As it was, he had to content himself with a swift raid on the religious community inhabiting the Kadariyeh *tarika* at Sheikh, which was razed to the ground. On all sides, however, Rumour, loud-tongued, carried it about the land that an attack on Berbera was imminent. The bazaars were to be looted, the mission-houses destroyed, the gaol opened, and the town burnt. The Indian merchants stowed away their valuables, and as many as were able left for Aden in the s.s. *Falcon*, the ninety-ton leviathan that plies between Aden and the Somali Coast to impress on British officers "proceeding" to Somaliland the dangers and discomforts of the life that lies before them. This general alarm was only allayed by the arrival in the harbour of the R.I.M.S. *Minto* and H.M.S. *Pomone*. On the 1st September



FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM THE MULLAH, TRANSLATED ON PAGE 40.

a letter was received from the Mullah. It may be translated from the Arabic as follows :—

" *From Mohammed bin Abdulla Hassan to the English.*

" This is to inform you that you have done whatever you have desired. You have oppressed our ancient religion without cause. Further, to inform you that whatever people obey you they are liars and slanderers.

" Further to inform you that Mohammed, your Akil, came to ask from us our arms ; and we, therefore, send you this letter. Now choose for yourselves. If you want war, we accept it ; but if you want peace, pay the fine.

" This and salaams."

The Consul-General promptly proclaimed the Mullah a rebel and all were warned against affording him assistance or holding any communication with him. The urgent necessity for an expedition was strongly represented to the Home Government, but our commitments elsewhere, more particularly in South Africa, were such as to preclude the immediate adoption of this course.

From Burao the Mullah moved with his main force south-westward to Oadweina, with a view to coercing to his banner the western Habr Yunis tribes who water at Oadweina, Adadleh, and Sik. The principal men of the tribe and a considerable quantity of their livestock were seized *en route* on the Arori plain. The men were flogged until, sworn on the triple divorce oath,* they agreed to obey him. He achieved little success with the tribe as a whole, however, and finding that his Dolbahanta horsemen would not tarry so far in Ishaak territory, he moved back to Burao. Towards the end of September, he retired south-east to Bohotle on the Abyssinian border. On the road at Ber, most of his Dolbahanta horsemen left him in a body, complaining that he was a fraud, that he was afraid to lead them to Berbera—the El Dorado from which they cherished hopes of great loot—and that two of

* The divorce oath is the most solemn a Somali can take.

their number had been killed by one Habr Yunis bullet at Sheikh, despite the fact that he had definitely promised that infidel bullets would turn to water and could not hurt them.

At this time there was a considerable revulsion of feeling against the Mullah throughout the Darod country ; and the Gerad Ali Farah, the Sultan of the Dolbahanta, made so bold as to send a message to the Consul-General to the effect that his old friendly relations with us remained unchanged although, owing to the evil influence of the Mullah, his orders were no longer obeyed by his tribe. For this act the Sultan was treacherously murdered by the Mullah's command ; and the bodies of the twelve principal sheikhs in the Dolbahanta country were seized. If the Mullah's aim was to overawe the whole tribe, he did not achieve his object. For all the powerful Mahmoud Gerad sections seceded from the movement and threatened to attack him, partly on account of their disgust at the cowardly murder of their Sultan, and partly with a view to the removal of the embargo imposed by the Consul-General on their caravans proceeding to the coast to trade.

In addition, the sections of the Habr Toljaala and Habr Yunis, whom he had previously coerced, deserted him. In consequence of this change of attitude, the Mullah crossed our borders in December and concentrated his looted camels and other livestock at Walwal among the Ogaden, rer Ibrahim. Here he occupied himself with an attempt to combine the Ogaden tribes against the British tribes that had abandoned his cause. By the beginning of February, 1900, the Mullah had gained a considerable access of strength. Many rifles had been obtained from Jibouti, whence they had been conveyed in a dhow sailing under the French colours, without the knowledge of the Italian authorities, to Osman Mahmoud, the powerful Sultan of the Northern Mijjertein,* who

* A Somali tribe inhabiting Italian Somaliland.

in turn had sold them to the Dervishes. The Mullah's immediate following at this time was estimated to be some 1,200 men, but it was believed that in addition the whole of the vast Ogaden tribe adhered to his cause.

All British Somali caravans proceeding along the Ogaden trade routes were looted; and there was considerable uneasiness throughout our Protectorate owing to the possibility of the Mullah returning at the head of a large Ogaden *oil** armed with rifles. In March, the Mullah was reported to be at Harrardiggit and other places within two days' march from Milmil in the Ogaden, rer Ali, country. In the same month, a well-armed Abyssinian expedition of about 1,500 men was despatched against the Mullah from Harrar, under the command of Gerazmatchf Bante. The force failed to locate the Mullah's men and, after looting the rer Ali, retired on Jig Jigga, where they constructed a large thorn *zariba*. Here they were attacked with the utmost boldness by some 6,000 of the Mullah's Ogaden following; but the Mullah himself was not present. Accounts of this engagement differ. According to the Abyssinians, the attack was repulsed with the greatest ease and heavy losses to the enemy, estimated at 2,650. Gerazmatch Bante himself described the fight as follows:

" 22nd Zitkada, 1317
(March 24, 1900).

(After the usual Arabic compliments.)

" This letter has been sent from Jig Jigga, and conveys good news of the fight which took place with the Eastern Sheikh (*scil.*, the Mullah) on Wednesday, 13th Majabeet, 1892. ‡

* Somali raiding party.

† Abyssinian military rank, meaning Commander of the Left Wing and ranking with our Major-General.

‡ An Amharic date. The Abyssinian calendar is seven years and eight months behind the Gregorian calendar. Majabeet corresponds to July.

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" At 8 o'clock the enemy's forces arrived in front of the fort. Their numbers were innumerable. The fight did not last five minutes before they fled, followed by our soldiers, who destroyed them, but he (the Sheikh) hid himself, and it is said that he did not join the force against us. A few of his force escaped, some on horseback, and others running and seeking for the safety of their lives have been made prisoners. We hear, by the favour of God, there are only a few of them left in Harrardiggit. We were going after them, but waited to ask the permission of King John Hawa. Then we will go after them, and by all means we will attack them at Harrardiggit. _

" This we send you for your information."

From other accounts it would seem that the Ogaden, although only armed with spears against the rifles of the Abyssinians, penetrated the *zariba* in broad daylight, and recaptured all the stock the Abyssinians had looted from the rer Ali. Indeed, it would seem that, although they inflicted heavy casualties on the Ogaden, the Abyssinians were not a little impressed with the fighting abilities of the Ogaden spearmen ; and our Vice-Consul at Harrar, writing after the engagement, reported as follows :

" The Abyssinians, it seems, fear the Somalis very much. I have never seen men so afraid as they are now ; they have given rifles to the children to show they have troops here."

And those who recall Adowa's stricken field* will remember that the Abyssinian is no mean fighting man.

After this engagement the Mullah remained for some time in the Ogaden country, making strenuous efforts to increase his stock of rifles and ammunition. He now dominated the whole of the Ogaden ; and the tribes on our side lived in continual fear of a

* The Italian force at this battle numbered 14,500, of whom 8,000 were white troops. They lost 4,000, including two generals killed, and all their guns (56) ; and, in addition, the Abyssinians captured 2,000 prisoners, of whom some were deprived of hands and feet, while others were still more terribly punished. The Abyssinian casualties are unknown, but must have been greater than those of their vanquished enemy.

Sudden onslaught. These fears were confirmed in June, when 1,000 of the Mullah's horsemen raided the Aidegalla in the Haud and carried off 2,000 camels. Consternation followed, and all our tribes fell back from their summer grazing-grounds in the Haud to their winter grazing-grounds immediately south of the Golis range. A critical situation had thus arisen. For the winter grazing-grounds could not hold all the tribes and support their flocks and herds in the summer; and, if the grass was consumed in the summer, what were they to do in the winter? Unless an immediate forward move against the Dervishes were undertaken, the tribes would have no alternative but to make the best terms they could with the Mullah to ensure the safety of their flocks and herds on which their very life depended. Such was the position as it presented itself to a much harassed Consul-General.

In the meantime, the Negusa Negust (King of Kings) the Emperor Menelik, more correctly styled Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Menelik II, the Elect of God, King of Kings of Ethiopia, had proposed a combined movement of British and Abyssinian forces against the Mullah; and in November it was decided to raise a levy of 1,000 Somalis, including two mounted companies, with British officers, under Captain (Local Lieutenant-Colonel) E. J. E. Swayne,* Indian Army, to cooperate with the Abyssinians. The plan was that the Abyssinians should drive the Mullah from the Ogaden, while our force would attack him from Burao, should he retreat to Bohotle in accordance with expectations. Thus, preparations were begun for the first expedition against Somaliland's turbulent priest.

At this point we must digress to take a more general view of the Mullah's movement than the narrative has allowed. It will have been realised

* Now Brigadier-General Sir Eric Swayne, K.C.M.G., C.B.

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that the movement was originally inspired by a religious motive, the Mullah's aim being to impose the austerities of the Salihieh sect upon his fellow-countrymen and to rouse them from religious torpor to religious fervour. To some extent this propaganda was assisted by the labours of a French Roman Catholic Mission in Berbera, which fed and educated the starving and homeless children of the country with a view to converting them to the Christian religion. "Do you not see," the Mullah wrote to the Aidegalla tribe in July, 1899, "that the Infidels have destroyed our religion and made our children their children?" With a religious revival in view he laboured, legitimately enough, for four years from 1895 to 1899, but with scanty success.

It is difficult to estimate accurately the number of his sincere converts, but it would be generous to say that there were not less than 2,000 or more than 4,000. Chiefly drawn from the wilder and more remote sections of the Dolbahanta tribe, they represented the true Dervishes, most of whom fell on the field of battle during the earlier expeditions, devoutly believing that the Mullah was an inspired prophet and that they had fought for the glory of God. It is curious that the call to a *jihad*, or holy war, should have met with so small a response from a fanatical Moslem race, but the explanation is not far to seek. The Mohammedan religion has, it is true, a potent fascination for the Somalis, as, indeed, it has for all races in which the fiery Arab blood flows freely. But the Somali's fanaticism is such as would more easily be invoked against any interference with existing creeds than in support of the introduction of novel and unpalatable doctrines.

The Mullah apparently attributed the lack of success which attended his religious mission to the political conditions existing in Somaliland. He came to the conclusion that, in order to achieve his religious object it was necessary to add a political

plank to his platform, namely, the substitution of his temporal authority for that of the tribal leaders and their infidel overlord. He persuaded himself that allegiance to a non-Mohammedan power was a definite" barrier to the religious progress of his fellow-countrymen ; and that the irksome doctrines of Mohammed Salih could only be imposed upon the sceptical tribesmen by fire and sword, a course to which an infidel and pacific Government would inevitably take the strongest exception. Once established as the temporal head of all thejSomalis he would, he argued, by methods of which he was the diabolical master, find little difficulty in constituting himself their spiritual leader to guide them aright in the path of true religion and virtue. Such was the nature of the motive which induced him to raise the flag of political revolt. On the other side of the picture, Great Britain's hold over her Somali colony was of a most precarious nature. We occupied the three coast towns of Berbera, Bulhar, andZeyla with a handful of officials, not more than ten in number, and a posse of 130 Indian Sepoys. Such authority as we cared to exercise in the interior was imposed by pressure brought to bear on the tribes in their dealings with the coast towns during the trading season. But our weakness was also our strength. For, if it was easy for the Mullah to dominate the distant tribesmen, it was proportionately difficult for him to rouse in them any enthusiasm for an onslaught on so aloof and benign a government. Consequently, his purely political adherents were almost solely confined to a few *degornmes* and disgruntled Somalis residing in Aden, who cherished some personal grudge against the British Government. Typical of these was Haji Sudi, an ex-interpreter of the Royal Navy, who had been at Suakin and was conversant with Dervish customs, many of which he imported into Somaliland. For one and twenty years he was the Mullah's trusty

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lieutenant, and was killed in action near Tale on the 5th February, 1920, during the final expedition.

So few were the followers whom religion or politics attracted to the Mullah's standard, that we must look elsewhere for the motive which inspired the majority of his following; and we find it in the cardinal sin of the Somali, avarice. Inter-tribal fighting and raiding constitute the Somali's national sport; and a life devoted to looting all tribes indiscriminately could not but seem irresistible to the indigent and bellicose Somali, especially when sanctified by the glamour of the Mullah's religious mission. They were quick to perceive an admirable opportunity to lay up for themselves treasure in the Mohammedan paradise by the inexpensive" method of confiscating other tribes' treasure upon earth. Victory spelt riches and wives; defeat a paradise peopled by houris.

Many were compelled to his cause by his coercive measures. Advancing on comparatively populous centres, where many of the tribes would necessarily congregate to water their stock, he would proclaim that all who were not with him were against him. Until they promised to obey him, the tribesmen found their property plundered, their women ravished, and their lives threatened. Such coercion was, of course, but temporary; and, as soon as the Mullah left their particular region, the tribe would be loud in its protests of loyalty to the British Government. Indeed, the tribesmen were on the horns of a dilemma. For, when the Mullah was with them, adherence to his cause was the only form of life and property insurance available. But, when he departed from their midst, it was indispensable that they should make their peace with the British Government, who held the ports through which alone their hides and skins, sheep and goats could reach the Aden markets, or dates and rice and clothes penetrate to the jungle.

Particularly hard was the position of the Somali *employes* of the local Administration. Their *kharias*, families, and properties were systematically seized by the Mullah, who also issued a decree making the wives of all connected with the Government lawful to his followers. The wife of one of our Somali native officers was divorced from her husband by the Mullah and appropriated to his own *harem*. The continued loyalty of the Somali Government servant under such detestable conditions is a great tribute to his patience and fidelity ; and it is not difficult to forgive those who secretly sent arms or provisions to the Mullah by way of compromise and in the hope that thus their wives and children and property might be spared to them.*

The Dervishes, collected originally from religious motives, subsequently by a political cry, more often by coercion, but chiefly by the opportunities for enrichment that the movement offered, were ruled by a terrible discipline. " If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee ! " was the Mullah's favourite precept. The thief lost his right hand for the first offence and his left foot for the second. Lips, nose, eyelids, ears might all be forfeit for some peccadillo or other. For the most trivial religious offences, mutilation and torture and death were the recognised punishments. " Remove him from my sight," was the fatal formula. Death, indeed, was meted out to those who were only suspected of offences.

On one occasion 66 men were foully murdered because it was thought that they contemplated desertion. On another occasion 300 women were mutilated and executed because the Mullah dreamt they would not pray. Whenever a Dervish succeeded

* It will be realised, of course, that a Somali Government *employi* stationed at the coast was compelled to leave his live-stock in the tribal grazing grounds and his wife with them to guard his interests. Thus, his all was at the Mullah's mercy.

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in deserting, all his family, and possibly all his section, would be killed. This and the generally accepted belief, carefully fostered in the *haroun** that successful deserters were subjected in the British camp to tortures even more terrible than those practised by the Mullah, did much to keep the Dervish horde together. But terrible as were the punishments which the Mullah inflicted on his peccant Dervishes, they were utterly surpassed by the atrocities perpetrated by the Dervishes on our loyal tribes whose villages were successfully raided. None escaped the most revolting mutilation : none escaped death.

On this stern discipline the Mullah relied to keep his following together—but also on the Somali's superstitious nature. He was at great pains to encourage a belief in the sanctity of his own person. Nor was he ill-advised. Throughout the twenty-two years of his revolt it proved an invaluable and an inalienable asset. Many were the stories of his miraculous powers which were told and believed, not by his followers only, but by all Somalis alike. Before his rise he was once seen reclining outside Berbera, pushing the town into the sea with his feet. At the instance of one of his followers, however, he refrained from giving the town a final kick into the Gulf of Aden—to the everlasting regret of those who have since been compelled to reside in Berbera's unpleasant climate.

He would claim, as others have claimed before him, that he could turn bullets into water. He could hear with his own ears in the Dolbahanta country what was being said in Berbera. The searchlights of His Majesty's ships seen by him from the Golis were the eyes of God unveiled to welcome his crusade. He was generally believed to possess an amulet with secret life-saving powers, presented to him by a

* **Armed encampment where the Mullah and his intimate advisers lived.**

Two SOMALI FISHERMEN.

well-known *shaitan*, or devil, at the request of a lady lizard whose life he had magnanimously spared. An Ogaden once sat with him with the intention of killing him. The Mullah, divining his object, challenged him to slay. The Ogaden raised his rifle, pressed the trigger, but no report followed. He reloaded, but for the second time a misfire resulted. Thereupon, the Mullah exposed his amulet and pointed out its secret powers.

Defeats in the field were attributed to failure to adhere to one of his most trivial religious injunctions. When "Z" Squadron of the Royal Air Force arrived in Somaliland in December, 1919, *on dit* in the town of Berbera that the Mullah was quite undismayed; that, on hearing the news, he had pointed out six hawks which were circling round his *haroun* at Medishe, and at a word from him they had fallen dead at his feet. So would he deal with the infidel airmen. Except among the more sophisticated Somalis, the belief in his powers as a sorcerer was implicit; and as such he was feared by friend and foe alike.

From this summary of the Mullah's assumed supernatural powers one naturally passes to the vexed question of his sanity. In the Sudan and other Mohammedan countries, the term *mad* is, I believe, applied to holy men who are supposed to be specially blest by Heaven. It is in effect a religious title, meaning "divinely inspired," applicable to the Leader of the Faithful. This was not, however, the origin of Mohammed's sobriquet of "Mad Mullah." When he first started preaching his unpopular doctrines in Berbera, his fellow-countrymen dubbed him *wadad wal* which, translated from the Somali, means "the Mullah that is an idiot," or "the lunatic Mullah." In latter years, however, he was known as "the Mullah" throughout the Somali country from Berbera to the **Juba River**. **Insanity** was first officially attributed to **him** on the

30th July, 1899, when the Consul-General reported to the Foreign Office as follows:

"Reports from the Dolbahanta, apparently on good authority, are to the effect that the Mullah has gone off his head. It is said that he fired twice at his nephew, killing his horse, and that he was only prevented from doing further damage by being seized by his followers."

From this time forward he was always known to the British public as the Mad Mullah, although those who had an intimate acquaintance with the very real ability with which he conducted his affairs often ventured to question his insanity. There is now, however, no reason to doubt that he was cursed with a madness that was akin to genius: witness his behaviour towards the sheikhs and notables who visited him at Shinileh with the terms of peace in May, 1920 (*see* chap. X). In the days of his youth, a Somali medicine man removed a bone from the top of his head, and this may have been the cause of his insanity. The scar left by this inexpert operation could be seen to his dying day.

In the last few pages we have considered the Mullah's motives and actions as impartially as possible, with a view to removing any misconceptions about the nobility of his aims and objects. That such misconceptions exist cannot be doubted. For there is a type of politician who delights in throwing the cloak of romance over the shoulders of any ruffian who chooses to camouflage himself as a patriot in revolt against a malign British Government. In the House of Commons, a prominent Irish Nationalist, who boasted that he had received an invitation from the Mullah to go to him on a three months' visit, once described the Mullah and his Dervishes as "brave men striving to be free." Such a statement is one of those untruths which constitute the most dangerous falsehoods, in that they have some appearance of veracity. Any

religious or patriotic impulse that originally inspired the Mullah's movement was strangled almost before it stirred by the passion for power and the plunder which rewarded victory.

There were few Dervishes who did not fight solely for loot, just as our friendly Somalis fought to save their women and children and livestock from cruel and ravenous bandits. Who can doubt that the Mullah would have attempted to impose his sovereignty upon his fellow-countrymen even if the British people had never assumed responsibility for the protection of the Somali tribes? Such an attempt would have been strenuously opposed by a people of independent spirit wedded to the tribal system, and instinctively averse to the unsolicited intervention of a member of another tribe in their own tribal affairs. If in our absence the Mullah who, be it noted, could claim no hereditary right to leadership even in his own tribe, had attained his object, he would doubtless have ruled the country by those same savage and cruel methods wherewith he maintained his power over the Dervishes for twenty-one years.

Had he failed, there would have been a continuous and devastating civil war between those who accepted and those who rejected his sway, in which no finality would have been possible owing to the geographical and physical conditions of Somaliland, which generally preclude any large concentration of savage forces for a decisive battle at any one particular spot. The intervention of Great Britain in Somali affairs cannot therefore be accounted the sole cause of the desolation and misery for which Dervishism has been responsible in Somaliland. On the contrary, we may claim that our leadership and organisation of the tribes saved the Somalis from much misery and eventually freed them from the chains which might otherwise have encompassed them.

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Although the similarity is more apparent than real, it is difficult to consider the Dervish movement in Somaliland without making some comparison with Mahdism in the Sudan. The rebellion of the Mahdi was primarily a revolt against the injustices and corruption of Egyptian officialdom which had turned fertility into scarcity and the native content of the savage into the misery of the oppressed. The Mullah's movement in Somaliland attempted to disguise itself as a revolt against the rule of the foreigner, but against a foreigner who had come to give peace to warring tribes, to replace corruption by justice and penury by prosperity. The political revolt in the Sudan was only made possible by the fire of religion or fanaticism, call it what you will, which the Mahdi kindled in the humble breasts of his starving and naked followers, uniting them proudly under his inspiring leadership. The Somaliland Mullah attempted to invest his ambitious schemes with the glamour of a divine mission. In the Sudan, the Mahdi turned indifferent Mohammedans suffering from political oppression into fanatics and patriots. In Somaliland, the Mullah traded upon the avarice and superstitions of his fellow-countrymen to convert them into robbers and cut-throats. In short, Somaliland Dervishism was but a despicable imitation of a genuine patriotic and religious revolt.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST AND SECOND EXPEDITIONS

IN November, 1900, Lieutenant - Colonel Swayne arrived in Somaliland to take command of the first expedition. He was no stranger to the country, for he and his brother, Major H. G. Swayne, R.E.,* had often travelled in the Protectorate, bent on sport and exploration at a time when the country was very much a *terra incognita*. His first duty on arrival was to raise a Somali Levy and to establish them in the interior, where they were to replace the 2nd Battalion King's African Rifles, who were being withdrawn for service in Ashanti. He had then to raise and train the Levy of 1,500 Somalis with which it was proposed to attack the Mullah and his Dervishes.

This did not prove a very difficult task ; for so great was the exasperation engendered in the mind of the average Somali on account of the Mullah's atrocities that the tribesmen flocked to the colours in far greater numbers than were required, despite the unusually low rate of pay that was offered. On the first day of recruitment no less than 1,200 men came forward ; and it was not long before the full complement of 1,500 men had been obtained, 100 being mounted on camels, 400 on ponies and mules, and the remainder being trained as infantry. Likely men were selected to be non-commissioned officers and were taught their duties by Indian havildars lent from Aden. Twenty-one officers of the

* Author of " Seventeen Trips through Somaliland."

British and Indian armies were seconded to the force.

Many considerations had to be carefully weighed before the most advantageous date for launching the expedition could be determined. During the dry season, from January to April, the force would be confronted with the water problem. On the other hand, if an efficient system of water transport were maintained, a considerable advantage would be gained over the Mullah by moving at a time when his mobility would necessarily be impaired. But this consideration was outweighed in turn by the fact that it was most improbable that the Abyssinians, whose administrative arrangements were quite as crude as the Mullah's, would ever consent to move in the dry weather ; and their effective co-operation would thus be denied to us. Moreover, the Government of East Africa had a punitive expedition in the field against the Southern Ogaden Somalis on the Juba, who had murdered Her Majesty's Sub-Commissioner at Kismayu after cutting up his escort; and it seemed desirable that the Somaliland expedition should be deferred until our operations in Jubaland had been brought to a successful conclusion, which could not be expected before the end of March. In all these circumstances, April seemed the best month for the advance, and it was so decided.

Meanwhile, the Abyssinians, after the Dervish attack on Jig Jigga, realising that the Mullah's movement challenged their sovereignty over the Mohammedan tribes in their Harrar province, had despatched a force of some 15,000 men to the western edge of the Haud. Alarmed at this development, the Mullah retired eastward into British territory to the Bohotle area, where he was assured of a welcome from his own kinsmen, the Dolbahanta. The sanction of the Emperor Menelik had been obtained for a British officer to be attached to

the Abyssinian troops to facilitate their concerted action with Lieut-Colonel Swayne's Tribal Levy; and Major the Hon. A. Hanbury Tracy, Royal Horse Guards, was selected for this duty and arrived in Abyssinia in April, 1901.

The Mullah's return to Bohotle had necessitated the transfer of the Levy's advanced base from Adadleh, where they had undergone their preliminary training, to Burao; and this move was carried out early in April. At the same time, Consul-General Sadler issued his instructions to Lieut.-Colonel Swayne setting forth the objects of the expedition. These instructions may be summarised as follows. The object of the expedition was to capture or defeat the Mullah and put an end to his movement in the Dolbahanta country. In the unlikely event of his offering to come in, only an unconditional surrender was to be accepted. After the Mullah had been dealt with, any tribes that might actively support him during the operations were to be punished; and a proclamation was issued warning the Darod that only those who continued to assist the Mullah would be considered hostile, and that tribes as a whole would be held responsible for the acts of individuals.

In framing the plan of operations, Lieut.-Colonel Swayne had many considerations to bear in mind. In the first place, as soon as the expedition left Burao no support could be given from the rear. Secondly, if the Mullah's flocks and herds could be captured, his men would be compelled either to disperse or to make terms, or to concentrate for an immediate attack on the Levy. For, deprived of camel's milk, on which the nomad* can subsist indefinitely without any other food or drink, the Dervishes would be

* So nourishing is camel's milk that British officers in Somaliland have often relied on it alone for their sustenance over long periods. It is by no means unpleasant, especially when stiffened with rum.

unable to remain in the field if driven from their wells. But, above all things, it was essential that the Levy should march faster than the enemy. Slowness would entail the possibility of attack by overwhelming masses ; rapidity would mean surprise and the consequent disorganisation of the enemy's plans. The Dervishes were estimated at some 5,000 men, mostly mounted on horses, with some 600 rifles ; and the tribes whose attitude would be doubtful if a reverse were sustained, were thought to possess some 60,000 spearmen.

As ever, in Somaliland, man proposed but God disposed. The earliest date known for the break of the rains is the 25th March ; but generally the drought persists till well on in April. In 1901, however, there was no rain before May ; and it was not until the 22nd of that month that Lieut.-Colonel Swayne was able to set out from Burao on the Burao-Ber-Bohotle track, so well known to all Somaliland campaigners. The order of march was generally an elastic square, with the transport in the centre and the mounted men half-a-day's march ahead, preceded by scouts and spies. Mounted men were also sent well out on both flanks and to the rear. The intention was to march direct on the Mullah wherever the latest intelligence might locate him and, at the same time, by striking out at the hostile tribes on the right and left of the line of march, to drive them back out of touch with him.

The force was divided into two columns, both of which were self-contained. The larger and more mobile column was under Lieut.-Colonel Swayne's personal command, and was as light as possible, the reserve of rations and livestock being brought up by the second column of some 20 Punjabis and 350 Tribal Levy under Captain M. McNeill, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Both columns marched and camped together ; but as soon as a favourable opportunity of making a sudden attack upon the



TRIBAL. HORSEMEN ON THE MARCH.



A TRIBAL OLL (ARMY).

enemy presented itself, the larger column was to leave all transport camels except those required for the carriage of water, barbed wire, and the wounded with the smaller column. So organised, the Levy reached Eil Dab, 90 miles from Burao, on the 28th May, the last 72 miles being covered in three days' forced marching over the waterless desert.

On the way the Mullah's birth-place, Kob Faradod, which was entirely inhabited by Mullahs, was burnt to the ground, the mosques being spared so that Mohammedan sentiment might not be outraged. At Eil Dab our scouts captured a caravan, and from the intelligence thus obtained the various sections of the Dolbahanta tribe were located. Swayne was anxious to punish the Mahmoud Gerad section of the tribe on the left flank of the line of march, who were open adherents of the Mullah, partly because there was a danger of their raiding down to Berbera after the force had passed, and partly because he desired to replace his heavy loads of rice and dates with livestock. Accordingly he despatched the mounted Levy to attack the Mahmoud Gerad. At the same time, the infantry of both columns continued its march on the Mullah who had been located south of Yahelli. They approached by an easterly detour which, skirting the dense bush, enabled the force to make night marches over the grass plains. Thus the clouds of dust which indicate the course of a column through the Somaliland bush by day were avoided.

On the 30th May the two columns of infantry reached a pool of rain water at Samala, where news was brought that the mounted men had surprised a section of the Mahmoud Gerad and had captured some stock. It was thereupon decided to form an advanced base at Samala and await the arrival of the booty. Sections were sent out to support the incoming mounted men who had driven the Mahmoud Gerad in flight northwards, where,

separated from the Mullah, they had been forced to come to terms.

Before despatching the sections to support the mounted Levy, Swayne had arranged for a strong *zariba* overlooking the wells at Samala to be constructed on a low hill admirably adapted for defence; and the work was strengthened by a plentiful use of barbed wire. McNeill, with three other British officers and 500 other ranks, of whom some 370 only were armed with rifles, was selected to hold the post, while Swayne himself pressed on in pursuit of the Mullah. As it was anticipated that the captures, which included 46 prisoners, 3,500 camels and 50 horses, would form a bait to attract the enemy's attack, McNeill was instructed to double the *zariba* and to fill water tanks to use as cover against the enemy's rifle fire. This was carried out and the •450 Maxim gun was well disposed on a cairn of stones commanding a good field of fire all round.

The encampment was divided into two *zaribas*, the lower for the 3,500 captured camels, and the higher for the men. All the precautions taken proved to be well justified, for at 3.30 p.m. on the 2nd June the position was attacked by some 3,000 Dervishes. Just before the attack was delivered some horsemen on a low range of hills about a mile to the south-east had been espied. They rapidly increased in numbers and began to descend into the plain towards the British camp. With all haste the 3,500 camels, which were out grazing in all directions, were driven back into their *zariba*; and it speaks well for the discipline and organisation of the Levy that only two camels were lost. The enemy advanced on the encampment in the most gallant fashion, despite devastating fire from our machine gun. They did not succeed, however, in reaching their goal, although some were shot very close to it. When darkness fell they did not retire, as had been anticipated, but stayed in the vicinity maintaining a desultory fire.

Eventually, a determined attempt was made to rush the north-west corner of the camel *zariba*; and, assisted by the darkness and the favourable nature of the ground, several of the enemy got right up to the *zariba* and were shot down when practically touching it. But not a Dervish succeeded in penetrating the defences. Simultaneously the men's *zariba* was attacked, but, thanks to the barbed wire and some effective shooting, this rush was also stopped. No further attack was made during the night, but the enemy maintained a dropping fire until 10 p.m. After this the defenders were left in peace, although the enemy could be heard calling to each other throughout the night. It seems that the Mullah occupied himself with rousing the religious fervour of his Dervishes, and appealing to their cupidity by telling them that inside the infidels' *zariba* they would find the dead body of Colonel Swayne, within which were many bars of fine gold.

When dawn broke the vicinity seemed to be almost deserted, but at 8.45 a.m. a large force, subsequently estimated at 5,000 men and believed to have been commanded by the Mullah in person, was seen to issue from the hills to the south. They rapidly extended until they formed one long line several ranks deep. Advancing at a steady pace they opened fire at 400 yards, and the Levy suffered several casualties. McNeill had reserved his fire until the enemy were within 500 yards of his *zariba* and then a heavy fusillade was opened, with the result that not a single Dervish got within 150 yards of the encampment, although the line advanced with great dash and bravery. On the west and south-west sides of the camel *zariba*, however, aided by the more favourable terrain, the enemy, as on the previous night, got very close up, and severe hand-to-hand fighting ensued for some ten minutes. But again they failed to force an entry. After this rush the enemy retreated and did not renew the

attack. The Levy's total losses during the two days' fighting had been 10 killed and 8 wounded, while the Dervish casualties were estimated at 500. Had the enemy succeeded in taking the camel *zariba* on either day the situation would have been most critical; for it would have been easy to drive out the camels from the lower exit while attacking the men's *zariba* higher up.

In the meantime Swayne's flying column had not been idle. Leaving behind all surplus rations in McNeill's encampment, and taking only water and hospital camels, they had moved on the 1st June towards Waylahed, whither the Mullah had transferred his head-quarters. At their camp on the first night, though they were unaware of the fact at the time, they were surrounded by the very Dervishes who had subsequently attacked at Samala. Concealed in bushes and trees some 300 yards distant, the enemy awaited the cry of the jackal which was to be given by the Mullah himself as a sign for a general rush. Each man was then to drag aside one thorn branch from the *zariba* and select his own man to kill. Sultan Nur, however, persuaded the Mullah that McNeill's encampment would not only afford an easier objective but would also yield greater booty; and so the jackal's cry was never given.

After his two successive reverses at Samala, the Mullah passed his force through the hills in detachments, and Swayne's column was then enabled to push between the various detachments and complete their discomfiture. The Dervishes were continuously pursued for 120 miles, leaving many wounded prisoners on the road, and constantly losing men from the rifle fire of our patrols and scouts. The Mullah himself, with Haji Sudi, Sultan Nur, and some 500 horsemen, was encountered, and at first it seemed that he would attack the column's rear-guard, but, when the mounted troops were

withdrawn from the front to oppose him, his horsemen broke into groups and, when pursued, adopted the tactics which were subsequently to become so familiar to us, and split up into small parties which made off through a score of practicable passes in the stony hills. This occurred about five o'clock in the evening, and it was decided to carry the pursuit through the night in the hope of capturing the Mullah himself. Swayne accordingly divided his mounted troops into several detachments, and he himself, with the pick of the horsemen, followed hot on the tracks of the largest cavalcade on the assumption that the Mullah would be of the party. After dark the tracks were lost in the dense bush and at 1 a.m., as there were no guides, a halt was called till dawn, when the pursuit was continued. *En route* the Mullah's encampment at Waylahed, which was large enough to hold 10,000 people, was burnt to the ground, and some horses and prisoners were captured.

At Ana Harigli another Dervish encampment was destroyed and some more fugitives were rounded up. Thence the tracks led eastward to Courgerod and Ben Tagla, which was the only place where the Dervishes had stopped to water before moving south into the Haud. Reconnaissances were then sent out in all directions, and it was discovered that, while the Mullah's Dolbahanta allies had retreated south-east towards Illig, the Mullah himself, with all his sheep and goats, but abandoning his camels, bullocks, and ponies, had fled post-haste across the waterless Haud to Mudug. Swayne's horses were so fatigued that many could not even walk, and there were also insufficient water tins to take his force across the Haud. Consequently he decided to break off the pursuit. It subsequently transpired that the Mullah himself on one occasion had narrowly escaped capture: hidden in a ravine some 500 yards distant, he had watched Swayne inspecting a water supply.

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Throughout these operations prisoners had admitted that Osman Mahmoud, Sultan of the Mijjertein, the Italian protected tribe, was aiding the Mullah in every possible way, and proof of this had been obtained by the capture of a caravan containing rifles and ammunition which he had despatched to the Mullah from Bosaso. As further pursuit would inevitably bring the British force into collision with the Sultan's people, which might lead to complications with the Italian Government, Swayne decided to refer the question of further action to the Consul-General. The latter made strong representations to the Foreign Office in favour of continuing the pursuit. The Mullah could not, he maintained, be left in the Mudug so close to the British Protectorate, whither, if we withdrew from the pursuit, he might return at will at any time and dominate the Dolbahanta area.

His Majesty's Government, however, declined to authorise the pursuit into the Italian sphere, and considered that operations should terminate. While awaiting this decision, Swayne, having effected a juncture with McNeill's column at Lassader, south of Samala, had set out to punish the various refractory sections of the Dolbahanta who had aided the Dervishes during the operations; and by the 8th July all the people concerned had been subdued or had expressed their willingness to come in.

But meanwhile the unexpected happened. The Mullah, finding himself threatened from the south by the Sultan of Obbia, decided to return to British territory; and accordingly he moved back north across the Haud and established himself at Bere-tabli. As it was essential to prevent the Mullah re-establishing his authority with the tribes, Swayne decided to transport his force once more across the whole breadth of the Dolbahanta country and attack him. On coming up with the enemy's rear-guard not far from Courgerod, he received the

Foreign Office orders of recall. He was now over 340 miles from the coast with no support nearer than Burao ; and to retreat before an active Mullah through a country teeming with potential enemies was to court a serious disaster. He, therefore, decided that the only course open to him was to ignore his instructions and continue the offensive.

Arriving at Courgerod at sunset on the 16th July, Swayne learnt from his scouts that the Mullah was at Ferdiddin, some fourteen miles eastward, and he therefore decided to continue his march that night with a view to attacking at dawn. Owing to the necessity of detaching parties to escort prisoners and captured stock to Burao, his column had been reduced to 700 rifles, of whom only 75 were mounted. One hundred were left behind at Courgerod and the remaining 600 set forth at midnight for Ferdiddin. There was no moon and progress was necessarily slow. At dawn the force found themselves descending into a shallow bush-covered valley, and prisoners reported that the Mullah's encampment was just beyond a spur on the right of the valley about three miles distant.

The Mounted Corps of 75 men under Major W. G. L. Benyon, D.S.O., I.S.C., were sent forward to reconnoitre and report; and the column assumed the following formation of attack. The Camel Corps in the centre, with one infantry company under Lieutenant F. A. Dickinson, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, as a reserve ; one infantry detachment under Captain G. E. Phillips, R.E., on the right flank to crown the hills; the other under McNeill on the left flank extending on to the plain. All units were warned to keep well in touch of the centre and not to be led into disorganised pursuit.

When well away from the main column, and round the spur, Benyon sent forward Captain D. A. Friderichs, R.E., with a few mounted men to act as an advance party. Seeing the enemy on the hills

some distance to his front, and concluding that the plain was clear of them, Friderichs advanced into some very dense bush where an ambush had been laid. Firing immediately broke out and Benyon moved up, dismounted, in support; nearly half of his camels and horses were shot, and the 350 Dolbahanta horsemen who accompanied him bolted. Some severe fighting ensued during which Friderichs was killed in a very gallant effort to save a Somali non-commissioned officer.

Realising from the heavy firing behind the spur that the mounted men must be more heavily engaged than had been intended, Swayne directed the reserve company under Dickinson to move to the edge of the spur whence a commanding fire could be brought to bear on the enemy in the plain. Accordingly the reserve company doubled over the intervening two miles and seized the spur, suffering somewhat from the enemy's fire from the hills. Thanks to the fire of Phillips' detachment, the Dervishes in the bush in the plains who were engaged with Benyon's men were checked, and the latter were able to fall back on the spur, but not before a number of our men had been killed and wounded. Among the latter was Dickinson, severely hit in the thigh. Moreover, the Maxim gun camels had been shot down. But our Somalis, who behaved magnificently throughout, succeeded in disentangling the Maxims from the dead camels and bringing them into action on some commanding ground. The advance of Phillips' detachment over the hills on the right had now brought a considerable volume of fire to bear on the enemy in this direction, with the result that they were compelled to take cover and fire from behind boulders and bushes. As soon as the enemy's attention was occupied by Phillips' men, Dickinson's reserve company, under a native officer, descended the farther side of the spur at a run and drove the enemy from the hills beyond.

At this point the Dervishes, having lost cover, began to suffer very severe casualties and to give way all along the line, the retirement eventually developing into a rout.

In the meantime, McNeill's Corps had been advancing steadily on the left, had driven back the Dervishes who had engaged the Mounted Corps, and had also outflanked the enemy. The latter then mounted their ponies and galloped into the bush, continually losing men from our rifle fire. The pursuing force reached the Mullah's encampment, and, after burning it, chased the enemy through the dense bush. Here and there, a party of Dervishes would try to make a stand, but could not face our fire and would bolt again after suffering considerable loss. The pursuit was maintained until the coherence of our levies became somewhat shaken, so that McNeill, who was at the head of the chase, decided to check and reorganise his men. By this time the force was nearly fifty miles distant from its last watering place and there was no water now nearer than Beretabli. The tanks at Courgerod were nearly empty; the men had expended all the water they carried themselves; and only six camel loads remained for the wounded. Anxiety for the welfare of the wounded-impelled Swayne to abandon the pursuit. And so, after collecting and burying their dead and arranging for the carriage of the wounded, the force returned to Courgerod at nightfall. In the nineteen hours following midnight of the 16th/17th July our raw Somali soldiers had marched forty miles, most of them on foot, had fought a stiff action in dense bush and over stony hills, and had drunk nothing but the water they carried.

The backbone of the Mullah's following had been severely handled; many well-known sheikhs had been found amongst the dead. Subsequent reports revealed that the Mullah never stayed his

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flight into the waterless desert for five days; that few of his following reached Mudug wells alive, hundreds dying of thirst by the way; and that the Mullah himself, his son, and that *fidus Achates*, Haji Sudi, were reduced to such straits that they were forced to drink the water found in the bellies of the dead camels with which the line of retreat was bestrewn. For some miles the Mullah had been pursued by a couple of Somali scouts, who emptied their bandoliers, quite unaware of the value of the man that jogged along on a weary pony in front of them, disdainingly to take any notice of the bullets that whistled about his head. All the Mullah's chained prisoners succeeded in breaking their leg-irons and escaped, preferring to run the risk of death from thirst in the desert to the torture that makes a Dervish holiday.

Swayne's force, marching twenty to 'twenty-five miles a day, and enduring great hardships, now returned to Burao, where the operations were declared at an end. Our total casualties had been one British officer and 21 non-commissioned officers and men killed, one British officer and 23 non-commissioned officers and men wounded. In addition, one British officer was accidentally killed, and two other deaths occurred in the ranks, one from wounds and one from disease. The enemy's total losses were estimated at 1,200 killed and wounded. Some 800 prisoners fell into our hands. The levies had covered 1,170 miles in three months, had frequently marched thirty miles a day, and on days of action had traversed as much as forty miles. No attempt had been made to teach the men, in the limited time available before the operations, anything except to obey orders, to shoot, and the simple formations and movements necessary for general cohesion. Although occasionally they had shown excitement in action, as was only natural considering the **temperament of the Somali and the elementary**

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nature of their training, they never failed their officers and never hesitated to advance whatever the loss caused by the enemy's rifle fire. Their discipline was excellent. It must be remembered, too, that they were fighting an extremely gallant and fanatical enemy. Describing the Dervishes after the close of the operations, Swayne wrote as follows:

" I was impressed with the danger of the Dervish movement. Until I actually saw the Mullah's men fighting, I had no idea that a Somali could be so influenced by fanaticism.

" I am speaking of the Dervishes, the men who, following the custom of the Suakin Dervishes, have thrown over father and mother and their own tribe to follow the Mullah. They have passwords, wear a white turban and a special breviary, and have sworn to throw up all worldly advantages. Of course a certain number even of these Dervishes have joined the Mullah simply for the sake of loot, but there are, on the other hand, a considerable number who are pure fanatics. At Ferdiddin and at McNeill's *zariba* these were the men who led, and who were shot down. At Ferdiddin, after the others had fled, a number of these men remained behind to fight to the end, and were shot down as we advanced. When recording the names of the enemy's dead, I found that a large number were Hajis or Sheikhs."

It is unnecessary to waste much time or paper on the Abyssinian expedition which was intended to co-operate with our Levy. It may be said that they achieved their primary object: for by their presence in the field they blocked the western avenue of escape against the Mullah. But it was extremely fortunate that they never encountered the enemy. The force originally consisted of some 10,000 men with but one month's supplies ; but they were immediately joined by thousands of others who desired to profit from any loot that might offer, so that the commissariat soon found themselves in grave difficulties. There was only one casualty, a rifle wound which occurred in characteristically Gilbertian circumstances. Two Abyssinian soldiers captured twelve suspect unarmed

Somalis. While on their way back to the camp, one of the two soldiers left the party for a few moments. The prisoners finding themselves under the charge of only one man decided to escape. The absent soldier, hearing cries for help from his comrade, fired from a distance at the running Somalis, but instead of hitting the prisoners, as he had hoped to do, he shot his brother warrior, some fifty yards behind, through the abdomen.

When the rations gave out, no supplies were obtainable from the country-side except camel meat to which the Abyssinians, who live mainly on grain, were unaccustomed. The heat in the plains was intense ; and water was scarce and generally impure, being the rain washings from the surrounding country mixed with animal droppings. There was little fodder for the ponies and mules, who became more and more debilitated as time went on. Weakened, disheartened, and sullen, the men yearned to return to their highlands; but the Ganiazmatch in command desired them to proceed south to the Webbi Shebeli in search of loot. Major Hanbury-Tracy was eventually successful in dissuading the Ganiazmatch from so perilous a course, and eventually, on the receipt of a false report that the Mullah had been captured by our Levy, the force returned to Jig Jigga. Major Hanbury-Tracy's relations with the Abyssinian Government had been most happy. He was himself invested with the Order of the Most Brilliant Star of Ethiopia of the second class, and the Emperor Menelik placed in his charge a zebra which was to be a gift to King Edward.

Ras Makonnen, the Governor of Harrar, addressed the following cordial letter to Major Hanbury-Tracy and his companion, Captain R. Cobbold, before they left Abyssinia :

" De la part de Ras Makonnen a mon auguste ami le Major l'Honorable Algernon Hanbury-Tracy et a mon ami le Capitaine Ralph Cobbold.

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" Comme nous allons nous separer maintenant, et vous allez rentrer dans votre pays, je desire vous remercier au nom de Sa Majesty l'Empereur Menelik I I , Roi des Rois d'Ethiopie, pour l'assistance et les tres bons services que vous avez bien voulu rendre a mes troupes commandees par le Ganiazmatch Abanabro pendant le temps que vous etiez avec l'expedition dans l'Ogaden contre le Mullah.

" Le Ganiazmatch et tous les omciers ont ete tres satisfaits, parce que vous avez toujours bien voulu les assister et les aider.

" J'ai Tespoir que votre presence parmi mes troupes affirmira la bonne ami tie" qui existe deja entre les deux Gouvernements de la Grande-Bretagne et de l'Ethiopie.

" Je vous envoie mes salutations.

" Ecrire a Harrar le 2 Pagounis, 1893 (7 Septembre, 1901).

" (*Cachet*) RAS MAKONNEN."

When the Levy returned to Burao towards the end of July, 1901, the question of the steps to be taken for the maintenance of peace in the interior of Somaliland in the immediate future called for an early decision. Telegraphing to the Consul-General on June 25th, the Marquess of Lansdowne, as Foreign Secretary, had made it clear that His Majesty's Government would not countenance any permanent occupation of the Dolbahanta country. This being so, it was reasonable to assume that, as soon as our back was turned, the Mullah would reappear among the Dolbahanta, would punish them for their secession, and would then impel them to rejoin his standard so that he might attack the Ishaak tribes. Before the Levy returned to Burao, the Dolbahanta elders had insisted that, when the Mullah returned to their country, it would be for them a clear case of Hobson's choice, and that, in the absence of a British garrison, they would have to submit to the Mullah's will. Without rifles they could not withstand the Dervish riflemen.

" What use are our spears to us ? " they asked, adding pathetically, " We might as well throw them away and take to sticks ! If you go back now, we **will surely be punished for leaving the Mullah, and**

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making our peace with the Government. We shall have to do everything he tells us, and under his orders even attack the Government tribes again." At this point, and again on many occasions in this history of the Dervish movement in Somaliland, the reader will be filled with indignation on account of the apparent callousness with which the Dolbahanta were left to an unenviable plight in which they had to choose between disloyalty to the British *raj*, with its inevitable consequences, and the most terrible punishment at the hands of the Mullah. Whenever they were thus left in the back of beyond with this choice before them, the primary cause was, of course, the expense entailed by a permanent military occupation of their country, where anything but a large force would be exposed to grave risk; and consciences were salved by the reflection that our obligation to protect the tribe from the man whom they themselves had created, supported and followed, was less than our obligations to the Ishaak tribes who had for the most part resisted the movement from its very start. Moreover, as will be recalled, the Dolbahanta were the only tribe with whom we had no formal protective treaty.

After weighing all considerations—the fanaticism of the Dervishes, the ease with which the Mullah could obtain arms and ammunition from the neighbouring territories, and his wonderful powers of recuperating after a reverse—the Consul-General and Colonel Swayne recommended that 500 infantry and 100 Camel Corps should garrison Burao; that a reserve company should be quartered at Berbera; that the rest of the Levy, with the exception of the 150 mounted infantry, who were to be disbanded, should be formed into a militia; that the permanent transport should be retained near Burao; and that a couple of "pompoms" should be provided for the force. With this organisation it was considered **that the ports and their immediate hinterland could be**

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protected if threatened by any further move on the Mullah's part. At the same time, with such a force as a nucleus, it would be possible to organise another Levy at the former strength with very little delay, if the necessity arose. His Majesty's Government, however, declined to sanction the permanent occupation of Burao ; but they approved, as a provisional measure, of the retention of a force not exceeding the numbers recommended by the Consul-General.

It was not long before the fears of those who understood the Somaliland situation proved to be justified. By October, 1901, the Mullah had re-assembled his scattered riflemen, had advanced against the Dolbahanta, and was re-established well within British territory. By December his headquarters had been set up at Lassader, with outposts at Bohotle, Kirrit, and Gosawein. On the receipt of this information, His Majesty's Government decided to launch the second expedition ; and Lieut.-Colonel Swayne was again appointed to the command. On his arrival at Berbera on January 18th, 1902, Swayne found that, owing to the continued importation of firearms, the Mullah had not only recovered from the losses inflicted on him in 1901, but had compelled most of the Dolbahanta sections to return to his standard. His force had now swollen to some 12,000, of whom 10,000 were said to be mounted and not less than 1,000 carried rifles.

A series of very successful *razzias* had just been carried out, and much booty had been acquired. In fact, the entire livestock of some sections had been carried off. The casualties among the tribesmen had been heavy. The Dervishes had displayed the greatest ferocity ; even infants of both sexes had been ruthlessly speared. The Burao garrison had not been considered strong enough to march out against the raiding forces ; and a panic had ensued which spread to Berbera, where the garrison consisted of **100 Indian troops hastily requisitioned from Aden.**

The Somali Levy had been raised again to a strength of 1,500 men ; but, owing to the increased strength and enhanced prestige which rewarded the Mullah's successful raids and the corresponding demoralisation of our friendly tribes, Swayne considered that the force should be further strengthened by an addition of a new corps of 500 men and the conversion of 100 infantry into camelry. The necessary preparations to effect this were carried out with the greatest possible speed in order that our counter-stroke might not be long delayed. But throughout the period of preparation the Mullah's raids continued, extending as far as the tribes to the east of Berbera, with a view to the establishment of a base in this region from which the capital might be threatened. This movement was as dangerous from a political as from a military point of view; for the secession of any one of the hitherto friendly Ishaak tribes would naturally have a most unsettling effect on the rest. With a detachment of 700 men from the Levy, however, Swayne dealt with the menace with characteristic celerity, and soon cleared the region to the immediate east of Berbera. By May 26th preparations for the advance against the Mullah's main force were completed, and Swayne moved from Burao to Wadamago, where he arrived two days later. The numbers and dispositions of the two opposing forces were as follows on June 1st:—

BRITISH FORCES.

Main Body Somali Levy under Swayne.

50 Mounted Infantry	\	
20 Camelry		
1,200 Infantry	I	At
3 Maxims)	Wadamago.
Two 7-pounder Guns		
1,000 Transport Camels	J	

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Reinforcements, 3rd King's African Rifles.

400 Mounted Infantry	1	On the march
and Camelry	}	from Burao to
50 Infantry	J	Wadamago.

Detached Somali Levy.

450 Rifles	Operating from the
		Haud towards
		Bohotle.

Garrisons.

150 Infantry	}	
1 Maxim	[Burao.
One 7-pounder Gun	J	
100 Infantry	1	Las Dureh Blockhouse.
1 Maxim	J	

MULLAH'S FORCES.

12,000 Horsemen	\	Near Baran (i.e. the
(1,500 with rifles)	J	Baran in the south).
3,000 Foot, with	1	Moving southwards
livestock and families	J	from Damot.

On the evening of June 1st Swayne left Wadamago for Bohotle, which was reached on June 4th. Patrols were immediately sent out to gain touch with the Mullah, with the detached Somali Levy under Risaldar-Major Musa Farah, and with the 3rd King's African Rifles, commanded by Captain P. B. Osborn. In the meantime, a strong stockaded fort was constructed at Bohotle to command the wells and protect the reserve stores.

The reports of prisoners captured by the patrols, revealed that Baran had been evacuated by the bulk of the Mullah's force; that 3,000 had been left at Damot to observe Swayne's Levy; but that the Mullah and the rest of the Dervishes had retired southwards to Erigo, one day's journey north of Mudug. At this time of year Mudug offered a safe

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refuge for the Mullah's livestock, and Swayne felt that there was no alternative but to arrange to cross the Haud desert in pursuit. Unfortunately the mobility of the British force had been seriously impaired by an outbreak of glanders that had destroyed half the ponies ; and consequently it was useless to attempt to deal with the Mullah's 3,000 horsemen at Damot, who would easily be able to elude us if they so desired.

By June 10th, Musa Farah's detached Levy of 450 rifles had reached Kurmis. After collecting 5,000 tribesmen from the western side of the Protectorate, Musa Farah had transported them across the waterless Haud where it was over 100 miles broad, had attacked the western Dervish encampments, had routed them in all directions, and had finally succeeded in transporting his force back across the Haud, together with his captured livestock, amounting to 1,630 camels, 200 cows, and 2,000 sheep. For this service His Majesty King Edward VII rewarded the Risaldar-Major with a sword of honour. To prevent any chance of Musa Farah's 450 rifles being attacked by overwhelming numbers of the enemy, Swayne decided to move towards them with 1,250 rifles, 3 Maxims, and 2 guns. A junction was effected, and the united force proceeded back to Bohotle.

On June 15th, 238 rifles and 300 spearmen, under the command of Major A. G. Sharp, Leinster Regiment, were established in the fort of Bohotle to guard the reserve of supplies and to prevent the Dervish horsemen from watering at the wells; and the rest of Swayne's force moved out towards Damot. On reaching this point the water was found to be practically exhausted and insufficient to enable the force to cross the desert. Swayne had no alternative, therefore, but to move fifty miles north-eastward to Las Anod, which was the nearest watering place.

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It was now ascertained that a large number of the Dervishes had left the Haud and were marching towards the Nogal Valley in search of water; and, further, that the Mullah himself had left Erigo. It seemed likely that he might be preparing to follow. On the receipt of this information Swayne decided to move eastward to Beretabli and interpose his force between the Mullah and the detached tribes. This move had been carried out by June 25th. Detachments under Swayne's Chief Staff Officer, Lieut.-Colonel A. S. Cobbe,* 32nd Sikh Pioneers, and Major G. E. Phillips, R.E., were sent to attack different encampments of the enemy in the vicinity. These attacks were successfully carried out, although the Dervishes used their rifles well and fought most gallantly. Many casualties were inflicted, and many thousands of camels and sheep were captured. By July 2nd the whole column reassembled at Gerrowei, and it was then decided to clear the Eastern Nogal district of the Dervishes and their sympathisers before the advance across the Haud was undertaken: for there was considerable anxiety amongst our Levies owing to the danger incurred by their unprotected families behind them. A drive was accordingly undertaken, during which all Dervish encampments and tribal sections acting in concert with the enemy, were rounded up.

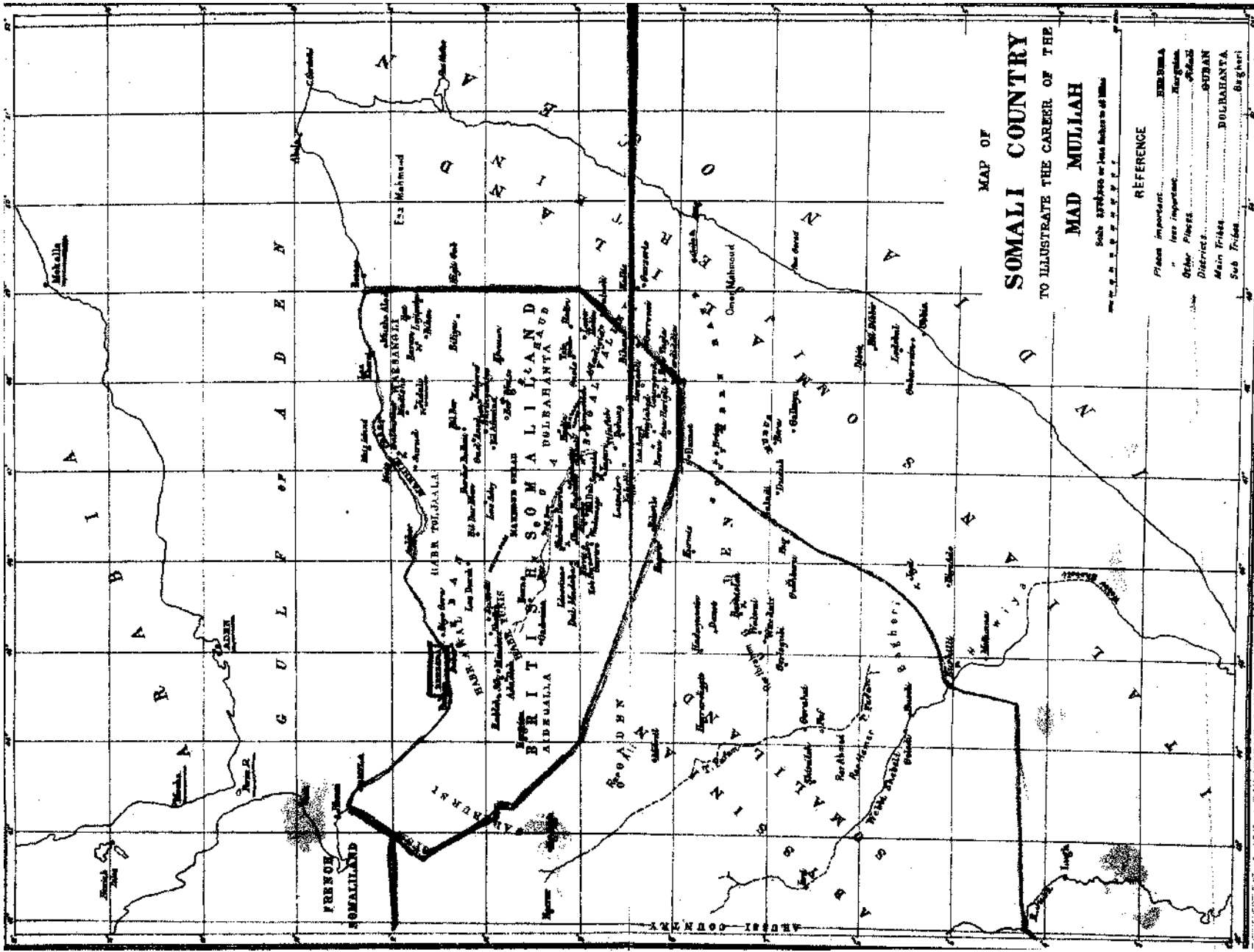
The route taken was Gerrowei - Bihen - Kallis-Garserio-Afladigid-Halin-Gaolo. It was early August by the time the column reached Gaolo, now much embarrassed by the quantity of livestock which had been captured, amounting to some 12,000 camels, 35,000 sheep and 600 head of cattle, exclusive of the 2,000 transport camels. This, too, despite the fact that 1,000 transport camels had perished owing to the rigours of the long waterless marches, and

* Now General Sir A. S. Cobbe, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O., A.D.C.

that 1,500 eating camels and 15,000 sheep had already been slain to supply rations for the men and followers. The greatest difficulty was experienced in providing so many animals with grazing and water. Moreover, the general scarcity of water was proving very trying to the large number of non-combatants, men, women, and children, who also encumbered the column. It was, therefore, decided to send the surplus livestock to Burao *via* Shilemadu and Shimber Berris.

After engaging in a series of operations round Gaolo between the 5th and 20th August, with the object of preventing the return of the Mullah's followers to water in the district, the column worked back towards Las Anod, which was reached early in September. The wells down at Mudug had long been overcrowded, and the Dervishes were in such straits for want of water, that many had taken the risk involved in coming towards Las Anod; and Swayne's communications with his garrison at Bohotle were blocked. It was reported that a portion of the Mullah's forces had captured Galkayu fort, which was held by the representatives of Sultan Yussuf Ali of Obbia; and that a series of striking successes against this powerful Mijjertein potentate had greatly increased the Mullah's prestige. Moreover, large consignments of rifles had been received by the Dervishes from French Somaliland and Arabia through Osman Mahmoud, the rival Mijjertein Sultan.

In these circumstances, Swayne determined to tarry no longer, but to begin his march across the Haud at once. He had been joined by a detachment of 250 men of the 2nd Battalion King's African Rifles (Yaos), who had recently arrived in the country fresh from service in Ashanti and the Gambia; and the Bohotle garrison had been strengthened by an accession of a small detachment of Sikhs, the first regulars to operate against the



MAP OF
SOMALI COUNTRY
 TO ILLUSTRATE THE CAREER OF THE
MAD MULLAH

Scale: 1:100,000 or less, unless otherwise stated.

REFERENCE

Places important.....	BERBERA
" less important.....	Mogadishu
Districts.....	SOMALI
Main Tribes.....	BOLBAHANTA
Sub Tribes.....	Bagheri

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Mullah. A recent fall of rain would give the force a chance of finding rain pools on the road wherewith to supplement the scanty ration carried in the water tanks by the transport camels.* On the 3rd October the march was begun and no more was heard of the force until the 17th October.

Soon after leaving Baran, unexplored and very dense thorn bush was entered, and this continued for some 70 miles without a break. On the 4th and 5th our scouts were lightly engaged with the enemy's horsemen. One prisoner, captured on the morning of the 5th, reported that the enemy were moving up in great strength from Mudug, but were still two days off. During the night of the 5th the column encamped at a place called (Awan) Erigo. Nothing broke the silence of the night except some[^] distant volleys, which subsequently proved to be two Dervish scouting patrols firing into each other by mistake.

At dawn on the 6th the column were moving through extremely dense bush, when our scouts reported that the enemy were close by. Prisoners stated that there was a clearing not far off, and Swayne decided to move on very slowly in the hope of finding it. But the bush became even denser, if that were possible, and two miles further on the scouts reported that the enemy were advancing in great force. A halt was called. The formation, which was three sides of a square round the transport, with three companies closing up the rear, was dressed as far as the dense bush and the transport camels permitted. From the trees our men could see the enemy's scouts, likewise perched in trees, • some 400 yards away. After a considerable pause

* The transport camels carrying water numbered 2,000. Enough water had to be carried to transport the force to Mudug (no miles) and back, in case Mudug proved to be dry or the water poisoned. Two thousand eating camels were also taken for rations.

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it was evident that the enemy intended to await our further advance before they attacked, and accordingly the column moved forward very slowly again. No sooner had the move begun than our outlooks reported that the enemy were advancing from all sides.

In two minutes the firing began. The bush was so dense that in many cases not more than half a dozen of our men could see each other at a time. The enemy advanced with cries of "Allah! Allah!" running in and out amongst the bushes and pouring in a deadly fire from a 20 yards range. At once our men and camels began to fall. The rear companies stood firm, as did the 6th (Somalis) and the 2nd (Yaos) King's African Rifles on the right. But the Somalis on the left, forming Lieutenant-Colonel Phillips' command, amongst whom were the most recently raised of our levies, fell back on the centre and rear in sudden panic, followed by one and a half companies of the front face. During this temporary *debacle* a machine-gun, which was not recaptured till 1920, was dropped by the men who were carrying it, and was taken by the enemy. But as their comrades fell back, one half-company on the front face which had been told off as head-quarter escort under Swayne's direct command, charged to its front with admirable *elan*, and drove the enemy off, losing most heavily.

Taking heart of grace, another company of the front face advanced, and then the companies on the left also returned and advanced again to their original position, the enemy being everywhere repulsed. Swayne now took two companies of Somalis and two companies of Yaos to clear the ground beyond the left rear corner of our formation, whither the transport camels had stampeded owing to the noise caused by the firing in such dense bush. It had been a scene of intense confusion. Four **thousand** camels loaded with the precious water

tins and ammunition boxes, crashed into each other in terror as they rushed into the jungle, scattering their loads in all directions. However, the enemy were successfully driven away from the loads, all of which were recovered with the exception of two cases of whisky, which were subsequently returned by the Mullah with a note to the effect that they were no use to him, and that we should stop fighting and give him a port. In the evening, with two companies of Somalis and one company of Yaos, Swayne drove the enemy before him and returned with some 1,800 of the camels we had lost.

Throughout the day the fighting had been severe, and there had been many a brave deed to the credit of British officer and African soldier. Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in "working a Maxim and in assisting a wounded soldier under a hot fire." We had lost Lieutenant-Colonel Phillips, R.E., who had been killed while rallying his men, and also Captain J. N. Angus, R.A., who was shot while serving his guns. After his death the Somali gun detachment stood by the guns while the Dervishes recklessly charged up so close that their clothing was set on fire by the case shot. In addition to the British officers, 56 of the Levy and 43 transport spearmen were killed. The wounded included Lieutenant L. W. D. Everett, 2nd Battalion Welsh Regiment, Captain T. N. S. M. Howard, West Yorkshire Regiment, and 84 of the Levy and transport followers. The Dervishes also had lost heavily. Within a belt of 20 to 25 yards of the front face alone Swayne counted 62 bodies, 40 of whom were identified as well known Hajis and Mullahs. The six leaders of the enemy's force were killed. The Mullah himself was said to have gone back to hurry up reinforcements.

The evening of the 6th was spent by the force in burying the dead in the presence of all officers ; and a strong *zariba* was made. A quiet night followed,

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during which Swayne had to decide what his next move should be. The only certain water in front of him was Mudug, which was held by the enemy ; and this was still some 40 miles off, some 30 miles of which were reported to be dense bush. Another fight in this impenetrable jungle with so much transport was obviously to be avoided, nor could the advance be made without transport if only because the transport column, if left behind, would sooner or later be forced to move for want of water and would then be an easy prey for the enemy as they retired through the bush. It was consequently decided to get the transport back while keeping the enemy in play by mounted scouts ; and, in pursuance of this plan, the column retired on the morning of the 7th to a pool of rain-water in a glade about 6 miles off. The evening of the 7th was spent in strongly entrenching the transport over the water ; and arrangements were made for a lightly-equipped column, comprising three companies of Yaos and five of the Levy, accompanied by 400 transport camels only, to attack the enemy who were believed to be encamped some 10 miles to the south. On the morning of the 8th, Swayne moved out with this mobile column. But during the morning the senior officers reported that they could no longer rely on their Somalis.

On the 6th, despite the sudden panic on the left, the companies had rapidly recovered, as has already been shown, but during the 7th the severity of the fighting had sunk deep into minds already imbued by a superstitious awe of the Mullah. It must be remembered that our men, fighting under Christian officers, were of the same faith and the same blood as the enemy. Many had brothers and cousins among the Dervishes, who had taunted them during the fighting at Erigo with infidelity to Islam. Moreover, the Mullah himself had been astute enough to make capital out of his former

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reverses by reminding the Somalis that the Prophet himself had met with similar misfortunes at first, but had always recovered with amazing rapidity. There was, indeed, a growing belief in our ranks that the Mullah was immortal.

In view of this damaged *morale*, the great disadvantages to be encountered in the dense bush, which was unexplored and unmapped, and, above all, the impossibility of determining accurately the numbers and dispositions of the enemy's forces, Swayne had to ask himself whether he was justified in taking the risk involved by an advance. Regretfully he answered the question in the negative. "Should a sudden panic occur again/" he wrote, "I don't think I could save the force or even the transport left behind us." In these circumstances, he withdrew the column to the transport camp in the open, where he knew he could repulse any attack. Arrangements were then made to retire the whole force to Bohotle, which was reached without any incident of note by the 17th.

The second expedition was thus at an end. During the operations the head-quarters of the expedition had covered some 1,500 miles, while detached columns had marched a considerably greater distance. All the losses suffered by our tribes had been recovered, and there was a surplus of 1,600 camels available for rations and transport purposes. The enemy had sustained casualties estimated at 1,400, and, in addition, had lost many prisoners, 25,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 1,500 cattle, and 200 horses. Moreover, although it was not realised at the time, the Mullah regarded his repulse at Erigo as a severe set-back; and after the withdrawal of our troops he retired from Mudug to Galadi in Italian territory, where he remained quiescent until compelled to move during **the third** expedition.

The action at Erigo on the 6th October, 1902,

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marks the end of the first phase in the history of our operations against the Mullah. For the inexpensive policy of relying chiefly on tribal levies commanded by British officers was abandoned; and it was decided to employ regular troops and to launch an expedition on a far more ambitious scale. Although in the years to come almost all the paraphernalia of modern warfare, including aeroplanes, were to be used against the Dervishes, no greater successes were ever attained than those which attended the efforts of Swayne's mobile and tireless levies. At a trifling cost the Mullah had thrice been driven from British territory, and on several occasions his following had been severely punished and scattered during the fifteen months which followed May, 1901. No subsequent expedition could claim much more. It was a thousand pities, therefore, that the 1901-2 policy had to be abandoned; but the demoralisation of the Levies seemed at the time to leave no alternative. Yet, the Somalis are so mercurial by temperament that it is more than possible that, if we had continued to rely on them, their excessive dejection would soon have given place to a corresponding excess of confidence.

CHAPTER IV

THE THIRD EXPEDITION

THE third and fourth campaigns against the Mullah afford an interesting study in strategy and of the almost insuperable difficulties which beset a general charged with the conduct of operations in a vast and un-administered country, barren and all but waterless, devoid of all the resources of civilisation. In Somaliland every ounce of men and animal rations has to be laboriously conveyed on camels some hundreds of miles from a sea base to the furthest limit of operations. The necessary supply of burden camels* is hard to come by; and as much as five or six days' water for man and beast has often to be carried, in addition to the rations, ammuniton, ordnance, and engineering stores that must form anywhere the indispensable impedimenta of an army in the field. While admiring the magnificent feats of endurance displayed during the many forced marches in the torrid Somali desert, and applauding the valour of our troops which converted even tragedies like Gumburu into imperishable memories in the history of our native armies, we must not, in studying the two following campaigns, lose sight of the fact that it is the transport **that** must invariably be the chief contributor to the success or failure of any large scale expedition in Somaliland.

* It should be remembered that, although Somaliland contains immense herds of camels, the proportion of burden to milch and eating camels is small.

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Deprived of rations or water, a force can neither advance nor retire; deprived of ammunition, it ceases to be a fighting force and may fall an easy prey to the enemy. But, lacking the means of transport, a force can have none of these three essential commodities. In Somaliland, for economic and financial reasons, the local burden camel was the only possible means of transport. The construction of light railways or even of the most primitive roads on any large scale was financially impossible ; and imported pack animals could do little more than carry their own grain and water. Unfortunately, in 1903, the supply of Somali transport camels, which only require water every fourth day and can live on the country, proved insufficient to meet the many demands. When considering the course of the third campaign, then, it is essential to keep all these supply and transport considerations well in view. For throughout it, supply and transport were the greatest factors in the situation ; and it is for this reason that I have laid stress on this all-important point before resuming the main narrative.

At the time of the action at Erigo the troops in Somaliland under Colonel Swayne's command were as follows :

Corps.	Nationality.	Strength.
1st Batt., King's African Rifles -	Sikhs -	60
2nd " "	Yaos -	300
6th " "	Somalis	500
	Somalis	1,500
Total		2,360

As soon as the news of the action reached London, the greatest anxiety for the safety of the column and its long line of communication was evinced

and the following reinforcements were hurriedly despatched to Berbera :

Corps.	Nationality.	Strength.
1st Bombay (now 101st) Grenadiers 1st Company, 3rd Batt., King's African Rifles -	Indian	274
5th Batt., King's African Rifles - 1st	Sudanese Sikhs - 320 Yaos 50 Sikhs	100 100 } 370
2nd „	Yaos -	345
Total		1,189

Brigadier-General W. H. Manning, C.B.,* Inspector General of the King's African Rifles, who had been instructed to proceed to Berbera to secure Colonel Swayne's lines of communication, arrived in the Protectorate on October 23rd, five days after the latter's return to Bohotle. It was subsequently arranged for Colonel Swayne, who had not only been commanding in the field but had also succeeded Colonel Hayes-Sadler as His Majesty's Commissioner for Somaliland, to proceed to England to consult with the home authorities regarding future movements, while General Manning was to take over the command of the troops and reorganise them.

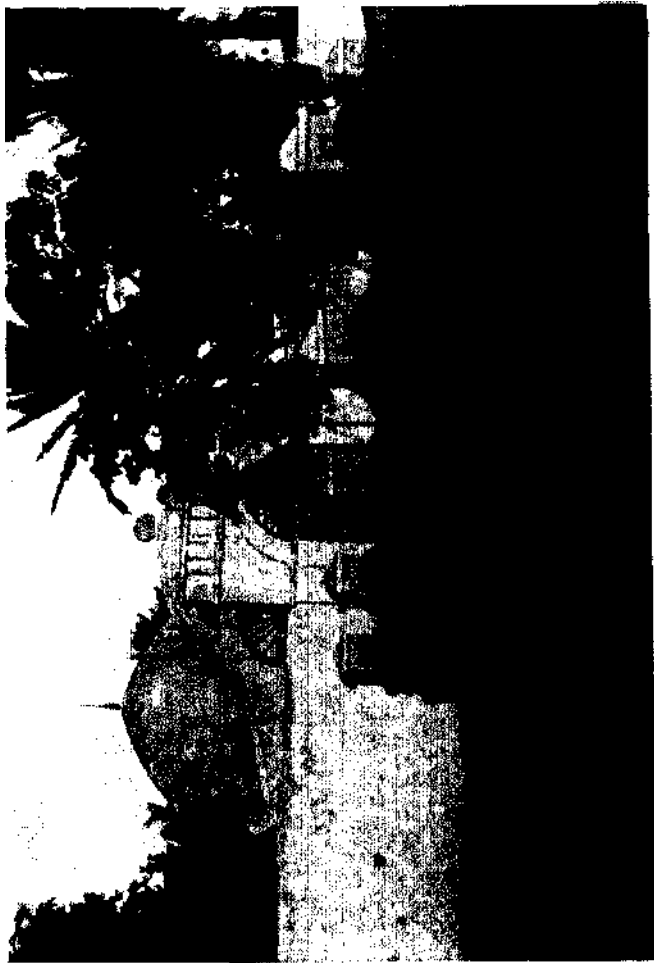
During the lull which followed Erigo, representations were made through the usual diplomatic channels to the Italian Government, urging the desirability of attacking the Mullah from the eastern coast of the Italian Protectorate. The authorities at Rome, though disinclined to accept the suggestion, agreed to a conference to examine the situation; and, in the meantime, H.M.S. *Pomone*, accompanied

* Now Brigadier-General Sir W. H. Manning, G.C.M.G., K.B.E., C.B., Governor of Ceylon.

by H.I.M.S. *Volturno*, surveyed the Italian Somaliland coast to select the most suitable port for the disembarkation of troops. Obbia was eventually chosen. While thus planning an advance against the Mullah from the east, the necessity of preventing his escape to the west had not been forgotten, and Lord Cromer was arranging with the Emperor Menelik, through the British Minister to Ethiopia, for an Abyssinian force accompanied by British officers to occupy the Tug Fafan Valley.

While these negotiations were in progress, General Manning was occupied in reorganising the local forces. Rations were being moved up to Garrero, where a flying column was formed, and a large number of transport camels was gradually being collected. The Somali Levy was reduced in numbers and reorganised on the basis of 150 mounted infantry, 50 camelry, 400 infantry in four companies, and 150 for garrison duties.

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on the 16th December the consent of the Italian Government to the landing of a British force at Obbia was announced; and it was decided to proceed with the third Somaliland expedition, using Obbia and Berbera as bases of operations. General Manning's plan, stated briefly, was for an expeditionary force to advance from Obbia and occupy the Mudug region, where it would be joined by a column from Bohotle. A mobile column organised from the two forces would then pursue the Mullah into the interior. In the meantime, an Abyssinian army, 5,000 strong, with two British officers, would occupy the Webbi Shebeli area to prevent the Mullah's retreat in that direction, whither it would be impossible to follow him. In short, the object was to hem *in* the Mullah's forces by a simultaneous advance from the south-east and north by the British, and from the south-west and west by the Abyssinians. The military and financial control of the expedition was



to be handed over to the War Office by the Foreign Office. The expeditionary forces in Somaliland were to be composed as follows :—

OBBIA FORCE (2,296 strong).

From South Africa :

- 1 Company (141) British Mounted Infantry.
- 1 Company (100) Boer Mounted Infantry.

From Berbera:

- 1 Company (150) Punjaub Mounted Infantry.
- 550 King's African Rifles.

From India:

- 200 Bikanir Camel Corps.
- 1 Section Native Mountain Battery (2 guns).
- 1 Company Sappers and Miners.
- The 2nd Sikhs.
- 1 Native Field Hospital; and
- 1 Section British Field Hospital.

BERBERA-BOHOTLE FORCE (1,745 strong):

Protectorate Flying Column, viz., 650 Sikhs and Yaos from the 1st and 2nd Battalions King's African Rifles.

From India:

- 1 Pioneer Regiment (737).
- 3 Companies (300) 1st Bombay (now 101st) Grenadiers.
- 1 Native Field Hospital.

From England:

- 1 Telegraph Section (58) Royal Engineers.

The commands and staffs are shown in Appendix (" B ").

The following instructions were issued to **General Manning** by direction of Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, **the** Commander-in-Chief:—

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" I am to state that the object of your operations should primarily be the expulsion of the Mullah from the oasis of Mudug, which has formed the bases of his recent raids on the Somaliland Protectorate.

" The Italian Government have made it a condition of their assent to the disembarkation of a force of His Majesty's troops at a port within the Italian sphere of influence, that so far as the military situation will permit, the direction and distribution of the troops in their subsequent advance on Mudug should aim at preventing the Mullah from retreating southward into the Webbi Shebeli valley. His Majesty's Government have accepted this condition, as it is obvious that the retirement of the Mullah into the Webbi might result in his ultimately becoming a serious menace not only to the Italian Protectorate, but also to the Jubaland province of British East Africa. The details of your final dispositions for the advance from Obbia to Mudug must, however, depend on your latest intelligence as to the enemy's movements, and are, therefore, left entirely to your discretion.

" If the Mullah should be driven from the Mudug, or should retire therefrom without contesting your seizure of that district, you should endeavour, if the conditions of the country and of your force permit, to pursue him with mounted troops ; but this pursuit should not be pushed to any greater distance than four or five days' march to the south or westward.

" The Italian Government are anxious, if possible, to establish at Mudug some form of administration, and with a view to this it has been agreed between His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government that an Italian officer will accompany your advance from Obbia as political officer. Probably it would be found expedient to reinstate Yussuf Ali at Mudug, and to assist him in making his position there secure for the future ; but as to this you should be guided by the views of the Italian political officer.

" You will be good enough to report to the Secretary of State for War your occupation of Mudug and the results achieved by that occupation, with a view to further instructions being issued for your subsequent guidance.

" It is hoped that an Abyssinian force, accompanied by two British officers, will occupy the eastern Abyssinian frontier, and thus act as a stop to the Mullah should he retire in that direction. You will be informed, however, by telegram later if the Emperor Menelik consents to carry out this arrangement

" You will bear in mind that as the south-west monsoon will make the use of Obbia as a port dangerous, if not impracticable after the end of April, it will be necessary to embark all troop and stores left at that base before that date. The Commander

in-Chief considers, however, that it will probably be desirable that the Obbia column should not return to the east coast, but should march through the country, via Bohotle, on Berbera. His Lordship is of the opinion that this movement is likely to have a salutary effect on the tribes.

" His Majesty's Government attach much importance to the construction of good roads and the improvement of water supplies by the sinking of wells in the Protectorate, especially on the northern fringe of the Haud. It is believed that if the country is opened up by these means a feeling of security will be engendered, and the maintenance of internal order much facilitated. For this reason it has been decided to place a Pioneer Regiment on the lines of communication from Berbera to Bohotle in lieu of the Bombay Rifles and the remainder of the Bombay Grenadiers originally proposed by you. You should, therefore, impress the importance of **this** work strongly on the officer commanding the troops in **the** Protectorate. The work is to be taken in hand immediately on the arrival of the Pioneer Regiment from India. The direction of the roads constructed and the sites chosen for sinking wells must be selected primarily having regard to military considerations ; but, subject to this limitation, the permanent development of the Protectorate must be carefully borne in mind. On this point you should consult with His Majesty's Acting Commissioner for the Protectorate.

" Finally, I am to remind you that on the termination of the operations it will be desirable that the British, Indian, and the greater part of the African troops should return to their normal stations. You will therefore consider carefully what should be the strength and composition of the future garrison of the Protectorate, and you will report fully your views on these points for the consideration of His Majesty's Government."

The town of Berbera was now to witness scenes of vast activity. Great transports steamed into the fine natural harbour to disgorge their troops and guns and stores on the inhospitable shore. Press correspondents began to arrive intent on their everlasting search for copy. Around the town, mile after mile of canvas met the eye where before there was nothing to break the drab monotony of sand and straggling thorn bush. Thousands of refugees from the interior flocked to the town to beg for alms. For the distress resulting from the

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Mullah's depredations had now reached most alarming proportions. So much so that it is recorded that a woman and a girl were found one day devouring the flesh of a small child whom they had roasted.* Some starved to death; others, more fortunate, were fed by the fathers of the French Mission, or had recourse to the charity which is always so freely offered by the soldier on active service, be he white or black, brown or yellow. Side by side with this poverty and distress there was the profiteer alien trader battenning on the needs of the troops.

Within the encampment there was a strange medley of men drawn from many different corners of the Empire: from the British Isles, from South Africa, from the frontier of India, from Kenya, from the Nile, from the uplands of Central Africa. Boers and Sikhs and Sudanese: their race had battled against the Empire not so many years before, but had since found contentment and prosperity under British rule. Now they were to be united in an imperial adventure, the like of which had seldom, if ever, been essayed before, in a campaign against an inscrutable enemy, whose range of movements extended from Cape Guardafui to the equator, from the sea into Abyssinia, who offered no target for attack, no city, no fort, no land, and no possessions save those of others which, if lost, could be replaced as easily as they had been acquired. In short, there was no tangible military objective, but only an outlaw who would know how to fight when the

* The Somalis, of course, are not, and never have been, cannibals. In fact, considering their antecedents and their amazingly strong prejudices in regard to food, they would be less likely than most European nations to give way to cannibalistic practices in circumstances of dire necessity, *cf.* the following from a report on modern Russia: "Cannibalism is extending with amazing speed. It has come to this that mothers kill and eat their own children. A few days ago a doctor was called to a village to examine a piece of salt meat, and discovered that it was the flesh of a boy killed in the presence of his brother."

odds were in his favour and how to scuttle across waterless and barren deserts when the odds seemed against him.

By the 22nd December, 1902, the preparations had sufficiently advanced for a force to be despatched to Obbia to form a base, and accordingly 19 British officers and 700 Indian and African troops with 2 9-pounder guns and 5 Maxims, embarked at Berbera in the transport *Haidari*. This force, which was under the command of Major P. A. Kenna, V.C., D.S.O., 21st Lancers, arrived at Obbia on the 26th December. From the outset difficulties were encountered. Despite the efforts of H.M.S. *Pomone*, which, with several lighters from Aden, joined the *Haidari* at Obbia, the work of disembarkation occupied no less than seven days owing to the heavy sea and high surf. Once landed, the force found Yussuf Ali, Sultan of Obbia and Alula, most intractable. His Highness displayed the greatest ingenuity in the art of "making difficulties in Africa/" and, above all things, he failed to produce the transport camels which he had promised. General Manning arrived on the scene on the 3rd January, 1903, and with the assistance of Count Lovatelli, Captain Finzi, and Chevalier Sola, the General brought every possible pressure to bear on the Sultan with a view to the fulfilment of his promises. Cajolery and threats were equally unavailing; and on the 29th January the Sultan and his son were banished to Erythrea. The effect was instantaneous, and three weeks later the camels had been brought in by the Sultan's men, who had hitherto been compelled to bring them in to Yussuf Ali who received payment therefor from us, but only handed over a small sum to the owners, saying that we refused to pay anything.

While these negotiations with the Sultan were in progress, a reconnoitring force under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel A. S. Cobbe, V.C., D.S.O., had

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examined the various possible routes from Obbia to Galkayu, an absolutely unknown and unmapped country. The line Gabarwein-Lodobal-Eil Dibber-Dibit was eventually selected, and the wells at these posts were cleared and water stored in tanks constructed of tarpaulin. As camel transport became available, supplies were pushed forward in anticipation of the impending advance. From Dibit (58 miles north-west of Obbia) reconnaissances were made towards Galkayu (101 miles north-west of Dibit) by the Bikanir Camel Corps, who displayed remarkable endurance and mobility, marching 100 miles in 25 hours on one patrol, and two days later covering 150 miles in three days mounted on the same camels. The Mullah was reported to be in the Galadi district to the north-west of Galkayu.

The Berbera-Bohotle force had, in the meantime, been joined by the 7th Bombay (afterwards renumbered the 107th) Pioneers from India. They immediately set out to make a road from Berbera to Bohotle, to improve wells, and to construct defensible posts at no less than nineteen of the principal places on the lines of communication. A telegraph section from England erected an air line from Berbera to Bohotle (204! miles) in 41 days, and thence laid a cable to Damot (47 miles).

An Abyssinian army of 5,000 selected men, under the command of Fitaurari Gabri, and accompanied by Colonel A. N. Rochfort, C.B., R.A., and Major R. P. Cobbold, Reserve of Officers, left Harrar early in March and proceeded to the Webbi Shebeli, reaching Geledi on that river on the 26th March. The Emperor Menelik also provided troops to guard the Jig Jigga-Faf line and prevent the Mullah from escaping west.

As all the remaining troops, which were to form the Obbia force, had arrived from India and South Africa there was no longer any need for delay ; and General Manning accordingly informed Lieutenant-

Colonel J. C. Swann, 1st Bombay Grenadiers, commanding the Berbera-Bohotle force, that the flying column would leave Obbia on the 22nd February and arrive at Galkayu on or about the 3rd March. And so, on the appointed day, a flying column composed as follows marched out into the desert:

<i>Mounted Troops under Major Kenna :</i>	Rifles.
British Mounted Infantry	50
Boer Mounted Infantry	50
Punjaub Mounted Infantry -	100
Bikanir Camel Corps	75

Infantry :

2nd Sikhs.	270
1st Battalion, King's African Rifles -	180
3rd Battalion, King's African Rifles -	75

To be joined on the line of march by :

Punjaub Mounted Infantry	50
Bikanir Camel Corps	58
Bombay Sappers and Miners	50
2nd Sikhs.	180

The remainder of the troops at Obbia, comprising 304 mounted and 503 unmounted men, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel C. G. M. Fasken, 2nd Sikhs, were to follow on the 6th March. The advance in separate columns was necessitated by the lack of transport and the inadequacy of the water supply on the line of march. The flying column reached Galkayu on the 5th March, and the whole Obbia force was concentrated at this place by the 24th March.

In the meantime, a flying column detached from the Berbera-Bohotle force and under the command of Major J. E. Gough*, Rifle Brigade, Staff Officer to

* Afterwards Brigadier-General J. E. Gough, V.C., C.M.G., A.D.C.

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Lieutenant-Colonel A. W. V. Plunkett, Manchester Regiment, commanding at Bohotle, had occupied Damot.

From prisoners captured, the General learnt that the Mullah himself had left Galadi as soon as he heard of the arrival of the troops at Obbia. With 160 horsemen and 40 footmen he had made for the Harrardiggit area, where he hoped to obtain the assistance of the Ogaden with a view to an attack on Bohotle. All his personal belongings and the remainder of his force were reported to have been left at Galadi. The Mullah's strength was estimated at 2,500 mounted riflemen, 5,000 horsemen, 16,000 spearmen, and 4,000 spare ponies—probably a considerable over-estimate. It will be recalled that in Lord Roberts's original instructions the primary object of the expedition was the occupation of the Mudug zone, which had now been achieved by the concentration at Galkayu. Thereafter, an endeavour was to be made, should the conditions of the country and of the force permit, to pursue the Mullah with mounted troops to the south or west, *but not to a greater distance than four or five days' march*. As the result of telegraphic communication with the War Office, however, the General was now given a free hand in all operations to the westward.

On the 25th March, Plunkett, with 1,000 transport camels and 400 water tins under the escort of 300 men of the 2nd King's African Rifles, and 50 Somali Mounted Infantry, with two guns of the Camel Battery, joined the General at Galkayu, having crossed the Haud desert without incident. On the following day the General marched to Bera (15 miles). Here he halted for twenty-four hours to allow the transport camels time to rest and graze ; but on the evening of the 27th Kenna, with a force of 240 mounted infantry, was despatched with orders to push on to Dudub. At 5 a.m. on the 28th the

General resumed his march on Galadi with the main column, which was composed as follows :

Unit.	Numbers.	
	Officers.	Rank and File.
Head-quarters Staff -	5	6
Italian Political Officers -	2	
Mounted Corps	12	200
Camel Battery -	2	20 and 2 guns
Bombay Sappers and Miners	2	20
2nd Sikhs -	9	434
1st King's African Rifles -	6	142
2nd King's African Rifles	10	247 and 1 British Warrant Officer
Hospital	4	4 and 1 Assistant Surgeon
Transport -	6	5
Intelligence Department -	1	
Survey Section	1	—
Provost Marshal	2	*3
Veterinary Department -	1	
C.R.E. -	1	
Supply Department -		1 (Warrant Officer)
Total -	64	i>094

anc I 481 followers.

Serious opposition had been anticipated on the march from Galkayu to Galadi: for the enemy were reported to be lurking in the bush in large numbers. But it was not to be. The country traversed was open and grassy, and the column moved forward unmolested. On the morning of the 30th they reached Dudub, where an excellent water supply was found. The march was continued on the same day, and during the evening a message was received from **Kenna** stating that he had found Galadi but

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lightly held and had occupied it after killing several of the enemy and capturing a few prisoners. On the 31st the main force marched into Galadi, where the water was found to be better than had been anticipated. The heat during the march had been extreme, but the infantry had covered some 20 miles daily.

It now transpired that, on the arrival of British troops at Galkayu, the Mullah's main force had evacuated Galadi and retreated to Walwal. His livestock, however, were said to have got no further than Gumburu, some 30 miles away. As an accession of camels would greatly assist the further advance of the force, Plunkett and Cobbe were despatched with detachments of the 1st and 2nd Battalions King's African Rifles, in a westerly and southerly direction, respectively, with a view to effecting the necessary captures. After five days' absence from Galadi they returned, Plunkett having captured 1,630 of the Dervish camels and Cobbe having destroyed several of the enemy's minor encampments and inflicted severe loss.

But before the main column could advance further westward, not only had a sufficient store of food to be collected, but the water problem had also to be solved, for the district, which the column would have to traverse, was practically devoid of water. Two courses presented themselves to the General Officer Commanding. The first was to transport a sufficient quantity in tanks, involving a lengthy and, consequently, vulnerable transport train. The second was the establishment of posts along the route, from which water could be supplied, entailing not only the weakening of the main force, from which the posts would be drawn, but also the exposure of a large number of small detachments to the risk of annihilation in detail. Grave as the objections to both courses obviously were, one or other must be adopted if the force was not to remain stationary.

The General decided on a combination of both. A post was established 20 miles distant, where two days' water for the whole force could be stored, and a similar post some 15 miles further on. His plan was to move from the further of them with tanks carrying five days' supply, trusting to reach Wardair on the third day, where ample water was reported. But before any move to Wardair could be made it was necessary to await the arrival of Fasken's column from Galkayu with further supplies. It was anticipated that Fasken could not make Galadi before the 17th April; and the General, therefore, decided to utilise the interval by sending forward a strong reconnaissance to discover the road to Wardair and, if possible, to occupy that place and secure the water supply for the main column. This decision was taken after the receipt of intelligence to the effect that the Mullah had left Walwal and Wardair for a destination unknown, but presumably to the south or west. Cobbe, who was detailed to conduct this reconnaissance, with instructions not to attack if he had reason to believe that the main force of the enemy was in the vicinity, began his march westward at 5 p.m. on the 10th April, accompanied by 415 rank and file of the 1st, 2nd, and 6th Battalions, King's African Rifles, four Maxims, and two 7-pounder guns.

On the 12th, after moving through thick bush, Cobbe struck the track to Gumburu, which had been followed for some 10 miles when the column halted for the night. Marching again at 4 a.m., the column was joined during the midday halt by 50 men of the British and Boer Mounted Infantry, who had been sent as reinforcements. The British, Boer, and Somali Mounted Infantry were now sent on in advance, but lost their way in the high impenetrable bush. By nightfall, Cobbe was 53 miles from Galadi. At 6 a.m. on the 14th Cobbe attempted to continue his advance, but,

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as the bush became thicker and the track was far from clear, he decided to return, for he had not as yet discovered the road to Wardair, and he had not sufficient water to prolong the search. As he retired, the enemy's horsemen, who so far had held off, fired into the advanced guard and stampeded some of the transport. The guns were brought into action and the Dervishes were dispersed and subsequently driven off by the Mounted Infantry who had been attracted to the scene of the action by the sound of the firing.

The retirement was continued until a place near, and to the north of, Gumburu Hill was reached. Cobbe then sent word to General Manning that, in accordance with his instructions, he would establish a post at this camp and then return to Galadi with the remainder of his column. Heavy rain, however, on the following day enabled the tanks to be filled and the horses to be watered ; and Cobbe, therefore, decided not to continue his march back, but to remain and reconnoitre enemy and water. Accordingly, on the 16th, parties were sent in several directions to reconnoitre and search for water pools. Two of these parties became heavily engaged with the enemy, and the Mounted Infantry had to be despatched to their assistance to cover their withdrawal to the camp. During the fighting on this day Lieutenant C. E. Chichester, of the Somerset Light Infantry, was killed. There was no longer any doubt that the enemy were collected in thick bush some 10 miles to the west of Cobbe ; and a captured rifle, which had been lost by us at Erigo, and two horses which were recognised as belonging to the Mullah's *kasooi*, or intimate advisers, gave rise to suspicions that the enemy force was represented by the leading " die-hards."

On the following day, the 17th April, Cobbe ordered two reconnaissances. The one, which will ever be remembered in the annals of Somaliland,

was to the westward and consisted of one company of the 2nd Battalion of the King's African Rifles, under Captain H. E. Olivey, of the Suffolk Regiment. This company left camp at 4.45 a.m. Three hours later Olivey despatched a message to Cobbe saying that he was three to four miles out, had seen no enemy, and was about to return. Twenty minutes later, at 8.5 a.m., he despatched a second message to say that the Dervishes, horse and foot, were advancing; that he was retiring; and that he required reinforcements. Plunkett was immediately ordered to take out another company of the 2nd Battalion King's African Rifles, together with 50 men of the 2nd Sikhs, who had joined Cobbe's column on the previous day, and two Maxims, and to bring in Olivey's company. At 9.15 a.m. Plunkett left the camp, some delay having been occasioned by the loading of the Maxims and the distribution of 50 rounds extra to each man. Just as Plunkett was starting, another message was received from Olivey saying that he was within a mile and a half of the camp and was not in action. It was to prove the last message received from the British officers employed on this ill-fated reconnaissance or from Plunkett's relieving force.

Cobbe now busied himself with decreasing, strengthening, and entrenching his *zariba*. At 11.45 a.m. the Somalis reported that they heard firing, but the sound was scarcely audible to the British officers in the *zariba*. Mounted Somalis were sent out to report, and an hour later one returned, carrying Plunkett's guide on his pony. The force had been cut to pieces.

Although Plunkett's instructions had been confined to bringing Olivey in, and although the latter was within a mile and a half of the camp when the relieving force went out, the fight at Gumburu **took** place some seven miles from the *zariba*. **The**

presumption, therefore, is that after meeting Olivey, which he should have done within a mile of the camp, Plunkett must have proceeded further and been drawn on by the enemy until he was attacked by the whole of the Mullah's forces. As no British officer survived to tell the tale of Gumburu, it is necessary to reconstruct the story from the evidence given by the Yao survivors before the Committee of Enquiry that was held at the time at Galadi, and from the deserters and prisoners subsequently captured. It appears that after Plunkett's force met Olivey's they formed square, with the Sikhs in the front face, and marched some six miles further on to an open spot surrounded by thick bush, in which the enemy were mustered, commanded, so it was said, by the Mullah in person, and numbering some 4,000 horse and 10,000 foot. From three sides the Dervish horsemen swooped down upon the square, firing from the saddle as they came. While the front face and flanks were thus completely engulfed in a surge of horsemen calling on Allah and hurling imprecations at the infidels, the spearmen and dismounted riflemen attacked our rear.

Again and again the Mullah's cavalry precipitated themselves into the square which stood firm, fighting with grim determination. The Maxims at the corner of the square swept the enemy, whose dead lay in great heaps all around. One by one the British officers fell urging their men to stand. Plunkett was the first to be hit, and he also received a spear thrust. But he fought on to the last. Neither the Maxim nor the rifle fire of the square succeeded in stopping the rushes of the Dervishes, whose frenzied valour, encouraged by the shrill cries of their womenkind in the rear, impelled them to charge the square time and again, impervious to the terrible punishment that was being meted out to them. Indeed, it is difficult to know which to admire most—the

dogged courage of our Sikhs, Yaos, and Somalis as they stood firm in the square, hopelessly outnumbered, or the fanatical contempt for death displayed by the savage enemy. Finally, when our ammunition was all but expended, Plunkett gave the order to break up the square and charge back to Cobbe's *zariba*, some seven miles distant. With fixed bayonets, the survivors of the square fiercely rushed the exulting Dervishes, but, although they put up a most heroic fight, the British force was eventually worn down by sheer numbers, but not before Johnston-Stewart had broken up the Maxim guns so that they never fired again.

As has already been stated, all the British officers with the force had been killed. In addition to Plunkett and Olivey, our dead included Captain J. Johnston-Stewart, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Captain H. H. de B. Morris, East Kent Regiment, Captain L. McKinnon of the Notts and Derby Regiment, Lieutenant J. A. Gaynor, 2nd Dragoon Guards, and Lieutenant E. W. Bell, Suffolk Regiment. Our total casualties were 9 British officers killed, and 187 men killed and 29 wounded. There were only six unwounded survivors. But it had been almost a Pyrrhic victory for the Dervishes ; and the dead bodies lying in heaps around the spot where the square had stood were a grim monument to the gallant defenders. Indeed, it subsequently transpired that, so far from gaining prestige from Gumburu, the Mullah found that it was not long before the rejoicings of his victorious Dervishes yielded to depression as they grimly reflected that the small infidel force, before being overwhelmed by vastly superior numbers, had inflicted a loss in killed and wounded heavier than they had ever suffered on any previous occasion.

In this connexion, it is noteworthy that no attack

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was made on the greatly weakened force in the *zariba*, and that on the morning of the 19th Cobbe began his retirement on Galadi without molestation, although accompanied by a long train of transport camels, which usually proved a sure bait to the Dervishes. On the road he was met by General Manning, who had marched out to the assistance of his reconnaissance with all available troops. After the return to Galadi, the General came to the conclusion that it was impracticable to advance at once on Walwal and Wardair, for the reason that " the delay caused by the events at Gumburu had, in any case, too far reduced the available rations and transport, while the knowledge gained of the country to be traversed and of the military spirit of the enemy would have necessitated a larger force than was available at Galadi."*

While Cobbe's reconnaissance towards Wardair was in progress, an operation of a similar nature was being carried out by a column detached from the Berbera-Bohotle force, under the command of Major Gough. The operation consisted of a movement to the west and south-west with the double object of collecting information and stock, and interposing, if necessary, between the Mullah and the district to the north and north-east of Hodayuwein. Further, the column was to endeavour, as far as possible, to keep up communication with the advanced force operating from Galadi.

At 4 p.m. on the 13th April, Gough's column, with Captain C. M. Bruce, R.F.A., as Staff Officer, and Captain C. M. Rolland, 101st Grenadiers, as Intelligence Officer, left Bohotle; and the force was eventually constituted as follows:

* As Fasken had reached Galadi on the 17th, as arranged, General Manning, after deducting Cobbe's losses, still had 1,085 ^{men} with him.

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Unit.	British Officers.	British N.C.O.'s	Rank and File.
<i>Staff.</i>			
Indian Contingent -			
B.C.A.			85
2nd Batt. King's African Rifles			260
Medical -			22
Supply and Transport			
Somali Spies -			20
<i>Mounted.</i>			
Bikanir Camel Corps			50
6th Batt. King's African Rifles :			
Somali Camel Corps			50
Somali Mounted Infantry			80
Total -	20		567

with 3 Maxim guns and 192 followers.

The immediate objective of the column was Danot. But, before they left, it was given out in Bohotle that they were making for Kurmis; and, to lend colour to this, they marched some 25 miles down the Kurmis road. To illustrate the efficiency of the Dervish spy system at this period it may be mentioned that, when they were only a few miles out of Bohotle, the news of the departure of the column was signalled by means of a large bonfire in front of them. The signal was taken up by a runner some miles ahead, who at once started for Danot with the news. Luckily a patrol of the Somali Camel Corps picked up the runner's spoor, ran him to earth, and brought him in as a prisoner.

Despite the density of the bush, the column pushed on with all possible speed as the absence of any considerable water supply *en route* made an

early arrival at Danot imperative. Even at Danot the presence of water was problematical, and Gough was naturally anxious to ascertain its quantity and quality with the least possible delay. He, therefore, pressed forward with the mounted details in advance of the infantry, and arrived within 10 miles of Danot on the 19th April. At this point, the animals were so near collapse from heat and want of water that an officer's patrol of 30 Bikanir Camel Corps and 10 Somali Mounted Infantry was sent on in advance to Danot to inspect the water-hole. They found it occupied by 15 Dervish horsemen who, all unsuspecting, were sitting by the water with their horses tethered to some neighbouring bushes. The Somali Mounted Infantry, creeping stealthily forward, seized the ponies while the Bikanir Camel Corps covered the enemy. The ponies had already been captured when the Dervishes suddenly awoke to the situation.

After exchanging a few shots they dashed off into the bush, leaving the patrol in possession of the water, which was of the characteristic Somali greenish-brown tinge. But with a depth of nine inches in the centre, and an origin in a small underground spring, it was sufficient to water the whole column which was soon concentrated in a strong *zariba* around the hole. Great as the demand was, the supply did not apparently diminish. From Danot patrols were sent out towards Daratoleh and into the neighbouring country. One such patrol, composed entirely of Somali Mounted Infantry, became engaged in a sharp skirmish with the enemy, killing eighteen and capturing two prisoners. The latter were marched into Gough's camp, one mortally the other severely wounded, yet mocking and defiant. One wore a British military helmet and the other a solar topee. Martini-Metfords, bandoliers, and water-bottles had completed their equipment, all of which were supposed to be relics of

Erigo. They were, in fact, part of the Dervishes' scanty booty from Gumburu. Jubilantly they gave Gough a garbled account of the disaster that had befallen Plunkett.

During a campaign in Somaliland, false rumours of reverses to British troops are legion, and the news was summarily dismissed as a typical Somali fabrication. It was not long before the mortally wounded Dervish passed exultingly to the Paradise that awaits the true believer and slayer of the infidel. The other captive, though terribly shattered, made a bold bid for liberty at dusk, but, while attempting to leap the side of the *zariba*, he was shot through the brain.

The Dervishes were reported to have a small force at Daratoleh, some 25 miles to the south-south-east of Danot. They had been sent there to watch Gough's advance, and were said to consist of 50 mounted riflemen and 300 spearmen who, however, had recently been reinforced by numbers unknown. At 4.30 a.m. on the 22nd April, 1903, Gough left Danot for Daratoleh with 10 British officers, 45 Bikanir Camel Corps, 54 Somali Mounted Infantry, 50 Somali Camel Corps, 30 men of the 2nd Battalion King's African Rifles, mounted on Bikanir camels, 12 of the Indian Contingent (Sikhs), British Central Africa, mounted on ponies, and one Maxim under Sergeant A. Gibb. Reuter's correspondent with the expeditionary force graphically described the difficulties of the march as follows :*

" Ammunition of 250 rounds *per man* was carried by everybody. The order of advance was roughly in open square. Definite formation was almost impossible, the bush lying in large clumps, dense and widespread, 10 to 12 feet in height, 80 to 120 feet in thickness. The tracks, mere lines of footprints, bordering the different bunches of bush, swept and swerved between them, making any regular line of front impossible, any pattern of the parade-ground kind of square

* " Somaliland," by Angus Hamilton; published by Hutchinson & Co., 1911.

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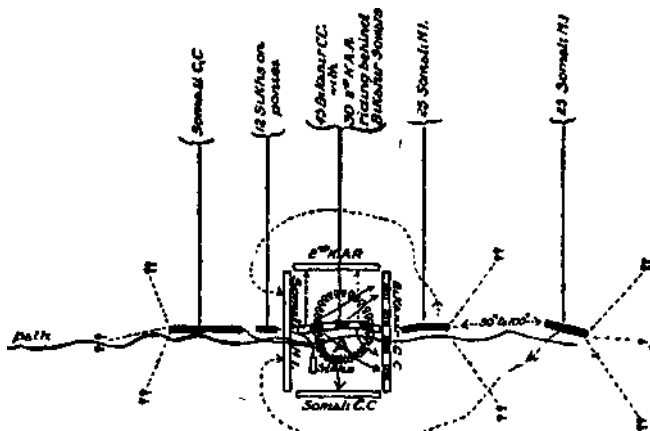
impracticable. The utmost that could be done towards maintaining close order where it was necessary was accomplished. In the waste places of the earth, where the unexpected happens, and men fight with their lives in the slides of their rifles, notions that are comfortably orthodox drop away, and men, falling foul of the precedents of Aldershot, hang together with an instinctive common sense.

" Making detour after detour round the bushes the little force wriggled forward, extending into open order where the bush permitted. Patrols searched the front and covered the flanks of the column, every wide clearance into the bush being seized upon to bring together *in* closer order any too widely separated details, as well as to make a thorough overhauling of the adjacent country. The density of the bush was greatest within a two-mile radius of Danot; beyond that point a zone of more sparsely covered country relieved the column of much of its anxiety. This open area extends some 18 miles, losing itself in the heavy undergrowth of scrub and bush which describes Daratoleh. Threading a track through the denser bush, no order but single file is possible; flankers are impossible, the path being barely two feet in width, and confined to a single trail. However, pushing along an even pace of four to five miles an hour was secured in the more open country. For the first three hours nothing occurred, and only fleeting glimpses of spies and scouts were caught by our flanking patrols. The country was now less adapted to any surprise attack than had been the case earlier in the march; the bush was much lower and less dense; open reaches were more frequent. Opposition to the column at this point would have resulted more disastrously to the enemy, since it presented few inherent obstacles to the work of mounted infantry, and any surprise was impossible. Unhappily the enemy had disappeared, waiting an opportunity until the bush would give their attack the crowning advantage of an ambush."

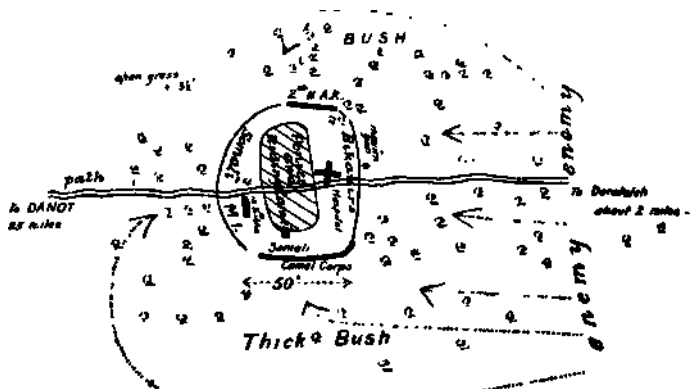
At 7.30 a.m. (12 miles) the force was fired on by Dervish scouts who had been surprised by the sudden appearance of the column. Again at 9.15 the force came into contact with the enemy's scouts. At 10.20 a.m., when they were within a very short distance of Daratoleh, and where they were leaving the more open country and entering dense jungle with long grass about 3½ feet high, and large clumps of thorn bush some 15 to 20 feet high, the Somali Mounted Infantry reported that a Dervish force,

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subsequently estimated at 300 riflemen and 500 spearmen, was advancing to attack. The force was dismounted at once in a comparatively open space, the animals being placed in the centre and the men lining the faces. The following sketch by an officer who was with the column, shows the order of the march to Daratoleh:



and the following sketch shows the formation in which the enemy's attack was received:



Some minutes, which must have seemed an eternity, elapsed before the Dervish attack was delivered. Finally, after a few sallies from Gibb's Maxim, the Dervishes charged to the attack* At no time, however, did they get within 20 yards of the square. The fire discipline of our men was admirable; but the outstanding feature of the fight was Gibb and his Maxim. Shifting from face to face, wherever the attack pressed, he raked the enemy's ranks which always gave way before his fire. At 2 p.m. there was a momentary lull. Our ammunition was beginning to run short, but the honours were still easy. The enemy had suffered severe loss but showed no signs of giving way. On our side, Captain C. Godfrey, Indian Army, had been killed and two other British officers were wounded; there were also several casualties in the ranks, mostly due to the enemy's fire going over the heads of one face of the square and hitting the men of the opposite face in the back.

During the momentary lull at 2 p.m. a wounded Dervish dashed into the square and declared that the Mullah with ten followers was waiting at Daratoleh, whither he was willing to conduct the force and arrange for his master's capture. The treacherous offer of this Somali Judas was not accepted, but his statement revealed to Gough the fact that the Obbia force could not have reached, or even threatened, Wardair. In view of this consideration and the shortage of ammunition, he decided not to attempt to advance further but to endeavour to make good his retirement back to Danot. All the wounded were put on riding camels and ponies. But, about 2.15 p.m., the enemy returned to the attack apparently reinforced. At 2.30 p.m. Gough ordered the front face (Bikanir Camel Corps) and left face (2nd Battalion King's African Rifles) to charge. They dashed forward about 100 yards in the bush, driving the enemy before them.

The success of this manoeuvre was so striking that several successive charges were made, in which the *Daily Graphic* correspondent, who had pluckily taken the place of a wounded officer, specially distinguished himself. At 3 o'clock Gough sent to Danot for reinforcements, and for more ammunition, and the retirement was begun. Nothing was left upon the scene of the action except the dead animals. The rear face of the square advanced 200 yards, the camels and ponies closing on them, while the front and side faces retired, thus forming an elastic square with the animals in the centre.

Owing to the thick bush, the rear-guard, who had to hold their ground while the wounded were placed on the camels, got considerably in the rear of the rest of the column. While they were so situated Bruce, the Staff Officer, was shot through the lungs at a range of some 20 yards. He attempted to struggle to his feet, but the effort was too great and he collapsed on the path. Helpless and badly hit, he would have fallen into the hands of the Dervishes, had not Gough himself, Walker of the 4th Gurkha Rifles, RoUand, a couple of Yaos, a Sikh, and a Somali stopped and formed round him. The rest of the column, oblivious of what had happened, were getting further and further away. An attempt was made to carry Bruce away in a blanket, but, unfortunately, he proved too heavy. A camel was brought up by a Bikanir *Sowar* who foolishly let the animal loose before reaching Bruce who at this juncture was hit again. The position seemed desperate, but RoUand managed to get through to the column and fetch back another camel.

By this time the enemy, leaving the main column unmolested for the moment, concentrated on the small party round Bruce. While preparations were being made to place the wounded man on Rolland's camel, he lapsed into unconsciousness and died before he was lifted on to the beast. Although

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hotly opposed, the party managed to regain the column with Brace's body. Marvellous to relate, only the Sikh had been wounded. It was characteristic of Gough that in his despatch, recommending Walker and Rolland for the Victoria Cross, the Africans for the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and the Sikh for the Indian Order of Merit, he made no mention of the fact that he himself was of the party. King Edward was graciously pleased to confer the decorations recommended ; and, some time later, when his own share in the incident came to light, Gough also received the Victoria Cross.

The progress of the retirement was exasperatingly slow owing to delays caused by having to load the wounded on the camels. Until 5.45 p.m. the rear-guard and side faces of the column were heavily engaged. Thereafter, the march was unmolested and Danot was reached at 1.15 a.m. on the 23rd April. So ended one of the most strenuous days ever spent in that strenuous country. Since the evening meal of the 21st the men had had nothing to eat except a few mouthfuls of rice, and the officers nothing but a cup of cocoa and a biscuit which they put away at 4 a.m. on the 22nd just before the column left Danot. Yet, in the 21 hours which had elapsed between 4.30 a.m. on the 22nd and 1.15 a.m. on the 23rd, the force had marched 54 miles and had been in action for over seven hours. In his report on the operations Gough paid the following tribute to the men under his command :

" In conclusion I cannot speak too highly of the behaviour of all ranks. It could not have been better, the Somalis surprising every one by their steadiness and dash, the 2nd Battalion King's African Rifles having both officers wounded and losing 11 men killed and wounded out of 30, and yet full of dash and fight."

So much for the unreliable Somalis, so demoralised and dejected by Erigo six months before that they could no longer be trusted !

The morning of the 23rd was spent in laying the funeral pyre of the dead Sikhs and in burying Bruce and Godfrey and their gallant African comrades in arms. When the last melancholy rites had been observed, bonfires were burned on the graves and every trace of the last resting place of our dead was hidden from an enemy whose savage delight it was to desecrate the infidel's corpse in a most abominable and unspeakable manner, whenever he was given the chance. Our total casualties had been 2 British officers killed, 4 wounded, 12 rank and file killed, 25 wounded, or 25 per cent, of the total effectives. There is no doubt but that, if the Dervishes had attacked with their usual *elan* during the retirement, the British force would have been annihilated ; and their failure to push home their attack is inexplicable unless, indeed, it may be attributed to their terrible casualties at Gumburu and the subsequent reflection that the wholesale death of infidels may be achieved at too great a sacrifice. It is, of course, impossible to gauge with any degree of accuracy the Dervish casualties at Daratoleh. Gough's modest estimate was that " 150 killed would probably be within the mark."

During the fight at Daratoleh, a " white man " in a topee was seen in the Dervish ranks with a whistle, controlling the fire. The " white man " was presumably a Turk or an Arab who had joined the Mullah in search of adventure, although his apparition lent colour for the moment to a *canard*, very popular at that time, which avowed that the Mullah had surrounded himself with a few European advisers. The topee and whistle had, doubtless, been taken from Gumburu's stricken field, as also had been other articles of the Dervish equipment, such as the black cloth caps of the Yaos, the khaki puggarees of the Sikhs, and the Mannlicher cartridges belonging to the Mannlicher sporting rifle possessed by poor Johnston-Stewart, the only weapon of its

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kind with the force. Such manifestations must have given the British officers at Daratoleh furiously to think ; and, on the 24th April, the day after the return to Danot, Gough received the official papers which confirmed their worst suspicions. Plunkett, with all officers, had been cut up at Gumburu, and the Obbia force was still concentrated at Galadi. At noon on the same day Gough started his march back to Bohotle, which was reached on the 28th April.

In the meantime, the Abyssinians, under Fitaurari Gabri, who was accompanied by Colonel Rochfort, had been playing a very useful part in the plan of campaign. It is true that their advance to the Webbi Shebeli had not been remarkable for its rapidity. On the day of Plunkett's disaster they had only reached Mekunna on that river, but *en route* they had gained a signal victory over a body of some 1,100 Dervishes at Burhilli. After marching from 5.30 a.m. to n a.m. on the morning of the 4th April, they had arrived at Burhilli and formed a *zariba* on the left bank of the river, with one face resting on it and in fairly thick bush. They were immediately attacked on three sides. The attack came as a complete surprise and severe hand-to-hand fighting ensued for some 45 minutes. Eventually the Dervishes were driven off, many being killed in the water while trying to cross the river. The Abyssinian casualties were 21 killed and 10 wounded, and they claimed that the Dervish casualties were 301 killed and 2 wounded. The following is an extract from Rochfort's staff diary :

" The Fitaurari did not apparently issue any orders during the fight, but donned his lion skin and sat outside his tent in state, surrounded by his staff. What direction there was during the action was carried out by the various chiefs. There was a great deal of firing and considerable noise and confusion, but individually the men rushed into the fight in the keenest possible way. The result was satisfactory, but if the enemy had been more formidable, I think the Abyssinians would have



WATER TRANSPORT ON THE LINE OF MARCH.



CAPTURED DETVISH CAMELS.

had reason to deplore their want of precaution, absence of control and discipline; but, on the other hand, there can be no doubt that a long series of almost unbroken successes since 1868 against Italians, Egyptians, and Dervishes has imbued them with great confidence, and is a factor to be reckoned with. They are too excitable to be good shots, and prefer their swords to their rifles. At the conclusion of the fight, those who had killed their man or men presented themselves individually before the Fitaurari, dancing a war dance and proclaiming in loud and excited tones their devotion to their Emperor and country; then, bowing low in obeisance, they exhibited the spear, shield, and blood-stained clothes of the slain. The custom of firing a shot in the air, which signifies an enemy slain, was also observed. It was altogether a very remarkable sight. The Abyssinians pursued all day."

From Mekunna the force moved north, but unfortunately the absence of water and grass on the Gerlogubi route made co-operations with our Obbia force at Galadi impracticable. There was, therefore, nothing for it but to wait at Buseli until rain should make it possible to proceed to Gerlogubi. By the 15th May a few showers had made the move practicable, and the force started on the Gerlogubi track. *En route* the Mullah was reported to be at Bur, and the army moved eastward with the latter place as its objective. When at Biyo Ado on the 30th May, after an almost waterless march of 53 miles through thick bush, the Fitaurari decided to despatch a strong raiding party to Jeyd to ascertain whether it would be possible to reach Bur from there, which was thought to be improbable owing to lack of water. On the following day this raiding party fell in with, and utterly routed, a large force of Dervishes at Jeyd.

They claimed to have killed the Mullah's uncle and no less than 1,000 Dervish spearmen. On the 7th June, the Fitaurari decided that the deficiency of water in the district and the shortage of grain made it impossible for the Abyssinians to take any further part in the operations. As Rochfort was in complete ignorance of the general military

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situation he felt that he had no alternative but to return with the Abyssinian army to Harrar and await his further instructions there. A week later telegraphic orders from His Majesty's Government, dated as far back as the 26th April, reached Rochfort notifying him of the disaster at Gumburu and suggesting that he should advise the Abyssinians to move on Wardair and strike a blow at the Mullah from the west. Had this telegram reached Rochfort any time within six weeks of its despatch, the conclusion of the third Somaliland expedition might have been very different. As it was, the best chance of active co-operation between the Obbia and the Abyssinian forces, which was so essential to the ultimate success of the expedition, had been lost.

We have now reached a stage in the history of the third campaign at which detachments from the Obbia, Berbera, and Abyssinian forces had separately and severally engaged the Mullah. The difficulty of establishing communication between any two of the three forces—which had proved insurmountable although every expedient, including wireless telegraphy, then in its infancy, had been tried—had prevented a simultaneous blow from being struck whereby the Mullah himself might have been killed or captured and his following destroyed.

Hemmed in and enclosed in the Ogaden country, with an Abyssinian army to oppose a retreat to the south-west across the Webbi Shebeli, with other Abyssinians to the west to prevent a retirement in that direction, and with British forces advancing on him from the south-east and north, he had wisely selected the Walwal-Wardair area for his head-quarters. Here he was separated from the Obbia force by some one hundred miles of waterless country covered by dense bush and by a similar stretch of country from the Berbera force at Bohotle. He was almost as well placed as regards the

Abyssinians on the Webbi. But, if he were wise in the selection of Walwal-Wardair for a temporary habitat, he was still wiser to deal so drastically with Cobbe's and Gough's reconnaissances at Gumburu and Daratoleh. Had either reconnaissance reached its objective, our well-laid plans would, doubtless, have proceeded and received their due reward.

We left General Manning and the Obbia force at Galadi after the withdrawal from Gumburu. The stock of rations at Galadi would not permit of a delay there to rest the weary troops and transport and a further advance afterwards. It was consequently decided to garrison Galadi and Dudub with 380 and 80 rifles, respectively, and to send back the balance of the troops to Galkayu. When this movement had been carried out, the General had to consider future plans in the light of the very serious transport situation that had arisen. Four courses were propounded by telegraph to the War Office. They were:

(a) To co-operate with the Abyssinians in the event of their occupying Walwal and Wardair;

(b) To continue the present dispositions, denying the Mudug zone and Galadi to the Mullah ;

(c) To hold Galkayu with a strong force and withdraw the remainder of the troops ; and

(d) To withdraw the whole force to Bohotle.

Lack of transport made the first two courses quite impracticable ; and on the 5th May His Majesty's Government intimated to the General that he should concentrate his forces at Bohotle and conduct any further operations that might be necessary from that base. It was further announced that, owing to the transport and supply difficulty, it had been decided not to proceed with the idea of holding the Mudug area. Throughout May, covered by the posts to the west of Galkayu, frequent convoys **carrying surplus** stores crossed the **Haud without**

molestation, and all troops, save those required as garrisons, were gradually passed into Bohotle.

The Mullah now carried out one of those daring and unexpected movements which not only were characteristic of his genius, but also invariably met with the success they deserved. On the 31st May, as has already been narrated, he had been severely defeated by the Abyssinians at Jeyd. Doubtless dreading lest this blow might be repeated, he determined, taking advantage of a heavy fall of rain, to pass through our lines of communication and move with the whole of his following, covered by a screen of horsemen, into British territory to the Nogal valley. The General himself was unaware of the movement until it had been concluded. It is true that on the 6th June he received a native report that the Mullah was contemplating a move into the Nogal valley, but, knowing nothing of the Abyssinians* victory, and having regard to the impossibility of such a movement unless the watering places, then in our possession, had changed hands, or unless the *ballis** had been filled by heavy rain, he merely noted the report in his Intelligence Diary with the remark that not a particle of reliable evidence had been received to lead him to the belief that the Mullah had shifted his quarters. But to Swann at Bohotle there was ample evidence of the move. ,

On the 8th June, his advanced scouts at Hagerer came into contact with 150 Dervish horsemen who formed part of the Mullah's screen. Next day, the telegraph line between Bohotle and Damot was cut at four points, and six miles of wire were removed. On the 10th, 11th, and 12th of June, positive information was received that the Mullah, with all his followers, their wives, and stock, was heading across our communications thirty-five miles

* Depressions in the ground which hold water after heavy rain.

THE THIRD EXPEDITION

south-east of Bohotle. Exclusive of sick, the Bohotle garrison comprised 1,132 of all ranks with eight Maxim guns. It was, indeed, a tempting opportunity to strike a blow at the Mullah. For it seemed probable that he would stand and fight in order to cover his flocks and herds. On the other hand, the General Officer Commanding subsequently expressed the opinion that, if threatened, he would have retired back on Walwal and Wardair owing to shortage of ammunition and his losses at Gumburu and Daratoleh.

Swann, however, decided that the troops at his disposal were insufficient to make success a certainty and that, with the Obbia force dependent for supplies on the maintenance of Bohotle, he would not be justified in accepting the risk. Moreover, although the small post at Damot, under Major A. R. Hoskins, D.S.O.,* North Staffordshire Regiment, cut off from communication and isolated in the midst of the enemy, was a cause of the gravest anxiety, it was thought that, if seriously attacked, it must have already fallen and that a relieving force could not arrive in time to avert disaster. In actual fact, Hoskins' post was safe, having beaten off several Dervish attacks. Whether or no Swann should have challenged the Mullah's passage to the Nogal is a question for debate into which it is not proposed to enter here. There were considerations at stake that were grave beyond measure. Suffice it to say that the War Office Official History of the Operations laconically delivers itself of the following judgment :

" It is open to question whether the significance of the retreat of the enemy across the Berbera-Bohotle lines of communication was adequately appreciated and taken advantage of by the commander at Bohotle."

To point a moral and adorn a tale, the Mullah,

Now Major-General Sir A. R. Hoskins, K.C.B., C.M.G.,
D.S.O.

during his march to the Nogal, indited a letter to the "English people," which he sent to Swann as he passed south of Bohotle. It may be translated from the Arabic as follows :—

" *From Mohammed Abdulla to the English people :*

" I say listen to my words and mark them. First, I send you this letter. It is the first letter I write about the former and present doings. We have fought for a year. I wish to rule my own country and protect my own religion. If you wish send me a letter saying whether there is to be peace or war. You do not listen to my words. Listen now and consider. Before this I have sent letters which you have not listened to. We have both suffered considerably in battle with one another. You have heard that the Dervishes have run away. They have not done so. I have moved my camp, but I have not run away. I have got horses, camels, and cattle. When I get news of good grazing I go to that place. You are in Bohotle now, and before that you went to the Ogaden country. Before our fights I was at Harrardiggitt, and have been moving about according to where there was good grazing, from Mudug to Mudug and from Danla (?) to Danla up to the present time. I intend to go from Burao to Berbera. I warn you of this; I wish to fight with you. I like war, but you do not. I have with me camels and goats and sheep in plenty. Last year I fought with you and Musa Farah was with you. God willing, I will take many rifles from you, but you won't get any rifles or ammunition from me, and I will not take your country. I have no forts, no houses, no country. I have no cultivated fields, no silver or gold for you to take. I have no artificers. Musa Farah has gained no benefit by killing my men and my country is of no good to you. If the country was cultivated or contained houses or property, it would be worth your while to fight. The country is all jungle, and that is no use to you. If you want wood and stone you can get them in plenty. There are also many ant-heaps. The sun is very hot. All you can get from me is war, nothing else. I have met your men in battle and have killed them. We are greatly pleased at this. Our men who have fallen in battle have won paradise. God fights for us. We kill, and you kill. We fight by God's order. That is the truth. We ask for God's blessing. God is with me when I write this. If you wish war I am happy; if you wish peace I am also content. But if you wish peace, go away from my, country to your own. If you wish war, stay where you are." Listen to my words. I wish to exchange

a machine-gun* for ammunition. If you do not want it, I will sell it to someone else. Send me a letter saying whether you want war or peace.

(Signed) "MOHAMMED BIN ABDULLA."

The day before he reached Bohotle, General Manning received a telegram from the War Office, congratulating him upon the approaching concentration of his force, and the manner in which he and his troops had overcome the great difficulties incident to the campaign. He was at the same time informed that reinforcements were to be sent from India and Aden, and that Major-General Sir C. Egerton, K.C.B., D.S.O., had been appointed to command the increased force. Pending the transfer of the command, he was to confine operations to the protection of the posts between Berbera and Bohotle. The decisions to increase the force in Somaliland and to despatch thither an officer of higher rank than the Inspector-General of the King's African Rifles was taken on the advice of Lord Roberts, who felt considerable anxiety regarding the situation on learning the news of the Mullah's daring move to the Nogal.

On July 3rd, the third expedition against the Mullah may be said to have terminated. Our total casualties had been 213 (including 13 British officers) killed, 60 wounded, and two missing. In his final despatch on the operations, the General Officer Commanding wrote :

" The late operations have been carried out under conditions of extreme difficulty ; the arid and waterless nature of the country traversed has, of necessity, imposed upon the troops hardships probably not incidental to campaigning in any other country, and this, added to the extreme heat and the necessity for long marches to economise the issue of or to reach water, has subjected the discipline and training of the troops employed to a very high test.

" It is a pleasure to me to be able to bear testimony to the excellent discipline maintained and to the cheerful manner in which all ranks have carried out their duties **under very trying** conditions."

* *Scil.*, that lost at Erigo.

CHAPTER V

THE FOURTH EXPEDITION

THE newly-appointed commander arrived at Berbera from Bombay on July 3rd, 1903, and without delay he devoted himself to a study of the political and military situation. Briefly, the position, as reported to him, was that the Mullah was somewhere in the Eastern Nogal, replenishing his store of arms and ammunition and attempting to attract fresh recruits to his standard. His followers were believed to be greatly depressed by their losses at Gumburu and Daratoleh, at Burhilli and Jeyd ; and his camels and flocks and herds were said to be utterly exhausted by their long march to the Nogal. Flattered by this cheerful summary of the situation, the public and Press at home urged General Egerton to make a sudden dash at once for the Nogal with mounted troops. This, they maintained, was all that was necessary now to terminate the Somali war.

Apart altogether from the debateable question whether the Mullah's plight was as bad as reported, General Egerton was not in a position to make a dash, sudden or otherwise, to the Nogal or anywhere else. For, in the first place, he had not the mounted troops necessary for the conduct of such an operation, and secondly he had neither the supplies nor the transport required. Furthermore, he was strategically at a considerable disadvantage. The War Office Official History of the 1901-04 Somaliland campaigns sets forth the strategical

position as it was in July, 1903, in the following words :

" Strategically the Mullah had all the advantages. Separated from our nearest outpost by about 150 miles of country, he could calmly await the advance of our troops and either fight or decline to fight as seemed best; for there was no containing force to keep him where he was, while the whole of Somaliland to the south, from the Nogal to the Equator, was open to him.

" Our force, on the other hand, was in the worst strategic position possible. Our front was to a flank, with our base of supply at the extremity furthest from our line of advance. There was then no advanced base of operations from which even a small force could operate, while for convenience of supply all troops that could possibly be spared had been brought down the line towards the advanced base, leaving our outposts entirely *en fair*, and until the transport was increased and equipped there was no hope of an advanced base being established. The situation was not a hopeful one/'

In greater detail, the Mullah's position may be described as follows. He and his *kharias* were in the Eastern Nogal within an area comprised by the triangle Halin-Gerrowei-Kallis. Here he was secure from any danger of surprise. He could move at will to the Mudug area, towards Obbia, or to the Webbi Shebeli; and his occupation of the Italian port of Illig, some two hundred miles up the coast north of Obbia, afforded him many easy opportunities of importing supplies and arms and ammunition. It was obvious, therefore, that our strategy must be directed towards keeping him north either by occupying, or by inducing the Mullah to believe we had occupied, the line of wells which stretch across the Southern Haud from Gerlogubi to the sea.

After forming his preliminary appreciation of the general situation as he found it, General Egerton came to the conclusion that there could be only two objects in view, the death or capture of the Mullah, or, failing this, his final expulsion from the British

Protectorate. If there was to be any prospect of achieving the Mullah's capture or death, it would be necessary to hold all the wells from Obbia westwards to Gerlogubi, and to deny the Mullah access to the Mijjertein, the Mudug area, or the Ogaden. On the other hand, the expulsion of the Mullah from the Protectorate and the subsequent prevention of his return would entail a chain of posts from Hargeisa to the Nogal Valley for the duration of his existence ; and, to ensure the success of such a scheme, it would also be necessary to give the Dolbahanta an assurance of our intention to occupy and administer their country.

There was no doubt that such an assurance would be welcomed by the Dolbahanta who had learnt to hate and fear the Mullah. His Majesty's Government, however, expressed themselves as opposed to a reoccupation of the Mudug area which is beyond the British sphere of responsibility ; as averse from any considerable increase of force in view of the water supply difficulty ; as having no intention of maintaining a large garrison in the country after the conclusion of operations ; and as being anxious to strike an immediate and damaging blow at the Mullah in the Nogal while still in his supposedly demoralised condition. To this the General replied that he deprecated the movement of a small force into the Nogal as inconclusive. But the War Office retorted that the Government were unwilling to commit themselves to a costly campaign without some assurance that the Mullah's power would thereby be permanently shattered. The General, of course, could give no such assurance. The most that could be said for any plan was that it afforded the greatest chance of success ; and, in any case, everything would depend on the policy of His Majesty's Government after the operations.

The General then proceeded to press for unmistakable signs to be given the Dolbahanta tribe that

we intended to administer their country and support them with permanent posts. The War Office replied that His Majesty's Government had no treaty with the Dolbahanta, and that to put the General's policy into effect would involve assurances of protection, which would still further add to our liabilities in a direction which had already cost so much. The following extract from one of his despatches illustrates General Egerton's point of view:—

" *Reorganisation of the Forces.*—On my arrival I found a mixed body of troops, many of them in a much exhausted condition, without an adequate staff, and without transport. It has been my endeavour to remedy these defects as far as possible, to re-equip the troops that were in need of it, and to prepare a plan of operations which should be effective in securing the peace of the Protectorate.

" *Political Considerations as affecting Plan of Operations.*—Being unaware of the ultimate policy of Government in the Protectorate, but seeing that a main road from Berbera to Bohotle was under consideration, that a survey for a railway was in progress, and that it was already in contemplation to send out plant for its construction, I concluded that it was the intention of the Government to extend its influence and administration to the interior of the country. To effect this and to restore order, the first essential is the final expulsion of the Mullah and the destruction of his influence within the Protectorate, and to this end I have framed my plan of operations.

" The plan of operations is, briefly, to attack the Mullah with two columns, to crush those tribes of the Dolbahanta who have willingly and persistently assisted him, and to detach those who would otherwise be coerced into joining him; which latter object can only be effected by assurances of future protection. The outward and visible signs of this would be the establishment of posts in their midst.

" The map which accompanies this despatch, on which the Dolbahanta country has been marked out in blue pencil, will show what a threatening position they occupy, not only with reference to the Berbera-Bohotle line, but also towards the coast. In the hands of the Mullah they are a constant menace to the peace of the country; without them the Mullah is powerless. The actual death or capture of the Mullah is so very problematical that it can hardly be taken into

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consideration ; but to drive him out of the Protectorate is comparatively easy, as also it would be to keep him out permanently with the co-operation of the Dolbahanta.

" It must not be supposed that in advocating the establishment of posts I in any way contemplate a prolonged military occupation. On the contrary, I consider it affords the best means of avoiding it. It is not intended that these posts should be largely garrisoned with a view to offensive, or even defensive operations. They would rather be the emblems of our supremacy, and form rallying places for the tribesmen, in what would then be the very remote contingency of the Mullah again attempting to enter the Protectorate. The important points to hold are Gerrowei, Las Anod, and Badwein, these being the water centres of the tract of country known as Nogal, which forms the principal summer grazing ground of the Dolbahanta, and the Mullah's base of operations against the western and north-eastern tribes of the Protectorate. It is well known that the Dolbahanta tribe are adherents of the Mullah, more through fear of him than any attachment to his person or fanatical religious spirit. They are tired of his cruelties and exactions, and in the belief of those who best know the country, would speedily transfer their allegiance to us. Should they do so, we shall have obtained the best possible guarantee for the future peace of the Protectorate. An essential preliminary, however, to all negotiations with the tribesmen must be the tactical defeat of the Mullah and dispersal of his following, or, should he refuse to fight, his expulsion from the Protectorate. In these operations the Dolbahanta will be the chief sufferers in both life and property, which will give them, it is hoped, a more wholesome respect for our power.

" *Plan of Operations.*—I now come to the means whereby I hope to effect this object, and my reasons for asking for more troops and transport. My intention is to operate in two columns, directed on Halin and Gerrowei respectively. I had at first intended to base these columns on Burao and Bohotle, but considerations of water and transport have decided me to base them both upon Olesan, about half-way between the two, whence they will both follow the same route as far as Dariali in the Las Anod, where it will be necessary to establish a strong intermediate post. The strength of each column from this point should not be less than 500 mounted troops and 1,000 infantry, while the intermediate post should not be less than 400 rifles, making a total of 3,400, or, with some sappers and miners, say, 3,500.

" *Troops Necessary.*—Now the total number of troops at my disposal, British and native, including Somali Mounted

Infantry, is just 6,000 (when brought up to field service strength). From these must be deducted 725 Pioneers and 300 Sappers, who are employed on special work and are not available for garrison or convoy duties, and say another 200 for sick and ineffectives and men on special employ (only 3 per cent., a very small percentage), giving a total of some 1,200 men, which leaves 4,800 available for all purposes. Of these the columns take 3,500, leaving only 1,300 for garrisons and convoy duties. Now Berbera, Burao, Garrero, and Bohotle will absorb some 800 of these, Hargeisa and Las Dureh 100 more, Upper Sheikh 150, leaving only 250 men available for the smaller posts and for the movable columns which I propose to form at Olesan or Badwein to escort supplies from thence to Las Anod, and to form a general reserve. My calculations regarding the strength of the columns are based on the opinions of General Manning, Colonel Fasken, and other officers of recent experience as to the minimum fighting residuum that should be left after establishing connecting posts, etc., along the line of advance, and I do not think they are extravagant. An additional battalion would just give me that margin of troops in hand which would provide for all contingencies. I would further point out that Berbera itself is unfortified and not too strongly garrisoned, considering that it is our only base of supplies, and would be vulnerable to a raid from the Mahmud Gerad country (this tribe is an offshoot of the Dolbahanta, and they are adherents of the Mullah), should the Mullah have the hardihood to attempt it. The only stop we have in this direction is the small post of Las Dureh, 105 miles from Berbera, with its garrison of 50 men. I might dispense with the extra battalion by utilising the Pioneers as a fighting unit, which would of course stop all work on the road during the time active operations may last, and this I am prepared to do if necessary.

" *Transport.*—I now come to the most important question that confronts me, viz., that of supplies and transport; and in order to make my requirements understood, I will briefly recapitulate what that supply and transport has to undertake. It has to provide for the daily requirements of all the troops distributed over a line of 201 miles in length, and to maintain one month's reserve for the garrisons at each of the posts. It also has to provide carriage for the movable column at present covering the lines of communication, and, over and above all this, to place in readiness two months' supplies at an advanced base, which is situated 135 miles from Berbera, for the 3,500 men and a large number of followers who will accompany the columns, and to convey all military

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stores and equipment to any required point. It will then have to provide carriage for the baggage, ammunition and a month's supplies with three days' reserves for the whole force, including the columns. To fulfil all these objects I have at present 2,800 Indian camels and 3,538 Somali camels, of which latter half are sick and not likely to be available for the next three months. So short of carriage am I, that the mere maintenance of the small movable column of 500 men most seriously hampers and delays the work of pushing up supplies. I may mention that while the Indian camels carry full loads of 400 lbs. each, the Somali camels at present only carry 160 lbs. In addition, I have the two Army Service Corps companies which are not yet disembarked, and whose practical utility until the road is completed is more than doubtful. What I require, and most urgently require, are more camels. Local purchases are proceeding but slowly, and the prompt addition of four more organised and equipped camel corps, viz., 2,800 camels (not 3,500 as you state) from India would be of infinite value to me, and by hastening my advance and consequent conclusion of operations would be an indirect saving to Government.

" *Abyssinian Co-operation.*—As regards the co-operation of the Abyssinians, it no doubt would be effective, could it be organised in time, but of this I am very doubtful."

The Home Government, however, maintained their objections to assuming any responsibility for the Dolbahanta tribe, and continued to press for a blow to be struck at the Mullah without further delay, while he was still more or less disorganised. Finally, after much parley, in which the Home Government adhered to the various principles enunciated by them, the plan of operations was to move one column based on Olesan directly against Halin and to establish posts in the Nogal Valley. A second column was to move eastward from Olesan in the direction of Gerrowei. The primary object was to drive the Mullah northwards and bring him to battle. The secondary object, his capture, could only be achieved by an efficient organisation of "stops." In the west and south-west, an Abyssinian army was to advance into the Ogaden country and deny the Mullah access to this region. In the

south, in view of the obvious objections to a reoccupation and subsequent evacuation of the Mudug area, it was considered sufficient to occupy Damot, which would presumably induce the Mullah to believe that Mudug was the objective, and, in addition, some of our troops were to be placed on interior lines in respect to Mudug.

In the south-east, a containing force landed at Obbia was considered too expensive ; and a naval demonstration at Obbia by all available warships, with a great show of landing men and stores, the latter being in fact presents of rice and dates for the Sultan, was considered sufficient to impress the Mullah's spies with the idea that a force had actually been landed to deny him access to the Southern Mijjertein. Finally, in the north-east, the Mullah was on very bad terms with Osman Mahmoud, the Sultan of the Northern Mijjertein, who undertook on certain conditions to keep the Mullah out of his territory. Subject to the limitations imposed by *haute politique* and finance, no more adequate " stops " could be devised.

It was early October by the time that these plans had been approved. But, in the meantime, the preparations for the expedition had been proceeding apace. The field force had been distributed into two brigades, one under Brigadier-General Manning and the other under Brigadier-General Fasken, with divisional and line of communication troops. The commands and staffs were eventually constituted as shown in Appendix ("C").

As usual, the transport was the great problem. Two thousand eight hundred Indian camels, who are better workers than their fellows in Somaliland but are incapable of working for several days without water, had been ordered before General Egerton's arrival; and this importation was reinforced by 700 Arab camels from Aden, two Army Service Corps companies with 80 buck-wagons from South Africa,

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100 camel-carts from India and Aden, and 1,000 hired camels and 1,000 ekkas and ponies from the Punjab and North-West Frontier Provinces of India. In addition, 2,362 Somali and Arab and 338 Abyssinian camels had been purchased locally by the beginning of October, and formed into three Somali and one Arab camel transport corps. By the 21st November, 6,384 camels had been purchased in the country and formed into seven corps, while an eighth was in course of organisation. A coolie corps of 500 men from India, and another of 200 from Aden, was also formed. The surveys of the alternative railways from Berbera to Bohotle or from Berbera to Harrar, with a branch line from Adadleh to Bohotle, were completed ; but the construction, which in any case could not have been carried out in time to be of assistance to General Egerton, was not, and never has been, begun.

Those who were not engaged with the purchase and organisation of transport were busy with the other manifold preparations which an expedition in Somaliland demands. Native levies were raised and trained. Temporary roads were constructed. Supplies were pushed up to the advanced base at Kirrit. Water supply plant from England was installed at various posts on the line of communication.

The Abyssinian army of 4,000 mounted men, including many of Menelik's personal troops, was also being mobilized ; and the Emperor's consent was obtained to seven British officers, under Colonel Rochfort, accompanying the army, the command of which was again entrusted to Fitaurari Gabri. It was also decided to reimburse the Emperor's Government for the expense entailed by the expedition, and a sum of £15,000 was remitted to him on this account. In addition, 1,000 water tanks, 5,000 water bottles, several pumps, and other water appliances were provided by us. Mobilization

was very slow, however, owing to the difficulty of obtaining transport and the jealousy that existed between the Emperor and Ras Makonnen, the Governor of the Harrar Province, and so, on the 1st December, to expedite a move, £7,500 was telegraphed to Rochfort to expend "by results." In Abyssinia money talks : two days later the force was on the march. The original proposal had been for the Abyssinian army to occupy Walwal, Wardair, and Galadi, but, in view of the paramount importance of a "stop" to the south, and the improbability of the Abyssinians crossing the waterless tract of 80 miles between Wardair and Galadi, if there was any chance of finding the wells at the other end occupied by the Dervishes, General Egerton decided to establish a strong British post at Galadi.

On the 26th October orders were issued for Manning's Brigade to concentrate at Bohotle, and Fasken's Brigade at Eil Dab and Wadamago. At the same time, secret orders were issued to Manning to march to Galadi, to establish a strong fortified post there, and then to return with all despatch to Bohotle. The details for the march had been carefully worked out at head-quarters, so that there should be no delay and no chance of the destination of the Brigade leaking out prematurely. So well was the secret kept that even the troops employed were ignorant of their destination, while the rest of the force knew nothing about the move until it was *fait accompli*. Bohotle was left on the nth November, and Galadi was reached four days later without opposition, but not without discomfort owing to the intense heat, dense bush, the scanty allowance of water for man and beast, and the almost total absence of grazing. After watering his camels and refilling his water tins, Manning commenced his return journey on the 18th November, leaving the **following** garrison in Galadi:

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Commanding—Brevet-Major J. R. M. Marsh,
Lincolnshire Regiment.

No. 2 Company, British Mounted Infantry.

25 Rifles, Somali Mounted Infantry.

Two Guns, King's African Rifles, Mountain
Battery.

250 Rifles, King's African Rifles.

25 *Illaloes*.

On the way back, the Somali Mounted Infantry fell in with a Dervish raiding party returning to the *haroun* with live stock from the Ogaden. A brief skirmish ensued before the Dervishes fled, leaving 385 camels and a large quantity of sheep and goats in our hands. Owing to the density of the bush it was impossible to follow up the Dervishes. Manning reached Bohotle without further incident on the 24th November, after an absence of thirteen days only.

In the meantime, between the 14th and 18th November, Commander E. R. Pears, R.N., with H.M.S. *Perseus*, *Porpoise*, and *Merlin*, and H.I.M.S. *Galileo*, appeared before Obbia to make the proposed naval demonstration to induce the impression that we were landing a force at Obbia simultaneously with our occupation of Galadi. It will be recalled that, owing to his truculent attitude at the beginning of the third expedition, the Sultan Yussuf Ali, with his son Ali Yussuf, was banished to Erythrea. But very soon after, in May, 1903, the son was brought back by the Italian Government and installed as Sultan in the room of his father, on condition that he would maintain order both at Obbia and in the Mudug area.

Consequently, on the occasion of the naval demonstration in November, 1903, Ali Yussuf was all compliance and seemed anxious to help in every possible way. He pleaded, however, that he had not sufficient arms to occupy Galkayu, but on

receiving 250 rifles and a promise that he would be supplied with a monthly ration of rice and dates conditionally on his holding the Galkayu wells, he despatched a force thither which succeeded in occupying the fort without opposition on the 12th December. In order to complete the barrier against a southern movement of the Mullah, General Egerton had constantly urged the desirability of occupying the Dervish port of IUig ; but the naval demonstration against this place, which was made during the return voyage from Obbia, revealed that it was impracticable to land troops there at a time when the north-east monsoon is at its height.

Early in December it had become known that the Mullah had established a strong post at Jidbali; and towards the middle of the month our scouts reported that it was being reinforced. Fasken was, therefore, instructed to send a reconnaissance of mounted troops to Jidbali with an infantry support half-way between Badwein and Jidbali. Lieutenant-Colonel P. A. Kenna, V.C., D.S.O., Commanding Mounted Troops, was entrusted with this command ; and his general instructions were to endeavour to ascertain the numbers and position of the enemy, but not to commit himself seriously, and to fall back on his infantry support if the Dervishes were in force. In pursuance of these instructions, Kenna left Badwein on the evening of the 18th December, with 95 British and 97 Indian Mounted Infantry, 200 Somali Tribal Horse, and 50 Bikanir Camel Corps, with an infantry support comprised of 100 rifles Hampshire Regiment and 150 rifles 27th Punjaubis.

After marching throughout the night, he arrived close to Jidbali at 4.45 a.m. on the following morning. Numerous fires showed that the enemy were in considerable strength; and Kenna distributed his force to threaten their front and both flanks. **At daylight (5.30 a.m.) our troops opened**

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a heavy fire, which was immediately returned by the Dervishes who, at an estimated strength of 2,000, including 200 horsemen, occupied a line of bushes near our *zariba*. Three hours' desultory fighting ensued before the Dervishes were reinforced from the north and east. As soon as these reinforcements appeared on the scene, Kenna decided, in accordance with his instructions, to fall back on his infantry support which was by then only nine miles short of Jidbali, having marched 28 miles since the previous evening.

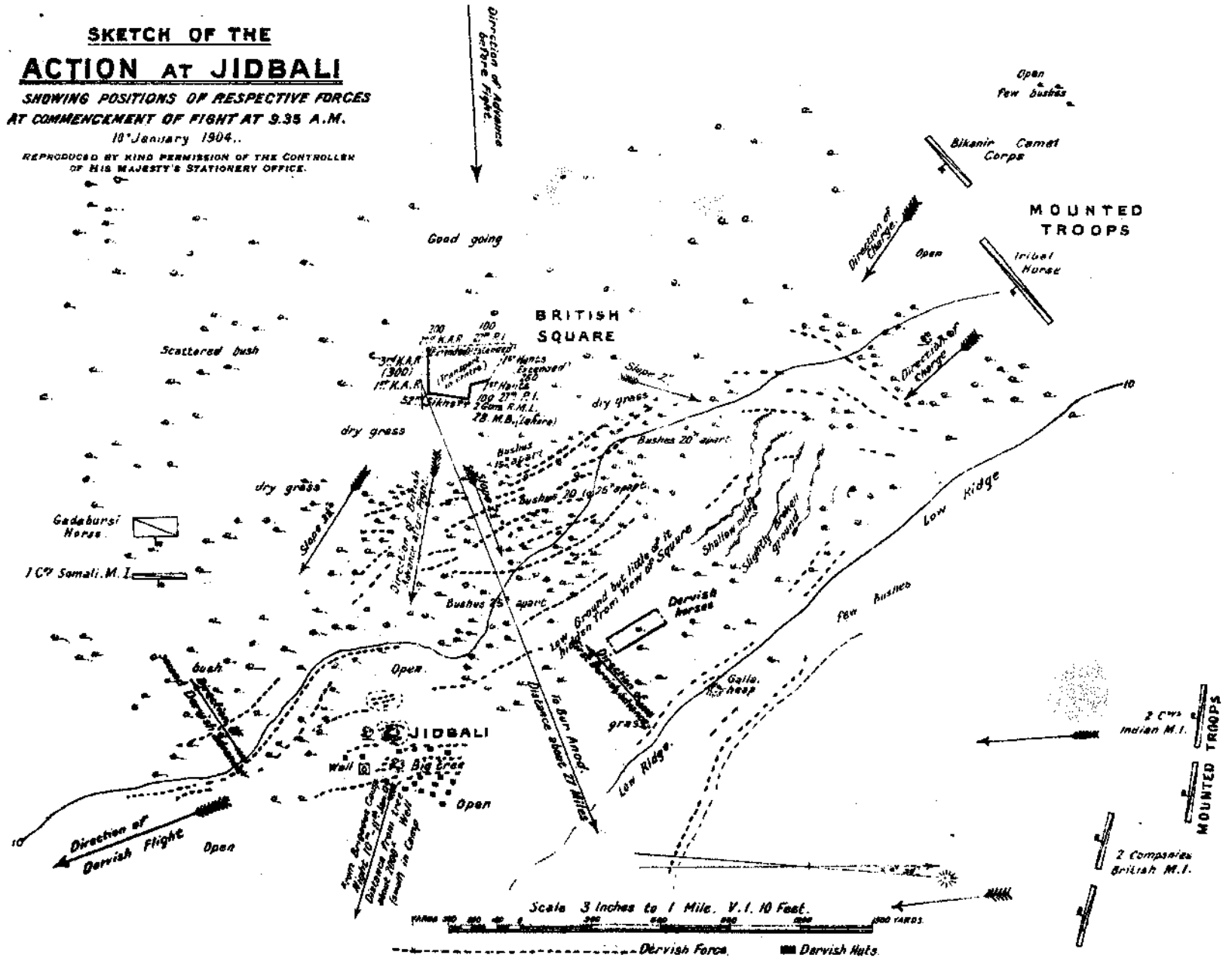
The whole force arrived back at Badwein on the following morning, the infantry having covered 56 miles in 44 hours. During the action the Dervish fire had been extremely wild; and our casualties were consequently very slight, namely, two British Mounted Infantry wounded, one missing, two Somali Tribal Horse killed, two wounded. The Dervish casualties were reported to be about 180 killed and wounded. The fight had been distinguished by what Kenna dubbed "the finest and most brilliant individual act of valour performed in the Somali campaign." Lieutenant A. H. Carter, 101st Grenadiers, and Subadar Bhairo Gujar saved the life of Private Jai Singh, and were awarded, respectively, the Victoria Cross and the Indian Order of Merit.

General Egerton now decided to withdraw the garrison from Galadi, which had served its purpose and was running short of supplies; to concentrate Fasken's brigade and Kenna's mounted troops at Eil Dab with a view to an attack on the Dervishes at Jidbali; and to move Manning's force into the Southern Nogal. A convoy was accordingly despatched from Bohotle to Galadi with the transport, water-tins, and supplies for the garrison's return journey. By the 10th January, both garrison and convoy had returned to Bohotle and, after filling up their water-tins there, moved on to Eil Dab where they were established five days later.

SKETCH OF THE ACTION AT JIDBALI

SHOWING POSITIONS OF RESPECTIVE FORCES
AT COMMENCEMENT OF FIGHT AT 9.35 A.M.
10th January 1904.

REPRODUCED BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE CONTROLLER
OF HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.



In the meantime, Manning's command which, owing to the absence of the Galadi garrison and convoy, had been reduced to one company Somali Mounted Infantry, 550 King's African Rifles, 30 Sappers and Miners, and 100 *Illaloes*, was directed to move from Bohotle to Yaguri, *via* Lassader. While this move was in progress, General Egerton received news that the enemy's force at Jidbali was daily increasing. There was now every reason to believe that the Mullah's main fighting force was established there, although the Mullah himself was said to be at Halin. Manning was, therefore, directed to drop the bulk of his supplies at Yaguri and to meet General Egerton on the 9th January, 1904, at a point twenty miles east of Badwein with five days' supplies, two days' water, and the following troops :

550 King's African Rifles.
6 Maxims.
125 Somali Mounted Infantry.
500 Gadabursi Horse (Somalis).

About noon on the appointed day, General Egerton met Manning at the rendezvous with the following troops:

MOUNTED TROOPS.

Lieut.-Colonel Kenna, V.C., D.S.O., Commanding.
No. 1 Corps, Nos. 1 and 3 Companies, British Mounted Infantry.
No. 2 Corps, Nos. 6 and 7 Companies, Indian Mounted Infantry.
Bikanir Camel Corps.
No. 3 Corps, Tribal Horse.

2ND BRIGADE.

Brigadier-General Fasken, Commanding.

Artillery.

No. 28 Mountain Battery, 1 Section.

Infantry.

Hampshire Regiment, half-Battalion,
27 th Punjaubis, half-Battalion.
52nd Sikhs.

Sappers and Miners.

No. 19 Company.

Maxims.

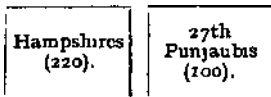
Six.

At 5 o'clock on the following morning the force moved off in double echelon formation as shown below, the front and right flanks being covered by No. 5 Company, Somali Mounted Infantry, and the Gadabursi Horse, the left flanks by the Tribal Horse :

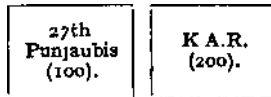
52nd Sikhs (450).
Maxims, 2.

28th Mountain Battery, 2 guns.
Reserve ammunition.
Hospital. _____

S. & M. & K.A.R.
(300). Maxims, 5.



Mounted troops.



All baggage, water-tins, and other impedimenta were left behind in the bivouac under a strong guard. At 8.30 a.m. the advanced scouts reported that the enemy were in force at Jidbali, occupying the near edge of a depression in the ground and forming a rough semicircle of some 2\ miles circumference. Kenna was instructed to make a **wide turning movement to the north to threaten**

the Dervish right flank and rear ; and the mounted troops accordingly formed up a mile to the left front of the infantry and on the right flank of the enemy. The mounted troops soon came into contact with the Dervishes, who stretched a good way to the north in the scattered bush, and heavy firing was heard from that direction.

The advance of the echelon down the slope of the wide, open, and undulating plain must have given the Dervishes furiously to think. This was not the mere handful they had fought at Samala, at Gumburu, or at Daratoleh. It was no reconnaissance, nor yet was it a hastily recruited tribal levy such as they had faced at Ferdiddin or Erigo. In comparison General Egerton's force at Jidbali must have seemed to them a mighty army ; and, in very truth, it comprised some of the best seasoned British, Indian, and African troops at the Empire's disposal. On the other hand, the Dervishes numbered from 6,000 to 8,000 fighting men, representing the pick of the Mullah's forces.

Our advance continued until the echelon was within 800 yards of the Dervish position, when a square was formed. The enemy could now be seen lying down in the grass or among the scattered bushes to the north. As the halt was called, the transport camels were tied down by the foreleg in the centre of the square, the two guns were brought out a few paces in front of the firing lines, and the infantry were instructed to kneel or lie down. The enemy immediately opened a heavy, though ill-directed, fire. Our guns promptly responded, shelling the enemy's main *zariba* and firing case into the bushes on our left front. The Dervishes began to advance in regular skirmishing order, somewhat after the fashion of the Boer, making short rushes from cover to cover and then lying down. Although they were continually reinforced, only a few got **within 400** yards of the square. Eventually they

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were unable to face the heavy fusillade any longer, and this first attack died away. Much execution had been done by the Maxim worked by Gibb in the right corner of the square, one entire group of nine men having been wiped out in a moment. In the meantime, the Somali Mounted Infantry and the Gadabursi Horse on the right, had got too close to a body of Dervishes, who suddenly rushed them while dismounted. Some confusion ensued in the course of which Captain J. R. Wellan, R.A.M.C., was killed while attending to a wounded hospital assistant. It was for gallantry in connection with this incident that Lieutenant C. L. Smith, D.C.L.I., was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Undeterred by the failure of their attack on the left flank of the square, the Dervishes now made two determined rushes on the front and right flank. But so terrific was the fire from Maxim and rifle that the charging enemy could not face it. At 10 a.m., twenty-five minutes after the fight had begun, the whole mass of the enemy broke and fled, pursued by a hot fire until it was masked by the mounted troops under Kenna, who were advancing across the front of the square to take up the pursuit. For eighteen miles, until both ammunition and horses were exhausted, the pursuit was maintained. The enemy kept together, moving fast enough to outpace the Bikanir camelry and to force the ponymen to spurt into a gallop to recover touch after each bout of firing. They continued to return our fire to the very last but without much aim or precision. **It** is estimated that the Dervishes lost more during this brilliant pursuit than during the twenty-five minutes' fight at Jidbali (668 killed actually counted). **It** was a thousand pities that Kenna had no cavalry regiment at his disposal. For his task was essentially one for the lance or the sword rather than for the mounted infantryman. Our casualties **throughout** the fight had been **slight except in**

British officers, of whom three* were killed and nine wounded, out of a total of 27 killed and 37 wounded of all ranks.

Thus the biggest battle ever fought against the Mullah's Dervishes ended in an overwhelming victory for our troops. Nine days later a most gracious message was received from His Majesty King Edward VII; and Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, who were then Commanding-in-Chief at home and in India, respectively, sent congratulatory telegrams on the success that had been achieved.

Water difficulties and the necessity for awaiting Manning's supplies from Yaguri and for the 2nd Brigade supplies from Badwein made it impossible to follow up the enemy from Jidbali on the day after the fight. Indeed, it seemed questionable whether the force would be enabled to continue its march in this direction at all. All the wells in the vicinity of Jidbali were choked with the debris of the battle, and the corpses of the dead Dervishes; and the country beyond was reported to be waterless for many miles. Thanks, however, to the untiring exertions of the Engineer staff, five wells at Jidbali were cleaned out, and by midnight of the 12th January all the horses and ponies had had a drink, though not a full one. On the 12th and 13th, Manning, with the mounted troops and King's African Rifles, marched to Dumodleh where abundant water was found. On the 14th Hudin was reconnoitred. No traces of the enemy, except dead bodies, were found.

Deserters reported that on hearing the news of Jidbali, the Mullah had fled to Halin. This might indicate a move towards Kallis and Illig, or to the Southern Haud. General Egerton decided that in either event it would be his best plan to seize

* Captain the Hon. T. Lister, 10th Hussars, and Lieutenant C. H. Bowden-Smith, Hampshire Regiment, in addition to Welland, already mentioned.

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Gerrowei and Dariali in the Southern Nogal, which would place his force on interior lines as regards Kallis and Illig, and between the enemy and his objective in the Southern Haud. This had been accomplished by the 18th January, lines of communication being established through Dariali and Yaguri to Eil Dab, Kirrit, and Burao.

All the intelligence received seemed to indicate that the Mullah was still in the neighbourhood of Halin; and so, on the 20th January, orders were given for the 1st and 2nd Brigades and mounted troops to concentrate on the line Gaolo-Halin on the 25th January. After occupying Halin, the two brigades advanced through different passes into the Sorl or Northern Haud, no signs of the enemy being seen. There was, however, no longer any doubt that the Mullah had retired northwards. He and his people had, in fact, suffered the greatest privations during their flight across the waterless tract that separates Halin from Jidali.

General Egerton now determined on the following course of action :—

(a) To concentrate the whole of the 1st Brigade at Halin with orders to deny the Nogal to the enemy, and to inflict all possible loss on him by raiding Dervish stock ;

(b) to withdraw the 2nd Brigade *via* Hudin to Eil Dab and thence to Sheikh, where a column was to be organised to advance *via* Las Dureh towards Jidali ;

(c) to form a movable column at Eil Dab ;

(d) to roll up the telegraph line and evacuate all posts in the Southern Nogal; and

(e) to establish a signalling post in the neighbourhood of Hudin.

All these movements were completed by the 22nd February, when the first phase of the operations may be said to have successfully terminated.

Why did the Mullah allow his picked fighting men

to take the great risk of opposing a powerful British force at Jidbali contrary to his custom both before and after this event ? The answer to this inevitable question is, I think, that for once we had completely deceived him. He believed that he had been deprived of all the strategical advantages which he had possessed on the day General Egerton landed at Berbera. His quarrel with Sultan Osman Mahmoud led him to think that he would not find a welcome in case of need in the Northern Mijjertein country. The naval demonstration at Obbia convinced him that we had landed a containing force in this region. Our temporary occupation of Damot and Galadi had persuaded him that the Mudug area and the Ogaden region, respectively, were denied him. The occupation of Galadi had, indeed, achieved more than this. It had deceived him into assuming that our main army was at Galadi; and on this assumption he conceived the idea of cutting our lines of communication by an attack in the direction of Eil Dab. It was to this end, so it transpired, that he concentrated his fighting men at Jidbali. Apart from these considerations, the season had been an exceptionally dry one, even for Somaliland. In these circumstances, it was obvious that there was only one line of retreat for the Dervishes, namely, across the Sorl Haud towards Jidali. It was therefore of paramount importance to the Mullah to maintain his position at Halin. To fight in the more open country around Jidbali appeared to him to be more favourable to his forces than to stand at Halin, where the terrain was much more broken. Above all, if his Dervishes were to be defeated at Jidbali, he would at least have plenty of time to prepare for his own flight from Halin northwards. Such must have been the considerations that induced the Mullah to order his men to stand and fight at Jidbali. General Egerton had much to congratulate himself upon. Tactically, he had defeated and

routed the enemy at Jidbali. From the material point of view, he had inflicted most damaging losses in men, rifles, and livestock. The Mullah himself had lost severely in prestige; and his fighting Dervishes were utterly demoralised. Strategically, he was hemmed in between our victorious column and the British and Italian tribes who were professedly hostile to him and the Dervish cause. There seemed, therefore, a fair prospect of his being compelled to risk a battle again or, in the alternative, of his surrendering without a fight, provided always that he was denied an asylum in the Italian Protectorate. Such were the chances when the second phase of the operations commenced.

General Egerton's plan of operations was for a strong column under Fasken from Las Dureh to work through the north-eastern Mahmoud Gerad country to Jidali, and thence to operate in the Warsangli country. At the same time, another column, under Major R. G. Brooks, D.S.O., 7th Hussars, was to operate from Eil Dab. As the Nogal was held by Manning's brigade, it seemed reasonable to expect that these operations would drive the Mullah out of the British Protectorate into the Northern Mijjertein country when, if Sultan Osman Mahmoud acted up to his promises, the Mullah might be captured or his force destroyed.

While the preparations for these further movements were in progress, the General wrote to the Mullah stating the terms on which his surrender would be accepted. If he brought in with him the two Maxims he had captured at Erigo and Gumburu, and 1,400 good rifles, his life and the lives of his family would be spared. His future residence would be decided by His Majesty's Government. No reply was received to this letter; and it is doubtful whether it ever reached the Mullah.

On the 10th March, Brooks's column, consisting of 750 rifles in all, left Eil Dab. On the same day,

Fasken moved out from Las Dureh with 250 British Mounted Infantry, 150 Bikanir Camel Corps, 1,050 Infantry, two guns 28th Mountain Battery, 100 Tribal Horse, and six Maxims. The common objective of both columns was Eil Afweina, which they reached on the 16th March. No traces of the enemy were seen *en route*. When this advance commenced, most of the Dervishes were at Jidali, but the Mullah himself, with the *haroun*, was at Kalgoraf. On the day before the troops arrived at Eil Afweina, he received news of the advance and retreated precipitately to Bar an. His intention was said to be to make for Illig, if still pursued. If this were so, it seemed he must be unaware of the presence of Manning's brigade in the Nogal, and uncertain of the attitude of the Mijjertein.

On the 21st March, Fasken occupied Jidali. His infantry had averaged seventeen miles a day since leaving Sheikh fourteen days previously. Leaving some Somali Levies under Lieut.-Colonel C. J. Melliss, V.C., to hold the place, Fasken himself with his main force pushed on to the frontier *via* Bihen. The mounted troops, who preceded the main column, reached High Gab on the 29th March. They had now struck the direct line of the Mullah's flight marked by a trail of dead men, women, children, camels, cattle, goats and sheep, and abandoned water-vessels and household utensils—an eloquent testimony to the hurried nature of the flight and the desperate straits to which the Dervishes had been reduced. A few stragglers were rounded up; but this was all that could be done for the moment. For operations across the Italian border had been prohibited. Moreover, there were no signs of co-operation from the Warsangli or Mijjertein. On the contrary, the Mullah seemed to have been receiving supplies from all along the coast. In these circumstances, the infantry were marched to Las Khorai, where a garrison had been established, to embark for

Berbera; and the mounted troops commenced to retrace their steps to Las Dureh *via* Jidali and Eil Afweina. Melliss's levies, however, continued to hold Baran.

On the 7th April, the consent of Italy to operations across the border was received. Had this consent been given ten days before it would have been invaluable. As it was, it came too late to affect the ultimate issue.

Instructions were immediately issued to Fasken to remain at Las Khorai; to Brooks to concentrate at Eil Afweina; to the mounted troops to stand fast near Jidali, where Brooks was to join them after concentration; and to Manning to maintain his position in the Eastern Nogal as long as possible, despite the supply and transport difficulties* with which he was faced. The mounted troops from the Las Dureh and Eil Dab columns were placed under the command of Kenna, who was directed to proceed to Rat with Las Khorai as a base. The strength of his force was 500 mounted troops, 500 infantry, and 150 Somali irregulars. The Mullah's whereabouts were unknown. The last authentic news of him was that he was at a place some seventy miles south by east of Bosaso, whence he was known to have received supplies of dates, rice, and *tobes*. His people were scattered about wherever there was water and grazing. He had lost many deserters; and many of his following, who had fallen under his displeasure, had been killed by his orders. Others had been turned adrift starving and destitute. These last had surrendered to us, praying for food and safe conduct to their tribes. In short, the Mullah's followers were no longer an organised fighting force.

* These were considerable. All supplies were short owing to the emaciated condition of the transport, and although large captures of stock had been effected, an epidemic, presumably pleuro-pneumonia, had attacked the sheep and goats, so that for meat rations even the officers had to rely on camel flesh.

They were a demoralised rabble. In these circumstances, Kenna's orders were "to endeavour by every means in his power to locate the position of the *haroun*, and, having done so, to try and surprise it by long-distance marching with his mounted troops."

As Kenna advanced, information was received that Sultan Osman Mahmoud and the Northern Mijjertein were taking the offensive against the Mullah; and a letter was received from the Sultan saying that he would attack the Dervishes provided that our column was not withdrawn.

On the 25th April Kenna reached Lojipshu, where information was received to the effect that the Mullah was at Biliyu, some twenty-eight miles distant. Arriving there at daylight on the next morning, after a troublesome night march through heavy rain and over boggy ground and swollen water-courses, Kenna found a few Dervish footmen only, who reported that the Mullah had moved south two days earlier. After moving two miles in this direction, Kenna decided that he was on a false trail, and rejoined his infantry and convoy on the 27th at Biliyu.

The state of Kenna's supplies and transport only admitted now of one final effort to locate and strike the Mullah. But still there was no news of his whereabouts. The opinion prevailed, however, that the *haroun* was at Kheman. Accordingly, with 240 Mounted Infantry, 40 Irregulars, and 160 Camel Corps, Kenna started for Kheman some fifty miles distant on the 30th April, and arrived there on the following morning. He found but a few stragglers who stated that the Mullah had kept a more easterly course, at first towards Halin, but that afterwards, on hearing that it was held by Manning's brigade, he had turned towards Illig. The water-holes at Kheman were dried up; and Kenna had no option, therefore, but to return to Biliyu, which he reached

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at 8 a.m. on the 2nd May, having covered 100 miles in thirty-eight hours with one gallon of water for each man and nothing for the animals. At Biliyu he received orders of recall; and, with his withdrawal to Las Khorai, the fourth expedition may be said to have ended.

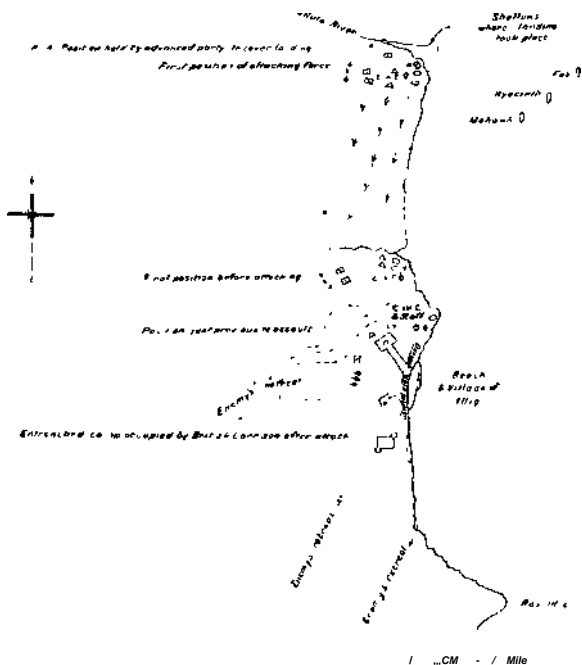
Throughout the second phase of the operations, all reports were consistent in stating that the Mullah's objective was Illig, where he was known to have a garrison of 200 riflemen and 500 spearmen. Moreover, he had fortified the place against attack by land or sea. As Illig was beyond striking distance from the Nogal Plain, from which it is separated by a belt of dense, waterless bush, it was an ideal rallying point for the Mullah and his Dervishes; and General Egerton, not unmindful of this fact, had constantly urged its destruction by a mixed naval and military landing-party covered by warships. On the 31st March the consent of Italy for a British force to land at Illig, in the presence of an Italian warship, was finally obtained. Rear-Admiral G. L. Atkinson-Willes, Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Station, was entrusted with this operation with *H.M.S. Hyacinth* (flagship), *Fox*, and *Mohawk*, 125 men of the 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment, and a small field park.

At 4.30 a.m. on the 21st April the boats of the *Mohawk* made a feint to land on Middle Beach, a little strip of sand about half a mile to the north-west of Illig village. A Dervish picket had been observed there, and it was desirable to divert their attention from the real landing-place near the entrance of the Gallule River. At dawn, about five a.m., Captain the Hon. Horace Hood, R.N. (Flag-Captain), in charge of an advance party of 100 seamen and marines of the *Hyacinth* and one Maxim gun, landed with his men on the beach, covered by boats mounting field guns and Maxims. The party was towed ashore by steam launches which, on account of the

ROUGH SKETCH OF PLATEAU ROUND

I L U G ,

TO ILLUSTRATE THE DISPOSITION OF FORCE DURING
ADVANCE AND ATTACK ON THE DERVISH POSITION
ON THURSDAY, 21ST APRIL, 1904



GROUND FORM LINES THIS

GUNS THIS, (|)

Representing the disposition of the units of the 11th and 12th Divisions on 21st April 1904

shallow water, had to slip boats when about thirty yards from the beach. The boats were then backed in and anchored up to within about twenty yards, and from this point the men had to wade. Proceeding unopposed, the party seized the plateau above the south bank of the river at about 5.25 a.m. To effect this they marched up the gorge formed by the river and took up a position on the plateau at 1,000 yards from the landing-place. At this point the Dervishes were first seen, some twenty scouts being sighted in the distance. An advanced picket was now thrown out to an eminence on the right. Communication with the flagship was established by signal. The remainder of the force was awaited.

The disembarkation of the landing party now proceeded as rapidly as possible, the boats returning for the rest of the force as they were cleared. Owing to an increasing surf, none but the advanced party got on shore without getting wet up to their waists, and some up to their necks. The landing took two hours, being accomplished without accident, except that the *Fox's* cutter was temporarily swamped. Admiral Atkinson-Willes landed about 5.45 a.m. and at once climbed the cliffs, followed by the remainder of the force. On arrival at the plateau the Admiral established himself on the left, while Hood, with his party, held the right. As the men came up they took up their positions as previously ordered, and, as soon as all were disposed as shown in the sketch, the order to advance was given at about 7.40 a.m. The troops moved on a front of about three-quarters of a mile, Hood assuming command of the seamen and marines, and Lieut.-Colonel S. C. F. Jackson that of the Hampshire detachment. The plateau upon which the advance was made was very hard, rocky, and level, and the ground sloped away from the cliffs. The sun was very hot. A few Dervish scouts **were observed to**

be watching our movements, but on finding us in strength they retired to their works on the heights above Illig village. After marching about 3½ miles, we reached some rising ground ; and at about 9 a.m. our scouts reported that the enemy had retired from his outlying *gurgis* to his *zariba* and stone forts or towers, which soon afterwards appeared in sight. The Hampshires were ordered to halt, whilst Hood was directed to move to the right, reinforcing the fighting line with the reserves, and then to throw his right forward. When this manoeuvre was completed, the Hampshires, with one Maxim, were on the enemy's right flank, and the line extended across the enemy's rear and overlapped his works. The force was now halted for a short rest, and during this interval the Dervishes, in their position, began to blow horns and shout defiance, while their women and children were seen fleeing to safety. As the force advanced, the Dervishes opened fire ; and, as the men got within 250 yards of the works, the firing became very brisk. In addition to the rifle fire, the enemy used an old gun which discharged canister at the advancing line, which, however, continued to move forward in splendid order. By now the fire had become very hot on both sides, but our men were not to be denied and continued to advance in short rushes. When about 100 yards from the enemy's defences, Hood, who had previously closed in and wheeled round his men so as to take the works end-on, gave the order to charge. Thereupon, the Hampshires and the whole body of seamen and marines dashed at the *zariba* and turned out the enemy in gallant style. The Hampshires entered the works at one point, the bluejackets and marines at another, where there was a second gun embrasure. The actual assault and occupation of the hostile works did not last long, but small parties of Dervishes held the two stone forts obstinately and caused several casualties

before they were overpowered. The Maxims were brought to bear on the Dervishes as they fled, and they were seen running down their communicating walls and passages. Many of them were killed and wounded; fifty-eight corpses were found after the fight. The British and Italian flags were hoisted on the wall of the *zariba*.

Such close fighting, and the subsequent clearing of the village and the caves, caused the troops to suffer some casualties, which amounted to three seamen killed, and ten seamen and one marine wounded. When at 9.45 a.m. the enemy broke and fled, many of them took shelter in the caves on the cliff sides and in the huts in the village, whence they fired on our wounded as they were being embarked. The caves were cleared and the huts set on fire by the seamen and marines of the *Hyacinth*, under the direction of Hood, who, taking a south-westerly direction, followed the fugitives up for about a mile and a half, the ship firing upon any of the enemy seen near the cliffs. During this operation Hood, with Mr. A. G. Onslow, midshipman, and P.O. No. 9146 John Edward Flowers, Corporal, R.M.L.I., of the *Fox*, entered the cave from which they were fired at, and cleared it in a **t**nd-to-hand encounter. Major C. H. Kennedy, M.L.I., who was an eye-witness of this incident, gave the following account:—

" A marine and a bluejacket passing a burning hut were fired at. Mr. A. G. Onslow, midshipman, with the two men at once opened fire, and after several shots firing ceased, but after a pause firing was again opened by the occupants of the hut. Captain Hood, who was on the beach at the time, then went up with several men, who opened fire. After several volleys had been fired into the hut, the firing still continuing, Captain Hood gave the order to charge, and called on more men to follow. He himself dashed in, accompanied by Mr. Onslow, through the burning hut, and with his sword attacked the men in the cave, the whole time being practically under fire. He first used his sword and then his

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revolver, and Mr. Onslow bayoneted the third man. During the advance the four Maxims were carried by their crews, who kept up with the advancing line during the attack.

" The village of Illig as a fortified place was entirely demolished, together with the adjacent caves, as it was considered too formidable a stronghold to be held by any natives. The natural strength of the enemy's works was surprising, and subsequent inspection showed that an attack from the beach opposite Illig village would probably have proved disastrous owing to the natural advantages possessed by the defence."*

During the fourth expedition our total casualties amounted to :—

Killed.

- 3 British Officers.
- 5 British Other Ranks.
- 7 Native Rank and File,
- 19 Somali Irregulars.

Wounded.

- 10 British Officers.
- 18 British Other Ranks.
- 20 Native Rank and File.
- 16 Somali Irregulars.

The Dervish casualties were estimated at 2,034 killed; and we had captured 304 prisoners, 473 rifles, 2 guns, 24,376 camels, 223 ponies, and 36,415 other livestock. The capture or surrender of the Mullah had not been effected; but even this would probably have been attained, had it not been for the failure of the Mijjertein to co-operate at the critical moment and the delay in obtaining the consent of the Italian Government to our troops entering their territory. There is little doubt that Sultan Osman Mahmoud played false with us and that, so far from attempting to secure the Mullah's person, he had patched up his quarrel with

* My account of the capture of Illig has been taken almost *verbatim* from the " Official History of the Operations in Somilaland, 1901-4."

him and had actually aided him in effecting his escape. Moreover, the break of the rains at the critical moment had allowed the Mullah to move freely without reference to the line of wells.

Although the capture of the Mullah's person was an objective which it was unreasonable to set any military commander at any time, nevertheless it must be admitted that, with this object unattained, the fourth Somali expedition cannot be acclaimed an unqualified success. As it was, however, the Mullah had been soundly beaten in battle and had lost the greater part of his following and stock. His power had been shattered, his prestige sorely damaged. For the moment he had ceased to be a soldier's problem ; and it was for the local administrators to devise some means, acceptable to the Home Government, whereby he might never be allowed to menace the peace of North-Eastern Africa again. As a purely temporary measure, the situation was met by the establishment of a garrison of 2,000 men in the country.

The conclusion of the fourth campaign marks the close of what may be styled the " expeditionary period " in the history of Somali Dervishism. The magnitude of the difficulties confronting successive commanders in the field it would be impossible to exaggerate. First and foremost, there was the transport difficulty in a country which lacked all civilised means of transport. Then there was the supply difficulty greatly complicated by the heterogeneous nature of the troops employed, who seemed to be collected from all corners of the earth and to require between them every conceivable type of ration. Most serious and most crippling of all, however, was the water problem. Again, there was the difficulty of obtaining accurate intelligence owing to the limitations of the Somali, friend or foe. As one officer observed at the close of the campaign, an Intelligence Officer in Somaliland requires the

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patience of Job combined with the cheerfulness of a Mark Tapley. The officer who can perform a long and arduous march through the Somali desert and can then, without losing his temper, examine and cross-examine a stupid or obstinate prisoner for, perhaps, five hours at a stretch, through the medium of an indifferent interpreter, in order to gain one small but all-important piece of information, possesses qualities with which few of us, I fear, are naturally endowed. But the officer who at the end of such cross-examination can unerringly pick out the one grain of truth from the chaff of lies and Somali irrelevance has yet to set foot on Somali soil. Finally, there was the map difficulty in what was in 1900 an almost unknown and unexplored country. Maps had to be compiled as the troops broke new ground. It so happened that Colonel Swayne was a good military sketcher of great experience, besides being a trained surveyor. Generals Manning and Egerton had, therefore, the advantage of very workable maps in respect of the areas actually traversed by Swayne's two expeditions. Indeed, these maps of Swayne's were amazingly accurate considering that they were entirely a compass sketch generally executed at night and with the distances always judged by time and the rate of marching. When an unexplored route—Galkayu to Walwal, for example—had to be followed, the following course was adopted: Two large stones were placed on the ground to represent the two places as nearly as possible in their relative positions as regards direction. This was then explained to a Somali who knew the route, and he was asked to show with a small stone the position of the first place at which he would halt after leaving Galkayu and so on at each successive halt. Being accustomed to move through the bush guided only by the sun and stars, the average Somali was able to give a very accurate idea of the general direction of one place from

another; but the chief difficulty, of course, was the distance. For the Somali does not measure time by hours. It was, therefore, only possible to get an approximate idea of the distance by putting questions to him about the respective positions of the sun at starting and when arriving at the next halting place.

The third and fourth expeditions had cost us much. In treasure, no less than five millions sterling ; in blood, the lives of many valuable British officers whom our small professional army could ill afford to lose. On the credit side, we had stemmed the tide of rapine and murder and had driven out of British territory the megalomaniac who had been rapidly ruining his fellow-countrymen in his efforts to further his insensate personal ambitions.

CHAPTER VI

THE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE INTERIOR

IN October, 1904, Commendatore Pestalozza, the representative of the Italian Government, visited Illig, where, assisted by Abdulla Shahari, a prominent Dervish (*cf.* p. 183), he succeeded in arranging a meeting with the Mullah. At this meeting the Mullah apparently made overtures of peace on the following terms :—

1. A fixed residence in Italian territory.
2. The Government of his own " tribes."
3. Religious liberty.
4. Freedom of trade, save in arms and slaves.
5. A guarantee by himself, either in money or hostages, if the other tribes would agree to furnish a similar guarantee.
6. A general truce of 50 days from the 18th October, 1904.

After much parley between the British and Italian representatives, the agreement known as the Pestalozza, or Illig, Agreement was drawn up and signed at Illig on the 5th March, 1905. It may be translated from the Arabic as follows :—

" PRAISE to the merciful God.

" In accordance with the common desire of the contracting parties to afford peace and tranquillity to all Somalis, Cavaliere Pestalozza, the special envoy acting under the authority of the Italian Government, and Seyyid Mohammed bin Abdulla, acting for himself and for the chiefs and notables of the tribes following him, have agreed on the complete acceptance of the following clauses and conditions:

" 1. There shall be peace and lasting accord between the above-mentioned Seyyid Mohammed, with all the Dervishes

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dependent on him, and the Government of Italy and all its dependents among the Somali Mijjertein and others.

" In view of this and in relation thereto, there shall also be peace and accord between Seyyid Mohammed, with his above-mentioned Dervishes, and the British Government, with all its dependents among the Somalis and others. So likewise shall there be peace between the Seyyid, with his above-mentioned Dervishes, and the Government of Abyssinia with all its dependents. The Italian Government guarantee and pledge themselves on behalf of their dependents, as also on behalf of the British Government.

" Every disagreement or difference between the Seyyid and his people and the dependents of the Italian Government, or those for whom the Government have pledged themselves, as, for example, the English and their dependents, shall be settled in a peaceful and friendly manner by means of an *ergo* or of envoys from the two parties under the presidency of an Italian delegate, and also in the presence of an English envoy whenever British interests are concerned.

" 2. Seyyid Mohammed bin Abdulla is authorised by the Italian Government to establish for himself and his people a fixed residence at the point most convenient for communication with the sea, between Ras Garad and Ras Gabbe. This also with the approval of Yussuf Ali and of Sultan Osman Mahmoud.

" That residence, and all its inhabitants, shall be under the protection of the Italian Government and under their flag.

" If and when the Italian Government so desire, they shall be at liberty to instal in that residence a representative of Italian nationality or other person as governor, with soldiers and custom-house (or tithes).

" Seyyid Mohammed shall in every way afford help and support to the Government in all matters, and, until the Government appoint a special representative of their own, the said Seyyid Mohammed shall be their procurator.

" The government of the tribes subject to him in the interior shall remain in the hands of Seyyid Mohammed, and shall be exercised with justice and equity.

" Moreover, he shall provide for the security of the roads and the safety of the caravans.

" 3. In the above-mentioned residence commerce shall be free for all, subject to the regulations and ordinances of the Government. However, from henceforth the importation and disembarkation of firearms, cartridges, lead, and powder necessary for the same is prohibited. Seyyid Mohammed himself and his people pledge themselves by a formal and complete pledge, as also by oath before God, to prevent the traffic, importation, and disembarkation of slaves and firearms,

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whencesoever they may come, whether by sea or land. Whoever shall infringe this ordinance shall be liable to such punishment as shall be considered fitting by the Government.

"The territory assigned to Seyyid Mohammed and his followers is that of the Nogal and the Haud, comprised within the limits of the Italian sphere of influence. But in view of the special agreement between the Governments of Italy and England after the despatch and return of the *ergo* sent to establish peace with the English, according to the Somali customs, and to settle certain formalities necessary for the general tranquillity, the English shall authorise Seyyid Mohammed and his followers to enter their territories (those of the English) in the country of Nogal, to feed their cattle there, according to their former custom.

"But the said cattle shall not be permitted to pass beyond % the pasturage of the walls enumerated hereafter; they are the wells of Halin, and from these to those of Hudin, and from Hudin to Tifafleh, and from Tifafleh to Danot.

"In the same manner also, in the case of the Mijjertein, there shall be accord and peace between them all, and Seyyid Mohammed and all his Dervishes.

"The question of the pasturages, which is at issue between these latter and the Esa Mahmoud, as also between them and the Omar Mahmoud, shall be settled with the approval and consent of the parties, according to former custom.

"The lands of Mudug and Galkayu shall continue to belong to Yussuf Ali and his sons.

"All questions between the Dervishes and their neighbours shall be referred to the examination and the decision of the Italian Government.

"In confirmation of all that is above stated, and as a pledge of the contracting parties, this document has been signed in duplicate by Seyyid Mohammed bin Abdulla for himself and the Dervishes, his followers, and by Cavaliere Pestalozza, the authorised delegate of the Italian Government, at Illig, Sunday, the 28th of the month of Zelheggia in the year 1322 of the Hegira, corresponding to the 8th March in the year 1905.

"I have read the above document, and have understood its entire contents, have accepted it all in perfect sincerity, and have signed it—in short, Cavaliere Pestalozza, representative, knows my state—in good faith.

"SEYYID MOHAMMED BIN ABDULLA.

"G. PESTALOZZA.

"Seen for translation, in conformity with the original in Arabic.

"G. PESTALOZZA.

"Illig, Mar 5, 1905."

It should be explained that by a supplementary agreement under date the 19th March, 1907, the term "tribes" as used in the main agreement was interpreted to denote only individuals belonging to the Somali tribes who for the time being were with the Mullah. In other words, "tribes" denoted followers.

Thus the Mullah became an Italian-protected subject; and during the three years that followed, his *haroun* remained in the neighbourhood of Illig. Whilst refraining in his own interest from committing any overt act of hostility, he never for a moment abandoned his original object of establishing his suzerainty over the whole of the Somali country; and, uncontrolled by his new protectors, he took advantage of the respite afforded by the Agreement to collect together again his scattered forces. Outwardly pacific, he gradually organised a widespread service of secret agents whose duty it was to endeavour by threats and promises to undermine the loyalty of our tribes. With his immediate neighbours, the Southern Mijjertein, he maintained a desultory warfare in which, thanks to the personality and leadership of Sultan Ali Yussuf of Obbia, the Mijjertein more than held their own.

Throughout this period the efforts of the local Government in British Somaliland were concentrated on counteracting the effects of the Mullah's propaganda among the British tribes, the western and central sections of the Protectorate being administered by a small band of political officers. In 1905 the armed forces in the Protectorate were constituted as follows:—

(a) The Tribal Militia, consisting of some twenty sections of twenty-five men each, armed with Martini-Henry carbines, whose duty it was to protect the tribal grazing grounds.

(b) The Standing Militia, a permanently embodied force, trained and disciplined on regular

lines, consisting of six Somali companies, four mounted and two dismounted, under political officers and administered by the Commissioner. Their armament was -303-inch Lee-Enfield rifles and carbines.

(c) The 6th (Indian) Battalion, King's African Rifles, consisting of four companies of Indians, two mounted and two dismounted, under military officers and armed with -303-inch rifles.

(d) The Armed Police, chiefly Somalis, 320 strong, of whom 50 were mounted on camels. Subsequently, in 1906, the Standing Militia was broken up and the men drafted into the 6th (Somali) Battalion, King's African Rifles, which was then constituted as under :—

Four companies of Somalis (450).

Two companies of Indians (200).

Of these, two companies were mounted on camels, two on ponies, and one on mules. Ber, Burao, and Sheikh on the main caravan route, and Hargeisa in the west, were held by the regiment; and, in the Ain Valley, there were outposts, manned by the Tribal Militia, the furthest flung being those at Bohotle and Eil Dab.

The weak point in our position, politically, was the unadministered eastern portion of the Protectorate, inhabited by the Dolbahanta, Warsangli, and a few sections of the Ishaak tribes. Overriding financial considerations precluded the extension to the east of the system of local political control which proved so efficacious in the west and in the Ain Valley; and our efforts were confined to keeping the Dolbahanta and Warsangli neutral so as to use them as buffer tribes in the event of Dervish incursions into the heart of our Protectorate. For it was realised that, if once the weight of these two tribes were to be thrown on the Mullah's side, the political equilibrium would be upset; **and the**

Government and the Ishaak tribes would be faced again by a powerful and hostile combination, which could not be resisted without military aid from outside.

To the importance of the Dolbahanta and Warsangli as the deciding factors in the situation the Mullah was by no means blind; and consequently the bulk of his propaganda was aimed at winning them over to his side. Both tribes were convinced that the Mullah would sooner or later overrun the country and drive the British infidel into the sea. But the Dolbahanta were astute enough to perceive that it would be injudicious and unnecessarily precipitate of them to take a decision for or against the Mullah except under the pressure of physical force. The Warsangli, on the other hand, led by a Sultan who had married his daughter to the Mullah, had by 1908 committed themselves far more definitely to the Dervish cause.

For some time past they had allowed the Mullah to use Las Khorai as a port through which to obtain supplies of food and clothing and arms and ammunition. This temporary alliance was mutually advantageous. For, if the Mullah gained a convenient port, the Warsangli certainly profited commercially from this very considerable addition to their trade. But the tribe's enthusiasm for this alliance was necessarily tempered by the knowledge that we could blockade their coast from the sea, and so force their submission to us by the stoppage of all the imported food supplies—rice and dates, sugar and tea—on which the Somalis are so largely dependent.

In January, 1908, the crew of a Government dhow landed on the Warsangli coast and were fired upon by the inhabitants. Precautionary measures were immediately taken by the local Government, and the Warsangli trade was stopped and a blockade instituted. The reasons for this measure were explained to the Mullah in a letter couched in

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friendly terms ; and three letters, full of ill-founded complaints, were received from him soon after. They may be translated as follows :—

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SEYYID MOHAMMED TO COMMISSIONER CORDEAUX.*

" Your letter has been received and its contents understood. We have learnt from it that you have arrived from your country, and that you are pleased to find the country in peace and tranquillity, that you are prepared to do your utmost to promote this as long as you live, and I am perfectly content with all you have written. I am likewise very pleased to make peace, as I am more desirous to have peace and tranquillity than anybody else, and I am most honest. If you are prepared to maintain peace, I am also prepared to do so, and you shall hear nothing wrong about me or see any error. Your people, the Dolbahanta tribe, have killed fifteen of our men and looted eighty-four camels. I do not know if Abdulla Shahari reported this to you: if he did the fault lies with you; if not, I do hereby acquaint you of it. You are requested to restore to us our camels and the blood shed by your people.

* . * . *

" I further complain that my wives are kept back from me against their will. Their names are Bint Adam (my uncle), Bint Shaour Kali, Bint Hag Hussim, who are my wives; also the wives of my son, viz., Bint Bih Kali, Bint AH But, Bint Ursul, Bint Hassan Id, Bint Firn Kadah, Bint Seid Abdulla, the wife of my slave Awal, Bint Ali Ismail, Bint Ok Fahia, Bint Belal Warsama, Bint Adam Ada, wife of Kubol Bint Mohammed Hag Ali, Bint Hirn Waraba, wife of Hag Gaibalil, Bint Dua'al Fekas, wife of Ahmed Fiki, daughter of my slave Adam, and Bint Shaour Hassan. You are requested to give us back our wives; also my animals you have looted at Aden, and the men who were with them and the money. I also sent you a man named Osman, but you refused to answer his request and imprisoned him ; you are requested to dispose of his case.

* i.e. Captain H. E. S. Cordeaux, C.B., C.M.G. (now Sir H. E. S. Cordeaux, K.C.M.G., C.B., Governor of the Bahamas), who, after some years' political experience in the country, had succeeded [Brigadier-General Swayne as Commissioner for Somaliland.

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" I also made another proposal *to* enter your country for trade purposes, and my people actually reached Berbera for this purpose under the *aman*, but they did not meet with a complete *aman*, for you spoiled the prices and seized the arms of the caravan; you only gave back their arms after their return from your country, and a portion of the caravan was lost. This made us afraid. We also went to Aden and there we met nothing good; you seized my buggalows, and now they are lying idle there with all my men. This made us also afraid of going to Aden, and we sent our trade to the Arab country, but you seized our men there and asked them, saying, 'What are you doing here, you Dervishes?' To which my men answered that they intended to buy rice, dates, and coffee; but the man who seized them said it was firearms they wanted, and he refused to allow them to proceed, and searched all they had, but could find nothing beyond the rice, dates, and coffee. He then forced out of every man 100 rupees. You are requested to go into this and give back the money.

" When we went to Aden with the Warsangli and were very afraid, you seized all the boats and stopped trade at Aden and other places. We also complained about a different matter, which is more serious still and most important. Abdulla Shahari informed us that you played tricks against us and that you intend attacking and hold the troops in readiness; subsequently, after due consideration and consultation, you stopped this and made an intrigue with the Abyssinians. He also reported to us that you spoiled our relations with the Italians, by advising them to fight the Dervishes for the sake of their subjects, as you have done for yours. He further reported that you intrigued between us and the Mijjertein.

" Now you, Cordeaux, do not play the double game on us and spoil our relations with others. You should reconcile us with the Ogaden and make peace between us. Their property is kept by me, and you are requested to arrange and give them back their property and give us back ours which they have. Also arrange to reconcile us with the Mijjertein and give back to each his rights from the other.

* * * * *

" We also complained against the Italians, who pester, incite, and annoy us very much and curse us in every way. Being cursed is harder for us to bear than having our necks cut off. They also captured our dhow and hoisted a flag on it; they also poisoned my son, who came to me very ill and died on his arrival; his property is still with them. The

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Mijjertein have also captured a dhow belonging to me laden with silk, and the Italians did not give this back to us, but said that we could also capture the dhows on the sea.

" We must explain to you that we do not know the Italians, but we only know you, and the good or evil that they do towards or against us we attribute to you. This is the case with the Abyssinians also. We have only one ear, and if we want *to* have peace and to become friendly we ask it from you and not from anybody else.

" Now you, Cordeaux, try to do good to us and not harm, and let us be friendly and give back to each his property, including our wives, and dhow { also give the prisoner his rights back and open the towns for trade j also stop the intrigues everywhere. I am quite prepared to accept all that you decide justly.

" SEYYID MOHAMMED."

II

SEYYID MOHAMMED TO COMMISSIONER CORDEAUX.

" This, my present letter, is very serious and important.

" i. After compliments, I beg to inform you that I have sent you two men, by name Osman Dervish, who was formerly sent by me to you, and you have done as you did in Aden { the second man is Ibrahim Hassan, and both of them are men of high rank among the Dervishes. Also they are my true confidential men and sharers of my secrets; and not only that, but they are now sent by me, so if you have any speech concerning me your honour may send through them, and also you may trust and believe their words for me, and do not believe any other men who may present themselves to you on my behalf and in any way, because all other men are nothing but disturbers of the peace, and this is my speech :

" 2. I beg to inform you that Abdulla Shahari and Mohammed Habarwah, the Italian interpreter, informed me that your force against me has been long ago formed ready to proceed against me, and that also you at first intended to despatch a strong force against the Bagheri; but after you changed your mind as to despatching the force, and that finally you ordered the Abyssinian Government to despatch a force against the Bagheri.

" Further, they have clearly informed me that the British Government are constantly preparing their forces for fighting against the Dervishes. Also they have informed me that the cause of my fighting with Mijjertein, Ogaden, and Abyssinians, etc., is the British Government. Also they informed me that

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you have given orders and prevented the dhows of the Warsangli from going to Aden and stopped them from trading. Further, they informed me that your honour has openly told the Warsangli that if they will have any trading with me it will be their look out for the result. Moreover, many similar stories were brought to me by the above-named two men ; and if all this is true it is not fair, and you should not do so, as it causes more disturbances j and if you have not done so, please send me an answer, but if you are ignorant of all these tales, please let me know, and I shall certainly find out the composers of all these stories and cut their throats.

" 3. I beg to inform you that I am in peace with the British Government, and I shall never attempt to tell you lies. All that I mentioned to you in my letters is true, but most of the people who talk to you about me are telling lies, and you must know that all the Somalis are talking and dealing against me, and no doubt always they tell you that the Dervishes have done so-and-so. And note for me that this is the only day I have produced to your honour my complaints, and you hear the liars and the disturbers, but you never hear or believe our complaints, and the cause of this is the continual complaints produced to your honour, and imprinted on your mind.

" Further, I beg to inform you that between us there are very few men who wish for peace between us.

" General Cordeaux, if you are a good judge and will deeply see into the claims between us and others, I inform you that the Mijjertein have killed and looted us, and although we were in peace together, they have raised the trouble between them, and their Sultan was the cause of the trouble, and what the Sultan has done against us previously you are aware of, and witness if you are judge.

" Also the Ogaden have done the same to us, and you are aware, and witness if you are judge.

" Also all Somalis are the same. Further, I have to inform you that the Mijjertein are now robbing us day and night, and we are ignorant and do not know the way of robbing ; but, when they have been continually robbing us, then we have risen up against them. However, your honour did not hear about their continual robbing, but have heard only the movements of our forces against them, and a good judge should know everything, and consider each side of the question.

" Although I have been treated as stated above by the Somalis, yet I am considered by them and called a bad man, such as 'old singer,' 'killer,' 'looter,' 'disturber of peace,' 'thief,' and, therefore, you must consider into this **and** see **both sides.**

" My request from you now is for *aman* and peace, and I also request you to put out your hand and make peace between me and the other Somahs;

" Also I request you to settle between me and the Abyssinians and create peace, and warn them not to despatch forces against me nor against the Bagheri and my followers.

" We also request you, General Cordeaux, to be sole judge and settler between the British Government and subjects and all the other Somalis, and create peace between your subjects and all the other Somalis ; and if your honour will comply with this, know that I am willing and will humbly observe the same.

" Further, I have to inform you that Abdulla Shahari and his friend, Mohammed Habarwah, the Italian interpreter, have seceded from me and are no longer my men, and that whatever you require from me your Honour may ask these two men sent with the letter. And if my proposals will be confirmed by you and peace will take place, then the disturber of peace will be dealt with. And the tribes and nations I want to make peace with are:

" (1) Abyssinians.

" (2) Mijjertein.

" (3) Ogaden.

" Finally, I inform you that the men I sent to you are these two men, by name Osman Dervish and Ibrahim Hassan, and I do not want anyone else from my side.

" Abdulla Shahari and Mohammed Habarwah are disturbers of the peace, and all the above-mentioned news was given by them, which are all lies.

" This, and salaams.

" 4. Please note also that the bearers of this letter have another letter addressed to your Honour, which you must also read.

" SEYYID MOHAMMED ABDULLA."

III

SEYYID MOHAMMED TO COMMISSIONER CORDEAUX.

" My object in writing this to you is the following :

" 1. I sent you two men, viz., Osman Dervish, who is the same man I sent first, and you did with him what you have done at Aden, and the other is Ibrahim Hassan. Both are eminent Dervishes of authority and are both wise and faithful. They are delegates, and if you wish to give attention to any of the Dervishes you should hear them and none other of the intriguers.

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" 2. Abdulla Shahari and Mahmoud Habarwa reported to me that you have used trickery and deceit and prepared an army. When everything was ready, you consulted with each other and refrained from sending it, but you induced the Abyssinians to move. They also reported that you intend to foster intrigues, and that you spoiled our relations with others, like the Mijjertein, Ogaden, and Abyssinia, and other people, and have stopped the dhows of the Warsangli at Aden, and the trade as well. Also you told the Warsangli that if the Seyyid was of any benefit let him do so to them. Many other similar reports were reported to us, which do not agree with the sense of friendship and agreement. If you really have worked all these intrigues, I ask you why you have caused this agitation and what are your reasons for doing so ? I conjure you by the name of God to give me an answer to this, and if you are innocent of this charge and treason, for the sake of God say so, and by the will of God I shall cut off the heads of the intriguers.

" 3. I assure you that I am honest and true, and I do not fail in peace and security ; I do not utter lies and falsehoods, but others do so. You should know that people, whether Somalis or others, make false statements against us, and they say that the Dervishes do this and do that, and make a multitude of complaints against us. We, however, have not complained until now, because we know you give attention to what liars and intriguers may say, but heed not what we report, and we do not expect that now you will hear what we say, on account of the hatred you have in your hearts for us and because you are not upright and just between us and the others. You, Cordeaux, if you are really just between us and the others, I report to you that the Mijjertein have ill-treated, killed, and looted us, accusing us of intrigue, and have thus infringed our agreements with them. Their Sultan did to us that which every sensible man knows of. You are a witness to this if you could only be fair. In like manner, the Ogaden have done to us the same as the Mijjertein. You can stand as witness to this if you are only fair. The same I say regarding the Somalis.

" Further, I wish to report to you that the Mijjertein have ruined us by theft and spies. They robbed us by day and night continually and persistently, when theft was unknown to us. At last we arose against them and took revenge. You cannot hear anything about their thefts, but only hear about ours. Yet the wise man should know the state of affairs. They have done evil towards us, the Somali, by insults, envy, intrigue, raiding, theft, and murder. You have to consider our condition, and not only theirs.

" I request peace and reform from you, and ask you to interfere and effect peace between us and the others. The property of the Ogaden is all kept by me, and you can take it all and hand it over to the Ogaden, and hand over to us what they have of our property. So also is the property of the Mijjertein, with which you can deal in the same manner between them and us.

" Also, you are requested to keep away the Abyssinians, and to effect peace between them and us, that they cease to encroach on us.

" You, Cordeaux, be the peacemaker between everybody, and I, by the will of God, will comply and accept. I also request you to show kindness to me and my messengers, and conform with the heartfelt wishes of Osman by communicating with him and showing him kindness.

" Please know also that Abdulla Shahari and his friend Mahmoud are not with us, and you should know this. An interview between us is requested, to bring all these matters to an end, also with representatives from Abyssinia. If all these matters are settled, the party which starts trouble will be the tyrant.

" I wish further to inform you that I have never sent to you anybody except Osman and Ibrahim, and I cannot be satisfied with anybody else. Both Abdulla and his friend Mahmoud bin Habarwa are intriguers, and their statements are false and untrue.

" 4. This is written on the other paper, and you can read it.

" SEYYID MOHAMMED BIN ABDULLA."

Encouraged by his comparative success with the Warsangli, impatient of the Dolbahanta decision to sit on the fence, and urged on by his followers, who were finding it increasingly difficult to replenish their food supplies owing to their lack of success in their forays on the Mijjertein, the Mullah instigated certain of the more reckless sections of the Warsangli to launch a series of raids on the Dolbahanta on a large scale, in the hope that the test of physical force would compel the latter to throw in their lot with him. In these raids the Warsangli were stiffened by a considerable accession of Dervishes. But, with typical astuteness, the Mullah was most careful not to attack in his own name in case he should

precipitate hostilities with us before he was assured of Dolbahanta support; and the Dervishes of the raiding party were, therefore, instructed by their master to suppress their identity by posing as *Buraad* (i.e. roving bands of robbers). In the face of these raiders, Dervish-inspired and Dervish-supported, and Dervish in all but name, the Dolbahanta were characteristically apathetic and helpless. When asked why they took no adequate measures to protect themselves, they invariably replied that the raiders were Dervishes and that, if they killed any of them, they would have to answer for it to the Mullah some day or other.

The raids were repeated, and became increasingly daring and successful. Had they been unsuccessful, the Mullah would have been free to disown the Warsangli and the *Buraad*. But as it was, he seems to have been so far satisfied with the demoralising effect produced on the Dolbahanta that he was prepared to acknowledge his responsibility. Accordingly, he addressed a letter to the Commissioner in which he demanded, under threat of a renewal of hostilities with us, that we should withdraw our outposts from Bohotle and the Ain Valley, and that we should recognise the Warsangli as his "proper Dervishes/' Any punitive action we might take against the Warsangli in consequence of their unprovoked raids on the Dolbahanta he proposed to regard as an act of hostility to himself. The following is a traplation of the letter:

" *To General Cordeaux.*

" This letter has two objects. I have sent you many letters before on the subject of peace, and about our looted property and wives, and also to prevent disturbances on both sides ; but you did not send me an answer nor did you send me my rights or make reforms. I, however, have made reforms and have stopped the disturbances of the *Buraad*, and I have also made peace for travellers. You yourself are aware of this.

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" And now I inform you that the son of Egarreh* and his people are bad men and are breaking the peace between us, and I know this well. For instance, when he sent a party to Bohotle ; also when he ordered them to take their horses as far as Badwein and the Am Valley ; and also when he sent spies to Jidbali, and the chief of them is Yussuf Habarreh, and he was instructed to go as a spy secretly, and not only he but many other spies were sent. And I know all about this.

" And now I inform you that I intended not to send you any more letters, as my previous letters were not replied to, but now I have sent this letter purposely to stop the disturbances between us. For my part, I do not like disturbance and fighting ; so, if you want peace as I do, remove your party from Bohotle and also remove the horses from Badwein and the Ain Valley, and call back your spies from Jidbali and other places. As I have stopped the disturbances of the *Buraad*, you must do the same. And if you do not want peace, but only wish disturbance and fighting, then you need not move the party from Bohotle nor the spies nor the horses.

" Further know that I am honest with all men. But the son of Egarreh and his people are creating disturbances in the country. They never consider the result which will happen afterwards. There was peace before the previous disturbance was raised. You never sent Sepoys nor did I send any, and then we were not looted. You gave my son Osman a mule.

" General Cordeaux, take my advice and do not hear the words of Egarreh*s son. If we start fighting he will not be of any use to you in the fighting, because he is a coward. In the expedition he applied medicine to his sound eyes when he was called for the expedition, and this is due to his fearing from us, and he nearly lost his sight. At the last he went to Mecca and Medina on account of fear. As you know, a brave man would not have shrunk from lighting.

" And now I tell you that he is a grey and old man, and he is doing harm to you. If we start fighting again, many of your men of high rank will be killed, and you will suffer much loss of property and men. But there will be no loss to me of money and property. I tell you that my property is in your hands and the stock I have at present is very poor.

" Further, if we fight again now, I will burn all my huts and use my stock for food, and you would only see horse-men in the saddle ready for fighting ; and the stock I have, such as camels, cows, and sheep, I swear that I would eat \ip

* i.e. Risaldar-Major Musa Farah, I.S.O. (page 310).

in one single hour, and then I would take the property of others for food.

" I do not possess any land nor cultivation nor gardens; and I pray to God the country may be turned upside down, and these words are true. If you also wish this, listen to the words of Egarreh's son. But if, on the other hand, you want peace between us, do not hear the words of the intriguers.

" Further, a party of Ishaak tribes have recently killed 17 men from the Warsangli, and looted some she-camels. Again, the Ishaak tribes looted property from the Warsangli, and a portion of this stock was mine, namely 170 cows. Again, the Ishaak tribes killed from the Warsangli 12 men. This is the news about the Warsangli, who are now proper Dervishes.

" And I and the Warsangli have sworn to each other that they are proper Dervishes and we are with them; and, if you want peace in the country, let me settle between the Ishaak and the Warsangli; and, if you do not want peace, and you hear the words of the son of Egarreh, let it be so.

" Also I inform you that the Dervishes are like white milk (kind hearts), and I inform you that the words of Egarreh's son are lies. His conscience is bad and he does not like the peace. He wants to destroy men and property. But I like your peace, despite what you hear from the words of this man. And now I inform you, and you are aware, that if we now fight again, you will lose more men than you lost before. You must know this. We are men and not women. Allah is our protector and He will give us the victory.

" From one who may be poor and small and *mazlum* (i.e. oppressed), but who relies on God for mercy and victory and assistance.

" SEYYID MOHAMMED ABDULLA."

This epistle was carried to His Majesty's Commissioner by a Dervish named Hirsi Liban; and the Mullah cunningly arranged for it to be opened *en route* in the Dolbahanta country and read to the leading tribesmen, so that all might know of his contempt for our power and of his hostile intentions. The Dervish envoy was disinclined to tarry long in the British camp; and on the 26th August, 1908, pending a decision by His Majesty's Government on the policy to be pursued in the changed circumstances

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in Somaliland, the following reply* was handed to Hirsi Liban to take to his master :

" To Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulla.

" After compliments.

" This is to inform you that I have received your letter sent by the hand of Hirsi Liban.

" First, I wish to inform you that the British Government still desires to maintain the peace between our tribes and the Dervishes.

" Secondly, with regard to the men whom the Government sent to Bohotle and the Ain, you must know that the reason of this is because of troubles caused by the *Buraad* and the Warsangli and not because our mind has changed and turned from peace.

" Thirdly, I wish to inform you, and you are aware, that the Warsangli are British subjects, and they will have to answer to the British Government alone for their acts of hostility. Recently they have raided the British tribes close to Badwein and the Ain. For this reason I cannot call my men back from these places but must send still more men to protect the people from these raids, and to keep the peace.

" I am informed that your messenger was molested by the Jama Siadf, and they will answer for this to the Government. But I wish to remind you that the men who did this are the people to whom you gave presents of rifles and camels when they came to see you. For this reason they speak one way to you, but their speech to the Government is very different.

" This and salaams.

" H. E. S. CORDEAUX."

Before a month had elapsed, the news that filtered through from the *haroun* at Illig revealed that the Mullah was seriously pressed for food and intended to kill and eat all his remaining stock before the beginning of the Ramadan fast at the end of September. It was anticipated that the

* iV.B.—The Mullah always refused to open our letters personally, as he suspected they might contain some powder or other substance which would kill or blind him. An Arabic clerk would, therefore, open all such communications and convey their meaning to the Mullah. How far the contents, when of a disagreeable nature, were accurately conveyed, it would not be difficult to surmise.

t A section of the Dolbahanta.

Mullah would then be forced to quit his headquarters in Italian territory and assume the offensive somewhere in the British Protectorate. An attack in force on the garrisons at Ber, Burao, or Sheikh was even regarded as a possibility and, consequently, owing to the isolated position of Bohotle, the police, who had been sent to reinforce the tribal militia at this outpost, were withdrawn under the pretext of scarcity of water. To reassure the tribes in the Ain Valley, who had been completely demoralised by the increasingly daring raids of the Warsangli and *Buraad*, two mounted infantry companies were despatched to Wadamago whence the head of the valley could be watched and isolated raids promptly frustrated. Arrangements were also made for another blockade of the Warsangli coast with the object of placing more effective restrictions on the importation of firearms and ammunition, and so bringing pressure to bear on the Warsangli and, indirectly, on the Mullah. Further, His Majesty's Government announced that it would be prepared to reinforce the 6th Battalion King's African Rifles with 1,500 native troops drawn from Aden, Nyasaland, the East Africa Protectorate, and Uganda, in order to ensure the safety of Burao and the line of communication with Berbera. At the same time they stipulated that no action should be taken that might entail the despatch of an expedition to extricate any of these troops from Burao or any other post in the interior.

The Mullah's forces were now divided into three parties :

(a) The permanent Dervishes living in the *haroun* near Illig, within the orbit of the Mullah's personality, estimated at 4,000 to 6,000 fighting men with 1,200 rifles and, perhaps, as many as 1,500 ponies.

(b) The southern sections of the Mullah's adherents drawn chiefly from the Ogaden tribe round Galadi and Gerlogubi: strength unknown.

(c) The Warsangli adherents of the Mullah in the Haisimo valley : strength unknown.

The majority of the stock was grazing round the Dervish forts at Halin and Gerrowei, about 150 miles from our advanced post at Eil Dab, and were protected by some hundreds of *Illaloes* (i.e. scouts) covering our line of advance down the Nogal Valley.

As has already been stated, our only trained troops in the interior were the 6th King's African Rifles, 700 strong, who held Hargeisa in the west, and Sheikh, Burao, and Ber on the main caravan route. So long as the Mullah remained inactive, these dispositions were sound enough. The garrisons at each post served as escorts to the local political officers, provided a rallying-place for tribes harassed by Dervish raiding parties, and were capable of dealing with any Dervish force of not more than 400 rifles operating in the vicinity. But, with a Mullah who showed every sign of resuming the offensive, these dispositions did not content the critics. Hargeisa is the western metropolis; Burao the eastern. No habitations in the interior of Somaliland are larger. Yet, neither Hargeisa nor Burao can be described as permanent townships ; nor does the floating population of either place at any time of the year exceed 8,000.

At Burao you find a dry river bed, the Tug Der. On one side, there is a substantial stone-built fort overlooking the wells and round about it are a few mud huts. About 300 yards distant on the other bank of the river bed, there is the native town, the buildings of which are composed of sticks, spread out on poles, plastered together with mud. At Sheikh, named after the white tomb of Sheikh Kuttub which is now over 300 years old, the native village is even smaller than at Burao or Hargeisa; but there was then an excellent fort, with half a dozen Government bungalows and two permanent stone buildings erected by Indian merchants. Ber, which in the



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THE MULLAH'S DEFENCES AT TALE PHOTOGRAPHED FROM THE AIR.

Somali tongue denotes bad gypsum water, comprises but one coffee-shop, where they sell tea, surrounded by a dozen huts—a typical Somali village. It will be realised that the intrinsic value of these four stations was trifling; and yet the strength of our small force of 700 men was dissipated among them.

What if any one of the posts was subjected to a sudden attack by an overwhelming Dervish force and the garrison annihilated? This was a question that some critics anxiously put to themselves; and the only answer they could find was that prestige and the sentiment which attaches to any place on African soil where the British flag has flown, would demand an expedition to recover and reoccupy the post. In other words, millions might be spent on the recovery of what, from a purely material point of view, could only be regarded as a bagatelle. Moreover, garrisons that are so weak that they may be compelled to keep to their walls and watch an enemy harrying the country around them are worthless and more damaging to prestige than no garrison at all. In gauging the merits or demerits of the alternative lines of policy in Somaliland, it is essential to keep these considerations always in view. For, it was this *apparent* weakness of a small and dissipated garrison which, even more than financial considerations, led to our withdrawal from the interior and concentration at the coast. I say *apparent* weakness because, in the light of the experience of later years, it can confidently be affirmed that it was no part of the Mullah's plans to waste his fighting strength on attacking our regular troops in their fortified positions. But, in 1908, few would have assumed the responsibility of basing their policy on any such assumption in view of our experiences elsewhere in Africa.

This brings us to a consideration of the alternative Somali policies which now presented themselves to

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the Home Government. In February, 1906, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Administration, in which Whig Imperialists and Little Englanders sat cheek by jowl, came into power; but it was not until 1908 that their attention was drawn to the Cinderella of the Empire as the outcome of the events which have been described in this chapter. There was a very considerable body of opinion, not only in the Cabinet but also among the rank and file of the Government's supporters, which chafed at the expenditure* involved in holding an apparently worthless country and maintaining an indefinite and costly defensive against the Dervishes; and it was not long before the complete evacuation of Somaliland was mooted. Indeed, it was clear to all that, so far as the British Government was concerned, two solutions, and two solutions only, of the Dervish question did, in fact, exist, if finality was desired: one was a military expedition on such a scale that it would lead to the death or capture of the Mullah, and the other was the complete evacuation of the country.

In view of the cost (some 2½ millions sterling) and the inconclusive results of the fourth campaign, a military expedition was definitely vetoed by His Majesty's Government. In a despatch dated the 30th November, 1908, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Marquess of Crewe, directed the Commissioner on this point in no uncertain terms:—

" His Majesty's Government are not prepared to entertain the question of sending an expedition against the Mullah, and they are anxious that no action should be taken which might entail the despatch of an expedition to extricate any of our troops from Burao or from any other post in the interior."

* The Somaliland grant-in-aid from Imperial funds was £78,469 in 1904-5, £76,000 in 1905-6, £37,000^m 1906—7, £89,000 in 1908-9, £190,500 in 1909-10 (Am Valley occupation), £101,000 in 1910-n (cost of evacuation of interior), and *nil* in 1911-12 (coastal concentration).

In the absence of some compromise, therefore, there only remained the second alternative—complete evacuation. The objections to such a course were many. First, we were faced with our obligations to the friendly Somalis. With all the tribes, save one, we had treaties of protection :—

" The British Government is desirous of maintaining and strengthening relations of peace and friendship with the tribes, and, in compliance with their wish, undertake to extend to them and to the territories under their authority and jurisdiction the gracious favour and protection of Her Majesty the Queen-Empress."

The vast majority of Somalis had learnt by bitter experience to hate and fear the Mullah and to rely on us for protection to an extent which was as embarrassing as it was flattering. They had loyally co-operated with us in attempting to crush a foe who threatened their liberties and our suzerainty with equal relentlessness ; and no one could doubt that complete evacuation might entail the submission of each tribe in turn to the Mullah, or, alternatively, their destruction in detail. For not only were the tribes leaderless and as sheep not having a shepherd, but they also possessed far fewer rifles and ponies than the Dervishes. Also, the exigencies of grazing and water forbid a nomadic people to concentrate for self-defence against a common enemy and compel their dispersion, with their flocks and herds, over large areas. As we have found before and since, imperial responsibilities once assumed have an uncomfortable tendency to cling like the shirt of Nessus. Secondly, the loss of prestige entailed by evacuation was a consideration that could not be lightly ignored.

In Egypt and the Sudan, in the neighbouring East African Protectorate on whose borders live powerful and unruly Somali tribes, at Aden, even in India, and above all, in Abyssinia—where British influence was, and still is, competing for

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predominance with other European powers—our complete evacuation of Somaliland in the face of the Dervish menace could hardly fail to prejudice **our** cause. As was remarked in the House of Commons at the time, a Lord Spiritual is a great man in the East, but a man like the Mullah who was a Lord Temporal as well as a Lord Spiritual is an even greater potentate ; and it would have been idle to pretend that his influence did not project far beyond the confines of the Somali country. Thirdly, to evacuate the Protectorate entirely was to leave the ports of Berbera and Zeyla, with vast possibilities as first-class harbours and on the highway to India, to some other European, and potentially hostile, Power. In addition, there was the question whether, in the absence of a force from outside almost as large and as costly as would be required for an expedition, military disaster might not attend evacuation, having regard to the fact that the armed forces of the Crown on the spot were composed mainly of Somalis, whose wives and children and kinsmen they would, on evacuation, be leaving to their own devices in the face of a voracious and merciless foe.

From many points of view, then, ethical and international, political and financial, there were serious objections to a complete evacuation ; and, as the other alternative, an expedition, had been definitely banned, a search for compromises began. Two were suggested: (*a*) withdrawal from the interior and concentration at the coast, a policy subsequently known as coastal concentration, and (*b*) a temporary military occupation. As coastal concentration was the policy actually adopted, it is unnecessary to discuss here its merits or demerits, as the reader will be able to form his own judgment based on actual results after perusing the following chapter. Suffice it to mention here, in parenthesis, that the possibility **of paying**

the Mullah an annual subsidy, on condition of his good behaviour, was also considered ; and such a course, had it been at all practicable, would undoubtedly have greatly facilitated any retirement to the coast. This scheme* was propounded by the Secretary of State in the following terms :—

" His Majesty's Government have also raised the question whether it would be possible to adopt towards the Mullah the policy which has been followed by the Indian Government in dealing with some of the tribes of the North-western frontier, and to come to some arrangement with him by which he would undertake to refrain from raids on British territory in return for the payment of an annual subsidy.

" In any case, in view of the difficulty of obtaining direct access to the Mullah, negotiations with this object would be difficult and delicate, and the present moment does not appear to be favourable for taking any steps in this direction, but circumstances might at some future and perhaps not distant date admit of our offering the subsidy, and thus perhaps securing a more peaceful position in Somaliland."

Apart from the primary difficulty mentioned by Lord Crewe, there would have been, as the Commissioner pointed out, the further difficulty of enforcing the terms of any compact it might have been possible to make. One thing was certain, and that was that, despite his defeat at Jidbali and despite his four years' exile in Italian Somaliland, the Mullah had never abandoned his ambition of becoming the temporal and spiritual lord of all the

* It originated, I believe, with Mr. John Dillon, who on the 3rd March, 1910, stated in the House of Commons: "I made a suggestion at least ten years ago that this gentleman (*sal.* the Mullah) ought to be offered, say £2,000 *per* year, and then he would keep quiet. I do not really know that he has been doing any harm when let alone. I am perfectly certain that for a modest sum he would become entirely friendly to the British Government. And observe the saving it would be supposing you paid this gentleman, as is the custom of the Government in India to pay along the frontier subsidies to tribes as long as they kept quiet, whereas you have spent £4,000,000 and **many** lives in chasing him, and for what purpose I never could find out."

Somalis; and, this being so, there was no reason why he should respect a subsidy agreement any more than he had respected the Pestalozza agreement.

Give the devil his due, he was aiming at greater prizes than mere cash. He was the head of a considerable militant organisation cemented by the prospect of expansion ; and, had he been induced to honour such an agreement, permanent quiescence and his personal enrichment would assuredly have entailed the disruption of his forces, which were kept together chiefly by the lust for loot. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine Mohammed bin Abdulla Hassan deserted by his warriors and established in smug satisfaction in the lush obscurity of a Somali *tarika* in full enjoyment of a regular income, the envy of rival and more loyal Mullahs—an *otium cum dignitate* disturbed only by periodical treks to Berbera to collect his bagful of rupees from His Majesty's representative. But who can doubt now that the acceptance of a subsidy would never have induced him to mend his ways, and that any payments made by us would have been devoted to the purchase of more arms and ammunition until his strength was such that he could overwhelm the tribes and drive us into the sea ?

The second compromise, a temporary military occupation, was that favoured by the Commissioner. The Secretary of State's offer of reinforcements of 1,500 rifles from the neighbouring Protectorates had been gratefully accepted; and the Commissioner's proposal, briefly stated, was that this force should be retained in the country at Burao and in the Ain Valley, until such time as the Mullah, faced by a bold and unswerving front, should be forced into showing his hand either by attacking us in force or by relapsing into the comparative quiescence which had characterised the four years following the Battle of Jidbali. In favour of this course it wa[^]

represented that it involved no undue military risks, that it offered a reasonable chance of success, and that, if it failed, we should be no worse off than we were before as regards a possible evacuation and far better off in the event of the despatch of an expedition.

If the Mullah were to decide on active hostilities and advance to attack our tribes in the Ain Valley, we should with such a force have an exceptionally favourable opportunity of dealing him an effective blow. If, on the other hand, he remained inactive, it was believed that the depressing effect on his following would be such as to make his position in Italian Somaliland untenable and compel him to shift south into the Bagheri country. Such a move would not only afford considerable relief to the general situation, as in the process of the retirement south the Mullah would be weakened by the desertion of many of his followers from the northern tribes, but it would also leave us free to punish the Warsangli for their misbehaviour.

On the other hand, all were fully alive to the main disadvantage of a military occupation. If, as was probable, the Mullah did not choose to attack in the Ain Valley and thus afford us an excellent opportunity of coming to grips with the Dervishes, the situation might be prolonged indefinitely with no prospect of finality. Great as such a disadvantage undoubtedly was, a military occupation seemed at the moment to be, at any rate, the least of four evils ; and, on the 5th February, 1909, the Secretary of State acquiesced in the adoption of this policy, and the reinforcements from the other African Protectorates were accordingly retained in the country.

But, as had so often happened before in Somaliland, man proposed and transport disposed. The camel proved the determining factor in the military and political situation. Writing of the Nile as the

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supreme factor in the River War, Mr. Winston Churchill said* :—

" Without the river none would have started. Without it none might have continued. Without it none could ever have returned."

No less has the camel reigned supreme in our Somali wars. During the dry seasons, transport camels are easily obtainable, as the tribes are concentrated close to permanent water and the *kharias* are more or less stationary. Consequently, the camels are not required by the tribes and are available for Government transport purposes. On the other hand, during the rainy seasons the tribes require nearly all their transport camels to move their own belongings from place to place in the pursuit of water and pasture. At such times, therefore, few camels are available for Government purposes. With the military occupation of the Ain Valley, the Director of Supply and Transport was faced with the difficulty of obtaining sufficient camels to carry rations and forage, imported at Berbera from India, for thrice as many troops as before on a line of communication which now extended to some 200 miles instead of the ninety miles to Burao. In the dry season sufficient camels were available for this purpose and also to lay in some reserve supplies against the wet seasons, when the supply would be utterly inadequate to meet requirements. But, even so, in the absence of assistance from outside, a transport failure in the wet season was inevitable and would entail our withdrawal from the Ain and our retirement to the coast.

If the Mullah advanced as we retired, we should be unable to protect our tribes either from Burao or Sheikh, and much less from Berbera. The Mullah would defeat and absorb them in detail.

* "The River War," by Winston Spencer Churchill, M.P., 1902; p. 4.

If such a disaster was to be avoided, it was necessary either to purchase camels locally and organise a transport corps, or to introduce one or two trained camel transport corps from India. Either course would prove equally costly; and His Majesty's Government not unnaturally jibbed at this addition to the expenses entailed by a policy which offered so slender a prospect of finality. On the 12th March, 1909, only five weeks after the military occupation had been formally approved, the Secretary of State telegraphed that the cost of transport required to maintain the troops in the Ain Valley was so great that His Majesty's Government must reconsider the whole question of their policy in Somaliland.

Meanwhile, the Mullah had received a severe rebuff from a somewhat unexpected quarter. A certain Dervish, by name Abdulla Shahari, an extremely astute and able man, had been the Mullah's most intimate friend from his youth upward, and when Mohammed as a young man was invested at Mecca by Seyyid Mohammed bin Salih Rashid as the Khalifa of the Salihieh *tarika* in Somaliland, he had firmly believed in his friend's divine mission. He had been one of the Mullah's first adherents, had taken an active part in all the early fighting, and had gradually become one of his master's most trusted advisers.

After some years spent in the *haroun*, he had taken a prominent part in the negotiations which led up to the Pestalozza Agreement, and had subsequently been sent to Aden as the Mullah's accredited representative. For some time previously, however, Abdulla had lost faith in the Mullah's divine mission, as he slowly and reluctantly realised that his master's ambitions were purely mundane, and that he was a sensual profligate, attempting to gain his personal ends by cruelty and terrorism thinly disguised under the cloak of religion. Once settled in Aden, he

decided to extricate himself from the Mullah's clutches, but, before doing so, he made many efforts to get his mother and wife and four children away from the Dervish camp. But all such efforts were in vain, and realising that further parley was useless, he eventually severed his connexion with the Dervish movement once and for all.

It is of interest that, when his letter announcing this decision was received at the *haroun*, his son, a lad of fourteen summers, went to the Mullah and said, "When you get hold of my father, do not kill him, because I would wish to do so myself, for the unbelieving father should be killed by his own son/' Such was the spirit among the true Dervishes. But Abdulla Shahari, robbed of mother and wife and children, had become the Mullah's most bitter enemy; and, with a view to revenging himself upon his former master, he went to Mecca and fiercely denounced his atrocities to the Sheikh. As the result of his representations, the Sheikh despatched a denunciatory letter to the Mullah, reproaching him in no measured terms and pointing out that his conduct was not only at variance with the tenets of the sect, but contrary to the Mohammedan faith :—

"Praise be to God. . . * To my brother and friend the powerful Seyyid Mohammed bin Abdulla.

"After compliments to you and your people, praying for your long life and for your welfare.

"If you want to know about me, I am well, by the grace of God. . . .

"I have always been anxious and enquiring about your doings and welfare. I know that you have not grown weak, and are capable of fighting. I have this news before my eyes—that you and your people have got into bad ways; you are no longer minding the *Sharieh* law. I have proofs that you have ceased to abide by that law in that you loot and enjoy other men's wives; you shed their blood and rob

* The blank spaces in this translation represent quotations from the Q'oran.

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them and their property. You can be called now neither a Moslem nor a Christian; you have ceased to know your proper religion, because you do not go according to it, and do all sorts of bad things. I do not approve of this, because it is not according to the *Sharieh* law. The prophet has laid down. . . .

" I think God will punish you for your misdeeds in this world, only do not forget that He is not blind to all that you do. . . .

" Henceforth I wish to have nothing to do with you and your belongings. I will not write to you, and I do not want you to write to me. Those who walk in the way of God are sure to be protected by Him, and those who do evil are sure likewise to be punished by Him. . . .

" You call yourself 'Seyyid,' but whence you obtained this title is not known. You do not conduct yourself like a Sheikh, or walk in the path shown to you by our prophet Mohammed. . . .

" You had better leave off calling yourself 'Seyyid,' and would do well by keeping to your self-respect and instructing your people in the path of God and religion, and by ceasing to call yourself 'Seyyid,' 'Mahdi,' or any such thing. By assuming these titles, which do not belong to you, you will forget what you know of religion. . . .

" Mohammedans are not those who take their neighbours' blood on their hands, or those who deserve their neighbours' curses. . . .

" Leave off all this and fear God and the judgment day, when children will have to separate from mothers. . . .

" You are at present like a shipwreck, tossing and drifting this way and that way, unable to know or to make for any harbour. I think you are quite old and wise enough, and do not therefore require any instruction.

¹¹ Hearken to all I have said, and it is for you to choose whether you will listen or not; but if you do not listen to me or continue in your present state, it will be with the protest of myself and all the other Mussulmans, who will at once raise their voices and might against you and your people.

¹² It is enough what you have already done, and now leave off your bad habits and ways, or else I will not write or have anything to do with you in the future, and will take care to inform all our Mohammedan brethren of your doings, and you will cease to belong to our *tarika*. . . .

(Signed) " SEYYID MOHAMMED BIN SALIH RASHID."

" Successor to Seyyid Ibrahim Rashid."

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Abdulla Shahari took good care that this damning epistle, which was received in the Mullah's *haroun* in March, 1909, should be published broadcast throughout the country ; and the Mullah's attempts to prevent the purport of the letter from becoming generally known to his following failed. Great was the effect produced on the minds of the Dervishes who have always gone into battle invoking the name of Mohammed Salih. The Mullah's Q'adi, who had great influence with the Dervishes, boldly declared before his master that the Sheikh's condemnation was well merited, and was promptly murdered for his pains. The Sheikh's denunciation and the murder of the much respected Q'adi caused considerable disaffection in the Dervish camp, which culminated in the desertion of the Mullah's brother-in-law and 400 other Dervishes, who took with them a number of ponies and rifles.

Whatever the Mullah's eventual intentions may have been, it is clear that for the moment he proposed to mark time until the break of the rains, before which it was impossible for him to cross the waterless Southern Haud without abandoning the greater part of his property and stock. In his letters he revealed no very genuine desire for a settlement; and the reader can best judge of his attitude from the following effusion which was received in March, 1909 :—

" This letter is sent by the Dervishes to the English Government, and the object of writing this letter is because of the dispute which has taken place between us and the Government.

" First, we inform you that this dispute was caused by Swayne, Cordeaux, and Musa Egarreh.*

" These three persons have spoiled the country altogether. At first the country was quiet, and the people were contented, also there was much stock in the country. After a while Swayne went away from the country, and the orders of the Government passed into the hands of the intriguers mentioned above. The country is spoiled as before. We are looted, our

* Risaldar-Major Musa Farah, I.S.O. (see page 310).

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men are killed and imprisoned, and our dhows were seized ; we are taxed, and our country is taken away from us by force.

" We sent letters to Cordeaux, and we wrote and said: ' You must return our stock, release our women and our dhows, and depart from our country.' We were not listened to, and our request was not granted. This gave rise to all this agitation.

" Secondly, we inform you that we have in our possession the camels belonging to the Ishaak. These I will distribute among the Dervishes unless Government makes a settlement with us, returns our stock, and grants our requests and releases our dhows and leaves our country, and abstains from pressing us. If our request is granted we shall be content and happy and at peace. If not, then we will say it is the will of God, and divide the camels and eat them up. We will send out our men in every direction to safeguard our interests and to secure our protection.

(Signed) " THE SEYYID HASHIMI MOHAMMED BIN ABDULLA
and all the other Dervishes."

" P.S.—If you make peace with us we ask you to return to us the 95 men that were killed at Galadi and the 15 men killed in the Nogal, also 15 rifles, 88 she-camels that were looted from us by the Jama Siad, and the two dhows with their crews and cargoes, and finally to leave our country.

" Our chief grievance and the main cause of this dispute is that the Government has forgotten us*, also the money which was the cause of Deria Araleh's death ; and the other matters which I have written above."

To this letter the Commissioner replied in the following terms :-*

" To *Sheikh Mohammed Abdulla*.

" This is to inform you that I have received your letter, in which you speak of the *fitna* (i.e. disturbance) which has taken place between the tribes of the English Government **and** your people.

" First, I wish to inform you again that the English Government has no desire to quarrel with its neighbours or to interfere in their affairs. But, on the other hand, the English Government expects that its neighbours shall do the same, **and** will not allow any interference with its own affairs

" Secondly, I inform you that, if there be any *fitna*, the cause **of** it is that you have been interfering in the affairs of tribes under the English Government. Formerly the Warsangli were **contented and** obedient. Then you interfered in their

* **There was no** foundation for this grievance.

affairs, and they became disobedient, and you assisted them with men and rifles. You were warned that they are British subjects, and that you should not interfere. But you paid no heed, and now all the troubles and punishments which the Warsangli will have to bear are due to your interference. In the same way you tried to persuade the Ishaak tribes to follow the example of the Warsangli, and to cease from obeying the Government. But they would not listen, and have shown me the letters which you were constantly sending them. In these letters you were abusing the Government in every way, and at the same time you were sending me words of peace. Also you persuaded the Buraad to steal camels from the English tribes, and to take them to you. And all this time your words to me were of peace.

" Thirdly, with regard to your requests, know that the English Government is in no way concerned with the 95 men killed at Galadi. These men were Biamal, and they were killed by the Ogaden, who are not British subjects. This you know well. But, if you really think that the Ogaden are British tribes, then why do you constantly raid them? This is not according to the peace. With regard to the 15 men killed in the Nogal and the 15 rifles, you must know that these men were Warsangli, and they received the reward of their disobedience. If they were your people as you say, why did you send them to attack the English tribes in the Nogal? This is not in accordance with the peace. With regard to the buggalows, or their crew, or their cargo, the Government cannot return what it has not taken.

" Lastly, I wish to tell you this. You have written me many letters saying that you desire to maintain the peace, and I was willing to believe your words. But all the time you were sending men and letters secretly to the tribes, persuading them to leave the Government, and abusing the Government, and all those who obeyed the Government. You now write to me again saying that you desire peace, but now I find it difficult to believe your words after what has happened. Now, therefore, if you really wish for peace, return to me the camels which you took from the Ishaak without cause, and withdraw your men and rifles from the Warsangli, and cease from interfering with them and with other British tribes. If you do this without delay, I shall know that you really desire peace. Otherwise I shall know that your words are not true, but are intended to deceive me.

" This and salaams.

" H. E. S. CORDEAUX,

" Commissioner."

His Majesty's Government, realising the great difficulty of arriving at any solution of the Somali problem which they could regard as in any degree satisfactory, now decided to enlist the co-operation of Lieutenant-General Sir Reginald Wingate, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., R.A., who, as Governor-General of the Sudan, had been confronted with somewhat similar difficulties, in the hope that his experience united with the Commissioner's unique knowledge of the Somali question, might devise some way out of the *impasse*. It was accordingly arranged for General Wingate, accompanied by General Sir Rudolf Baron von Slatin, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., C.B., Inspector-General of the Sudan, to visit Somaliland on a special mission. The Secretary of State for the Colonies hastened to explain to Captain Cordeaux that this action implied "no mistrust of his judgment and ability. After the testimony which I have borne, both in my private telegrams and through the Under Secretary of State in the House of Commons, to your admirable conduct of this difficult matter, such a statement might have appeared superfluous, but recognising, as I fully do, what an anxious and ungrateful task you have had to perform for several months, I am more than usually desirous that you should have no ground for thinking that I do not properly appreciate the services which you have so loyally and ably rendered/"

In his instructions to Sir Reginald Wingate the Secretary of State, after summarising the position, declared that an organised campaign was out of the question, and that the indefinite continuance of the military occupation with the large expenditure involved was impossible to justify. There remained the policy of complete evacuation or, as an alternative, withdrawal to certain positions on the coast. "Evacuation or such a withdrawal would in themselves be satisfactory to His Majesty's Government

if, after consideration of the pros and cons, you could recommend one or other of these lines of action." Further, there was the suggestion that an attempt should be made to ensure the good behaviour of the Mullah by the grant of an annual subsidy, a suggestion that might be considered either as combined with, or apart from, the policies of evacuation or withdrawal to the coast.

Towards the end of April, 1909, the Wingate Mission arrived in the Protectorate, and on the 30th April, an Arabic letter was despatched to the Mullah in the following terms :—

"From General Sir Reginald Wingate, Governor-General of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Sirdar of the Army, and General Sir Rudolf Baron von Slatm, Inspector-General of the Sudan (generally known by the name of Slatin Pasha) to the Fakir Sayid Abdulla bin Mahommed Hassam. May God keep him.

"After salutations, we desire to inform you that we have arrived at Berbera, by command of the Government of Great Britain, with the object of studying the condition of the country and of the natives and Arabs under her protection, as well as that of the neighbouring tribes.

"We have made full inquiries concerning the state of affairs, and have obtained all available information about the various localities; we have also read all your letters to the representative of the Government, Captain Cordeaux. We have in this manner been enabled to appreciate the real situation.

"Granted, as you state in your letters, that you wish to secure justice and establish peace in the land, thereby contributing towards its improvement, and giving rest and tranquillity to its inhabitants, so much, and even perhaps more, earnestly does the Government desire this end, and would spare no effort to attain it.

"With regard to the complaints which you make in your letters relating to the raids of Government tribesmen on your people, we desire to inform you that we have made all inquiries on this subject, and it appears to us that your people were the aggressors in the first place, and it was they who began these disturbances which have resulted in the outbreak of hostilities between your Arabs and our Arabs, and, as a consequence, between your people and our troops.

"Without doubt you are aware that the outbreak of *fitna*

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(criminal intrigues or conspiracies) is far more noxious and alarming, yea, even more criminal, than murder, and to kill peaceable people is not only against the commands of God the Almighty, but tends to produce most distressing results on the country, retarding its progress and prosperity, and bringing it to ruin and desolation. It is this, and not lack of power, which is the chief reason which prevents the Government from sending a great army to this country.

" Undoubtedly, in the years that are past, you have, or should have, learnt thoroughly well that the Government is averse to all trouble and agitation, and, moreover, you must be well aware that the Government has taken nothing whatsoever of the looted property to which you refer in your letters. No proof is necessary in support of this statement ; the fact that the Government takes no taxes or duties on the herds actually owned by our Arabs is sufficient, as it is illogical to think that Government would renounce its legal rights while receiving unlawfully a share of property looted from the worshippers of God, the Almighty.

" It is beyond all doubt, and should be well known to you, that the highest aim of the Government, and the end which it earnestly strives to attain, is to bring, in every possible way, prosperity, peace and tranquillity to the creatures of the Almighty.

" It is to obtain these results that the Government endeavours to open roads and facilitate communications, these being among the chief factors in benefiting the people at large. If your aims are similar, and you wish to give effect to them, their realisation rests entirely in your own hands. You may rest assured that if you try and prevent your Arabs and followers from raiding the Arabs living under the protection of the Government, the Government will also restrain its Arabs from doing the same, and will also open roads and improve communications.

" We have read in your letters a complaint in which you state that a steamer captured a boat belonging to you. This boat was not captured by a British steamer, and, if it was actually taken by some other Government, the motive for so doing was no doubt to intercept any firearms, ammunition, or other equipment destined for the use of such of your people as may be inclined to loot, and who are at enmity with the other Arabs.

" In any case, even if anything has occurred which you consider to be wrong, we assure you that it could never be attributed to the representative of the Government, Captain Cordeaux, who conforms in all his dealings and decisions with what is right and strictly just, and whose whole

endeavours are for the improvement of the country and the prosperity of its inhabitants. Should others, who have their own ambitions, tell you the contrary, you should not believe it, as it is absolutely untrue.

" We intend to remain here about 25 days, and should you be willing to send envoys, chosen from your wise and faithful men, to meet us here and consult with us on all questions, giving us the reasons for the complaints you make in your letters to the representative of the Government, Captain Cordeaux, we do hereby give them the *aman* (free conduct) of God and His Prophet, the *aman* of Great Britain, and our own *aman*, and we promise that, after meeting them and hearing from them your intentions, and explaining to them our own aims and ideas, we will send them back to you in perfect safety, and we trust, by the will of God, that on their return they will report to you how thankful they are for the good treatment which they receive here.

" You will then be perfectly free to choose whatever course you like to follow.

" Your envoys should know the Arabic language, as that is the language we speak ourselves, and we wish to talk with them without the necessity of using interpreters."

Fruitless negotiations between the Wingate Mission and the Mullah then ensued. In June, an aged envoy from the *haroun* arrived in the British camp, bearing proclamations to various religious notables in Somaliland and letters to the General. He represented himself as a firm believer in the divine nature of the Mullah's mission, which he stated was to purge the country of Christians, whose presence in Somaliland was incompatible with the Moslem religion, and to punish any Mohammedans who aided the infidel. He feigned complete ignorance of political matters and was clearly unacquainted with the true tenets of the Moslem religion. On such a basis discussion was impossible. To illustrate the true attitude of the Mullah towards the negotiators, it is, perhaps, only necessary to mention that the bearer of General Wingate's letters was murdered by the Mullah after the usual preliminary mutilations had been effected. In due course, General Wingate submitted his report to

His Majesty's Government; but its recommendation has never been published.

On the 12th November, 1909, the fateful telegram conveying the decision of His Majesty's Ministers to withdraw from the interior of Somaliland and to concentrate at the coast was despatched to the Commissioner. Briefly stated, the broad lines of this policy were to arm and organise the tribes to enable them to protect themselves from the Dervishes; to withdraw entirely from the interior and abandon all direct control, leaving the administration of the internal affairs of the tribes in the hands of their chiefs; and to concentrate on the coast and limit active administration to the three coast towns. Simultaneously, Captain Cordeaux was promoted to the Governorship of Uganda. He had been in turn Assistant Resident, Vice-Consul, Sub-Commissioner and Consul, Deputy-Commissioner, and finally Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief in Somaliland, and he may be said to have forgotten more about the country and its inhabitants than anyone else then interested in the situation had ever learnt.

General Sir William Manning, K.C.M.G., C.B., succeeded him as Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief to carry into effect the Government's new Somaliland policy. Towards the close of January, 1910, he arrived in the Protectorate and immediately proceeded into the interior to take stock of the situation. His conclusions may be summarised as follows. The Mullah was considerably weaker than he had been at the time of the third and fourth campaigns. The Dervish force was split into three parties: the regular Dervishes concentrated in the *haroun* in Italian Somaliland, the Warsangli in the north-east, and the Bagheri in the south. There were also the other Ogaden on the Abyssinian border whose precise relations with the Mullah it was difficult to define. This decentralisation was decidedly in our favour as compared

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with the old order of concentration in the *haroun*. As regards the main force of regular Dervishes, General Manning reported that the Darod tribes, most of whom had served with, and subsequently deserted, the Mullah, professed themselves ready to raid the Mullah's livestock whenever occasion presented itself.

The overpowering dread of the Dervishes was disappearing, and General Manning felt sure that, if we supported with arms and ammunition the Darod ex-Dervishes, they would collect and form a number of combinations capable of holding the main body of Dervishes and preventing them from making any serious raids. The Ishaak tribes must be responsible for the Warsangli and Bagheri Dervishes. The latter General Manning regarded merely as tribal raiding parties organised mainly for loot, formidable certainly and led by Dervish leaders, but by no means as formidable as such raiding parties had been in the days gone by when they started from the *haroun*, were consequently fanatical in origin, and carried with them the prestige of the Mullah's name. With more arms, more plentiful ammunition, and more horses, the Ishaak tribes would be in a position not only to fend off any Warsangli or Bagheri raids, but themselves to attack with successful results.

The Ishaak tribes seemed to the General to be less virile than in 1901-04, and to have lost any powers of tribal cohesion they ever possessed owing to their reliance on our ability to protect them. They openly avowed that they looked to Government to lead them and that they had no known leader amongst themselves. For this, the General prescribed a little rough usage from the Dervishes which he surmised would soon evoke their dormant virility and produce the necessary leader. The situation in the Protectorate did not seem to the General to give any cause for delay in carrying out the policy of evacuation; and, as the rains might be expected at the

end of March or beginning of April, and it was desirable that the withdrawal should be completed before the rains fell, he recommended that the operation should begin on the 15th March.

This recommendation was approved, and by the 26th March the Commissioner was able to telegraph that the civil staff and troops had been withdrawn from the interior without any untoward incident. Indeed, our withdrawal seems to have been received by the Somalis generally in the true spirit of Oriental fatalism. The 6th Battalion, King's African Rifles, were marched down to Berbera, where they were disarmed and disbanded. The discipline of the men was excellent: not a case of desertion or misconduct occurred. As the men of the battalion were well aware of our intention to evacuate and of the consequent uncertainty of the future which lay before them individually and tribally, their behaviour on this occasion, considering the Somali's excitable nature, may be regarded as an eloquent testimony to their discipline of which their officers might well be proud.

As for the tribes, arms and ammunition and ponies and mules were issued to them, and they proceeded to make their own defence arrangements. They were expressly informed that they should not look to us in the future either for military assistance or to settle their inter-tribal disputes. We should in no way interfere or attempt to control their actions in the interior and their disputes must be settled among themselves in accordance with Somali custom. In compliance with the last instruction, they indulged in a free fight in Burao, armed with the rifles that had been issued to them, as soon as the last fort had been destroyed and before the retiring troops were out of ear-shot.

Thus, was the difficult operation of withdrawal effected and the area of our responsibilities in Somaliland contracted. It was foreseen that a

period of some disorder would follow our withdrawal, but it was believed by some—the wish presumably being father to the thought—that the tribes would eventually settle down to the new order of things, and that men of intelligence and strong character would come forward and assume control of each tribe, realising that their safety and future prosperity was entirely dependent upon unity and organisation.

In the parched desert that stretches from the foot-hills to the sea, the burning sand, bestrewn with the camel dung of a thousand caravans and the bones of many a luckless wayfarer, is for ever appealing to a pitiless sky for moisture. Usually its thirst must find contentment, if it can, with a gentle shower in April. But the last march of the 6th King's African Rifles was attended by a thunder-storm of such violence that its like has never been known, before or since, in the annals of Somaliland. It was a savage and a mocking trick of Nature thus to endanger* the lives of man and beast as, whipped by the blinding rain, they struggled through the roaring torrents that swirled and eddied through the thirsty river-beds. To the small band of British officers, it was but another example of the well-worn saw that it is the unexpected that always happens in Africa ; but to their Somali comrades-in-arms it was a portent representing the tears of Allah as he gazed down upon the melancholy scene.

* The French Roman Catholic missionaries, evacuating simultaneously by Government orders their mission station in the interior, suffered considerable loss from this cause, for which they were duly compensated.

CHAPTER V r i

DUL MADOBA

WITH the new *regime*, indescribable disorder immediately ensued, exceeding all anticipations ; and the tribes, abandoning themselves to an orgy of internecine warfare, used against each other the arms and ammunition which had been doled out to them for defence against the common foe. The cause was not so much the desire of any one tribe for supreme control as the Somali's besetting sin of acquisitiveness which impels him to raid his neighbours' flocks and herds if he can. It was also a golden opportunity to pay off old scores and to revive ancient feuds. This fratricidal strife was not confined to razzias by one tribe upon another, but extended to civil war between rival combinations of the same tribe.

The various sections of the Habr Toljaala were continually at each other's throats. Similarly, the Aidegalla split into two main sections and carried on a desultory warfare with one another. The eastern Habr Yunis came into frequent collision with the western sections of the tribe ; and the tribe as a whole attempted to recuperate its strength by a large and successful raid upon the Ogaden, which culminated in an enquiry by a British officer in Abyssinian territory, as the result of which the Habr Yunis were called upon to return a balance of no less than 1,330 camels to the Ogaden. As might be expected, the coastal Habr Awal were an easy prey to the more virile tribes of the interior

until, emboldened by adversity, they retaliated by waylaying and looting traders' caravans as they passed to and from the coast.

In this holocaust, in which it is estimated that not less than one-third of the male population of Somaliland perished, there was no tribe that did not suffer either from internal schisms or from attacks by their neighbours. But the most pitiful lot of all fell to certain sections of the Dolbahanta. Ousted from their ancestral grazing grounds by the Mullah's advance and bereft of all their stock, the remnants wandered like veritable Ishmaelites in the Ishaak country, deprived of asylum and almost of access to the coast, owing to the inveterate hatred which the Ishaak harbour for the Darod.

With this situation the local Government, penned within the defences of Berbera, were powerless to deal. It had been hoped that by assisting the peaceable tribes and by withholding subsidies and ammunition from the recalcitrant, by cutting off their food supplies from Berbera and seizing their caravans on arrival at the coast, the less amenable tribesmen could be brought into line. But this hope proved entirely delusive. Where all were recalcitrant and none were peaceable, a policy of rewards for the good and punishments for the bad could not but prove ineffective. Moreover, the tribes found no difficulty in obtaining from Jibouti through Abyssinia cheap French rifles and an abundance of ammunition wherewith to carry on their insensate struggle; and, consequently, the free issue of arms did not prove the inducement to good behaviour it might otherwise have been. The Government's failure to govern was quickly followed by the usual *sequelcz*, loss of prestige and loss of confidence. So much so that its orders were disregarded even by its own Somali *employes*, who not unnaturally put the personal safety of their family and property in the interior before the honest

performance of their duty at Berbera. For example, it was difficult to ensure that a policeman would arrest a guilty man, when the slaughter of his family and the looting of his stock by the tribe of the accused were likely to follow the arrest with startling rapidity. Seldom has a policeman's lot been a more unhappy one. Under such conditions, trade and revenue languished; and the British Indians, Arabs, Jews, Banyas and others who represented the trading community of Berbera, seeing their wares rotting and unsaleable in the godowns, were loud in their protests against an ever-growing anarchy unparalleled on British soil.

At the time of the evacuation, the Mullah was comparatively weak in men, stock, and ammunition; and his prestige had suffered severely as the result of Mohammed Salih's denunciation from Mecca. He was not, however, so weak as was represented in the House of Commons on the 29th June, 1910, when the Government stated that there was no doubt his power was completely broken, at any rate for the time being. "Completely broken," not for the first nor the last time in his chequered career, he moved in the following month from Illig to Gerrowei on the Protectorate frontier, and established a small outpost in the Nogal Valley. Panic ensued among the tribes in the vicinity: for a general advance seemed imminent. But it was not until November, 1911, that a further move was made and a successful attack launched against the Dolbahanta who held the old Government outpost at Bohotle. In the following January, the Dolbahanta strongly repulsed a Dervish force which attacked them at Eil Dab. But in February retribution followed, and the Dolbahanta sections concerned suffered a disastrous defeat in which they lost all their stock and were reduced to a state of starvation.

In the following month, Bohotle was occupied as a Dervish post. Thus were the Mullah's forces

re-established in British territory. Their success had been gained by striking sudden and unexpected blows when the Dolbahanta were scattered, and had been attended by the artistic mutilation of the vanquished and many unspeakable atrocities. Such was the general demoralisation, bred of disunion and internal dissension, that the tribes soon gave way to the most pitiful panic and trekked northwards and westwards, leaving the rich pastures of the Nogal Valley to the Dervishes. The Mullah's old-time threats of attacking the coast towns were repeated ; and, indeed, no tribe on the route to Berbera would have made any attempt to repel his advance, so firmly had the dread of the Dervish name been implanted in the breasts of the friendlies. In a memorandum dated the 30th April, 1912, Mr. H. A. Byatt, C.M.G.*, who had succeeded Sir William Manning as Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief in 1911, summed up the position in the following words :—

" Anarchy is steadily spreading over the country, with a prospect under the present system of becoming permanent.

* * * * *

" The present situation is profoundly unsatisfactory, and the future holds out a prospect of development for the worse rather than for the better. In view of this prospect, it is desirable, and even necessary, to reconsider the question of the attitude to be adopted henceforward towards the affairs of Somaliland. The policy of non-intervention and inactivity has been given full operation for two years, and has disappointed hopes and expectations. Tribal organisation—the first line of defence—has finally and completely given way, and there has been a steady and serious diminution of the authority and prestige of the Government among the tribes who are its nearest neighbours."

After considering the possibilities of an expedition, complete evacuation, the re-establishment of small military posts on the main roads, or a continuance of the coastal concentration policy, Mr. Byatt

* Now Sir H. A. Byatt, K.C.M.G., Governor of the Tanganyika Territory.



CORFIELD AND SOME OF HIS CONSTABULARY.

suggested the raising of a small mobile striking force, a Somafli Camel Constabulary not less than 70 strong, which could be used to maintain order within a radius of 50 miles of Berbera, and to keep the main roads clear. In favour of this expedient, which was admittedly experimental, it was urged that the existence of such a force would go far to discourage a Dervish descent upon the coast, and that the patrolling of the hinterland behind Berbera would promote peace among the coastal tribes. In June, the Home Government approved this proposal. A Somali constabulary force of 150 camelry was to be raised; and the command was offered to, and accepted by, Mr. Richard Corfield, an officer then serving in Nigeria, but with some years' experience behind him as a Political Officer among the Somalis.

While this decision was being taken, the Mullah's career in the Ain Valley had received a check. He had completely failed to persuade or coerce any of the Ogaden sections to his banner; and the arrival of Indian reinforcements at Berbera had given rise to fears of an expedition which he was in no position to withstand. To gain time, therefore, he indited the following characteristically humorous letter to the British community in Berbera :—

" Praise be to God who created, who leads and misleads who gives and withholds, who raises up and casts down, who gives life and death. Prayers and salutations to our Prophet Mohammed.

" Thereafter. This is an answer to the words sent by the British, and I say, Oh, British community, I inform you that your letter which you sent to me is altogether hostile to us, and it does not accord with our condition.

" And though your letter was as I say, I overlooked it, and I write you an answer which is better than your letter. And I do this solely in the desire for settlement and peace, otherwise I would have done even as you did.

" And now I inform you that I am seeking for settlement and peace. If you grant this request, I will not move about

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after **that at all**. **Bear** this in your mind. And I ask you when can there be the necessary meeting on this subject ? Also I inform you that our men who attacked were ordered to remain in quarantine in a far place. The distance between us and them is three marches. We do not go to them and they do not come to us.

" But we heard that they have attacked our enemies. This was before the arrival of your letter to us, and now I inform you that I will stop them in the future if they return *to me*.

" From the slave of God and the poor man,

" MOHAMMED BIN ABDULLA."

Though far from hopeful of any ultimate advantage to be gained by any agreement with the Mullah, the Commissioner replied with the following overtures for an armistice :—

Letter from the Commissioner at Berber a to Mohammed bin Abdulla Hassan, the Dervish.

" Salaams. I have received your letter from the hand of your messenger, and I am sending the same man back to you with this my answer.

" And first I tell you that your letter is wiser and better in tone than the letters which you sent me before, and therefore I write this reply.

" Again, you say that you desire peace, and again I inform you that the British Government is willing to talk of peace if your words are not words of deceit.

" You know very well that on former occasions you have spoken words of peace and afterwards you and your people made war without any cause, and much evil was done in the war.

" Now, therefore, how can I know that your words are true to-day ? I can know this in one way only, and the way is this:

" If for six months after you receive this letter you cease altogether from war, and stop your people from raiding British subjects, and cease from calling British subjects to join you, then I will believe your words. And at the end of six months you can send me another messenger, and I will give him another letter in which I will write the terms of the settlement which the British Government will offer to you, and then you can decide whether the terms are acceptable to you or otherwise. You should think carefully about this matter.

" You say **that** your people have made **war** without your orders, **and you say that** you will stop them. **That** is wise, **because you are responsible if your people break the peace.**

" You know that formerly, when your people broke the peace and the Government made a complaint to you, you replied that you did not consent to the war but that the peace-breakers were disobedient to you. But I know that you can rule your people if you wish, and I cannot accept that excuse another time. Therefore, if your people raid British subjects I shall think it is because you ordered them to make war, and you will be responsible for the acts of your people.

" Again I tell you that if you constantly make war then I will strengthen my people against you, and give them the powerful help of the Government against you. But if you cease entirely from attacking British subjects, and cease also from calling my people to become your followers, then I will not allow my people to molest you and I will do as I have said regarding peace and settlement.

" May God give you wisdom to listen to these words.

(Signed) " H. A. BYATT."

"June 7th, 1912."

Before this letter could have been received, the Mullah had withdrawn all his forces from Bohotle and the Ain Valley and concentrated them within his *haroun* near Qerrowei; and it was a matter for speculation whether this withdrawal indicated preparations for another advance or a genuine desire for a temporary peace in conformity with the tone of his last letter.

But the situation among the friendlies went from bad to worse. Acts of lawlessness became more and more common: preconcerted razzias by one tribe upon another, isolated murders and petty thieving on the caravan routes, outrages committed mainly by destitute refugees, were of daily occurrence. Indeed, to such a pass of destitution was the country reduced that women roasted and ate their own babies. Even the milch-camels of the Berbera towns-people were raided by a section of the Habr Awal within seven miles of the town almost under the eyes of the Government, and, simultaneously, camels were looted by a section of the Habr Yunis within four miles of Bulhar. Little improvement could be anticipated until the Camel Constabulary were ready to take **the** field.

Preparations for the formation and equipment of the force proceeded throughout the summer and autumn of 1912, and were regarded with favour by the more responsible Somalis who were sick at heart at the prevailing state of lawlessness.

The full quota of 150 men were soon recruited, and instruction in drill and musketry proceeded in Berbera with the utmost possible speed; and it was only the difficulty of obtaining suitable riding camels from Arabia and camel saddlery from India which prevented the Constabulary from taking the field in the early autumn. But, by the 4th December, 1912, all preparations had been completed and the Constabulary moved out of Berbera and formed a temporary camp at Mandera forty-two miles to the south-west, where, in the years prior to 1910, a fibre factory had flourished. The force was divided into two companies, each consisting of four sections of 18 men, this small unit being considered better adapted for rapid movement in the bush than a section of greater numerical strength. The remaining men had been formed into a Maxim gun team, which had been trained under Mr. Gibb's expert supervision. In view of subsequent events, it should be noted that the Constabulary were in no sense a military force. No regular officer took any part in their organisation or training. Their officers were civil, not military, officers; and they were not under the control of any military authority.

The general instructions issued by the Commissioner to the Commandant in regard to the status of the Constabulary and the nature of their duties are printed as Appendix ("D"), but they may here be summarised as follows:—

(a) The creation of the Constabulary did not in any way imply a reversal of the accepted policy of coastal concentration; and there was no intention of reviving the *status quo ante* and reoccupying **the** former posts in **the** interior.

(b) The main objects for which the corps had been raised were to keep open the trade routes for caravans visiting the coast and to put an end to the constant internal warfare which rendered the tribes incapable of resisting Dervish aggression.

(c) The Constabulary were not to assume a political character; and the Government would not accept responsibility for disentangling the enormous existing accumulations of claims and counter-claims in respect of thefts, loots, and blood-money, but would start with a clean slate, punishing only in respect of any looting and fighting which might occur in the future. At the same time, this amnesty could not be complete; and the restitution of looted property would be effected in cases where the aggression of one tribe had led to the ruin and starvation of another, especially when serious feuds remained on account of them. Such cases could not be specified at once, but would be announced from time to time as expediency required.

(d) There was not any immediate prospect of the Commandant encountering Dervish raiders, but, should he receive news of the near presence of any considerable force, he should carefully avoid being attacked or surrounded, and should at once retire on the coast. He was not to form a temporary base more than fifty miles, i.e. one day's march, from the coast, and he was to obtain the Commissioner's assent before moving into a fresh grazing camp.

The Habr Yunis tribe had proved, throughout the two years of coastal concentration, the greatest factor in promoting unrest; and, while the Camel Constabulary was being recruited and organised, their lawlessness had exceeded all bounds, **and** they had pillaged far and wide. Either they **did** not credit the announcement that Government **intended to** enforce order or, alternatively, they **had**

decided to collect as much loot as possible before they were subjected to restraint, in the hope that the Government would find it impossible to settle all the accumulated tribal claims. Mandera had been the centre from which two sections of the tribe, united under the name of " Sulagudab," had carried out their most serious acts of pillage, looting caravans from the south and west and raiding the Habr Awal between them and the coast; and it was for this reason that Mandera was selected by the Government as the first camp for the Camel Constabulary.

On his arrival at Mandera, the Commandant was assured by the tribesmen that all they desired was peace—an assurance which was followed three days later by raids on no less than 43 villages of the Habr Awal, in which all the male children were slaughtered. In the face of this deliberate challenge, Mandera was occupied by a small detachment of the 119th Infantry, Indian Army, from Berbera; and the Constabulary moved westwards with a party from the looted tribe in pursuit of the Sulagudab, whom they encountered north of Robleh. In the subsequent fighting, in which the Constabulary suffered no casualty, 38 of the Sulagudab paid the extreme penalty for their greed and defiance; and 1,282 camels, 11,300 sheep, 170 cows, 17 donkeys, 6 horses, and 16 rifles were captured from the offenders and restored to their victims. The punishment of the Sulagudab had been very heavy, and the effect produced among the other tribes was as immediate as it was salutary. Not only did inter-tribal fighting and caravan looting cease, but the tribes began of their own accord to settle differences and to return looted stock to their rightful owners.

In January, 1913, the Camel Constabulary moved across from Mandera to Burao to effect settlements between the eastern tribes. Mr. Corfield's success

in this work exceeded the most sanguine expectations; and even the hitherto intractable Habr Yunis vied with each other in rapid compliance with his orders. By mid-March, all serious matters of dispute had been dealt with in this district, and in one instance only had there been any reluctance to carry out the Commandant's instructions. One section of the Habr Toljaala failed to comply with an order to pay over stock within a fixed time, and Mr. Corfield, with the Commissioner's approval, made a rapid descent upon them and drove off more than the amount of stock required to meet their liabilities and to pay the additional fine to Government. Even in this instance no show of resistance was offered to the Constabulary. On the 20th March, Mr. Corfield, leaving the main force at Burao, proceeded with a detachment of 50 men to Hargeisa and, with equal success, dealt with the internal schisms of the Aidegalla and Habr Awal, and also with outstanding questions as between the two tribes. By May he had returned to Burao, where the Constabulary were then reunited.

From July to December, 1912, the Dervishes had remained concentrated in the Gerrowei district; and the Ain Valley was left deserted not only by the Mullah's forces, but also by the lawful occupants, most of whom were afraid to return to this danger zone. Amir, the Mullah's uncle and emissary in the Ogaden country, spent this period of quiescence in obtaining supplies of food, clothing, and ammunition from Abyssinian sources. No reply to the Commissioner's suggestion for an armistice had been received, and there was no doubt that the Mullah was temporising to see whether the formation of the Camel Constabulary was a prelude to a Government expedition, as was generally rumoured. In December, however, he established a small party of 150 Dervishes at Ainabo, with instructions to win over the Dolbahanta to his cause. The various

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sections of the tribe were offered the return of all stock captured during the past three years if they would but join him ; and a reward of 100 camels would be made to any individual rifleman or horseman deserting to the *haroun*.

The Mullah pointed out to the Dolbahanta that they had been severely punished for their allegiance to an infidel Government which afforded them no real protection ; and they were advised to throw in their lot with their own kith and kin. If they declined these terms, they must step aside entirely and afford the Dervishes a free passage through the valley. One month he allowed for deliberation and upon their decision depended their future safety or destruction. A dangerous situation had thus arisen. For, if the Dolbahanta joined the Mullah, they would go over with Government arms and ammunition which would be a most valuable acquisition to the Dervishes and would assuredly be used against the other tribes in turn. The terms were tempting, but, in the light of history, the tribe was loath to trust the Mullah. On the other hand, no encouragement from Government would induce them to attack the small force of Dervishes at Ainabo, who were said to be making constant and minute enquiries about our dispositions. As subsequent events proved, the Mullah's threats and cajolery were but part of his game of bluff and nothing came of them. But the question of the propriety of using the Camel Constabulary to drive the small force of Dervishes out of Ainabo naturally arose, and the Secretary of State (Mr., afterwards Viscount, Harcourt) declined to entertain any such proposition. On the 24th January, 1913, he wrote :—

" Such an arrangement would be contrary to the policy of His Majesty's Government in withdrawing from active participation in affairs in the interior of the Protectorate and confining the scope of the administration to the coast towns

and the friendly tribes in the neighbourhood of the coast. It would also be foreign to the principles laid down as to the duties of the Camel Corps, which were intended to be confined to the maintenance of order by coercion within a radius of fifty miles or so of Berbera and to keeping the main roads clear.¹

At the same time, the Secretary of State had no desire to confine the legitimate activities of the Corps within too close a radius, and the Commissioner, using the discretionary power which had been accorded to him, confined Constabulary operations to the immediate vicinity of Burao, in the Nogal direction, with Ber as the extreme limit for occasional patrols.

On the 3rd January, 1913, about the same time that news of the establishment of the small Dervish post at Ainabo was received, a letter from the Mullah was delivered to the Commissioner, pacific enough in tone, though not couched in the honorific terms usually employed in Arabic letters. It may be translated as follows :—

" To the British Consul.

" I state that I have sent many letters to you asking for peace and settlement. You do not listen to my words, and you do not accept the offer of a settlement from me. And every time I sent you a letter you returned me a bad answer and unsuitable words. Every unjust speech you sent me has been communicated to the Powers by me that they may be informed of your oppression.

" This is one thing, and another thing is that I inform you that I am disposed to make peace and settlement, and therefore I have returned to you the cows which the Dervishes have taken from your subjects.

" I also inform you that most of the Dervishes have got beyond my control, and frequently raid the people without my orders, and now I am striving against them, and have taken their arms from them and their horses. I have determined to return to the owners all of what has been taken from them, and therefore I have returned the cows mentioned above.

" And also I inform you, as to those who are raiding you, that I have sent to them men of my friends and relations to

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take them and kill them, and to return to you the property if they have taken any from you.

" Be this known to you, and note also that I am fighting against the Dervishes, who have gone beyond my control. This and salaams.

" The writer of this letter is Seyyid Mohammed bin Abdulla Hassan, the Dervish."

The following reply was returned :—

" *From the Commissioner to Mohammed bin Abdulla, the Dervish.*

" *nth January, 1913.*

" Salaams. I have received your letter, and I send this answer by the hand of your messenger. When you say that I sent an unjust answer to your former letter, you are mistaken. I told you before that I am ready to listen to your words of peace, but first I require a proof that your words are true. And that is not unjust. Also I told you that you are responsible for your people if they do wrong, and that is not unjust.

" Now I hear that you have returned a part of the stock which your people looted, and I say that this is well. Therefore, if you sincerely desire settlement, return all the stock to my people, and call back your armed men from among my people and sit in your place in quietness.

" And if you wish to make any arrangements, it is of no use to speak to the Somali tribes. The messenger you sent me is not wise. You should send some wise men of your own relations to speak with me direct, because I am the ruler, and I make arrangements for the people, and I make peace in the country. But it is not good to send one message to me and also to send another message to my people, because in that way there will be confusion and mischief. If the Dervishes do not trouble my people, then my troops will not trouble the Dervishes.

" I hear you have sent a second letter to me, but it has not yet reached me. This and salaams.

(Signed) " H. A. BYATT,

" His Majesty's Commissioner."

Later in the month the Warsangli brought to Berbera a letter written by the Mullah to the Gadwein, which they had captured from the latter during a raid in the Gadwein country. It is interesting to compare the delightfully rococo style of this

epistle with the studied restraint of the letters addressed to the Government:—

" Thanks be to God, prayers and salutations to the Prophet.

" This message is being sent by the poor man of God, Mohammed bin Abdulla, to the tribe Rer Hamood bin Osman, all, especially to Haroun bin Ahmed, Yussuf bm Dena, Mohammed bin Ahmed, Mahmoud bin Farah, Mohammed bin Mahmoud, Ismail bin Guleid, Abdi bm Jama, Salih bin Ali and his brother Farah, Arraleh bm Warsama, Fod bin Ahmed, and all their wise men.

" The object of this letter is twofold. One is to give you salaam; may God's mercy, blessing and salaams be upon you ; and the other is to inform you that you are oppressed from all sides. I mean from the side of the Warsangli, the Dolbahanta, the infidels and the hypocrites, and the Dervishes ; may God sympathise with you and give you good patience and make Heaven your dwelling-place.

" I also inform you that it is no offence m you to fight the infidels and hypocrites, for fighting them is the duty of every Moslem. You are Moslems, and they are infidels, and it is not good to repent of annoying the infidels. And regarding the Dervishes, there is no blame to you, but all the blame is on the Dervishes, as they have looted and killed their brothers, and everyone will see the punishment of his ill-deeds m this world or in the Resurrection. For God has said, if anyone kill a Moslem intentionally, his punishment will be hell, to remain in it for ever ; and God's anger and curse and a great rack will be ready for him. But I inform you, oh, my brothers, and my heart's children, that I am aloof from anyone who ever annoys you; by God I am, by God I am, by God I am. The great God does not like those who annoy you, and I always preach that God will destroy those who oppress our brothers, the Rer Hamood, and I pray the Almighty to destroy those who looted you. And this is a thing well known.

" I also inform you that I am a pilgrim and a holy fighter, and have no wish to gain power and greatness in this world, neither am I of the Dolbahanta, the Warsangli, the Mijjertem, nor the Ogaden. And I am not of the hypocrites; I am a Dervish, hoping for God's mercy and consent and forgiveness and guidance, and I desire that all the country and the Moslems may be victorious by God's grace. But I am a poor man, and have no devout men with me except a few, one or two or three persons, and the remainder of the people who are with us are oppressors. May God defend us against the oppression, jealousy, enmity and deceit of all oppressive, jealous, hostile, and deceitful people.

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" And now, oh, my brothers, this is a time of patience, this is a time of oppression, this is a time in which corruption and adultery spread, this is a time in which the infidels defeat the Moslems, this is a time in which your brother deceives you, it is a time in which your friend kills you, it is a time in which your companion loots you, and it is a time in which the learned men do serve the Christians. This is the end of all things. May God guide us, may God guide us, may God guide us. May God prosper our ends, may God prosper our ends, for the sake of the Prophet and his companions.

" Oh, my brothers, be patient, and Satan and his friends will not mislead you. Regret not what you have lost, for God will compensate you fully in this world or in the Resurrection, or both. I also beg you that I may be with you and you yourselves may also be with me, and the first thing should be a visit between us. Surely I have regretted the friendship of the hypocrites, and the friendship of the Dolbahanta, and I know that if I alone had fought the Christians I would have defeated them in one hour, and if you and I together had fought them we would have defeated them, and if I fought others also, namely, the Dolbahanta, I would have defeated them. But the difficulty is with the Dolbahanta, as their conscience is not clear and their hearts are not directed towards their God, with the exception of a few men. Even as God said : * But few of my servants are grateful/ This is my message, and my word is to inform you that everybody who has looted you has suffered in consequence of my prayers, for some of them have died, some have become infidels, and some have become weak.

" From your Brother,

" MOHAMMED BIN ABDULLA."

January, 1913, also marked the opening of a new chapter in the history of the Dervish movement. In that month, the Mullah moved from the vicinity of Gerrowei to Tale, which from that time forward remained the Mullah's head-quarters until the day of his downfall. At Tale, as the years went by, Arab masons from the Yemen constructed for him a fortress of remarkable strength. To a nomad all permanent locations are an anathema, and it was a striking proof of the Mullah's military genius and adaptability that he should plan and construct

so powerful a stronghold. It consisted (*) of a main walled enclosure surmounted by thirteen forts, with three covering forts of great height and strength distant about 200 yards. These fortifications were all stone built, 12-14 feet thick at the base and about six feet at the top, and the covering forts were not less than fifty to sixty feet high. Within these fortifications there were wells; and, within the encircling walls of the *silsillat* (i.e., chain), there was ample space for many hundred head of stock. There were also numerous stone granaries, forming part of the defences, which were filled with millet from the Mullah's gardens at Gaolo, ten miles distant. But the Mullah did not confine his forts to Tale, and, from this time forward, it was his policy to erect a fort in any district which he desired to dominate.

On the 8th April, 1913, the Commissioner received a communication from the Mullah in which he expressed a desire for a personal interview. Needless to say, such a request came as a bolt from the blue. The following is a translation of the letter :—

" *To the British Consul.*

" I have to tell you that your letter t has been received by us, and in it we perceive statements which are disparaging to ourselves, and this stands in the way of a settlement and peace between us. Now this is not good. As to anything that relates to me personally and is of a disparaging nature, for that I do not care and will thus say no more about it. To me it is clear that there is not to be found in these days the wise and honest man from whom there issues nothing but good, and this refers also to the English. Because the view of the Englishman (in this country) is not his own view but that of the Somali. It is quite clear that the Englishman can have heard nothing except from the mouth of the Somali; for, whatever happens, he must of necessity enquire of the truth of it from the Somali, and he thus has stated to him that which he subsequently repeats as his own words in connexion with any affair. And the Somali advises him

* C/. p. 282.

† i.e. that of the 11th January, 1913 ? see p. 210.

maliciously, and that which the Somali advises, that he does ; and it is this that has caused the mischief between us. Now were it otherwise, that he did not listen to the words of the Somali, but worked from out of his own judgment, then had the result been better.

" Now it is a quite clearly established fact that if a man desert from us and goes over to the British side, and this deserter says to the authorities: ' I am personally able to give assistance against the Dervishes/ then this man is believed, and it is not realised that he is merely a self-seeker after honour and wealth. But it is the man who gains his ends while the Englishman suffers the loss.

" Again it is clearly established that the Englishman sends out spies amongst us ; and these men, having finished their rations and buried their ammunition and emptied their bandoliers, return and report to the Englishman that they encountered some Dervishes with whom they fought till all ammunition was expended in a serious engagement, but of course this is merely talk for the purpose of receiving credit and monetary reward, and to gam their own ends. For m reality these spies never reach the Dervishes, but wait about on the outskirts m the hopes of picking up stray animals or some renegade or other with whom they may have come to terms ; and having secured these they then retire to the British with their idle stones made to suit their own ends.

" Furthermore, it cannot be controverted that when letters asking for a settlement and peace have been sent by us it is these men again who spoil the settlement by giving advice to the Englishmen to imprison the bearers ; and they advise him also to reply unjustly and harshly, as we have discovered from letters sent to us. And to complete their mischief, they have now told the Englishman that the Dervishes have not returned all the milch-camels and they have added that their people have been carried off by the Dervishes. All of which is utterly untrue; for the camels have been restored, even before they got as far as our country, and as to the people, they were never taken captive at all by us. This being so, how, I say, is it justifiable for them to demand firearms and ammunition from the Government after the restoration of their animals and the settlement between us, unless they mean treachery ? In fact, their treachery is obvious and it is unworthy. Yet the British seem to have a regard for people of this nature, and accede to their requests. And it is this on the part of the British that I am complaining about, that his view is taken entirely from the Somali and the Somali's view is a malicious one and as black as his own skin.

" However, I will not allow misunderstandings and petty annoyances of this sort to stand in the way of my desire for a settlement; though, as I have stated above, it is these mischief-makers who make the possibility of a settlement difficult. Those who listen to the words of falsehood become likewise corrupt.

" Now I wish to say that the words about sending *akils* to prepare a way for peace and settlement are good words, but it has been impossible for me to comply because of the behaviour of my people, with whom I have been gravely disappointed. In the first place there is Abdulla Shahari. I thought him a peacemaker, and I sent him to you, but but he has disappointed me and has become my enemy and also the enemy of the Mohammedan *Shaneh*. Then there is Deria Arali,* who should have been a peacemaker. I sent him to you, but he also disappointed me and has become my enemy. Then there is Adan Egal,f who should have been a peacemaker, but he disappointed me and has become my enemy. Yet again, there is the teacher Mohammed Nur ‡ and his cousin, and they have both failed me. Everyone I send has become like that, and there therefore remains for me nothing but that either you send me a trusted man of yours, or that I myself come to you and have an interview, so that we converse mouth to mouth, you and I.

" In fact I am prepared to express my willingness to come to you to any place that you may appoint, either to Berbera or to Burao, or for that matter, to any other place. And if you say to me 'Come with ten men or less' to that place which you may appoint, then to this also I agree. I accept this for I am desirous of a settlement and peace.

" These are my words. Salaams.

" MOHAMMED ABDULLA HASSAN."

Such a communication necessarily demanded the most careful consideration. Was it sincere or did it conceal an ulterior object? On the one hand, it seemed natural to the Commissioner that the Mullah should be alarmed at the appearance and success of the Camel Constabulary; that he should give credence to the rumour that the Protectorate was about to be filled once again with expeditionary

* Brutally murdered by the Mullah in 1907.

† A renegade, formerly of the 6th King's African Rifles.

‡ A Mijjertein gun-runner.

troops; and that he should take the view that peace offered the best, if not the only, hope of his own ultimate security, in view of his supposed gross obesity which it was erroneously believed had rendered him personally immobile. On the other hand, there was clearly an intentional lack of courtesy in the address to the "British Consul," although the lengthy complaint about British methods contained in the first part of the letter was obviously meant to save the Mullah's face and to explain and prepare the way for his final proposal. There was also the possibility of treachery in that he might be seeking an excuse to approach Burao with a large force without exciting suspicion; but this was a negligible risk which it was justifiable to take in view of the importance of the results that might follow from a personal interview. In all the circumstances, therefore, the Commissioner decided to make every endeavour to ensure the proposed meeting, and, with this end in view, he sent the following letter to the Mullah :—

Letter from the Commissioner of Somaliland to Mohammed bin Abdulla, the Dervish.

"Salaams. This is to inform you that I have received your letter from the hand of two Hawiya men, and they were very many days on the road and came slowly, but I am sending back this answer at once. I am sending two copies so that one may come to your hand without fail.

"I have understood the words of your letter, and although you complain against the British without reason, I take no notice of that matter. But the rest of your letter is good and many of your words are true, so that for this reason I am pleased with your letter. Because I have been long with the Somalis I know that a few of them are honest, but I know very well that nearly all of them are self-seekers and mischief-makers, and it is for this reason that misunderstanding occurs. What you say about them is true. You cannot trust your elders and I cannot trust mine. Therefore, it is well that we should meet face to face and speak mouth to mouth, and if you desire this I consent.

"I will meet you at Sheikh on an appointed day, and it is

well that we should meet as soon as possible. Therefore, I tell you that I await your reply, and if you agree I will arrange to see you. You may come according to your letter with ten of your people and I will send an escort of a few men to meet you at Eil Dab or some other place in the Am, and to bring you safely to Sheikh. I will arrange that the Somalis shall not molest you on the road and will send a sufficient escort for your safety. And you shall talk with me in peace, and afterwards I will send you back in the same way and in safety.

" Now I tell you that I give you *aman* to come and see me and to depart in peace, and my words are true, and you may believe them. You will find safety with ten men unarmed or with even one man, and if you were not safe with one then you would not be safe with one thousand. Therefore, believe me when I say that I give you *aman* to come and to depart, and ask your people who know the English whether the Government keeps its word or not.

" I desire that you send me an answer at once, and I will arrange about the escort and will see you quickly at Sheiklu. When we meet we can talk, and if we do not at last understand one another and make a satisfactory agreement in word and in writing the responsibility will not be mine. In your answer you must tell me the day and the place for the escort to meet you in the Am. When you come to that place you must come with the ten men you speak of, because if you come with many followers my people will report to me that you do not come for peace, and so war would begin. But I desire to arrange with you while there is yet time and before the war comes again to this country, so that all your people may dwell in peace and not see war.

" I wish to see you in the month of Jornada* because after that I shall go to see the big Government in England and tell them this arrangement and other arrangements for the country.

" If you have wisdom you will believe all the words in this letter. Salaams.

(Signed) " H. A. BYATT."

For the proposed interview, the Commissioner prepared the following agenda paper :—

- (1) The Mullah's future location, whether within or without the Protectorate.
- (2) Future Dervish and friendly armaments.
- (3) Trading facilities for the Mullah with the coast.

* i.e. April-May.

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(4) The status of the Mullah with respect to the Government.

(5) The payment of a subsidy or pension to the Mullah on condition of his good behaviour.

The Secretary of State did not consider that any of these five questions need be excluded in principle from the discussion, but drew attention to the importance of not giving ground for any imputation of bad faith in the future by making definite arrangements, even *ad referendum*, which His Majesty's Government, for political or other reasons, might be unable to ratify in full. It was not long, however, before it was discovered that the Mullah's overtures were merely a ruse to avoid an attack by the Constabulary at a time when his ponies, upon which depended the possibility of hurried retreat, were unfit. The bearers of the Commissioner's letter arrived in the *haroun* on the 24th April. After perusing the letter, the Mullah ostentatiously destroyed it, and put the envoys in chains. They subsequently made good their escape to Berbera.

During the spring and early summer of 1913, there were abundant rains in the Nogal and Ain Valleys; and our tribes were apprehensive that the Dervishes, with their ponies in good condition, would hardly fail to take advantage of the abundance of water and grazing in the Ain to make a descent upon their outlying stock. In the face of this danger, the tribesmen were more than usually despondent, displaying a remarkable lack of self-confidence. On the night of the 12th June, a mounted messenger arrived in Mr. Corfield's camp at Burao, announcing that a party of fifty Dervish horse, accompanied by footmen, were about to attack the *khartas* on the Bohotle-Ber section of the Bohotle-Burao road, and that the tribesmen were retiring panic-stricken on Burao. Mr. Corfield immediately moved out with the Constabulary at full strength to re-establish confidence and to check this precipitate retreat, if possible.

On the following morning, however, he found that it was little more than a false alarm, and that not more than twelve Dervish horsemen had been in the vicinity. Although, as things turned out on this occasion, no undue risk had been taken by the Constabulary, and although its presence had undoubtedly allayed the fears of the tribesmen concerned, it was obvious that to employ the force in this way was contrary to the standing instructions for its use; and, in a memorandum dated the 23rd June, 1913, the Acting Commissioner, Mr. G. F. Archer*, who had but recently arrived in the country, made this point quite clear to the Commandant in the following unequivocal terms:—

" Though nothing whatsoever unforeseen occurred on this occasion, and though there is no reason to doubt that the arrival of the Camel Corps on the scene at this juncture could have had other than a steadying influence on our tribesmen in full retreat, yet I cannot pass over the incident without drawing your attention to the explicit nature of the instructions conveyed to you from time to time on the subject of confining Camel Corps operations to the immediate vicinity of Burao (in the Nugal direction), with Ber as an extreme limit for occasional patrols. You are personally aware, moreover, that the Secretary of State has expressly disapproved of the suggestion of employing the Camel Corps against small Dervish parties, even where danger was little and success more or less assured, on the grounds that such measures were entirely foreign to the duties of the Constabulary, as well as contrary to Government policy, and there is no discretionary power of any sort on this subject allowed. I cannot, therefore, impress upon you too strongly the necessity of abiding strictly by this decision. Admittedly it does not make your position easy, but this is inevitable at the present juncture; and the principle must be realised that we do not, and cannot, as at present constituted, assume responsibility for the defence of the outlying *jilibs* at times of threatened Dervish attack.

" On the other hand, the presence of the Camel Corps at Burao does provide for our tribes a good rallying point in the face of small Dervish raiding parties; while there is no reason to anticipate at the present time any Dervish advance on

* Now Sir G. F. Archer, K.C.M.G., Governor and Commander* in-Chief, Uganda.

such a scale as would necessitate your falling back from this point, which, as you are aware, is the tenor of your instructions in the face of grave and imminent danger."

July passed without incident although rumours of coming Dervish activity still persisted. Early in August, the Acting Commissioner, apprehensive of the advanced position of the Constabulary and with an eye anxiously watching the gathering storm clouds in the east, left Berbera and proceeded to Burao to discuss the situation with the Commandant. Immediately on his arrival on the 6th August, the *akils* (leaders) of the tribes besieged him with entreaties and prayers for the immediate reoccupation of the interior and the assistance of Government troops in the event of Dervish aggression. Without such help, they maintained, their annihilation at the hands of the Dervishes would soon be complete. Within forty-eight hours of the Acting Commissioner's arrival a report was received that the Dervishes were severely raiding the district between Idoweina and Burao, their operations extending to within two or three miles of Ber. In view of the fact that the Dervishes had not penetrated so far for many a long day, it seemed almost certain that the report had been concocted by the *akils* to lend point to their prayers and entreaties to which, in accordance with the policy of His Majesty's Government, a deaf ear had perforce been turned.

To restore confidence and to ascertain the true position, whatever it might be, it seemed desirable to send out a mounted reconnoitring party under a British officer; and, in response to the earnest representations of Mr. Corfield, the Acting Commissioner sanctioned the Constabulary proceeding in the direction of Ber in order to watch developments. Mr. Corfield was instructed to refrain, in all circumstances, from committing himself to an engagement with any considerable force of Dervishes. Should the

Dervishes be present in large numbers, he was to withdraw on Burao, after obtaining all possible information of their movements. Captain G. H. Summers *, 26th King George's Own Light Cavalry and Somaliland Indian Contingent, who had commanded the Acting Commissioner's escort *en route* to Burao, was instructed to accompany the Constabulary in order that he might be in a position to make a report on the general situation from a military point of view. He was not to interfere with the Commandant's dispositions, although it was understood that his advice on any military points would be available, if required. Military action was not contemplated, and, consequently, orders were not given for Captain Summers to assume command.

At 3 p.m. on the 8th August, the Camel Constabulary moved out of Burao at the following strength :

Commandant: Mr. R. C. Corfield.

Assistant Commandant: Mr. C. de S. Dunn.

Temporarily attached : Captain G. H. Summers.

Rank and File : 109.

Followers : 7.

Armed with single-loading '303 M.H. carbines, they carried 150 rounds of ammunition *per* man, with a reserve of sixty rounds each in their saddlebags. For the Maxim gun, 4,000 rounds were carried. The force marched south-east towards Ber, and, on the road, retreating tribesmen reported that the Dervishes in large numbers, under the command of Ow Yussuf bin Abdulla Hassan, the Mullah's brother, having raided and pillaged in all directions, were withdrawing the looted stock in the direction of Idoweina, thirty miles south-east of Burao, which they had made their rendezvous.

* Now Colonel G. H. Summers, C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Somaliland.

At 7 p.m. the force was halted eleven miles north-east of Idoweina; and here fifteen men of the Constabulary, mounted on ponies, who had been sent on ahead, confirmed the news which had been received on the road. They had exchanged shots with the Dervishes whose strength they estimated at over 2,000 footmen all armed with rifles and 150 horsemen.

At 8 p.m. the Constabulary moved slowly on again, and at 9 p.m. they halted for the night within four miles of Idoweina. A *zariba* was made, and the Constabulary were formed up in column of sections, with the Maxim gun mounted and ready for action on the left front and the camels in the centre. All military precautions were taken to guard against a night attack. From the enemy camp occasional shots were heard throughout the night, and the African sky, radiant with a myriad stars, was also aglow with the reflection of the Dervish camp-fires. The Constabulary were joined by some 300 Dolbahanta who were anxious to recover their lost stock from the Dervishes; and some ammunition from the precious reserve was distributed to them.

At 10 p.m. Corfield consulted Summers as to whether it would be preferable to make a night attack on the Dervish camp at Idoweina or to wait till daybreak on the following morning and place his force across the Dervishes' line of withdrawal towards Kirrit and the Ain Valley. In response, Summers reminded the Commandant of his instructions and strongly advised him to content himself with making a reconnaissance of the Dervish encampment, holding his camels in readiness for withdrawal on Burao and leaving behind him patrols to give him early information of the Dervishes' movements at dawn. He added that, with the force at the Commandant's disposal, there was no prospect, in his opinion, of carrying **out**

a successful action against the Dervishes. Corfield was determined to operate, however, and decided to carry out his plan of cutting off the enemy's retreat early in the following morning, and about 10.30 p.m. he despatched a message to the Acting Commissioner informing him of this decision. The idea of a night attack had been abandoned. For there was no chance of effecting a surprise, the enemy being well aware of the presence of the Constabulary and on the *qui vive*. Moreover, the Constabulary were comparatively raw for a night attack, which is always a difficult operation, especially when the attacking force is badly outnumbered.

At 4.30 a.m. on the following day, the Constabulary stood to arms, and at 5.30 at the break of dawn they marched out in a southerly direction in column of groups with the Maxim gun in front. As soon as it was light enough to see, clouds of dust thrown up by the large herds of captured stock were observed moving in a parallel line with the Constabulary. A range of very low hills divided the Constabulary from the Dervishes and their loot. But, except for these hills, the surrounding country was flat and thick with bush. At 6.15 a.m. the advance guard reported that they had seen Dervish horsemen, and the Commandant thereupon swung round in a more southerly direction, altering his formation into column of sections. On arriving at a place called Megalayer, in the locality of Dul Madoba (i.e., the black hill), the order was given to dismount and the line was formed for action facing the approaching Dervishes. An advance was then ordered, the Maxim gun being man-handled and the camels led by number 3's in the rear. It had been the Commandant's intention to move to a position about 200 yards forward where the thick bush gave place to an open plain which the Dervishes were crossing ; but, before this position could be reached,

the advance guard reported that the Dervishes were close upon them.

The line was, therefore, halted while still in the dense thicket, the Maxim gun mounted in position in the centre of the line, the camels about thirty yards in the rear, and the 300 Dolbahanta tribesmen on the extreme left flank. Summers advised that the force should be formed into a square as he felt that, owing to the overwhelming numbers of the Dervishes, the flanks were bound to be enveloped, and there was also the risk of attack in the rear. Corfield did not consider this necessary, however, and remarked that the square formation would greatly diminish the volume of his fire. Before more could be said, lines of Dervishes appeared advancing through the bush 100 yards distant, pouring in a heavy volume of fire as they approached; and the Camel Constabulary were thus committed to an action in an irregular skirmishing line in dense bush without reserve or flank or rear protection.

The action commenced at 6.50 a.m. The Dervish attacks may be said to have been delivered in spasms. At the first shot the 300 Dolbahanta tribesmen on the extreme left flank broke and fled, seeking safety in the dense bush to the rear, and were seen no more until the fight was over. The Dervishes, shouting their weird, monotonous war-song "Mohammed Salih/" charged towards the Constabulary in successive lines at varying extensions; and each line, as it gave before the Constabulary fire, was replaced by the one immediately in the rear. By this means the attack was pressed on almost up to the Constabulary firing line. As the first spasm died away, a number of constables from the right and centre dashed forward in their excitement in pursuit of the Dervishes as they withdrew. Dunn immediately went out, rallied them, and brought them back to the main body.

No sooner had this been accomplished than the second spasm of attack began. The right flank was soon enveloped and commenced a disorderly retreat to the rear. Dunn and Sergeant Jama Hirsi made frantic efforts to check and steady the men, but a number got clear away. The Constabulary had lost considerably in killed and wounded ; their *morale* was shaken, and twenty-four in all—or nearly 25 per cent, of the original effectives—thinking more of their personal safety than of their officers and comrades, found safety in flight, to be followed in due course by dismissal from the force with ignominy. In the meantime, the one Maxim gun had been silenced by a rain of Dervish bullets after firing little more than three belts, and did not come into action again. Corfield, who throughout had been in the thickest of the fight, made a gallant effort to get the feed block out ; and it was then, about 7.15 a.m., that he was shot through the head and died instantly. As a well-known Somali remarked on hearing the news of his death, " Better a thousand Somalis had died than Corfield Sahib : for where shall we find another Corfield ? "

Summers now moved to the machine-gun ; but, by this time, not only the feed block, but the fusee spring box, had been damaged by bullets. The gun was useless. While inspecting the gun, Summers was wounded for the first time. This ended the second spasm. The subsequent attacks found the survivors in a square. Gradually a small irregular *zariba* had been formed with the bodies of the dead ponies and camels. Rush followed rush in endless succession, and hand-to-hand fighting ensued. The firing was at short range. Summers was severely wounded in three places, but, though weak from loss of blood, he kept up a continuous fire on the Dervishes with the rifles and ammunition of the dead around him. On Dunn had devolved the heavy responsibility for the conduct of the action.

Time and again it seemed to the gallant defenders that nothing could save them from complete annihilation ; but for some unaccountable reason the Dervishes always retired at the critical moment. Had they pressed a little further or brought up their spearmen, nothing could have prevented our small force from being overwhelmed. Even as it was, several individual Dervishes penetrated the *zariba*, and a determined effort was made to capture the disabled Maxim gun.

The action lasted a little over five hours. Soon after midday, the Dervishes withdrew for the last time, their ammunition being exhausted, and the defenders were left in the possession of their *zariba*—and of their dead. The 2,000 Dervish riflemen engaged left no less than 395 dead, actually counted, upon the stricken field; and their total casualties can hardly have been less than 600. Of the 109 camelry, who had left Burao on the previous day, ten fell out on the road to Dul Madoba owing to the unfit state of their camels and returned immediately to Burao ; and during the fight thirty-five were killed, seventeen were seriously wounded, and twenty-four deserted. The survivors in the *zariba* at the end of the action consisted, therefore, of Mr. Dunn, Captain Summers (wounded in three places), twenty-three men, some of whom were slightly wounded but fit for further action, and the seventeen seriously wounded. It was little less than providential that Mr. Dunn should have survived the fight unscathed, as he alone was wearing a white shirt and consequently he was an especial target for the Dervish rifle fire. Of the seven followers, six had been killed and one only survived. To those who have campaigned in Somaliland, the courage and devotion of the Somali personal servant is one of their most pleasant memories : to some it is also one of the saddest. Both Mr. CorfiekTs " boys " lay dead beside him. His faithful factotum,

Dualeh, who had served him for eight years in Somaliland, then in Nigeria, and then in Somaliland again, had fought on beside his master's body, until he fell upon it riddled with bullets.

After the final withdrawal of the Dervishes the survivors occupied themselves in burying their dead and destroying those camels and ponies which were too badly injured to be moved. In the absence of any medical officer, field dressings, stretchers, or medical comforts, the best possible was done for the wounded, and, at 3 p.m., satisfied that the Dervishes had retired southward, the survivors, wounded and unwounded, moved slowly towards Idoweina (six miles), all alike impatient to slake their thirst. Throughout the day the heat had been intense; there had been little shade and no water. At 4.30 p.m. they reached Idoweina, only to find the small water-holes in the sandy river-bed horribly befouled by the Dervish stock. But man and beast drank deeply, and the brownish-yellow tinge of the liquid proved that all were thirsty rather than fastidious.

Earlier in the day, at 9.30 a.m., the Acting Commissioner (Mr. Archer) at Burao had received the message which Corfield had sent him overnight announcing his intention of engaging the enemy, and at 4.30 p.m. two constables galloped into the camp with an extremely disconcerting account of what had occurred. The camelry had been heavily engaged and had sustained a severe reverse. One British officer and thirty men only remained in action and were unable to fall back without assistance. The Dervishes, though severely shaken, were still in the field, and fighting continued. On the receipt of this message, the Acting Commissioner, regardless of the personal risk to which he was exposing himself, gallantly hastened to the succour of the survivors with his scanty escort of twenty Indian sepoy and even scantier hopes of a successful issue. He was also followed by a posse of some seventy

scallywags from Burao town, who would most certainly have deserted at the first sign of trouble. Leaving at 5.30 p.m. and marching through the night, he met the survivors on the road at 2 a.m. on the following morning; and, his worst fears having proved unfounded, they wended their way back together to Burao and thence to Sheikh.

The action at Dul Madoba soon became a nine-days' wonder. Gorged with debating the propriety or otherwise of Bishops bathing and the other August "silly season" topics, the great British Public avidly responded to posters and head-lines announcing the "HORRIBLE DISASTER TO OUR TROOPS IN SOMALILAND." Before long it became the subject of acute political controversy. To that controversy, which is still rekindled from time to time, it is not proposed to contribute here. Suffice it to say that I have been at very special pains to set forth the whole truth about Dul Madoba with care and accuracy, so that whatever judgments the reader may be pleased to make may at least be based on facts and not on fiction.

Dul Madoba was dubbed, according to taste, a "victory" or a "disaster" by the journalist; and a "reverse" or a "set-back" by Government and Parliament. Usually an action in savage Africa, entailing the death of one British officer and five-and-thirty native soldiers, with 395 of the sworn enemies of the Crown left dead upon the field, would be acclaimed a victory—and not without good cause. Dul Madoba, too, was a victory when shorn of the attending political considerations and judged from a purely sentimental point of view. Indeed, from that day forward, the Dervishes always alluded to the fight as "Ruga/" which means the smashing or grinding (of bones).

That three British officers with seventy-five raw native constables should have kept at bay 2,000 determined fanatics armed with good rifles, and not only kept them at bay, but inflicted the severest punishment, was an achievement of which

those concerned had every right to be proud. But from every other point of view, Dul Madoba was a sad set-back. It may be said that Corfield's objects in giving battle were twofold. The immediate object was to prevent the Dervishes from driving off the stock they had looted from the Dolbahanta, and the ultimate object was to restore our damaged prestige. In both these objects we failed lamentably. For the Dervishes got away with the stock*, and the withdrawal of the decimated Constabulary from Burao to Sheikh discouraged and alarmed the friendlies as much as it must have rejoiced the heart of the Mullah. So far from being restored, our prestige in Somaliland had received yet another damaging blow.

In considering this bald, but I trust convincing, narrative of the action at Dul Madoba and the events leading up to it, the reader should bear in mind that Corfield had no experience of the Dervish prowess in the field of battle, and he was, therefore, apt to judge the Dervish by "friendly" standards of warfare, of which he knew so much. Indeed I have reason to believe that, during the first onslaught at Dul Madoba, he remarked that he had never anticipated the courage and determination wherewith the Dervishes faced the machine-gun and the comparatively disciplined fire of his men. I should, moreover, be greatly surprised if anyone, who has had recent experience of Somaliland and of the Dervish methods of warfare, would dispute the proposition that, if Corfield, making full use of the mobility of his mounted force, had contented himself with harassing the Dervish retreat, he would have recaptured most of the looted stock and achieved his primary object. But to express such a view is to commit the heinous offence of being wise after the event.

* Estimated at 5,000-6,000 camels and 20,000-30,000 sheep. The numbers were so large that the Dervishes had to send to the *karoun* for assistance to drive in their loot.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REOCCUPATION OF THE INTERIOR

THE battle of Dul Madoba had revealed much that had been obscure in the Somaliland situation during the preceding three years. In the first place, the previously accepted estimate, based on native reports, had put the Dervish strength at some 1,500 fighting men ; but there was now no reasonable doubt that the Mullah had at least 6,000 warriors at his disposal. For it was certain that not less than 2,000 riflemen, 150 horsemen, and 150 spearmen had constituted the Dervish raiding party at Dul Madoba; and deserters reported that this force comprised only one-half of the fighting men based on the *haroun* at Tale. In addition, there was the not inconsiderable Dervish encampment among the Ogaden in Abyssinian territory, whose numbers it was impossible to gauge. Secondly, there was no longer any doubt that the Mullah was well supplied with arms and ammunition.

Both European and Somali survivors of Dul Madoba testified that no Dervish had been seen during the engagement without a rifle in his hand; and, taking into account the ammunition expended first during the original raid on the friendlies and subsequently in the action against the Constabulary, it was estimated that the Dervishes must have had not less than 30,000 to 40,000 rounds of ammunition with them when they set out from the *haroun*. It was true that in the outcome our Constabulary had only been saved from complete annihilation by the

exhaustion of the Dervish ammunition supply, but it was equally true that the force had been amply equipped for the original object in view, namely, a raid on our friendlies, and that an action against a British force formed no part of their preconcerted plan. It was, moreover, well known that French rifles and ammunition in any quantity could readily be obtained in Abyssinia for their cash equivalent, and that Arabs and others at Mokalla were constantly despatching ammunition to the Mullah through the Makhir coast ports.

It may be mentioned, in parenthesis, that like other untrained Africans the Dervishes were always most inaccurate and excitable marksmen, and they would have been an infinitely more dangerous foe had they continued to use the Somali's traditional weapon, the spear, in addition to the rifle. In Somaliland, as elsewhere, the general adoption of firearms has led to the disuse of the spear as a weapon of offence, and throughout North-Eastern Africa spearsmanship must now be regarded as a lost art. Incidentally, the exchange of spears for rifles has inspired the African bushman with a false confidence in his martial attainments. Thirdly, the raid which had culminated in the action at Dul Madoba had afforded eloquent proof of the marvellous mobility of the Dervishes. A force of over 2,000 men had travelled some 200 miles and struck a devastating blow at the friendlies living within forty miles of the Camel Constabulary at Burao before anyone in the station was aware of its approach. Fourthly, all hopes that the old Dervish fighting spirit was dead as the result of the Mecca declaration that the Mullah's movement was no true *jihad* had been finally dispelled. The Dervish warriors at Dul Madoba had proved that they were fully imbued with the traditional fanaticism, were reckless of life, eager to slay the infidel in the name of Allah and his prophet, scarcely less eager to die if it should so please the All-Merciful.

Even before Dul Madoba, experience had shown that the dread of the Dervish name had eaten so deep into the hearts of the friendlies that they were quite powerless to withstand attack unaided. Dul Madoba had proved that their spirit was so broken that they even feared to stand side by side with a British force and face a Dervish onslaught. As will be recalled, they had fled at the first shot. This melancholy incident had finally demonstrated the futility of hoping that they would ever have the heart to defend themselves; and it was abundantly clear that, unless we re-established an effective military occupation, the Mullah's encroachments would soon extend to the northern and western areas of the Protectorate which had hitherto been immune from Dervish raids. In short, there was now no reason why the Dervish advance should not proceed *pari passu* with the retreat of the tribes, even as far as the gates of Berbera itself, unless we took effective action to prevent it.

But there was yet another lesson to be learnt from Dul Madoba, and it was this. In an unoccupied country such as the interior of Somaliland then was, where a large force of well-armed fanatics of amazing mobility might be unexpectedly encountered at any time, an irregular and non-military force like the Camel Constabulary must needs lead a most precarious existence. They could not assume an attitude of being too proud to fight. On the contrary, they could be forced to fight whenever the Dervishes chose, and they would be unable to take as much or as little of the fight as they might wish. But, apart from this, it was inevitable that the friendlies would place reliance on their assistance whenever the force might happen to be in the vicinity of a Dervish raiding party, and this reliance might well lead at any time to a situation in which it would be wellnigh intolerable for the Commandant to abide by his instructions and avoid

" becoming engaged with a considerable force of Dervishes." The nature of the British officer is not such that he can stand by with any sort of armed force and watch with equanimity those whom his country is under an obligation to protect, robbed and slaughtered, mutilated and raped.

The proved strength of the Dervishes, the pitiful weakness of our tribesmen, the decimation of the Camel Constabulary, all led to the one conclusion that there was now no alternative to an effective military occupation. The cause of humanity dictated such a policy: honour and prestige demanded it. All compromises and expedients had failed. It had been proved once more that " there is nothing so warlike as inactivity " ; and it was soon to be seen that well-considered activity in the face of a determined foe is the most effective promoter of peace.

As the remnants of the Camel Constabulary wended their way through Burao *en route* to Sheikh after the action at Dul Madoba, warning was given of the Government intention to evacuate the town ; and the inhabitants, Somalis and Indians and Arabs alike, followed suit with alacrity. Nor were they ill advised. For on the 5th September a party of sixty Dervish horse sacked the bazaar and razed the station to the ground. The Dervishes had not penetrated to Burao since 1900, and the event was viewed by all with consternation. The possession of Burao is the key to control in Somaliland, and from this point of vantage the Dervishes were in a position to ravage the whole country. Contrary to expectations, however, the sixty Dervish horse did not prove to be the advance guard of an army of occupation and they soon retired to rejoin their comrades in the Ain Valley, where the Mullah was quick to consolidate the position he had gained. A strong post of 400 Dervishes was established at Shimber Berris, some twenty-eight miles

south-east of Ber at the head of the valley, whence they could dominate the chief grazing grounds of our tribes.

In January, 1914, a letter was received from the Mullah in which he claimed Shimber Berris as the boundary between himself and the Government. The tone of the letter leaves the impression that he considered he was in a position to dictate terms. The following is a translation :—

" *To the Burra Sahib, the ruler of the Somalis, and their Governor, General ByatL*

" I tell you that I have written to you many letters regarding peace and settlement. You paid no attention to my words and did not send me a satisfactory answer, but you replied to me with empty words and abuse. Yet I had sent to you nothing but seemly words. What a great difference between our words and your words! This is one thing.

" Another thing that I tell you is that I sent you a letter before this incident* in which I asked for peace and settlement between us and all the people. I asked you for a place in which we might meet, so that at a meeting between me and you we might be able to make an agreement. You answered me with plentiful words, one of which was that the appointment should be at Sheikh, and another was that you would give me *aman* if I came to you. One was your saying that the English Government knows not lying and deceit, and that if I did not believe this I should ask the people who know the ways of the Government. Another was that if I came to you you would send me men to protect me from the people and to escort me so that I should not be afraid. When your words reached me I read them and I understood their meaning. I then enquired of the people to whom you referred when you said: ' Ask the people who know the ways of the Government.' I did as you suggested, and inquired about your methods from Haji Sudi and Adan Ali Ghurrif, and all who knew your ways. They told me the contrary of what

* i.e. Dul Madoba.

† This man deserted from the Mullah in 1905, and became an *akil* of the Dolbahanta. In 1911 he murdered another *aktl* and fled to the Mullah, and was subsequently a leader of raiding parties.

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you had said. I told them, 'I will go to the appointed place with ten horsemen,' and they said to me, * Do not do so, for the words sent to you are all lies. If these words had been uttered by the Queen* herself, then they would have been trustworthy, but they are the words of a Consul, and every Consul is a deceitful liar.'

" And in the time since then men were looted and killed by those whom you sent against us again and again and again. After you had looted and killed our men seven times I knew that my advisers were right, and that they were acquainted with your ways. And not long afterwards I heard that you were preparing a force against us, also you looted our caravan. All these things were done by you after I had returned the stock to you, and when the land had become peaceful. All the trouble is due to you and your Somalis. This is one matter.

" Another thing is that I now tell you again what I have told you before. I ask you for peace and settlement. Do not refuse it, and do not on this occasion listen to the words of others, but listen to my words, for it will be well for you and for all the people to do so.

"The land is divided between the people. The hill of Shimber Berns is our boundary. We have come to our boundary to the place which was taken from us by force, but God has now restored it to us. As to the land which is beyond this place, it is not ours ; we do not want it, or desire it, and have no inclination towards it ; and if we go beyond it then the blame will be ours. As to the people, those whom you claim will be left alone, and those whom we claim should not be interfered with.

" An essential condition is that you must not listen to the words of the Somalis, for they will not be helpful to you. They only think of eating, † and do not consider the future, and they are mischief-makers.

" I have clearly understood our position and your position and their position. It is that I and you are like dry wood, and they are like fire which burns among the wood. But fire and wood cannot remain together.

" One certain thing is that they are ruining us and ruining you. Oh, inexperienced man, be cautious ! Oh, prudent man, be careful!

* Usually well informed as to outside matters, the Mullah was apparently unaware that Queen Victoria had died since he left Berbera in 1899.

† i.e. of the immediate advantage of the moment.

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" So that you may believe my words you must know that I have sworn by Allah, his Prophet, and the Mohammedan *Sharieh* that I pray for the settlement of the country, and I desire it very earnestly.

" This and salaams.

(Signed) " SEYYID MOHAMMED ABDULLA HASSAN."

Desiring to gain time while the forces of the Protectorate were being re-organised, the Commissioner returned the following reply :—

" *From the Commissioner of Somahland to Mohammed Abdulla Hassan.*

" This is to inform you that I have received your letter and understood its meaning.

" In the letter which you wrote to me before, you told me that you cannot trust your people, and that I cannot trust my people, and that always the Somalis make mischief between us. And I agreed to this, and for this reason I consented to meet you face to face. And now again in your letter you ask me not to listen to the words of the mischief-makers. But also you tell me that you asked the opinion of Haji Sudi and Adan Ali Ghurn, and that you believed their words.

" In this way you ask me not to listen to mischief-makers, but you yourself admit that you listen to them. And I am sorry when I see you do this and I cannot understand the reason. If you refuse to believe the words which I wrote, where is the way of settlement ? Now again I tell you that if you wish to discuss peace and settlement, you may write another letter and in the letter put the words of your own heart and not the words of other men who make mischief. I say this because you swear by God in your letter that you desire peace, and therefore I send you this answer.

" About dividing the country and the people, you know very well the country which belongs to your fathers and that which belongs to the Government, and I also know this very well.

" And about your messenger, this man was always with me before, and he says that he went to you to get back his camels which you took, but he got nothing from you. He was with me before and now he is staying with me again.

" If you send another letter send it by a man whom you trust.

" This **and** salaams.

(Signed) " H. A. BYATT,
" H.M. Commissioner."



A GUN IN ACTION AT SHIMBER BERRIS



Somali I Halo. Indian Cameliryman. Somali Cnmrlryman. Soman M.I.D.
Sikh Pioneer.

TYPES OF NATIVE SOLDIERS EMPLOYED IN SOMALILAND, 1914-15.

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On the night of the 12th-13th March, 1914, the boldest venture ever attempted by the Dervishes was undertaken. Forty men, mounted on the fleetest and fittest ponies, starting from Shimer Berris and travelling down the Meriya Pass and through Las Dureh, arrived at the gates of Berbera, under the cover of darkness in the early hours of the morning. After firing into the native town, they immediately withdrew and returned whence they had come, destroying all villages and slaughtering their inhabitants *en route*. No material damage had been done in Berbera, and our only casualties were two Somali townsmen wounded ; but the sense of security in the native town* had been profoundly shaken. It was generally believed in the coffee shops that this daring descent was but a prelude to a siege of Berbera by the whole Dervish army.

All necessary steps were promptly taken by the Government to ensure the safety of the native town. Outposts of Indian Infantry were established at Biyo Gora and Dubar ; and one company of the Camel Constabulary was brought in from Sheikh to serve as a striking force. The military situation, already sufficiently difficult, had been seriously complicated by the fact that the Dervishes had found an open road to Berbera from Shimer Berris, some 150 miles distant, despite our *Illaloes* (scouts) and the presence of friendlies all along the route. It is true that one *kharia-wallah*, a Somali villager, had run into the town during the evening of the 12th March and informed the authorities that the Dervishes were about to deliver an attack on the capital. But his news seemed altogether too incredible to be true and he was ignominiously consigned to the guard-room. On the following morning, he was released and generously rewarded.

* The native town at Berbera is about three-quarters of a mile to the north-east of the *Shaab*, or official residential quarter, where the garrison of Indian Infantry was stationed.

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It may not be without interest to record here that the self-same *kharia-wallah* appeared in Berbera one evening some years later with precisely the same news. The Dervishes, he declared, were again advancing on the town. He was promptly given the food and money which he sought; but by the time his intelligence had proved to be utterly without foundation, he had left the town and had disappeared into the bush. Otherwise, the order of his previous experiences might well have been reversed. But the misjudged *kharia-wallah* was not by any means the only contributor to the lighter side of the attack on Berbera. There was also the imperturbable officer who, despite the nocturnal confusion, insisted on shaving and dragging on his field-boots before starting to deal with the marauders, who, needless to say, had decamped long before these ill-timed acts of titivation had been completed. But the episode had not been half Gilbertian enough for those who bandy service stories in clubland. According to this school of thought, the whole incident had been organised by the local administration who had collected together forty friendly tribesmen to fire a few shots into the capital by night, in order to impress upon the Home Government the desirability of abandoning their policy of coastal concentration. The burnt villages and mutilated corpses on the Berbera-Las Dureh road were, of course, ignored by the concoctors of this diverting theory. But, then, there has never been anything so Machiavellian attributed to our rulers in Somaliland that some could not be found to subscribe to it.

The descent of the Dervishes on Berbera in March, 1914, marks the close of a depressing period in the history of Somaliland which had begun exactly four years before with our retirement to the coast and the disbandment of the 6th King's African Rifles. In 1914, the Camel Constabulary were

reorganised on military lines and styled the Somaliland Camel Corps. This new force comprised eighteen British officers and 500 Somali rank and file, two companies being mounted on camels and the third on ponies. In addition, there was the Somaliland Indian Contingent, 400 strong, recruited from picked men in the Indian Army, of whom 150 were mounted on camels and attached to the Somaliland Camel Corps. There was also a temporary garrison of Indian Infantry, 400 strong. The command of these troops was first entrusted to Lieutenant-Colonel T. Astley Cubitt, D.S.O., R.F.A.* Earlier in the year Mr. Archer had succeeded Mr. Byatt as Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief in Somaliland.

The primary function of the new Camel Corps was to enable the friendly tribes to avail themselves of their grazing grounds and water without molestation by the Mullah. The objects in view in Somaliland were defined in the House of Lords on the 13th April, 1914, by Lord Emmott, then Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, as being "to keep order in the west and to prevent the further advance of the Mullah in the east."

As has already been narrated, the Mullah consolidated the advantage gained at Dul Madoba by sending his followers to establish a post at Shimer Berris, some twenty-eight miles south-east of Ber at the head of the Ain Valley. From this place, the chief grazing grounds of the tribes were at his mercy. It was an excellent base from which to carry out raids in any direction. Many of the tribesmen, loath to leave such luxuriant pastures, had remained in close proximity to the Dervish post; and their immunity from attack had shown that some sort of understanding existed between them and the Dervishes with whom they had exchanged visits and

* Now Major-General T. Astley Cubitt, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., commanding at Calcutta.

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presents. It was clearly the first duty of the reorganised Camel Corps to capture Shimber Berris and so to release the Ain Valley from Dervish domination ; and by November, 1914, the organisation of the Corps was sufficiently advanced to enable this task to be undertaken. Accordingly, on the 17th November, Colonel Cubitt left Burao with a self-contained mounted column of fourteen officers and 520 rank and file. The neighbourhood of Shimber Berris was reached two days later without the Dervishes being aware that the column had left its base.

Shimber Berris is a natural stronghold in the Bur-Dab range which rises a sheer 1,000 feet out of the plain, and is intersected by steep ravines covered everywhere with boulders and thick scrub. Certain Yemeni Arab masons in the Mullah's service had been spared from the greater work at Tale to erect three forts on a strong site on the top of the escarpment. The walls had been constructed of stone and mud plaster, some 25 feet high, 30 feet wide, 10 feet thick at the base and four at the top. Each fort was capable of holding from fifty to seventy men, and was provided with well-made machicolated galleries, but with ill-constructed loop-holes. The surrounding bush had been cleared to provide a good field of fire. Moreover, Nature had honeycombed the sides of the ravine with caves which were capable of sheltering 100 men and animals, should they be driven from the forts.

Colonel Cubitt's column, having ascended the hill, found the Dervishes in occupation of the three forts. At 11 a.m. attacks were launched on the first two forts. The nearest was soon rushed by a party of Indian Sepoys under Lieutenant C. A. L. Howard,* 32nd Lancers, Indian Army. The second fort, however, was firmly held by the Dervishes, and

* Afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel C. A. L. Howard, D.S.O., M.C., Commandant, Somahland Camel Corps, 1920-21.



A DERVISH FORT AT SINNER BERRIS.

three charges of a Somali company right up to the very walls of the fort were unavailing. During one of these charges Captain H. W. Symons, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, was killed within a yard of the door of the fort in a gallant attempt to rush it, and Captain A. Carton de Wiart,* 4th Dragoon Guards, was severely wounded in a similar attempt. Other officers tried to batter down the door and the men fired on the defenders within through the loopholes.

At 3 p.m., realising that the fort was too strong to be rushed, Colonel Cubitt broke off the action, the withdrawal being effected in good order and almost without molestation. The column camped some eight miles south of the hills. Four days later, they renewed the attack, reinforced by an old seven-pounder Q.F. gun, which had been hurriedly brought up from Burao. The attack was well executed, and all three forts soon fell into our hands, the occupants fleeing in an easterly direction. Unfortunately, lack of explosives prevented the complete demolition of the forts; and the troops were not in sufficient strength for a post to be left at Shimber Berris. Consequently, a fortnight after the troops had returned to Burao, the Dervishes reoccupied the place. But the Mullah was careful to send an entirely new detachment to replace the former garrison whose *morale* had been so severely shaken by our attack, †

In the meantime, we had obtained explosives from Aden and India; and, at the Commissioner's request, the General Officer Commanding at Aden placed an officer and thirteen men of the 23rd Sikh Pioneers at Colonel Cubitt's disposal. By the 2nd February,

* Now Major-General A. Carton de Wiart, V.C., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., A.D.C.

† The process of castration to which they were subjected by the Mullah as a punishment for abandoning the forts probably shook their *morale* still more severely.

1915, a force, partly mounted and partly dismounted, of 15 officers, 570 rank and file, Indians and Somalis, six machine guns, and two seven-pounders, had been concentrated in the neighbourhood of Shimber Berris. The subsequent operations, admirably planned and admirably executed, can best be described in Colonel Cubitt's own words* :

" On 3rd February I advanced in two columns against the forts of the Bur Dab. Although the Dervishes had commenced construction of new forts, the hill top was unoccupied, and the forts were blown up by the Pioneers. The following morning, 4th February, the column was transferred from south to north of the Bur Dab by a pass seven miles west of Shimber Berris, and was concentrated in the plain close to that place by noon. The enemy were holding two forts overlooking and flanking a deep nullah and a fort at the far end of the nullah, also in occupation of the numerous caves in the hill-sides.

" One company was despatched against each of the flanking forts, while the middle fort was also engaged at long range.

" The two flanking forts were captured after two hours' fighting, but the enemy developed a heavy fire from the caves, from the middle fort, and from the vicinity of the fort. The guns were brought forward, and with machine-guns engaged the middle fort and the caves at close range. The enemy's fire slackened, and Dervishes were observed to be evacuating the fort and retiring southwards up the ravine. I despatched a company against this fort, but, although unable to effect an entrance, the company remained round the fort and enabled the Pioneers to place a charge of guncotton against the door, under a hot fire from the occupants inside. The fort and its defenders were blown up, hand grenades were thrown into caves known to be still occupied, and the two flanking forts were also blown up. I then withdrew the column, reaching my *zariba* at 6.15 p.m., fighting having lasted continuously for more than five hours. The next morning all the caves were found to have been evacuated. Leaving a tribal post at Shimber Berris, the column returned to Burao on 7th and 9th February."

The Dervish, though not present in any great numerical strength, had offered a desperate resistance, and had proved once more his prowess as a fighter.

* Supplement to the *London Gazette* of the 1st August, 1916.

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During the two attacks on Shimber Berris in November and February our casualties amounted to:

Killed.

- 1 British Officer.
- 1 Rank and File, Indian Contingent.
- 3 Rank and File, Somaliland Camel Corps.
- 4 Tribal Auxiliaries.

Wounded.

- 5 British Officers.
- 1 Rank and File, Indian Contingent.
- 24 Rank and File, Somaliland Camel Corps.
- 10 Tribal Auxiliaries.

The Dervish casualties it was impossible to estimate accurately. Suffice it to say that 72 were found dead in the forts and caves, and many must have died of wounds subsequently. But the main value of the Shimber Berris operations lay in the moral effect. By the destruction of his forts and the routing of his followers from the Ain Valley, not only had the Mullah lost a valuable outpost, but his prestige had sustained a most damaging blow ; and the moral effect of the success on the minds of the friendlies was just what the previous situation demanded.

The Somaliland Camel Corps, too, had gained an initial success, the first of many, which eventually brought about the downfall of the Mullah. Shimber Berris imbued the Somali rank and file with confidence in themselves and their officers, and helped them to realise they were the masters of the situation. The Corps had been formed and organised during the first six months of 1914. During that period Somaliland offered the only hope of active service to the professional soldier: the rest of the world seemed but a poor hunting ground for those who desired experience in their profession and an opportunity to

serve their country in the field. Consequently, some of the keenest and most able of the younger officers in the British and Indian Armies competed for passages in the good ship *Falcon*, the 90-ton liner to whose charms, incredible to those who have not experienced them, I have already borne testimony in the Second Chapter.

Hardly had they set foot on Somali soil when the greatest transformation scene in history unfolded itself. In the twinkling of an eye, Somaliland had been wiped out of the soldier's picture. It was now a backwater, a side-show, providing nothing but "bow and arrow" warfare of the type so often to be found on the frontiers of the Empire in the piping times of peace. The "Great Adventure" dwarfed all others. After the capture of Shimber Berris, many of the officers so recently appointed gradually rejoined their regiments, and only a few had to be retained, much against their will, to safeguard our interests in Somaliland. It is in large measure due to the ability and devotion to duty of these officers that the war years were years of progress and success in Somaliland, and that they culminated in the collapse of the Dervish movement.

The outbreak of war found our fortunes in Somaliland at their lowest ebb. It is true that in the first months of the war the gradual reoccupation of the interior and the routing of the Dervishes from the Ain Valley did much to re-establish our prestige; but, in a country inhabited by credulous and fanatically disposed Moslems, the position of a Christian ruler at war with the Turk must necessarily be one of anxiety and embarrassment. Isolated and uneducated, the Somali naturally judged the course of events by our failures and successes in neighbouring countries within his ken. No success on the Western front, for example, could counterbalance a reverse in Mesopotamia, a vivid and convincing

account of which would be brought to Berbera in the Basra date dhows. Again, the fortunes and misfortunes of our troops in Aden, only 200 miles across the sea, were watched with keen interest, and were thought to be indicative of the final result of the war as a whole.

When the enemy advanced into our Aden Protectorate in 1915 and occupied Lahej, the Turks and Germans were unanimously acclaimed the victors of the war. When the two armies subsequently settled down to three weary years of trench warfare behind Sheikh Othman, the war was regarded as having ended in stalemate. Even when the Turkish army surrendered after the Armistice, without being defeated in the field, the fact that the Turkish General and his staff were entertained at the Residency was interpreted by some Somalis as proof positive that the Turks had won the war, and that the Turkish General was about to take over the reins of Government from the British Resident.

But events in Abyssinia were, perhaps, the greatest factor in influencing the Somali's outlook. In December, 1913, the Emperor Menelik, whose illustrious reign had lasted some four-and-twenty years, was gathered to his fathers and his grandson, Prince Lij Yasu, reigned in his stead. The latter, a callow youth of some seventeen summers, soon proved himself an unbalanced and frivolous ruler, easily influenced by the unscrupulous intriguers who formed his *entourage*. From the outset, he scandalised his Christian subjects by displaying various Mohammedan tendencies, so much so that the Abyssinian Government declined to accord him the honour of coronation as Negusa Negust, or King of Kings. This rebuff incited him to yet greater excesses, so that he left his capital at Addis Abbaba and lived in an almost exclusively Moslem *milieu* at Dir6 Daoua and Harrar, among his Mohammedan subjects. Influenced by the German and Turkish

Consular representatives, he conceived the idea of ruling over a vast Mohammedan empire in north-eastern Africa, which was to include Abyssinia and all the Somali country, British, French, and Italian.

With this end in view, he entered into relations with the Mullah and sedulously propagandised his and our Somali subjects. Fortunately for us, the Abyssinians regard the Christianity of their forefathers as one of the most precious legacies of their race. " For fourteen centuries/¹ wrote the Emperor Menelik to King Humbert, in 1891, " Ethiopia has been an island of Christians in a sea of Pagans." It was not long, therefore, before the Abyssinian Government decided to depose Lij Yasu, and in September, 1916, his aunt was proclaimed Empress in his stead*. But, before this action was taken, there had been a wholesale massacre of Somalis and other Mohammedans at Harrar, carried out with characteristic ruthlessness by the Christian Abyssinian soldiers. Thus had the German and Turkish counsellors of Lij Yasu gained their immediate object and set Christian against Mohammedan in the Somali country. From such a situation great events might reasonably have been anticipated by our enemies, who doubtless envisaged the declaration of a general *jihād* by the Somalis against their infidel rulers. But this was not to be.

The Somalis, in general, were quick to size up Lij Yasu for what he was—a craven and a renegade, who at heart cared more for his own foolish ambitions than for the interests of their religion. Consequently, their sympathy for their compatriots who had been massacred at Harrar was tempered by contempt for their lack of foresight in backing the wrong horse. The Mullah, on the other hand, had been clearly impressed by the

* Subsequent events in Abyssinia are described by the author in an article which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* for October, 1917.

possibilities of the Lij Yasu movement, and was determined to profit by it to the best of his ability. Presents and correspondence were exchanged; and the subsequent collapse of his ally must have been a bitter disappointment to the Mullah. In his latter days, he claimed to be a cousin of Lij Yasu. It would puzzle even a Somali genealogist to discover the common origin of their respective family trees, unless, indeed, the Devil was the ancestor whom both these rascals shared. But this did not dismay the Mullah. The relationship was recorded in the Q'oran*, or so he said, and that was the end of it.

The close connexion between the Germans and the Turks, Prince Lij Yasu and the Mullah, may be judged from the adventure of a certain German named Emil Kirsch, *alias* Casson. A mechanic by trade, he had travelled extensively in South and East Africa, mending typewriters and other machines. The outbreak of the Great War found him at Jibouti, the capital of French Somaliland. To avoid internment, he hastened to the nearest neutral country, Abyssinia, where he remained until August, 1916. In that month Lij Yasu, who went personal security for his safe return, persuaded him to go to the Mullah's *haroun* at Tale on a five months' contract to make ammunition and to repair the Dervish machine guns and rifles. Whether or not he realised the foolhardy nature of his enterprise we shall never know; but, if he did not, he was very soon to be disillusioned. On his arrival at Tale, he was given quarters in the main fort where he was held under duress.

It appears that the Mullah refused to grant him an audience, and that, whenever he was in his neighbourhood, he used to cover his mouth and nose with his *tobe* that he might not breathe the same air as the white infidel. Without delay,

* Cf. page 299.

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Kirsch was set to work mending rifles and manufacturing ammunition ; and he received no actual ill-treatment until his savage masters demanded that he should perform impossibilities—manufacture rifles without material and plant, and mend Maxim guns without component parts. Then buffeting and abuse, and eventually floggings, were his lot, and subsequently when he asked to be allowed to return to Abyssinia on the ground that his contract had expired, his request was received not only with threats of mutilation, but with ocular demonstrations of the most unspeakable atrocities. Thus his last few months at Tale were all but intolerable, and frequently he contemplated suicide.

Finally, he decided on an attempt to escape. Day after day his shoes were filled with sand to harden his feet by his devoted servant Ahmed, a native of Nyasaland, as he realised his tracks would soon be picked up in the desert by the Dervishes if he attempted to escape in European footgear; and then, one night in June, he let himself down from the fort by means of a long rope and a grappling-iron, and working by compass, he headed for the northern coast with the intention of surrendering at the Italian port of Alula. After many days of wandering without food or water his strength gave out, and he bade his faithful servant leave him and make good his escape if he could. Ahmed staggered on for another three miles to a nullah where perchance he struck water, with which, without delay, he returned to his master, only to find him dead from thirst under the inhospitable thorn-bush where he had left him. This story is given as related by Ahmed and subsequently confirmed by deserters.

The attitude of the Mullah towards the Great War and our Allies may be judged from the following extract from a contemptuous epistle received in March, 1917 :

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" In that letter it was suggested that we were in communication with Lij Yasu and had dealings with the Germans and the Sultan of Turkey ; that feeling weak we required assistance. The suggestion in your letter is that if we were strong people we should not have had recourse to such friendships. This is the outstanding feature of the letter, and now for the reply. I tell you, you fool, by now you will know what I have done to the Mijjertein and to the Warsangli. And you know, and I know, what the Turks have done to you and what the Germans have done to you, you of the British Government. The suggestion is that I was weak and had to look outside for friends ; and if, indeed, this were true and I had to look for assistance, it is only because of the British, and the trouble you have given me. It is you who have joined with all the peoples of the world, with harlots, with wastrels, and with slaves, just because you are so weak. But, if you were strong, you would have stood by yourself as we do, independent and free. It is a sign of your weakness, this alliance of yours with Somalis, Jiberti (Mogadisho people and sweepers), and Arabs, and Sudanese, and Kaffirs, and Perverts, and Yemenis, and Nubis, and Indians and Baluchis, and French and Russians, and Americans, and Italians, and Serbians, and Portuguese and Japanese, and Greeks and Cannibals, and Sikhs and Baniyas, and Moors and Afghans and Egyptians. They are strong, and it is because of your weakness you have had to solicit as does a prostitute. So much for my answer to you. Beyond this I would say one word. If your people have sense, and you desire peace, think deeply and pour water where you have raised fire: and arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement and open all the seaports to me. If you hearken to my word, let caravans *pass*. That is one thing. Again, there is an Arab, Ibn Durmoon by name, from whom, when I was in Berbera, I took coffee valued at 80 rupees. So now I send for Ibn Durmoon by the hand of my two messengers 200 skins. Let him have the skins.

" Finish.

(Seal) " SEYYID MOHAMMED BIN ABDULLA HASSAN,
THE DERVISH."

But we must now revert to the main narrative. After their defeat at Shimber Berris, the Dervishes retired to their two main positions, the one in the Mullah's *haroun* at Tale, and the other at Jidali, in the Warsangli country; but, at the same time, they held a series of small advanced forts covering

these two positions and the surrounding grazing-grounds. So long as the Great War eliminated any prospect of reinforcements, we were necessarily tied down to a purely defensive policy. The Dervishes, on the other hand, were in a position whence they could launch a raid at will at any point on a front of some 300 miles, extending from the Makhir coast to Galadi.

An imaginary line was drawn roughly from Ankhor on the sea-coast through Eil Dur Elan to Badwein at the eastern extremity of the Ain Valley, and thence south-west to the southern border at a point where it is intersected by the 46th degree of longitude. It was our object to confine Dervish activities to their side of this line and to afford protection to the friendly tribes on our side. With this object in view our dispositions were as follows: The 150 dismounted Indian Contingent and the 400 Indian Infantry provided garrisons for Berbera, Burao, Hargeisa, and Las Dureh and after 1916, for Las Khorai. In the outlying areas some 320 Somali *Illaloes*, or irregular scouts, held various isolated posts. The Somaliland Camel Corps, 500 strong, and the 250 Indian Contingent (150 mounted) attached to the Camel Corps, formed a striking force based on Burao and Ber.

These troops constantly patrolled the protected area to ward off attack and on occasions advanced into the Dervish zone for purposes of reconnaissance. It will be readily appreciated that with such an exiguous striking force on so extensive a front, in an inhospitable country, with few military resources, the complete attainment of the object in view could not be expected: for the initiative remained with the Dervishes so long as circumstances dictated a defensive policy to us. Nevertheless we succeeded far beyond all reasonable expectations. It was true that the Dervishes were occasionally able to effect successful raids in our zone and to make good their

retreat with the captured stock. But more often severe punishment was meted out to the raiders ; and eventually the Camel Corps so impressed the Dervishes with a sense of their range, mobility, and endurance, that projected raids were frequently abandoned almost before they were launched.

It would be tedious to describe in detail the many arduous marches undertaken during this period, some ending in a few shots exchanged with a fast retreating enemy, most devoid of any incident, but all testifying to the efficiency, pertinacity, and powers of endurance of the officers and men of the Somaliland Camel Corps. To tell the tale of one such patrol is to tell the tale of all. One hundred and twenty miles in 40 hours without water in pursuit of elusive Dervish raiders in April, 1915 ; 344 miles in June, 1915, crowned by a brief skirmish with a party of Dervish horse; 316 miles in August, 1915, during which three Dervish parties were encountered and defeated with considerable loss; 335 miles in April, 1917, during which some Dervish cavalry could not be seen for their dust; 360 miles in April, 1919, in pursuit of a large Dervish force which always managed to keep 30 miles between them and us. Time and again it was the same story : difficult terrain for the animals, brackish and sulphurated water debilitating officers and men, inadequate transport, limited rations, intense heat, sometimes blinding sand-storms—but always an elusive enemy with a long start.

But the actions fought at the Endow Pass and at the Ok Pass deserve more detailed description. On the 6th October, 1917, information was received at Burao to the effect that a Dervish force of four to five hundred men had raided the tribes in the Las Dureh area. Without delay, the Camel Corps moved out at a strength of 10 British officers, 347 rifles, and 6 machine guns, under the command of Major G. R. Breading, D.S.O., Reserve of Officers.

By the morning of the 8th October they had reached Eil Dur Elan and, pressing on the same day in the tracks of the retreating raiders, they were 27 miles further east by sunset. The Dervishes were now reported to be *zaribaed* only 20 miles ahead, and the column accordingly moved off again at 1.30 a.m. Captain H. L. Ismay, 21st Cavalry, Indian Army, with 150 pony rifles and 2 machine guns, was ordered to push ahead rapidly and act as circumstances demanded. On coming up with the Dervishes, Ismay found they had driven the looted stock through two very difficult passes which they were holding. Using an irregular levy to create a diversion against the western pass, Ismay attacked the eastern or Endow pass which was held by some 300 Dervish riflemen, who had taken up a strong position on the crest and in the caves to cover the withdrawal of the raided camels.

The action commenced at 9 a.m., and at 10 a.m. Breading, with the remainder of the force, joined Ismay. After five hours' sharp fighting, during which heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, chiefly by machine-gun fire, the caves were cleared and the Dervishes dislodged from their position. But it was evident that the enemy had determined to oppose our further advance; that the troops would be unable to reach the summit of the pass with their animals by nightfall; and that there was thus little or no prospect of overtaking and recapturing the raided stock which, on reaching the plateau below, would be driven off rapidly. Moreover, the troops with but two days' rations in hand were already 135 miles from their base at Burao, having traversed this distance and fought an action in addition in 70 hours. In all the circumstances it was reluctantly but prudently decided that further pursuit was impracticable. The Dervishes had been very severely handled, and, in addition to some 70 killed and an

unknown number of wounded, many of the Mullah's rifles had fallen into our possession. Our casualties were one British Officer and nine other ranks wounded. In his appreciation of this operation Lieutenant-Colonel G. H. Summers, 26th Cavalry, Indian Army, who had succeeded Colonel Cubitt as Officer Commanding Troops, wrote as follows :

" Although the stock was not recaptured, severe losses far in excess of the value of the raid was inflicted. The moral effect of the long-sustained, successful pursuit subsequently proved to be great. It is noteworthy that the column traversed 135 miles in 65 hours, including much very difficult and intersected country, before gaining touch with the Dervishes. The troops were under arms for 57 hours, and had only 9 hours' rest in the 75 hours which elapsed between 4 p.m. on the 6th October and 7 p.m. on the 9th October, 1917. In the course of this operation the Pony Company marched 280 miles in 7 days."

Some eighteen months later, on the 25th February, 1919, a wireless message was received at Burao from Las Dureh stating that a strong Dervish force was in the neighbourhood of Raj una. The mounted column under Major Howard left Burao at once and reached the Ok Pass, 53 miles north-east of Burao, without incident. Howard, with two camel companies, then moved to Eil Dur Elan to refill at the ration dump and to cover the friendlies' stock in the Guban. The pony company under Captain R. F. Simons, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, remained at Ok to secure the pass and cover Howard's movements. During the night of the 28th February-1st March the Dervishes were informed by a crafty old woman that the pony company's *zariba* was a defenceless village. All unsuspecting some 400 Dervish riflemen attacked the supposed village just before the break of dawn, only to receive a rather hotter reception than they had anticipated.

An hour's hard fighting ensued before the Dervishes were driven off, leaving 63 dead outside

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the *zariba* alone. The pony company, after despatching a report to Howard, followed up the retreating Dervishes and succeeded in shepherding them towards the Karumba Pass on the Rajuna-Las Adey track. At 1 p.m. on the 2nd March the pony company withdrew for much needed water, and the Dervishes, greatly elated by this withdrawal and totally unaware of the presence of the main column, blundered, on the following day, into the trap which Howard had laid for them. Enfiladed by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from the camel companies, they retired rapidly, and eventually, in spite of the very gallant efforts of their leaders to rally them, they broke in all directions, abandoning the stock captured from the tribes, and even throwing away their rifles and clothing.

Their casualties amounted to 200 dead actually counted. Our losses were two rank and file killed, one wounded. The action at the Ok Pass was the greatest defeat inflicted on the Dervishes since the battle of Jidbali in 1904. The Dervish attack on the pony company *zariba* had been a complete surprise, and there is nothing better calculated to test the steadiness and discipline of native troops than a surprise attack delivered by a savage enemy under the cover of darkness. It was in no small measure due to Simons's personal coolness and resource that the Dervish attack on his *zariba* was so successfully repelled. It is pleasant to remember that this gallant officer's services on this occasion were rewarded by his Sovereign with the grant of the Military Cross; it is sad to recall that he died so soon after on his way home on well-earned leave.

The material successes gained by the Camel Corps, first at Shimber Berris, then at the Endow Pass, and subsequently at the Ok Pass, and the moral ascendancy which was gradually gained by their frequent, arduous, and ubiquitous patrols, **could not have been obtained** without the **more**

passive, but none the less valuable, services rendered by the temporary garrison of Indian Infantry provided in turn by the following units from the Indian Army: The 73rd Carnatic Infantry, the 1/5th Light Infantry, the 58th Vaughan's Rifles, and the 1st/10th Grenadiers. Writing of their services in a despatch which was published in the *London Gazette* of the 4th March, 1921, the Governor* of the Protectorate wrote :

¹¹ They have garrisoned isolated outposts in the most desolate and inhospitable regions of the Protectorate in the hot weather season under intolerable climatic conditions ; and, on occasions, they have been called upon to make forced marches in support of the mounted troops and to escort camel convoys with supplies."

A word of praise, too, is due to the 320 *Illaloes*, or " Tally-hoes/" as they were affectionately dubbed by the British officer. Planted down in small parties of 12, 20, or 25 in the back of beyond, their primary duty was to collect intelligence concerning the Dervish movements and then to communicate with the nearest Indian garrison possessing a wireless set. These raw tribesmen, inured to privation and hardship, and attracted to their dangerous duties by their love of loot and of fighting for fighting's sake, were engaged in continuous minor "scraps" with small Dervish parties over whom they eventually acquired a very marked ascendancy.

But while congratulating ourselves on the comparative immunity from Dervish raids afforded to the tribes living in the protected area during the war years, we must not forget the Warsangli, whose habitat in the mountainous hinterland of Las Khorai was well within the Dervish zone and outside the striking radius of the Camel Corps. Early in 1915, the Dervishes had constructed and occupied a fort at Jidali on the western frontier of the Warsangli

* Mr. Archer had been promoted to the rank of Governor in October, 1919.

country, in the hills some fifty miles from Las Khorai. The Sultan of the Warsangli was one Mahmoud bin Ali Shirreh. It may be recorded to his credit that he was the last of the tribal Sultans in British Somaliland to retain any influence over his people. But this influence was maintained by tyrannical methods not far removed from those employed by the Mullah himself.

The son of the former Sultan's wife by an Indian trader, he has the face of a fox, and his face does not belie him. He has a genius for crafty intrigue which, in 1920, won for him His Majesty's hospitality in Mahé, one of the Seychelles islands. From 1905 onwards his fulsome protestations of loyalty to the British raj had always been overshadowed by an alliance with the Mullah, to whom he had married his sister. But his thinly-veiled friendship with the mammon of unrighteousness might have stood his isolated tribe in good stead, had it not been that, like most mongrel orientals, he was temperamentally incapable of keeping faith with anyone; and early in 1916 he made a senseless and unprovoked raid on the Dervish stock grazing round Jidali. Retribution quickly followed.

On a Saturday night, the 6th May, 1916, some 2,000 Dervishes swooped down from their mountain fastness at Jidali and surrounded the town of Las Khorai. The western quarter was captured at once, and some 300 women and children were put to death. But the rest of the town offered a surprisingly valiant resistance, and for four days kept the invaders at bay. No sooner had the first shot been fired on the Saturday night than a few seafaring Warsangli dashed into the sea, seized a dhow, and set sail for Aden. As luck would have it, the wind was favourable and they made Aden on the Tuesday morning, although under less propitious conditions the journey might well have

taken a fortnight. H.M.S. *Northbrook* (Commander L. Turton, R.N.) promptly set out to succour the tribe and arrived off Las Khorai at 8 o'clock on the Wednesday morning. On seeing the approach of the *Northbrook*, the Dervishes, who had not succeeded in penetrating further into the town, had commenced a hasty retreat in a westerly direction towards the mountain pass leading to Jidali. The *Northbrook's* head was promptly turned to westward and followed the line of the coast until a compact mass of men were sighted hurrying over the maritime plain which separates the mountains from the sea. The sequel is vividly described by Conrad Cato* in the following words :

" The range was just over 6,000 yards, the shell was lyddite. After the first round the compact mass was compact no longer, but small groups showed themselves from time to time, each one of them receiving its dose of high explosive, until finally the pass was reached. Here the *Northbrook* hove-to, and, as the rabble came together in that narrow neck, whose range was calculated to a nicety, so the shells dropped plumb on top of them. It was diabolically easy—so easy that the sporting instinct must have revolted from it, even as our men at Omdurman sickened at the sight of the havoc that their machine-guns created. After twenty-four rounds the *Northbrook* ceased fire. The number of her victims will never be known, for many dead and wounded were carried off by their comrades ; the only available evidence of the result of these few minutes of gunnery was afforded by the 171 corpses lying at the entrance to the pass."

Subsequently the Medical Officer made a tour of Las Khorai to tend the Warsangli wounded, whose condition may be gauged by the fact that they had been without water for four days : for the Dervishes **had** captured the only well near the town on the Saturday night. Those who inveigh against the Somali's lack of gratitude for services rendered **should read** the following quaint, but none the less

* In " *The Navy Everywhere: An Outpost of Empire* " ; published by Constable, 1919.

genuine, epistle written in English and signed by the Sultan and Haji Adan Ali, the leading Somali trader in Aden, to the " Secretary of Slaves*, London " :

" Surely we have found in Commander Turton a saviour of our place and people. God may give him long life and prosperity to enhance such heroic works. Praise and gratification have been in the mouths of us all since the success achieved by the genius and talents of Commander Turton, R.N., of H.M.S. *Northbrook*. The results of his success are truly colossal for us. . . . May God keep the British flag for ever and perpetual upon us, under whose shelter we are happy and thriving in content."

Soon after this *debacle* the Dervishes constructed another fort in the hills at Baran, some 30 miles due south of Las Khorai; and, on the urgent representations of the Sultan, a double company of Indian Infantry was sent to garrison the town in the following September. Never, let it be hoped, have troops been sent to a more inhospitable station. Las Khorai is an open roadstead*, swept by all winds from east to west through north. The anchorage is some 700 yards from the shore, and during most of the year embarkation or disembarkation can only be carried out at certain most favoured hours of the day. There is no pier, and passengers are carried pick-a-back through the surf. The town itself boasts one stone building, the Sultan's palace, which the troops converted into a fort. A perimeter of sandbags was built around this fort with a wide ditch outside the perimeter and barbed wire entanglements beyond. Within the enclosure, barracks were constructed out of sandbags and beams of wood imported from India. The native town consists of groups of mean reed-huts dotted promiscuously over the burning maritime plain.

This wide stretch of sand extending to the foothills is utterly devoid of all vegetation. Thanks to the

* Presumably a corruption of " Secretary of State " !

Dervishes and the depredations of their Sultan, the Warsangli present almost as melancholy an appearance as their town. Once a prosperous trading and seafaring tribe, they have been reduced to the most desperate straits. Whenever rations were landed for the troops, hundreds of *miskin*, or destitutes, would scramble in the sand for any grains of rice that might fall from the gunny-bags on their way from the ship to the fort; and, even more horrible to relate, they would search through the dung of the Government ponies and camels in the hope of finding some undigested grain of corn. This, too, despite the fact that the sea abounds with excellent fish—a food which the Somali stubbornly, but erroneously, maintains the Q'oran forbids him to eat.

The heat during the hot season was intense, the thermometer often registering 118^o to 120^o. Sand-storms were frequent, and a plague of flies tormented the unhappy soldiers. Isolation from the outside world failed to carry with it the compensating advantage of immunity from the universal influenza epidemic, a most virulent form of which attacked and decimated the debilitated garrison. But of all the hardships and privations to which troops serving in isolated outposts in Africa may be subjected there is none so irksome as an irregular and infrequent mail service. The local Government had the greatest difficulty in chartering a steamer from time to time to carry rations and mails to Las Khorai.

Sometimes many weeks would elapse between the departure of one steamer and the arrival of the next; and, in the absence of telegraphic means of communication, warning of an impending visit could not be given. At each successive dawn the British officers, from the tower of the fort, would anxiously scan the sea for an approaching steamer; and only on a very few days **out** of the 365 would they not be disappointed. In

the meantime, the desolate station afforded no sport, no recreation, not even a Dervish. But the garrison's *raison d'être* was fully justified, for their presence at Las Khorai freed the Warsangli from molestation by the Dervishes.

Such was the course of events in our struggle with the Mullah during the war years, but meanwhile the civil administration had not been idle. From 1914 onwards the protected zone had been gradually reoccupied and administered. The Somali proved himself responsive to an administration which was so clearly bent on furthering his interests, and his confidence was gained to an extent which had never previously been thought possible. The various departments of government were reorganised to deal with ever-expanding activities, the local revenue was quadrupled, and a high standard of efficiency was attained despite the very small funds available for civil services—some £50,000 annually.

When the Armistice was declared in November, 1918, it was clear that the time had come at long last to reap the fruits of our many minor successes. Many and urgent had been the representations of the Governor to the home Government to this end. In December, Major-General Sir A. R. Hoskins, K.C.B., C.M.G., and staff, arrived in Somaliland to advise the War Office on the military situation. Overriding financial considerations, however, precluded His Majesty's Government from launching an expedition on a large scale.

For four years the Mullah's activities had been confined to a limited area where his chances of recruiting were meagre. He had lost a large proportion of his fighting men at Shimber Berris, at Las Khorai, at the Endow Pass, at Ok and Karumba, and in various minor engagements, and not a few in the almost continuous fighting with our *I Haloes*. Dervish defeats led to Dervish desertion; and, as his following dwindled, the more ruthless became the

Mullah's methods in dealing with his half-hearted disciples, culminating in wholesale executions and mutilations at Tale. It is, perhaps, no exaggeration to say that since Dul Madoba he had lost five-sixths of his following in action, from desertion, or at the hands of his executioner. Moreover, we had by political action closed most of the previous sources of the Dervish ammunition supply. The Mullah himself was not blind to his ever-growing weakness ; and there is reason to believe that he had instructed his followers to kidnap a British officer with a view to holding him to ransom and so gaining his own personal security. With the Dervishes thus debilitated and the local troops in a high state of efficiency, the Governor was able to represent to Downing Street that operations on a very modest scale would suffice to effect the overthrow of the Dervish power ; and in October, 1919, the Cabinet sanctioned the aerial and military operations which are described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IX

THE FINAL EXPEDITION OF 1920

THOSE who know their Africa realise the wisdom of the Horatian injunction *nil admitari*: and from the Mullah it was never reasonable to expect anything but the unexpected. While the plans for the expedition were being discussed in London, news was received that with dramatic suddenness he had moved northwards to Jidali with his family and stock and nearly all his fighting men and war material; and that his principal stronghold at Tale, where he had lived since 1913, had been left to the charge of an insignificant garrison. This development, though somewhat disconcerting at such a time, was distinctly in our favour: for it not only deprived the Mullah of easy access to Italian Somaliland, where he would be immune from the pursuit of our troops, but it also increased his distance from the Bagheri country whither he would probably wish to retreat in case of need.

In general terms, the plan of the projected operations was as follows:—

An independent and self-contained Air Force under the command of Group-Captain R. Gordon, C.M.G., D.S.O., taking his orders from the Air Ministry, was to attack the Mullah, his followers, and his stock, and disperse them. In the event of this object being attained, the independent air operations would cease; and the ground troops, with the co-operation of the Air Force, would then undertake the rounding up of the Dervishes, the

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general direction of affairs being vested in the Governor and Commander-in-Chief.* Briefly, it was hoped that the unexpected attack from the air and the moral effect created by the new arm would bring about the disruption and demoralisation of the Dervish forces which could then be hunted down and dealt with in detail by the Somaliland Camel Corps.

The forces available comprised :—

(a) One flight of aeroplanes [D.H. 9], with six spare machines, know as " Z " unit, Royal Air Force.

(b) His Majesty's ships *Odin*, *Clio*, and *Ark Royal*.

(c) The Somaliland Camel Corps, 700 rifles.

(d) A Composite Battalion, 6th and 2nd King's African Rifles, 700 rifles.

(e) A half battalion, the ist/ioist Grenadiers, Indian Army, 400 rifles.

(f) An irregular Somali tribal levy, 1,500 rifles, and

(g) 300 *Illaloes*.

From the outset it was realised that the success of the operations would be largely dependent on the measure of secrecy attained and on the speed with which the aeroplanes could strike when once landed at Berbera. Group-Captain Gordon, with an advanced party of the Royal Air Force, was expected at Berbera in November, 1919. Prior to his arrival, the local administration had been at pains to disseminate a report that the long projected oil-boring operations were about to begin. Consequently when the advanced party arrived in mufti on the 21st November, camouflaged as oil magnates, the native mind readily associated their doings with the necessary preliminaries to mining operations.

Thus, some time could be spent in selecting suitable sites for aerodromes and camps without arousing

* This arrangement whereby a civilian Governor was charged with the direction of military operations in the field was without precedent in Colonial history.

undue suspicion. Simultaneously, arrangements were being made by the local Government for the purchase of men and animal rations, remounts, saddlery, Stokes guns, ammunition, water tanks, etc., from India, Egypt, Aden, and elsewhere. Five thousand transport camels were being mustered from the tribes by the political officers on the hire system—an extremely difficult task in view of the fact that the Protectorate had been depleted of some 10,000 camels in 1917 and 1918, which had been urgently collected for the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. By mid-December, it was clear that the many signs of activity, the collection of camel transport on a large scale at Berbera, the constant movement of supplies eastward, and the arrival of the King's African Rifles at Las Khorai could not but tell their own tale to the quick-witted and far from incurious Somali; and, consequently, a telegram was sent to Egypt asking for the despatch of His Majesty's ship *Ark Royal* with the main Air Force.

On the 30th December, thirty-six officers and 189 other ranks, Royal Air Force, with the aeroplanes, aircraft material, mechanical transport, and stores, were disembarked at Berbera; and our efforts to prevent the Mullah hearing of our intentions and possibly making good his escape by sea were redoubled. His Majesty's ships *Ódin* and *Clio* closely patrolled the seaboard and an armed dhow was posted off Mait, manned by naval ratings under the command of a Sub-Lieutenant.

During November the Mullah's dispositions in the Jidali area had been accurately ascertained. He himself, his council of war, and his main force were established in his AarcwmatMedishe, twelve miles north-west of Jidali. The forts at Jidali, Surud, and Baran were strongly held. Large numbers of rifles had been left behind under guard at Tale for want of ammunition; and it was estimated that the Mullah's riflemen in the Jidali area did not exceed one thousand.

The following is a summary of the detailed plan of operations :—

(a) The independent air attack on the Mullah's *haroun* at Medishe was to be delivered from an advanced base at Eil Dur Elan on or about the 21st January.

(b) In the first week in January, Eil Dur Elan was to be occupied by the Camel Corps and wing ist/ioist Grenadiers. The Air Ministry had stipulated that there should be no movement of troops eastward of Eil Dur Elan until it should be too late for the Mullah to obtain information of this move before the attack from the air could be delivered, so that the aeroplanes might find, if possible, an unsuspecting, concentrated, and stationary enemy. Owing to this stipulation, the Camel Corps were not to move eastward until two days before the aerial attack. They were then to take up a position at Durdur Dulbeit, whence they could strike in any direction after the aerial bombardment of the Jidali area.

(c) Simultaneously with the air attack, the King's African Rifles, operating on the Las Khorai-Musha Aled line to prevent the escape of the Dervishes into Italian territory, were to attack and occupy the Dervish fort at Baran.

(d) As soon as the main Dervish forces had been dispersed, a naval landing party from His Majesty's ships *Odin* and *Clio* were to attack and occupy Galbaribur, a Dervish fort within a few miles of the sea.

(e) The tribal levy of 1,500 men was to hold various posts on the Mullah's line of retreat southward to the Bagheri and to intercept Dervish fugitives and stock.

On the 19th January eight aeroplanes arrived at Eil Dur Elan from Berbera, and at 7 a.m. on the 21st six machines left to deliver the first aerial attack on Medishe. Owing to clouds and the difficulties presented by the intervening unmapped country,

which It had been impossible to reconnoitre from the air owing to the paramount necessity for secrecy, only one machine found the Mullah's *haroun* at Medishe. Four machines located and bombed the Dervish fort and stock at Jidali; and the sixth machine was forced to proceed to Las Khorai and land with engine trouble. It was naturally a bitter disappointment that all six machines had not located and bombed the *haroun*, for much had been expected from the bombardment. The scene, too, was well set for the venture. The Dervishes were as unaware of the termination of the Great War as they were of the existence of aviation. Moreover, no news of the expedition had reached the *haroun*.

And so, when the six machines were seen approaching, the Mullah was at a loss to know what they might be. Anxiously, he enquired of his advisers. A few guessed the truth, but hesitated to communicate their guess for fear of the death that was the recognised punishment for the bearer of evil tidings. Some, with the Oriental's native *penchant* for flattery, suggested that they were the chariots of Allah come to take the Mullah up to heaven. A certain Turk suggested that they were a Turkish invention from Stamboul come to tell the Mullah of the Sultan's victory in the Great War. This was the conjecture that was apparently accepted and seemed to be confirmed when one machine was seen to return and fly closer and closer to the *haroun*. Supposing that this speedy return indicated that the occupants of the machine desired to converse with him, the Mullah hastily donned his finest apparel. Leaning on the arm of Amir, his uncle and chief councillor, he sallied forth from his house and took up his position under the white canopy used on State occasions, to await the coming of the strange messengers.

Then the first bomb fell. Amir was killed outright and the Mullah's garments were singed. Thus the

first shot all but ended the campaign. For the Mullah's death would have led to the immediate disintegration and surrender of the Dervish forces except, perhaps, for a few die-hards. In the subsequent bombing and shooting up on this day the total casualties in the *haroun* amounted to some twenty killed and twenty wounded. On the 22nd and 23rd January, aerial attacks were delivered twice daily, the machines descending to 800 feet bombing and to 300 feet machine-gunning. The *haroun* was set on fire by incendiary bombs, and the stock was scattered in all directions. An extensive reconnaissance carried out on the 24th January revealed that the country round Medishe and Jidali was apparently deserted; and the Air Force Commander consequently decided to declare the independent air operations at an end and to issue instructions for the aeroplanes to engage in combined operations as from the morning of the 25th January.

Meanwhile the King's African Rifles contingent had moved out from Musha Aled at dawn on the 20th January at a strength of twenty-three British officers and 667 African combatant ranks with sixty-three *Illaloes*. After an arduous march they reached the vicinity of Baran fort in the early morning of the 23rd January. When the troops were within 600 yards of the main fort the Dervish garrison opened an enfilade fire which was kept down well by our machine-guns employing covering fire. At 500 yards the Stokes guns were brought into action, and the attack was pushed forward to 300 yards; but the effect of the Stokes gun fire on the forts appeared very slight, although direct hits were obtained on the roofs of the towers. By 4.30 p.m. it was clear that two alternatives presented themselves, either to make a costly assault on the forts or to continue the fight till evening and **then withdraw** and resume on the following day.

The Commanding Officer (Lieutenant-Colonel J. S. Wilkinson, D.S.O., M.C., Sherwood Foresters) wisely selected the latter course, and the force encamped for the night four miles south of Baran having engaged the enemy until after dark.

At 2.30 p.m. on the next day the attack was resumed. As the troops advanced the Dervishes maintained a brisk fire. The Stokes guns came into action at 270 yards and twelve direct hits were obtained on the roof of the towers within the parapets. But the Dervishes, defiant despite the heavy fire which must have seemed terrific in so limited a space, continued to hold out, shouting curses and abuse at the British officers. It was, therefore, decided to attempt to breach the fort with guncotton after dark. Charges were prepared accordingly, and at 7.45 p.m. a British officer, accompanied by a British warrant officer, moved forward, and, covered by machine-gun fire, tamped the charges against a corner tower. A loud detonation followed, but it was decided to await daylight to observe results. At dawn on the following day, a reconnoitring platoon found the Dervishes hurriedly retiring from the fort. Promptly opening fire, they rushed the main gate and occupied three of the four corner towers. The remaining tower was valiantly defended by one sniper, and it was not until a British officer had climbed the inside ladder and shot him with his revolver, after a hand-to-hand struggle, that the tower was taken. Only ten men of the Dervish garrison had found safety in flight. Baran had fallen into our hands; and the Mullah's line of retreat into Italian territory had been blocked.

While this operation had been in progress, the Somaliland Camel Corps under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Ismay had moved rapidly forward from Eil Dur Elan and had arrived early on the morning of the 21st January at Eil Afweina,

where a defensive post was constructed and an emergency landing-ground prepared. That night *Illaloes* were pushed forward to Gud Anod and Durdur Dulbeit. On the afternoon of the 22nd the supply column of 3,500 transport camels arrived. Eil Afweina was established as an advanced base with one month's supplies, reserve ammunition, a wireless telegraph set, and a section field hospital. It was garrisoned by 130 rifles, ist/ioist Grenadiers. One thousand seven hundred transport camels were retained here as a reserve. On the afternoon of the 23rd January the Camel Corps moved forward, with Colonel Summers, the Officer Commanding the Troops, and staff, followed by 1,000 transport camels carrying three weeks' rations, reserve Stokes gun and rifle ammunition, hand grenades, and explosives under escort of one company ist/101st Grenadiers and one dismounted company of the Camel Corps. By the early morning of the 27th, the mounted troops were within sight of Jidali fort.

In accordance with the preconcerted plan, the aeroplanes had been bombing the position. But the Dervishes had not been dislodged and the Camel Corps were therefore ordered forward at n a.m. As the troops advanced, the Dervishes fired over the top of the fort, but their fire was kept down by machine guns. The Stokes guns were then brought into action at 250 and, subsequently, at 180 yards. Twenty shells were dropped on the roof: most failed to detonate, but four breached the masonry, and it was only the number of small chambers on the ground floor and the thickness of the walls that saved the garrison from annihilation. But the Dervishes continued to hold out, firing and singing; and, as a dismounted offensive would have been very costly, it was decided to break off operations and renew the attack on the following day on the arrival of further shells, explosives, and grenades with the transport column. But on the following morning, it

was found that the Dervishes had completely evacuated the fort under cover of darkness.

Thus, by the 28th January, one week after the commencement of the operations, the Mullah's *haroun* at Medishe had been practically destroyed and his two principal forts in the northern area, Baran and Jidali, were in our hands. But, on the other hand, the ground troops had now to operate, gravely handicapped by the fact that the aerial bombardment had resulted in touch with the enemy being completely lost. The whereabouts of the Mullah and of the main body of the Dervishes was unknown. No prisoners had been taken and no deserters had come in.

The aerial bombardment of the 21st January had taken the Mullah entirely by surprise. Not only was he unaware that any expedition was being prepared against him, but, being entirely ignorant of the existence of aeroplanes, he had naturally made no arrangements to meet such an attack. As soon as the first bombardment was over, he had taken refuge in a cave some fifteen miles to the north-west where he deposited his two machine guns, which he had captured from us at Erigo and Gumburu, his arms, ammunition, and treasure. Here he hid oblivious of the fact that there were any ground troops in the field against him until the 27th January, when news was brought to him that Baran had been captured by the King's African Rifles, and that the Camel Corps were investing Jidali. He promptly decided to move southwards. Two bandoliers were issued to every Dervish and instructions were given for the packing and transport of the ammunition, treasure, and machine-guns. On the following morning, the 28th January, the Mullah embarked upon his *hegira* with 700 riflemen, and a large, but non-combatant, following, and all the *lares* and *penates* he could muster. He himself is said to have shared his pony with **his**

favourite wife. He successfully eluded the cordon of *Illaloes* ; and it was not until 4.30 p.m. on the 30th of January that a Dervish deserter, who had left his comrades on the road, arrived in Summers's camp and reported that the Mullah had broken south. Instructions were at once sent to the King's African Rifles to move *to* Jidali and to continue the operations in the northern area.

At 6 p.m. on the same day, the 30th January, the Camel Corps took up the pursuit of the Dervishes, who had now more than 48 hours start. Marching through the night they made Eil Der at 9 a.m. Here they crossed the main line of the Dervish retreat littered with discarded property. Small parties of Dervishes were seen moving in every direction driving vast herds of livestock. A considerable number of camels, cattle, and sheep, and some ponies were rounded up and handed over to the *Illaloes*. The Mullah was reported to be moving fast at the head of the retreat, and the column pressed on, reaching Gud Anod at 8 p.m. on the same day, and Eil Afweina at midnight, having covered 70 miles in 30 hours. With replenished supplies the column continued the chase at dawn *via* Ber Waiso. They reached Hudin at 6.30 p.m. on the 2nd February. Thus 150 miles had been covered in 72 hours. Animals and men were in sore need of rest.

During the Dervish flight southwards the Royal Air Force had not been idle. Isolated bands of Dervishes were bombed and shot up. Notably on the 31st January at Daringahiye, where a baggage column was located and attacked with bombs and machine-gun fire. This column consisted of the Mullah's personal following including his wives and sons : the Mullah himself was only three miles away hiding in a nullah. On the following day a large Dervish convoy with some 1,500 camels, 500 head of cattle, and 500 sheep and goats was attacked

with machine-gun fire from the air and bombs, and was thrown into utter confusion, breaking in all directions.

The presumption was that the Mullah was making for Abyssinian territory, probably the Webbi Shebeli, *via* Las Anod and Galadi; and it was an open question whether he would halt for rest in his stronghold at Tale *en route*. The first air reconnaissance over Tale was carried out on the 1st February, valuable photographs being taken. Hitherto our conception of Tale had been derived solely from descriptions of the fortress as given by Dervish deserters, and this conception proved to be accurate in almost every detail as regards the ground plan. But the photographs taken from the air revealed that the fortifications themselves were far more substantial than had ever been supposed.* On the 4th February three machines left Eil Afweina, which was now the Air Force advanced base, for an aerial bombardment of Tale. 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 one 20-lb. bomb was dropped on the Mullah's personal fort. But the material damage done was negligible. The machines then flew low, machine-gunning and setting fire to the Dervish huts inside and outside the fortifications with incendiary bombs. Fanned by a north-easterly wind the conflagration became general. Despite the terrible novelty of attack from the air, and the havoc that surrounded them, the Dervish garrison, to their credit be it said, valiantly returned the aeroplanes' fire.

As has already been narrated, it was part of the **plan of** operations that a tribal levy of 1,500 men should be formed to hold various posts on the Mullah's line of retreat southward to the Bagheri, **and** to intercept Dervish fugitives and stock. This

* A full description is given on page 282.



levy was organised and commanded by Captain Gibb, assisted by that other Nestor of Somaliland warfare, Risaldar-Major Haji Musa Farah, I.S.O. By the 19th January, two days before the first aerial bombardment of Medishe, 500 riflemen under 13 *akils* had been posted at Gaolo with orders to watch Tale, and the rest of the force was holding various posts on the Yaguri-Gerrowei line, Gibb himself having made Duhung his head-quarters.

At first the levy, isolated and without means of communication with the other forces employed on the operations, knew nothing of the march of events. But on the 1st February, the Governor was enabled to communicate by aeroplane both with Gibb and with the Somali leaders at the various outposts, informing them of the Mullah's retreat south and instructing Gibb to gain touch with the Camel Corps as soon as possible. On the morning of the 4th February, tribal horsemen arrived at Duhung from Gaolo and reported that the Mullah and a few men had entered the Tale fortress at midnight on the 2nd/3rd February, followed in the early morning by some 60 horsemen. A later message, while confirming the arrival of Dervish parties at Tale, expressed doubt whether the Mullah himself had entered the fortress. Gibb immediately left for Gaolo with all available tribal rifles. Meanwhile small parties of Dervishes were continually arriving at Tale, but many were being intercepted and killed by members of the levy.

It was now apparent that all the remnants of the Dervish force from the Medishe and Jidali area were converging on Tale; and the tribal leaders, although they had no proof, were convinced that the Mullah was in the fortress. A large party of Dervishes escorting the Mullah's main caravan had been successfully engaged by the Tribal Levy while trying to make their way into Tale. During the fight many notorious Dervishes had been killed,

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including Haji Sudi, the ex-naval interpreter, and Ibrahim Boghol, the commander of the Mullah's forces in the northern area. The captures comprised many of the Mullah's personal belongings, his correspondence, his clothing and jewellery and, in addition, 1,400 camels, 450 cows, 50 ponies, 51 rifles, 2,000 rounds of ammunition, and 300 camel loads of supplies.

The Camel Corps had joined Gibb on the road to Gaolo which they reached together on the evening of the 8th February. On the following morning the Mullah's second son Abdurrahman Jahid, a feckless youth, and his uncle, Haji Osman, who had deserted the *haroun* overnight were brought into the Camel Corps *zariba*. They stated that the Mullah was in Tale but would have left the previous evening, had it not been for the presence of 200 men of the Tribal Levy who were in the vicinity watching developments. They were confident that the Mullah would leave that night. Acting on this information, which might or might not be trustworthy, Ismay and Gibb decided to make a demonstration round Tale that evening.

Accordingly Gibb, with 800 of his footmen, marched out of Gaolo at 2 p.m., and the Camel Corps, with tired animals and but two days' rations, were to follow an hour later. Information was immediately received that the Tale garrison were making a sortie in strength against the 200 Tribal Levy, and had driven them back about one and a half miles. Pressing forward rapidly Gibb was in time to see the Dervishes retiring back towards the fort and, directly afterwards at 5.30 p.m., he observed a party of seventy to eighty mounted men emerge from the northern gate and ride away in a northerly direction. Presuming, and presuming correctly, that this was the Mullah and his personal following, he sent word back to the Camel Corps, whose dust was already visible behind

him on the horizon. He himself, finding the forts lightly held, attacked with all available men. General panic ensued. Men, women, and children rushed precipitately out of the forts and by 7 p.m. the Tribal Levy were in occupation of part of the fortress. A number of riflemen, however, remained in two of the forts, some of whom escaped during the night, others surrendering in the morning.

It was most fortunate that Tale was so easily captured. Had the Dervishes made a determined stand under the cover of their immensely powerful forts, the troops would have become involved in what, with the limited weapons at their disposal, must have proved a difficult and costly operation. The booty included 600 rifles, 450 camels, and 40 ponies. Mohammed Ali, the Mullah's Turkish adviser, and the Arab masons, who had constructed the fortress, were among the prisoners.

It was past sunset by the time the Camel Corps arrived outside Tale and too late to take up at once the pursuit of the Mullah and his horsemen. But a strong patrol was sent forward with orders to get on their tracks and to be ready to guide the column as soon as the moon rose. This patrol returned just after midnight to report that, owing to the hard gypsum surface, it would be impossible for the column to follow the tracks till daylight. Moving at dawn the Camel Corps followed the course of the Mullah's flight, which first led north and then, turning right-handed, south by east. After crossing the river bed at Halin (23 miles) the tracks divided and by nightfall the column had encountered nothing but exhausted ponies and the debris of the retreat. Moving on again by the moon at 3 a.m., the column was checked by the tracks breaking up completely and patrols had to be sent forward. Three miles south-west of Galnoli on the frontier, the tracks converged again.

At this point, Ismay decided to send back all

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but the fittest animals and to continue the pursuit with 150 rifles, three machine-guns, and two Stokes guns. At 3.45 p.m. a Dervish picket was rushed and information obtained that an enemy party was watering in the Bihen nullah a mile ahead. This party was surprised in the nullah, twelve of their riflemen being shot down at close range and the pony troop, galloping round the right flank, accounting for the rest of them. The party consisted of the Mullah's wives, children, and near female relatives: their escort of 30 riflemen had been killed where they stood. At 9 o'clock on the following morning, the 12th February, pickets reported that a force of Dervish horse and foot were approaching Gerrowei. Leaving 20 men to guard the Mullah's wives and children, Ismay at once gave chase with the rest of his force, and came up with the enemy in the broken ground north-west of Gerrowei stream. Our ponymen galloped straight through the Dervish foot holding a narrow neck, and then joining hands with another patrol went off in pursuit of the Dervish horse. These were eventually galloped down and only a handful escaped.

No reliable news of the Mullah's whereabouts had been obtained from any of the captives, and an exhaustive drive was now begun. At midday on the 12th one of the patrols reported the tracks of a few horsemen, footmen, and camels further south moving into the Haud. Ismay left Howard to continue the drive; and with 20 ponies, all that could now go out of a walk, and one camel troop, padding along well in the rear, he set out to hunt down the fugitives in the hope that this at last might prove to be the Mullah's own bodyguard. By 3.30 p.m. he had overtaken the party, which consisted of nine men under the Abyssinian Fitaaurari, Bayenna, who for some years had been in the Dervish camp. Two of the enemy surrendered, the remainder

died fighting. It has since transpired that the Mullah himself watched the fate of the Fitaurari's party from a neighbouring hill. His feelings can better be imagined than described. Throughout the flight from Tale the Mullah, with his eldest son Mahdi, a brother, and three chosen Dervishes had separated from the main party, keeping well to the east and seeking safety in isolation. None of the main party knew his whereabouts. He himself avoided all water-holes and other dangerous places, always sending his ponies to water under the escort of his three chosen Dervishes, and always moving to a new position before they had returned for fear they might be captured and be tempted to reveal his position. Thus he made good his escape into Abyssinian territory and finally crossed the Haud to Galadi.

The march of the Camel Corps from the sea to the southern borders of the Protectorate was a magnificent feat of endurance. Regardless of privation and fatigue, with men and animals on half, and afterwards on no rations, with their camel transport abandoned almost from the hour they left Tale, they had pursued until there was nothing more to pursue. *Ne plus ultra*. As the remains of the column wended their way back to their comrades at Gaolo, leading their animals and sick with hunger and physical fatigue, but even more sick at heart because the quarry they had sought so long had eluded them when almost within their grasp, they could at least console themselves with the reflection that no mounted troops in the world could have done more under the peculiar conditions existing in Somaliland. If a fugitive leader, thinking only of his own personal safety, be prepared to abandon his family and his followers, and seek refuge in the desert, he becomes a wellnigh impossible objective for a military pursuit. During the hunt not less than sixty of the Mullah's personal following,

including seven of his sons, seven other close relatives and four of his *kasoosi*, or immediate advisers and leaders, had been killed ; and six of his sons, his five wives, four daughters and two sisters had been captured. Only his eldest son Mahdi, a brother, and a few notorious Dervishes made good their escape.

In the meantime the northern area had been swept clear by the King's African Rifles and the ist/ioist Grenadiers, who had rounded up all the cattle, camels, and sheep which, in their haste, the Dervishes had left behind in the vicinity of Jidali and Surud. A naval contingent from the *Odin* and *Clio* had captured the last Dervish fort in the north, that at Galbaribur, but not without a gallant defence being offered by the garrison, all of whom faced high explosive shell, machine-gun fire, and Mills bombs, until not one defender was left alive. This, too, despite the fact that the fort and the surrounding huts had been bombed by the Air Force prior to the naval attack.

Thus this remarkable campaign was brought to a successful conclusion within the space of three weeks. It was the first time that aeroplanes had been used in Africa as the main instrument of attack, rather than as an ancillary arm ; and those who are concerned with aircraft as a weapon of offence, or in the policing of Africa and Asia, watched the results of the experiment with the most profound interest. It is unfortunate that no very definite conclusions can properly be drawn from the results achieved, and that consequently the most extravagant claims in regard to the efficacy of aircraft under such conditions have been preferred. It is indisputable, of course, that such a grim experience as an aerial bombardment, against which no counter measures can prevail, has a most demoralising effect on the savage African.

During German air raids many Londoners repaired

to their cellars; during the Medishe air raids the Dervishes made for the nearest caves. But the effect of such demoralisation would seem to be but temporary. Certainly it did not deter the Dervishes at Jidali and Galbaribur from facing ground troops immediately afterwards with their traditional valour. For example, the defenders of the Dervish fort at Galbaribur were subjected to an aerial bombardment prior to attack from the ground. But the naval contingent certainly did not attack a demoralised garrison. On the contrary they found the "bravest of the brave"; and they did not capture the fort until the last defender was killed. To quote the words of the official despatch* on the operations, Galbaribur was "defended with great bravery and the utmost contempt for death by a band of resolute fanatics, who held out to the last/' This is hardly "utter demoralisation," the condition of mind which is generally claimed to have been produced in the Dervishes by aerial bombardment. The defenders of Baran, who offered an almost equally valiant resistance, had not been attacked from the air, and the fort fell to the unaided onslaught of the King's African Rifles. From Tale and Jidali, too, no very definite conclusions can be drawn, as the issue in both cases is confused. The former was sacrificed to enable the Mullah to make good his escape; the latter was evacuated during the night of the 27th/28th January, and the garrison joined the other Dervishes on their retreat south on the following afternoon.

It is difficult to judge whether this evacuation was due to demoralisation effected by the preliminary aerial bombardment or was part of the Mullah's plan for the general evacuation of the Jidali area. The latter theory seems to be by far the more probable as the small garrison had shown no signs of demoralisation

* Second Supplement to the *London Gazette* of the 1st November, 1920.

on the preceding day and had held out, firing and singing, until the Camel Corps attack was broken off at dusk. It is true that the various parties of Dervishes trekking south from Jidali to Tale, and thence into Abyssinian territory, did not offer any effective resistance when attacked and outnumbered by the Camel Corps or the Tribal Levy. But, then, it cannot be said that the Dervishes, when in small parties in the open, ever at any time gained any great measure of success against organised forces of superior numbers and arms; and it requires a considerable stretch of the imagination to attribute the defeat and annihilation of such parties on this occasion entirely to demoralisation caused by the suddenness of the various attacks from the air.

The conditions under which the Air Force operated were to them unique. They had many difficulties, not previously experienced, wherewith to contend; and it was only due to the resource displayed by all ranks that such difficulties were overcome. Moreover, when judged as an ancillary arm, they achieved during these operations a very outstanding success. In such circumstances, it is with the very greatest reluctance that I have felt compelled to question the truth of the legend that the twenty-one-year-old Dervish problem in Somaliland was only solved by the use of aircraft, and that, had it not been for the demoralising effect of the aerial bombardment, the Dervishes would still be disturbing the peace of North-Eastern Africa. Such a legend is dangerous in the extreme, leading, as it has done, to a belief in some quarters that the savage peoples of Africa and Asia can be controlled from the air and that the troops and police on whom we have relied in the past should be replaced in whole or in part by aircraft. Such extravagant conclusions are certainly not justified by the air operations in Somaliland, nor, I am told, by our experiences in India and Iraq.

The truth is that such demoralisation as may have been detected in the Dervish ranks was primarily attributable to the six years' war of attrition which preceded the operations. As has already been recorded, defeats in action, the ravages of the Mullah's executioner, and desertion had reduced the Dervish numbers from some 6,000 fighting men in 1913 to less than 1,000 by the close of 1919. The severe punishment meted out to Dervish raiding parties on successive occasions had left an indelible impression on the minds of the ever-dwindling Dervish community; and it is noteworthy that no sooner had the Camel Corps appeared in the vicinity of Jidali than the Mullah decided to retreat to Tale. Equally as soon as the Camel Corps began to advance on Tale, the Mullah evacuated the fortress and fled into Abyssinian territory. Indeed, if it had been necessary to depend on the local troops solely as the weapon of offence, it is improbable that the Mullah would ever have consented voluntarily to stand in any position with his main force, weak as it had become, and face an attack by the Camelry. Six years' experience of their machine guns and mobility had implanted a very wholesome respect for the Somaliland Camel Corps in the Dervish mind.

But the actual results achieved were, perhaps, the most remarkable aspect of the operations. In twenty-one days, the Dervish forces which had defied us for as many years, had been wiped out, with the exception of the all-important Mullah and the five other Dervishes who had escaped with him into Abyssinia. The whole of the Dervish stock had fallen into the hands of the Government troops or the friendly tribesmen : all the Dervish rifles and the two machine guns lost by us at Erigo and Gumburu had been captured; all the Mullah's personal belongings had been seized ; **all his forts had been stormed, and all his family, with the**

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exception of his eldest son Madhi and a brother, were either dead or captives. At the close of the campaign all that was left of Dervishism in British Somaliland were the walls of Tale, the demolition of which was carried out two months later by a company of the Camel Corps after the arrival of a further supply of explosives from Egypt. In this connexion, those who have followed this narrative with sufficient interest to realise that this remarkable stronghold was built by the Mullah's Arab masons in 1913, and that no building existed at Tale prior to that year, will find diversion in the following extract from an archaeological paper in a well-known illustrated weekly :—

" The deepest interest attaches to the fortresses which were the lairs of the Mullah's raiding bands. Tale, his principal stronghold, consisted of a stone wall-ring of enormous strength and thickness, with a most elaborate system of guard-chambers and bastions. The ground plan shows an irregular oval, the interior space being sparsely strewn with rude huts and shelters. On the right side is what appears to be a garden. On the left side of the oval the fortifications consist mainly of a simple wall with square bastions, but there are traces of enclosures and chambers even here. Apparently, for some reason, attack was not expected on this side, but on the other sides all the elaborations of fortifications have been lavished. There are along this sector nine cylindrical towers, some roofless, linked together by blocks of thick-walled corridors and chambers, forming a whole series of casemates. Outside this central fortress are no fewer than thirteen detached towers. Two of these are shown in the lower view, and they are manifestly of great size and strength, as may be gauged by comparing them with the petty modern buildings alongside.

" The problem of the origin of these great stone-built strongholds in an almost desert land is one of extraordinary interest. The ramparts, with their projections and re-entrant angles, suggest a comparison with the ancient Egyptian forts on the Nile. It seems almost impossible that these buildings can be as ancient as the twelfth dynasty (about 2000 B.C.). Yet we must remember that Somaliland is now generally considered to be that Land of Punt which the Egyptians regarded as their motherland, **and** for which they ever

retained a religious veneration. Again, this curious ring-wall, with its elaboration of guard-chambers and casements, remind, one very much of the palace-fortresses of Northern Syrias such as Zenjirli. But perhaps it owed its foundation to the Himyarites of South Arabia, which lies so close at hand. Separated from Somaliland only by a narrow stretch of sea, there is no reason why the Himyarites during their glorious period should not have extended their influence over Somaliland. Tale may originally have been a Sabaeen colony in the gold-beanng region 'across the water.' The forts, too, resemble the tower-dwellings of Yemen. Be this as it may, one feels that the Mullah and his barbarous followers could never have erected such imposing works. In all probability they entrenched themselves among the ruins of a mighty past, and we can only deplore the lack of definite archaeological knowledge."

Unfortunately, the urgent representations of various amateur archaeologists begging that a Curator of Ancient Monuments might be installed at Tale to preserve and restore this remarkable example of ancient Egyptian architecture reached the local Government too late to prevent the place from being razed to the ground ; and consequently a golden opportunity of increasing the slender revenues of the Protectorate by organising tours to Tale for archaeologists and other sightseers was irretrievably lost.

Our total casualties throughout the campaign amounted to one British officer slightly wounded, three native soldiers killed and one wounded. Neither the Royal Navy nor the Royal Air Force suffered casualties. If the cost was trifling in blood, it was equally trifling in money ; and a House of Commons, outraged at hearing that a campaign had been initiated and concluded without reference to honourable members, was somewhat mollified to learn that the operations were estimated to have cost the comparatively small sum of £83,000. Had the rupee stood at is. 4d. instead of rising incontinently to, 2s. nd. the estimate would have been proportionately less.

The news of the downfall of the Dervish power was

greeted with enthusiasm by the home pressmen, who, misguided by a characteristically false news cable from Nairobi, added a panegyric of the efficacy of the tank (*sic*) in savage warfare to their usual recommendation in favour of a railway from Berbera to Bohotle. There was, indeed, only one cloud on the horizon. The Mullah himself, whose capture or death had been the main object of the expedition, was still at large—not in British territory, it is true, but in close proximity among the Ogaden. A despatch published in the *London Gazette* described his position in the following terms :—

" The Mullah himself is still at large—but as a discredited refugee, without possessions and power. Adherents, at all events, he will never get, for Dervishism as a cause in Somaliland is ended."

No more reasonable summary of the situation in Somaliland could have been devised at the time ; but in certain respects it was to prove somewhat at fault.

CHAPTER X

THE DEATH OF THE MULLAH

AFTER watching the death of Fitaurari Bayenna and his party from behind a rock on a neighbouring hill, the Mullah moved with all haste into the uncontrolled Abyssinian zone known as the Bagheri country, which extends from Walwal south-west to the Webbi Shebeli. This region has always been accursed, a no-man's land populated by fanatical Ogaden tribes, and a refuge for outlaws and malcontents from the surrounding territories. The virtual masters of this paradise for the lawless were several hundreds of well-armed Dervishes under the leadership of the Mullah's brother Khalif. From Walwal, Wardair, and Gorahai, where they had constructed powerful forts, they had since 1903 terrorised and dominated the various sections of the Ogaden Somalis on whose assistance they could rely for any nefarious or warlike enterprise. Khalif's Dervishes had always, since the first expeditionary days, been of the greatest assistance to the Mullah in arranging and securing for him the safe passage of arms and ammunition through Abyssinian territory ; and their forts had represented a base in neutral territory on which the Mullah or the Dervishes operating in the British Somali country could safely retreat in case of need.

It would be difficult to imagine any more suitable sanctuary for a fugitive from justice. The Abyssinians, fearing alike the fevers of the lowland climate and the martial qualities of the tribesmen,

have always steadfastly declined to administer in this zone despite the most urgent representations of our Government; and international law precludes a foreign force from entering this territory in pursuit of fugitive offenders. Prior to the Mullah's arrival, twenty-five *askaris* of the King's African Rifles, who, after murdering their officer, had got away with their rifles and a machine gun, had found a welcome among the Abdulla section of the Ogaden, who live on the north-west bank of the Webbi Shebeli. Such desperadoes were typical of the non-Ogaden inhabitants of the district.

How the Mullah would fare in such surroundings was the problem of the moment. Would he succeed in recruiting yet another Dervish army from the warlike Ogaden, whose fighting strength has been estimated at 45,000, and from the many other lawless elements around him? Or would he find short-shrift in the continuous and sanguinary intertribal fighting in which he was sure to find his hosts involved? Such were the questions which the Government of British Somaliland asked itself. On the one hand, there was no reason to believe that he had forgotten any of the arts and devices whereby he had so often succeeded in surrounding himself with followers in the years gone by. On the other hand, his overwhelming defeat in the field, his new poverty, and his old unfeavoury reputation for frightfulness must surely give pause to those who might otherwise have been willing to aid him in an attempt to resuscitate his fallen fortunes. Again, would not Khalif resent the advent of a rival, albeit a brother, who might wrest from him the power which he had wielded for so many years? As can readily be imagined, there are many stray bullets in this uncontrolled back of beyond looking for a billet somewhere. But it was not to be long before all such questionings were to be set at rest.

As soon as the operations had been declared at an end, one of the Mullah's wives, his old uncle, Haji Osman, his sister, and the chief Dervish executioner, a grim and terrible reincarnation of Koko, whose boast it was that he could not sleep at night unless he had achieved at least twenty mutilations and deaths in the course of the day, were sent post-haste from Tale in the Mullah's tracks with a letter from the Governor offering him immunity from punishment if he were willing to surrender to the British Government. The following is a translation of the letter :—

" This letter is sent from the hand of the British Wali at Tale to the Dervish Mohammed bin Abdulla Hassan.

" Three weeks ago I wrote a letter* to the Dervishes offering them *aman* if they surrendered. I do not desire to see Somalis killed ; and our weapons and your weapons are not the same. You are a Somali *wadad*. I represent the British Government, who have just beaten in war the German and the Turkish people. Your strength and our strength thus is not the same. But until now you have regarded yourself as strong, and it was thus no use my writing to you. To-day the position is different. Every man's hand is against you for the wrong you have done. On one side there is Osman MahmoudJ and on another Ah KenedidJ. They are your enemies. You cannot go to them. In Abyssinia Lij Yasu has gone and Ras Taffari, who is a friend of mine, rules in his place. He and I make our arrangements in agreement. And you know you cannot fight against us. In this war I have had one soldier killed at Baran. That is all. Your losses you know ; so do I. You, *wadad*, are now a fugitive and your people are in my hand. You have lost your leaders and your stock and your women and children, your forts, and everything you possess. With me your people are safe. It is not for me to kill Somalis. Therefore, now I say this to you. If you yourself will surrender to me, as have your people, and within forty days from now, then I will give you *aman*, I am the British Wall, and I do not break my word.

* During the air operations, the Air Force dropped Arabic pamphlets over the various Dervish settlements, offering pardon to all Dervishes who would surrender.

† Somali equivalent for Mullah.

‡ i.e. The Mijjertem Sultans.

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I will give you a place where you can live in your *tarika* and follow your *dm*.* I am not concerned with religion, but only with the government of the people. If you ask Sheikh Ismail Ishaak and the other Somali Sheikhs with me they will tell you I speak truly. For forty days therefore I make you this offer of *aman*. I do not wish to carry the war further, for it is my work to restore peace amongst Somalis. And if you come in, you will be given safe conduct to me by my people. But a letter is no use. It is no time for words. And if you do not come yourself within forty days then I shall know you do not wish *aman*. Your wife carries this letter from me to you.

(Signed) " G. F. ARCHER,

" Gaolo, 17th February, 1920.

" Governor."

On the 25th March, Sheikh Ali Guhar, once Q'adi of Tale, who had escaped with his master, arrived in the Governor's camp with the Mullah's reply. He was accompanied by old Haji Osman, the Mullah's uncle. The Sheikh was not, however, empowered to treat for terms on the Mullah's behalf; and, as will be seen from the following translation, the letter itself was non-committal and was obviously written to gain time :—

" Thanks be to God • that is all.

" These few words are from the man who is oppressed, bin Abdulla Hassan, to the oppressor without cause. I am a Hashimi by descent, Shaffei by doctrine, a Sunm and belonging to the Ahmedieh *tanka*. This is for my part.

" After that, I state I received your letter on the 22nd Jummad el akhir, and on the same night I replied without delay to what it contained. You say that the Dervishes have become weak and I am alone without following, all my people having run away: that on your side you have lost but one man, while many of mine have been killed. and that you have caught all my intimates, relatives and family; and that you have beaten the Turks and the Germans. And then you tell me to rejoin my people, otherwise you will not let me be. That is the meaning of what you have written.

" And to this I reply. To what you have said about the Dervishes growing weak I can say nothing, neither yes nor no. God is almighty, and if He desires to confer power or to weaken, it is for Him to do so. You say my people have run away. My answer is yes. Some of my people have run

* i.e. Religion.

away and some will never leave me until I die. But those who have left me will be of no use to you. You say you had only one man killed : I cannot question that. You say you have killed many of my people : that statement also I cannot contest or deny. You say you have beaten the Turks and the Germans. It is not for me to enter into that. You say you have caught all my closest relatives : that is perfectly clear. You then tell me to return to my family: there is something in this as even a fool would appreciate. But if there were sincerity in your words, then you would not have declared that you were going to send my family away on ships.* For if you wanted to make peace between us, you would have done better by me than this. In the first place and in the middle you have never done me any good : you should now have offered me some consolation.

" And now, if what you say is true and you want to offer me terms, then let me be myself among the people. But if you are not agreeable to this, that is to say, that we arrange amongst ourselves, then I want the right to place my case before you and I want justice from the people. And if there is anything proved against me, then I have no complaint to make. And by this means, if I have my rights, I shall be satisfied, and I shall never get up again. I shall never trouble the Habr Yums nor the Habr Awal nor the Habr Toljaala.

" As to Abdi Derreh, he says he killed Sheikh Yussuf because he alleges he killed 60 of his people. But, in the name of God, I ask you to enquire whether this *wadad* ever killed as much as a goat in the whole of his life. I, too, I have killed nothing. And if I killed anything from you in the world, or it has been done under my orders or with my consent or with my knowledge, then show.

" This and salaams,"

(Unsigned.)

The two Dervish envoys reported that the Mullah was at a place named Shinileh, some forty miles west of Gorahai, and more than 300 miles south by west of Berbera, as the crow flies ; and it was clear from what they said that the Mullah was endeavouring to secure the support of the Ogaden in his vicinity. In these circumstances, it was decided to frame conditions of peace with the least possible delay on

* **An untrue report.** His relatives were confined in Berbera and subsequently were given their freedom.

the basis of the Mullah being allowed to establish a *tarika* somewhere in the western district of our Protectorate. The Dervish envoys expressed themselves as being prepared to urge their master in his own interests to accept the proposed terms. But in order that nothing should be left undone that might persuade the Mullah to come to terms, it was also decided to send with the letter conveying the conditions of surrender a strong deputation representing the most responsible Somali Sheikhs and Akils on our side.

Accordingly, the three most influential Sheikhs in the country, representing the three leading *tarikas*, and seven Akils belonging to the tribes, which had suffered most at the Mullah's hands, were selected in the hope that their words and counsel might prevail. The head of this deputation was Sheikh Ismail Ishaak of the Salihieh *tarika*, who is by far the most influential religious leader in the Somali country with a reputation for sanctity and learning which extends from Berbera to the Juba River. So great was the terror which the Mullah's name inspired in the minds of other Somalis, even after his dramatic downfall, that it was only with the greatest difficulty that Sheikh Ismail and the other delegates could be persuaded to undertake this mission, despite the fact that one of the most solemn requirements of Somali custom and the Mohammedan religion is that in all circumstances an *ergo*, or peace deputation, must be regarded as sacrosanct. In fact, I have no hesitation in saying that it was only due to the Governor's personality and influence that Sheikh Ismail and his companions ever consented to undertake so dangerous a task. Indeed, when the proposal was first broached to them one night at Sheikh in Government Cottage, Sheikh Ismail, gathering his robes about him, fled from the room to vomit on the veranda outside from sheer fright.



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If the proposition seemed so terrible to a learned and dignified prelate like Sheikh Ismail, it is hardly surprising that the less sophisticated Somali should have regarded the delegates as dead men almost before they had started. Many days before they could have reached the Mullah's camp at Shinileh, it was reported that the Mullah was holding the delegates as hostages against the restoration of his family and all his possessions. A few days later they were reported dead, and blood-curdling stories of the tortures and mutilations, to which they had been subjected prior to death, were implicitly believed throughout the land. So much so that they were all "presumed dead," and their possessions were duly distributed among their heirs.

The following is a translation of the letter containing the peace terms which the *ergo* took with them :—

" *To Seyyid Mohammed bin Abdulla. May God preserve htm in good health.*

" After compliments, I inform you this letter is sent with important people, recognised leaders of the *dm* (religion), the Government, and the tribes. Their names are .

" Sheikh Ismail bin Sheikh Ishaak, head of the Sahniah *tarika*.

" Sheikh Abdillahi bin Sheikh Madder, head of the Kadariah *tarika*.

" Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, head of the Andarawieh *tarika*.

" Akil Ali Adan, Habr Yunis, rer Sugulleh, baha Deria.

" Akil Jama Madder, Habr Yunis, rer Sugulleh, rer Robleh Sugulleh.

" Akil Haji Ibrahim Warsama, Habr Yunis, rer Sugulleh, baha Sugulleh.

" Akil Hirsi Hussein, Habr Yunis, rer Hussein.

" Akil Haji Abdillahi Jama, Habr Toljaala, rer Dahir.

" Akil Ahmed Yasin, Habr Toljaala, Sulamadoo.

" Akil Ali Gulaid, Habr Awal, rer Ahmed.

" These men are being sent to you as an *ergo* to discuss *aman* and to offer terms. And you are aware that under Somali custom and the Mohammedan *sharieh* as well as under Government practice, an *ergo* has safe conduct from all,

and is entitled to the hospitality extended to strangers, so do not abuse this rule. They are my delegates and the words they bring are sincere and true. If you do not accept the terms I offer, then return the *ergo* in the way in which they have come, i.e. in safety. God is the judge of what is right. But if you accept my terms, then come with my delegates in *aman* so that all men may know you come in this manner. I have treated your *ergo* with kindness, and I now send them back to you. That is one thing.

" Now, with regard to your letter I need say nothing, for it does not make your intentions clear ; and in sending a reply many people advise me I am wasting time. This may be true. But your *ergo* swear on the Q'oran that you desire *aman* : and I feel it is better to effect peace by settlement than war, if it is possible. So I have sent you this letter under my signature, offering you terms of peace in case you wish to end a quarrel of 21 years and live in immunity for the rest of your days. You have tasted the bitterness of war. You will do well to try the consolations of comfort.

" The conditions I offer are :

" First, I will assign to you a locality on the *Galbeid* (western) side, suitable for grazing stock and making gardens where, with your people, you can establish a Dervish *tarika*. And I will restore to you your children and your relatives now in my hand. Their names are recorded by your envoys Sheikh Ah Guhar and Osman bin Sheikh Hassan.

" Secondly, the stock you bring with you will be yours, and if it is not enough then I will restore to you sufficient to meet the requirements of your people, stock, pay, and so forth, so that your *tarika* will be on the same footing as other *tarika* under the protection of the Government. I will not interfere with your religion : and if you desire to go to Mecca you will be able to go as others, in *raha*, Government affording facilities.

" Thirdly, you on your part will have nothing to do with the ordering of the tribes by Government; for this is a matter dealt with through Akils, not Sheikhs, who are concerned only with the administration of the *Shart eh Mohammedieh*.

" Fourthly, if any disputes arise between you and the tribes-people, the matter will be referred for the orders of Government. And the Court will be open to you as to others for the hearing of cases and for the giving of fair and impartial judgments.

" It is now for you to accept these terms or to reject them. There is nothing between yes or no. And if you accept, come with my *ergo* within a space of forty days.

(Signed) " G. F. ARCHER,

" Governor, British Somaliland."

" Burao, 7th April, 1920.

" P.S.—As regards your children and relatives, of whom it has been reported to you that they have been sent away by Government in ships, that is untrue. Ask Sheikh Ali Guhar about this."

It was with much trepidation and many misgivings, then, that the deputation set out from Burao on the 9th April, 1920, accompanied by the two Dervish envoys Sheikh Ali Guhar and Haji Osman. After sixteen days' travelling they found themselves very close to Gorahai on the evening of the 25th April. At this point the Mullah's uncle and one of the *akils* went forward to see whether there was anyone in the Dervish fort. As these two approached the walls the watchman from the tower heard them talking and fired two shots in their direction. Whereupon Haji Osman cried out, " Do not shoot! For I am Haji Osman the Dervish." They were then welcomed into the fort where they found a garrison of some fifty men. They were hospitably treated, were given some camel milk, and were allowed to sleep within the fort that night. The garrison sent a message to the Mullah saying that an *ergo* had come from the British Government and that the Mullah's envoys had returned with them.

On *the following morning the rest of the deputation joined them. Heavy rain, and perhaps their many forebodings, constrained them from* continuing their perilous journey that day. But on the 27th April, accompanied by a guide, they left Gorahai and started on the forty miles which now separated them from the Mullah's *haroun* at Shinileh. On the following afternoon six riflemen from the Mullah's camp met them. They spoke no word to them, but next morning they signalled to them to follow. Two of the riflemen were left with the baggage camels; and the deputation were led by the other four riflemen from the main road into

the thick bush. Once inside the bush, the riflemen ordered them to dismount. When they had done so, two of the riflemen went on to the Mullah. After one hour twenty horsemen, all armed with rifles which were loaded, arrived. They immediately took away the rifles of the *ergo* and then stood aside, talking among themselves. The *ergo* greatly feared they were about to be shot. But this was not to be. After some parley the leader of the horsemen advanced and said :

" When the Mullah asks you for your news, say that you are the *ergo* from the British Government, but that there is a large army of British Somalis just behind you under Musa Farah coming to attack the Ogaden/'

The significance of this strange instruction is not far to seek and is a remarkable example of the Mullah's cunning in negotiation. There was apparently in the Mullah's camp an Ogaden deputation come to discuss the terms of an alliance which the Mullah had proposed to the tribe ; and it was his desire that the British *ergo* should make the statement set forth above in the presence of the Ogaden *ergo*, in the hope that the latter would believe that the Mullah was now at peace with the British Government and that a tribal army was coming to attack the Ogaden, so that the best policy for the latter in the face of such danger would be to ally themselves with the Mullah and thus to ensure their own safety under the cover of his *aman*.

After receiving this instruction, the deputation were ordered to mount. Within half an hour they found themselves approaching the Mullah's camp. As they came nearer women and children ran towards the party shouting and screaming, but the Mullah's horsemen drove them off. Before halting or entering the camp they were taken round and round in a circle several times. They noticed that all the huts were separated some distance apart,

contrary to the usual Somali custom, and that the Mullah's hut was under a clump of trees—an arrangement which was doubtless due to fear of further attacks from the air.

At last they were halted some 75 yards from where the Mullah, the terrible man with the goatee beard, was seated on the ground, not Turkish-wise as might be expected, but, owing to his corpulence, with his legs extended straight in front of him. He sat thus in the centre of a circle of his followers, arrayed in a good white *tobe* and a white pugaree. The *ergo* afterwards described him as being about six feet tall, very fat, with a huge stomach, but strong withal. They observed that his skin was a light shade of black, but not copper colour. They noticed the two firebrands on his forehead, and also the scar on the top of his head caused by an operation performed on him by a medicine man in the days of his youth, which was generally believed by the Somalis to have brought about his insanity. On the right of the Mullah was his brother Khalif, a man of medium height (about 5 ft. 9 ins.), normal Somali figure, and light copper complexion. In the circle around the Mullah were some 100 riflemen, all in varying garb, mostly old, dirty, and inadequate.

When the *ergo* were halted they were not allowed to dismount, but, still mounted upon their ponies and camels, they were kept stationary on the spot where they halted for some two hours. During this time not a word was spoken by anyone in the camp. The *ergo* looked at the Mullah and the Mullah looked at them. To any men in the position of the *ergo* such silence would have been a very trying ordeal, but to Somalis, who are the most inveterate chatterboxes, the suspense must have been terrible. After these two hours of silence had elapsed, the Mullah gave the order to the twenty Dervish horsemen to dismount. He then sent

word to the *ergo* to dismount also. This they did, handing over their animals to those standing by. They were then told they might sit down on the ground.

Then followed another hour of studied silence even more disconcerting to the *ergo* than the first two hours. With many apprehensions, they watched the Mullah, poking the ground with his stick and turning his head disconsolately first to the right and then to the left. At long last a man named Haji Firhat came up to the *ergo* and said : " The Mullah has told me to ask you whether this is a meeting of Christians and Mohammedans, or of Mohammedans only ? " To such a question the *ergo* feared to return any reply. Then the chief Dervish envoy Sheikh Ali Guhar, who throughout acted as the intermediary between the *ergo* and the Mullah in order that the latter might not be defiled by direct converse with infidels, was called up to give the Mullah the names of the *ergo*. The Mullah wrote down their names with a thorn upon his bare arm. Then from all sides, but at set intervals, voices from the bush were heard singing the Mullah's religious wa* song, " Mohammed Salih."

It was quite clear that it was always the same party of singers from whatever direction the sound might come, and that they were being moved to different points of vantage round the camp in order to give the impression of numbers. During the singing about 150 horsemen, chiefly Ogaden, cantered up and walked their horses round the circle. They were followed by some 500 footmen armed with rifles, in separate parties of 40, singing: " The Unbelievers are beaten : the Unbelievers are not circumcised/" Finally the footmen and horsemen formed a circle around them, blowing the Somali horn—a large shell.

Then the Mullah rose up and ordered his people to remove the saddle from his horse to give the

impression that he was going to leap on to its back as in his more agile days. But apparent[^] he soon thought better of it and told them to saddle up again. He then walked round behind the place where the *ergo* were seated and sat down some four yards away with his back to them. He called for Sheikh Ali Guhar, who replied, " I am here, Seyyid." Then all the *ergo* turned round and faced him, and he turned round and faced them. The following duologue then ensued:

The Mullah: Who is that man on the left, Ali Guhar ?

Ali Guhar : Ibrahim Warsama*, Seyyid.

The Mullah : And who is the next man ?

Ali Guhar : Abdullahi Jama, Seyyid.

The Mullah: Oh Allah! Is that Abdullahi Jama ? Just look at his face ! Just see what havoc being an unbeliever does to a man's face ! My God, I knew his father, Jama Hashi, who was a very good man and, what is more, a very handsome man. And I knew this man when he was a little boy and he was far from being ill-looking. He used to be red. But just look at the colour of his face now and see what a Galla (unbeliever) looks like. He has turned black. Who is the next man, Ali Guhar ?

Ali Guhar: Jama Madder, Habr Yunis, rer Robleh, Seyyid.

The Mullah : And the next man ?

Ali Guhar: Ali Adan, Habr Yunis, rer Segulleh, ba Deria.

The Mullah : And the next ?

Ali Guhar : Ali Gulaid, Habr Awal, rer Ahmed.

The Mullah : And the next, Ali Guhar ?

Ali Guhar : Abdullahi Mattarf.

* The *ergo* should have been accorded the honorific Moslem title of Haji in this and other cases, but obviously this would not have been well received by the Mullah.

| The reply should have been " Abdullahi Sheikh Mattar," for he is the son of one who was the most distinguished Sheikh in Somaliland.

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The Mullah: Why do you say Abdullah! Mattar? Why do you not say Sheikh Mattar's son? Why do you hide these things? And who is the next man?

Alt Guhar: Ismail Ishaak*.

The Mullah: What do you say? Say it again.

Alt Guhar: Ismail Ishaak, Seyyid.

The Mullah (shutting his eyes in mock horror): Oh Allah! Allah! Allah! Just have a look at this infidel. See how being an infidel has changed him. I have something to say to you. They tell me you now claim to be a Dolbahanta. You are nothing of the sort. You were my slave. Your father was my father's slave. No one knows who your father's father was. For your father was a foundling in the bush. No woman would marry him until I arranged to marry him to Fatima Gorbat (white ankle). You are the offspring of that marriage, and now you pretend you are a Sheikh and a religious man. See what your religion amounts to. Where are the people who have witnessed your misbehaviour in the garden of your *tarika* at Suxodi? f . . . (Addressing the whole *ergo*). None of you are Mohammedans. You are the Gallas, infidels. I can prove it to you. For it is so written in five different places in the Q'oran. No one can read the Q'oran as I do. All the followers of the English, the Italians, and the Abyssinians are infidels. All the people at Mecca and Medina are infidels. The Sali-hieh are infidels. Mohammed Salih himself was a

* As has been already stated, Sheikh Ismail Ishaak is the chief religious leader of the Somali country, with a great reputation for piety. He visits Mecca every year, and is generally revered. He was, therefore, the chief butt for the Mullah's witticisms. The fact that there is a substratum of truth in the Mullah's statements about his birth adds poignancy to his abuse.

f At this point certain Ogaden came forward and gave evidence of various alleged immoralities. Their accusations were so obscene that modern taste forbids their reproduction.

pauper from the Sudan : a petition-writer. I made him what he was.

The Mullah then arose, gathering his robes around him, and went to his hut; and the *ergo* were taken away to a *zariba* where they were given food. Every day they fared sumptuously, their daily ration consisting of four basins of rice, two basins of meat (representing the whole of one eating camel which had been killed for them), coffee, honey and much milk. The Mullah detailed his uncle to taste their food to show it was not poisoned, doubtless because he feared that one of his fanatical followers might poison them without orders.

On the next day the Mullah visited them in their *zariba* and, again using Ali Guhar as the intermediary, he enquired from the *ergo*, whom he always addressed as soldiers, whether they would like to become Mohammedans. They discreetly said that they would, and he then brought a Q'oran and made them say after him, " There is no God but God and Mohammed is the Prophet of God." He then instructed them to read the Q'oran, but Sheikh Ismail, admittedly the chief Somali exponent of the Q'oran, wisely replied that they were illiterate and could not read. The Mullah then pretended to read to them from the Q'oran :

" This man whom they call the Risaldar* is an infidel. Any Jemadar is an infidel. Havildars are infidels. All Naiks are infidels. The Police are infidels. Every one who wears a red pugareef is an infidel. The transport drivers are infidels. Men who receive medals are infidels. Men who wear crowns on their shoulders are infidels. Men who wear Christian trousers and coats are infidels, and the men who sit with them are infidels."

At this point, one of the *ergo*, bolder than the others, interposed and enquired what he was to do if all his wives and children and property were with the

* Risaldar-Major Haji Musa Farah, I.S.O.

† The Somaliland Police wear red pugarees.

infidels. The Mullah replied that he should forsake them all and follow him. He then enquired of the *ergo* whether it was not the case that Musa Farah was the man who had made them all infidels. They perforce admitted that this was so.

After returning to his house, he sent a message by Sheikh Ali Guhar saying that now that they were no longer Christians, but Mohammedans, he would present the *ergo* with nine girls to be their wives, and they must give him nine girls in return. To this the *ergo* agreed. He then wrote down the names of nine girls he proposed to give them, and they similarly wrote down any names that occurred to them.

One day the Mullah told them that the *askaris*, who had deserted from the King's African Rifles with their rifles and machine gun, were living with the Abdulla section of the Ogaden, about one day's march away; and they were ordered to write a letter to them, over their own signatures, saying they had joined the Mullah and advising them to do likewise. "If you don't join the British Government and the Mullah, the British Government will send aeroplanes to attack you." The *ergo* had no alternative but to carry out these Machiavellian instructions. Similarly, the *ergo* were instructed to tell the Adone, a negroid slave tribe living near the Webbi Shebeli, that their Abyssinian and Italian masters were powerless; and that, if they did not join the Mullah, the friend of the British, the latter would attack them and send aeroplanes against them. Afterwards, the Mullah called up a man whom he had suitably primed, and said, "Bring forward the messenger from the Abyssinians." When the reputed messenger came forward, he said, "What is your message?" He replied, "All the Adone you have belong to the Abyssinians. Send them back at once." Then he turned to the Adone and said, "What do you wish to do? The

Abyssinians desire you to return." They replied, " We want to stay with you, Seyyid. We don't want to go back to the Abyssinians/ "

One night a man whom the Mullah had posted on picket duty desired to go off on his own with some Bagheri and raid the Abdulla. His intention was discovered, and the Mullah then collected all the various *ergo* in the camp to witness his punishment. He was stripped naked and terribly chastised with a Somali whip over face, chest, and belly ; and, at last, when he fell senseless to the ground, they placed grass round him and set fire to it.

On the night of their arrival the *ergo* handed the Governor's letter to Sheikh Ali Guhar, who told them he could not take the letter to the Mullah until such time as he asked for it. Between 8 and 9 o'clock that night, however, the Mullah called Ali Guhar to his house and instructed him to open the letter and let him know the contents. After the *ergo* had been five days in the camp, he collected everyone together, including the *ergo*, and, though usually of a most reticent nature, dictated his reply to a clerk some distance away in a loud voice, so that all might hear. He clearly desired that the assembled Ogaden might know the reply and see that he was making a peace under which he would be given back the great wealth he had lost. The reply ran as follows :

" This letter is sent by me to His Excellency the Governor Archer.

" I inform you that your messengers reached me safely in good health, and all here were pleased with them. I have accepted the peace terms they brought me willingly, but not under compulsion, namely:

" 1. You are to return to me my stock, consisting of camels, cattle, sheep and goats, ponies, mules, and donkeys, my slaves, firearms, coins, *anbar* (scent), diamonds, pearls, feathers, and reading books.

" The golden coins amount to £100,000.

" The feathers are the feathers of 900 ostriches.

" Piastres, 30,000.

" Dollars, 20,000.

" Other small coins not counted.

" 20 boxes of *anbar* (scent).

" Five boxes of diamonds.

" 1,000 pearls.

" Two pieces of ivory.

" Very many firearms, among which there were four machine guns (two large and two small), four other guns (one of four shells, one of two, one of one, and the other small), thirty Maxim guns, many revolvers, and all kinds of rifles.*

" This is one condition.

" 2. The other is that you return to me all those of my men who may have fallen into your hands either on desertion from me or captured by you in war.

" 3. The third condition is that you give me back all my land as well as the buildings demolished by you, and that you also afford me *aman* with no enmity on the part of the Warsangli, Mijjertein, or others.

" Further, there should be no trickery or ill-conduct, and no one is to interfere with our religion or business; there should be no interference with this.

" Oh, Governor Archer! I am Seyyid Mohammed! I know you! When lately I was ill-treated by the Italian Government, who caused trouble between myself, the Mijjertein, the Hawiya, and the Ogaden by giving firearms to my enemies, I warned the Italian Government that I was offended with them on account of their ill-treatment, and that I had moved to the British side of the border to avoid all *fitna* (quarrels). My intention then was to send you a letter with some of my elders and a caravan; but, before this could be done, you attacked me without any cause or fault of mine, and I am oppressed. Further, the aeroplanes have oppressively attacked me, and this is a great abuse to a man in my position. You have also killed forty of my children who were infants and innocents. You are, therefore, liable for their blood-money.

" I have heard that you are a good **man** and there are others who are my enemies. I am, therefore, quite willing to undertake your settlement."

On one occasion the Mullah gave the following diverting account of the last expedition to the *ergo* and others in the camp :—

* Unfortunately, all this treasure existed **only in the Mullah's** mind.

" I was troubled by the Mijjertein j and I, therefore, moved to Jidali in the hope of peace and quiet. I intended to arrive at a settlement with the British Government. But without any provocation whatever the Government attacked me. I did not mind the birds (aeroplanes). They cannot hurt me. Their droppings fell on the top of my white canopy, but could not touch me. The only thing that did hurt me was that in the Arabic letter which the aeroplanes dropped, I was described as Mohammed bin Abdulla, Ogaden, Bagheri, rer Hamar. That was dreadful. Do I look like a Bagheri, rer Hamar? They are Midgan, outcasts. Do I look like a Midgan? Just look at my beauty.* My origin apparently has been forgotten. I am the son of Ras Mikhail's brother, f and I am the cousin of Lij Yasu, the Prince of Abyssinia, and this I can prove. (Turning to an Arab.) You have read it in the Q'oran? (The Arab assents.) The British brought twelve birds against me. Four they borrowed from the French. Six I killed and two British officers, a very bad man named Lawrance,} and another. They have returned the four they borrowed from the French; so only two remain."

Old Haji Osman had taken his little daughter, one of our captives, back with him from our side to the *haroun*. As none of the Mullah's wives or family were returned also, this greatly angered him. " You have brought back none of my wives—nothing but this little cat."

After six days the Mullah moved camp about twelve miles west. He visited the *ergo* in the morning and told them to start. This was the first intimation they had of any move. Leading their camels for some 200 yards until they were level with the Mullah, they saw four men assist him to mount, lifting his leg. Some forty Midgan and Adone danced in front of him. He then attempted to convince the *ergo* of his prowess as a horseman. He was, in actual fact, mounted on an aged and

* Here followed three very obscene stories of his relations with certain Ogaden.

† C/. p.

‡ Major A. S. Lawrance, D.S.O., District Commissioner, whose connexion with Somahland dates from the early expeditionary days. He still enjoys perfect health.

very docile hack; but he jerked the Somali curb and kicked its flanks so vigorously that it reared slightly.

He remarked to the *ergo*, "I always have to break in all our wild young Dervish horses." He then moved past, straining at the curb, followed by six women mounted on ponies,* wearing bandoliers, and carrying small carbines. As the women cantered past they beat their ponies, and the Mullah shouted to them, "Don't you kill those ponies of yours!" They eventually camped at Burgayer, where they stayed seven days. Then the Mullah told the *ergo* they could return to our side, and he reminded them that they should send the nine girls they had promised him at the same time that his family was restored. This they agreed to do. They were very amply provided with animals for the return journey, both for transport and eating purposes; and they returned safely to Burao on the 26th May, much to the chagrin of their relations who, as already stated, had given them up for dead and had divided their possessions amongst them.

These adventures of the Somali sheikhs and notables in the Mullah's camp have been narrated in some detail and almost in the very words they employed when describing their experiences to me at Sheikh two days after their return. Trivial as many of these experiences were, I have ventured to set them down in detail primarily because they may be of general interest in that Sheikh Ismail Ishaak and his companions were perhaps the only responsible Somalis who ever had converse with the Mullah during his latter years, and secondly, because they furnish convincing proof of the madness which has so often been disputed. So far from treating

* This would greatly shock a Somali, who regards a woman as an inferior creature who should not ride a horse or own a rifle. The best woman in the land should not, in a Somali's considered opinion, ride anything nobler than a donkey.

with a responsible leader with whom peace conditions could usefully be discussed, they found a monomaniac who believed that he was the only true adherent of Islam left in an otherwise infidel world.

The *ergo* had been able to form a very shrewd estimate of the situation in the Ogaden region. It was clear to them that the Mullah was likely to gain considerable success in his efforts to concentrate around him a united Ogaden; and they were further impressed with the fact that such a concentration would be a very serious menace to our tribes especially at the time of year when they are forced to move southwards across the frontier in search of grazing. A series of successful raids would provide the Mullah with the stock wherewith to feed a large following, and with the rifles and ammunition with which he might reinstate himself as a power in the land. In short, three months after the annihilation of his forces he was within measurable distance of a triumphant return to British territory. Almost before the *ergo* had voiced these sentiments there was to be striking proof of the wisdom of their forecast. For a party of Khalifs Dervishes and Ogaden made a successful raid on our tribes living near the southern frontier, driving off a large number of stock and killing many men, women, and children.

For some years past the British Government had forbidden its tribes to raid the Ogaden in Abyssinian territory; but the latter, uncontrolled by their Government, had been free to advance into British territory and loot our tribes living near the frontier whenever they wished. On the whole, our subjects had abided loyally by the Government order, but, in so far as they were by far the stronger, it had naturally been most irksome to them to do so. They now decided that the only course open to them was to advance in force against the

Dervish-Ogaden elements and smash them before they could become a yet more serious menace.

All the responsible leaders were of this opinion, and when they approached the local Government to ask if they might put their project into effect, there seemed to be no further justification for adhering to a one-sided arrangement whereby our people, though the stronger, were restrained by their Government from raiding across the border while the Ogaden, free from all the shackles of civilised government and openly hostile to us, were at liberty to attack British subjects in British territory as and when they pleased. Consequently Akil Haji Mohammed Bullaleh, commonly known as Haji Waraba, or the holy hyaena, on account of his truculent and martial qualities, was allowed to organise a tribal army of some 3,000 Habr Yunis, Habr Toljaala, and Dolbahanta fighting men. Towards the end of July, 1920, they reached the Mullah's *haroun* at Gora'h, west of Shinileh, where the Mullah and some 800 Dervish and Ogaden riflemen were concentrated. Khalif and the Mullah's eldest son Mahdi had but recently died of the smallpox which was ravaging the district. The attack was delivered at dawn.

All who stood and fought were killed by our tribal army; and some 60,000 head of stock and 700 rifles, numbers which give some idea of the growing strength of the Dervish-Ogaden concentration, were afterwards brought back into British territory. At the first onslaught, Haji Waraba himself, anxious to win the price set on the Mullah's head, had made straight for the Mullah's hut only to find that its occupant had fled. He must, however, have been taken very much by surprise : for his tea was still hot in its cup and his skull cap lay beside it on the ground. After calling upon the riflemen to hold up the attack until he had

had time to get away, he had galloped out of the camp with a few of his intimates, intent as usual on saving his own skin.*

From this time onwards the movements of the Mullah became difficult to ascertain. He seems to have wandered for some time, but eventually he settled down at Guano Imi, a hill, half a day's march from Imi, at the head waters of the Webbi Shebeli in the Arussi country. Here he arrived with some three or four hundred followers in October, 1920. Feverishly, they built thirteen forts which they made as strong as possible. As soon as the Fitaurari, commanding the nearest Abyssinian garrison, heard of the arrival of the party, he sent one of his officers to ascertain who the invader might be, and why he had entered Abyssinian territory. The Mullah received the officer well, and said that he had been beaten in battle by the British and had come to Abyssinia for protection.

He sent the Fitaurari four rifles and a revolver as presents and asked for some provisions in exchange. But none were forthcoming and the Mullah's messengers were thrown into chains. Then sickness, probably influenza, and famine fell on the Mullah's camp and on the 23rd November, 1920, he himself died after six days' illness. He was buried in a hut, a small tomb with a dome being erected over his body, the doors and windows of the building being then filled in with bricks. Most of his remaining followers died of sickness and hunger at the same time ; and the few that were left are said to have dispersed after his death to eke out a precarious livelihood by begging.

* Cf. the Kaiser to the Crown Prince at the end of the Great War : "My Dear Boy,—As the Field-Marshal cannot guarantee my safety here and will not pledge himself for the reliability of the troops, I have decided, after a severe inward struggle, to leave the disorganised army. . . . Till the troops start their march home, I recommend your continuing at your post and keeping the troops together."

Such was the ignominious end of the man who had defied and successfully eluded the British Government for more than one~and twenty years, the indignity of a death from influenza contrasting strangely, almost uncannily, with the glamour of a life devoted to one great ambition. From a purely European point of view, he must be regarded as a romantic, but none the less consummate, scoundrel. In the hearts of his fellow[?] countrymen, however, he will live for ever as a national hero for reasons that I propose to examine in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XI

EPILOGUE

MANY years ago one of the most famous pioneers of our East African Empire met a caravan *en route* to Mombasa to trade. Observing that the physique of the men who led the caravan differed from that of the tribes then known to him, he enquired of his Baganda policeman who these strangers might be. The reply was as prompt as it was contemptuous. "Somalis! they no good. Each man his own Sultan!" It is this contempt for duly constituted authority, combined with an ardent love of freedom, that is the most outstanding feature of the Somali character. Jack is as good as, nay, better than his master. Youth has no respect for age, nor poverty for wealth, nor ignorance for wisdom, as Europeans understand these terms. And yet, paradoxical as it may seem, the power that riches and prestige bring is the greatest ambition of a Somali's life. To be in a position to give orders to your fellows, to be able to say to one man "Go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh"—that to the Somali's mind is the *summum bonum* of earthly existence. But the power that the Somali worships can only be obtained by rapine and slaughter and other means abhorred by British administrators.

In short, the *pax Britannica*, however much it may be to the advantage of the poor and weak, can only be regarded by the strong and capable as an intolerable check on their ambitions and aspirations. The risings and movements in Mohammedan

countries under Christian rule that are commonly attributed to a wave of fanaticism can generally be traced back to an unsatisfied thirst for power. "Kill the infidel!" is merely the war-cry with which the ambitious rebel seeks to attract followers to his standard and to justify his revolt in the eyes of his fellows. When the Mullah wrote: "I wish to rule my own country," he was giving expression to his true desires. When he wrote, "You have oppressed our ancient religion," he was seeking to justify his actions to himself, to his followers, and to the world at large.

The European Power that deliberately goes to war to acquire new territories, or to serve her national ends in some other way, earnestly seeks, and invariably finds, some high and noble motive to cloak the baser issue. Similarly, the Moham-medan rebel knows that he must disguise the fact that his ends are purely mundane and selfish; and he, therefore, proclaims to friends and foes that he fights for the glory of God. The Mullah, of course, had no more claim to suzerainty over the Somali country than John Jones of Peckham Rye has to the throne of Great Britain; but, none the less, in the eyes of the Somali, to whom Might is Right, he had such claims as ability and courage and personality confer on any man, however lowly his origin may be. The ambitious John Jones of Peckham Rye is content to satisfy his aspirations by one of the many legitimate avenues that Democracy has opened for him: he knows in his heart of hearts, although he would never admit it, that it is only his own personal limitations that will bar him from the greatest prizes that his country has to offer. But the uninstructed Somali has very different conceptions of the meaning of power and of the divers paths that lead to it.

It may not be without interest, in this connexion,



RISALDAR-MAJOR HAJI MUSA, FARAH, I.S.O.

to compare for a moment the Mullah's career with **that of** the most distinguished Somali on our side, Risaldar-Major Haji Musa Farah, LS.O., of the **Habr** Yunis tribe, who has so often figured in these pages. The latter was born about the same time as the Mullah in the early 'seventies and was of equally lowly origin. Cast adrift by his tribe to earn his own living, he selected the calling of a boot-black in Aden. Subsequently, he enlisted in the Aden Water Police. His high qualities earned for him rapid promotion in the non-commissioned ranks and subsequently a transfer to Bombay. When Sir Eric Swayne was on his way to command the first expedition against the Mullah, he "discovered" Musa Farah at Bombay and took him to Berbera.

Outstanding abilities and successes in the field, when in command of tribal levies, soon earned promotion to Risaldar-Major, then the highest rank to which even a native of India could attain. But it was in a civil rather than in a military capacity that Musa Farah won his laurels. His shrewdness in council, his natural intuition, his exceptional knowledge of the Somali character, and his ability in collecting and sifting native intelligence fitted him admirably for the post of Chief Native Adviser to His Majesty's representative, a post which he has now held with distinction for some twenty years or more. A man whom the King has delighted to honour on several occasions, Musa Farah has been the trusted confidant of successive British rulers of Somaliland for two decades. But the most eloquent testimony to his personality is the hatred for "Musa Egarreh," to which the Mullah's letters so often give expression.

Musa Farah, or "Bunty," as he has been aptly dubbed, is now in the fifties, and is, therefore, **for a Somali, an old man.** If he were a man **to ooast, he could boast that he is the most**

distinguished Somali of his time within the limits that the *pax Britannica* allows and as the western world understands distinction. From the Sovereign he has so faithfully served he has received orders and decorations, a sword of honour, and other distinctions. For a Somali, he is a rich man, possessing camels galore and many a fine herd of cattle. He has the affection and respect of the many British officers who have been proud to account him their colleague and friend. His fellow countrymen know full well that there is nothing, be it good or ill, which they may do that is hid from him. Consequently, they fear him. Wealthy and distinguished and influential, he has achieved as much as any Somali may achieve by legitimate methods under British rule. So much from the European point of view.

But from the Somali standpoint Musa Farah's prestige is as naught compared with that of Mohammed bin Abdulla Hassan. In the first place, Mohammed was a leader of the faithful against the infidel: he neither sought nor received favours from the Christian protector whom Musa Farah has served so loyally as guide, philosopher, and friend. Secondly—and this is, in truth, the *crux* of the matter—although Musa Farah could say to one man "Go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh/" he could only do so subject to certain very strict limitations imposed by an alien Government with very different conceptions of right and wrong. The Mullah, on the other hand, could say to his executioner of any man who had displeased him, "Remove him from my sight"; and the unfortunate victim would not only be done to death, but would be subjected first to the most exquisite tortures. It is true that at long last the Mullah was and Musa Farah is. But, in the eyes of Islam, death can have no sting for such as Mohammed.

Intensely as the Somalis feared and loathed the man whose followers had looted their stock, robbed them of their all, raped their wives, and murdered their children, they could not but admire and respect one who, being the embodiment of their idea of Freedom and Liberty, never admitted allegiance to any man, Moslem or infidel. On the other side of the picture, should the British Government surrender its protectorate in Somaliland to-morrow, Musa Farah would be impelled to flee the country, abandoning all that he has so faithfully earned by his many years of distinguished service to the King-Emperor. The alternative to departure would be certain death for the man who perforce has made many bitter enemies among his fellows while serving the British *raj*. Enough has been said to show that, in the eyes of their fellow countrymen, the Mullah was an infinitely more distinguished man than is Musa Farah, although the abilities of both were not dissimilar. Cynical as it must seem, I have often reflected that, perhaps, the only reason why Musa Farah did not play the role of Mad Mullah was that the idea of a Dervish revolt, with a leader who in the moment of final victory could claim suzerainty over all the Somali tribes, happened to occur to Mohammed first.

Let it be admitted then that, viewed through Oriental spectacles, the motives that inspired the Mullah's revolt were not such as to merit whole-hearted condemnation. It is true they were selfish motives, but they do not differ vastly from those that have actuated other megalomaniacs in all parts of the world, who will send thousands to their death to further their own personal ambitions—egoists *lov* whom the passage of time has, strangely enough, Hvon the respect, and sometimes even the admiration, of posterity.

As we pass from the motives that inspired the revolt to the methods whereby the Mullah controlled

his Dervishes and carried on a twenty-one years' war against the British Government, we are again faced with the great contrast between a European and an Oriental outlook on life. Tyrant and cut-throat, slayer of innocent women and children, cattle-thief, profligate, and libertine—a thousand opprobrious epithets fly swiftly to the lips of the European when judging such a man ; and the hard facts justify such vituperation.

But is not such criticism somewhat beside the point ? True, the Mullah was a tyrant, but it was because he knew no other means of disciplining his undisciplined compatriots. He was, of course, well aware that there is not in British Somaliland a single Sultan or *akil* or native ruler who has any control over his tribe so effective that it would impel the tribesmen to do anything they disliked from loyalty to their duly constituted leader. To control the Somalis, or any other native race, we rely primarily on the British officer's character and personality, and the respect and affection it inspires. The Mullah's credentials were somewhat similar save that fear and awe, and not affection and respect, were the emotions he had to arouse in the hearts of his followers. This was why he cut offending throats and slew innocent women and children. He was a cattle-thief because his followers had to live. He was a profligate and libertine because to his Oriental mind sensual pleasures are the rewards of power on earth.

But, whatever views may be taken of the Mullah's motives and methods, there can be no question of the greatness of his personal achievements. To prove it would be to tell the tale again. Blood-thirsty tyrant as he was, he remained, even when his fortunes were at their lowest ebb, an object of veneration to his followers who invoked his name not only in the heat of battle, but also at the cold hour of execution. And there is yet another quality

displayed by him throughout his career that must surely call for the admiration of every man, I mean, his extraordinary tenacity of purpose. Faced by a European Power, which was at once strong and anxious for peace, he was never apparently tempted to abandon his ideals and to come to terms. Even when he seemed to have lost everything but his personal freedom, he scorned and scoffed at the extremely favourable peace terms that were offered to him. Instead of seeking comfort and repose for his declining years as the head of a *tarika* in the comparatively rich western area of our Protectorate, he preferred to start once more to regain all that he had lost. No misfortune broke his spirit. One's dramatic instinct prompts one to wish that he had chosen to die in battle, either leading his Dervishes in one final glorious charge or, like the Khalifa, kneeling on his prayer mat, with his face to our guns. But, on due reflection, one must confess there is much to be said for the man who does not know when he is beaten.

For one and twenty years Dervishism has spelt economic stagnation for Somaliland and ruin for its inhabitants. It has involved, directly or indirectly, the untimely destruction of, perhaps, 200,000 lives. The known wealth of the country, its livestock, has been decimated while constantly changing hands during raid and counter-raid. All available Government funds have been expended on the maintenance of military forces to meet a situation happily unparalleled elsewhere in British Africa. Nothing has been left for education, for the encouragement of agriculture, for the development, or even a survey, of the country's mineral resources. In some savage countries, war brings compensating advantages. In the Sudan, the final destruction of the Dervish power left the country with 500 miles of railway, 900 miles of telegraph, and a flotilla of Nile steamers, wherewith to promote economic development. But,

greatest boon of all, the glamour of the Mahdi and the Khalifa, and the deeds of Gordon and Kitchener, had appealed to the imagination of the British public, so that when the victorious General appealed for funds to extend the benefits of education to the Sudanese, no less than £80,000 was subscribed within a week and the remaining £20,000 was forthcoming soon after.

Such were the beginnings of the Gordon College, Khartoum, the model of what an educational institution in a Mohammedan country should be. It has been the greatest civilising influence in a Dependency which has made remarkable progress during the last two decades. For the prime object of the college has been the moulding of the character of the natural rulers of the country, so that they may have something greater than their prowess as warriors to distinguish them from their fellows, rather than the production of a noisome brood of denationalised clerks with a ludicrous conception of the English language and a nodding acquaintance with the three " R's," an achievement of which the average educational or missionary institution in tropical Africa is so inordinately proud.

It is Somaliland's misfortune that her twenty-one years' war left her with nothing but a few ramshackle Ford cars that have seen better days, and none of the other means of communication that make for the pacification of a savage country. It is a still greater misfortune that the British public had forgotten the Somali war many years before it was brought to a successful conclusion. Consequently, when the end came, the news was received more with derision than with rejoicings. " Mr. Punch " avowed that we lived in stirring times, that Willesden had won the London Draughts Championship, and that the Mad Mullah of Somaliland had been beaten again. And yet, of a truth, it was no mean or paltry event

in the history of our Colonial Empire. A problem that had long baffled our administrators, soldiers, and statesmen had been solved at last. But there was no glamour, no conquering general to be acclaimed a popular hero, no final and magnificent charge of desperate fanatics against a British square, nothing to appeal to the national conscience. Consequently, to make a public appeal for so modest a sum as £20,000 to start a Gordon College on a small scale in Somaliland would be to evoke ridicule ; and, worse than this, the Imperial Parliament would look askance at any suggestion for expending, say, £200,000 on the development of the country's resources in the present state of our national finances.

Four-and-twenty years ago Mr. Winston Churchill portrayed the ideals, the duties, and the difficulties of the administrator in primitive countries in singularly realistic and inspiring colours. In the " River War " he wrote :—

" What enterprise that an enlightened community may attempt is more noble and more profitable than the reclamation from barbarism of fertile regions and large populations ? To give peace to warring tribes, to administer justice where all was violence, to strike the chains off the slave, to draw the richness from the soil, to plant the earliest seeds of commerce and learning, to increase in whole peoples their capacities for pleasure and diminish their chances of pain—what more beautiful ideal or more valuable reward can inspire human effort ? The act is virtuous, the exercise invigorating, and the result often extremely profitable. Yet, as the mind turns from the wonderful cloudland of aspiration to the ugly scaffolding of attempt and achievement, a succession of opposite ideas arises. Industrious races are displayed stunted and starved for the sake of an expensive Imperialism which they can only enjoy if they are well fed. Wild peoples, ignorant of their barbarism, callous of suffering, careless of life but tenacious of liberty, are seen to resist with fury the philanthropic invaders, and to perish in thousands before they are convinced of their mistake. The inevitable gap between conquest and dominion becomes filled with the figures of the greedy trader, the inopportune missionary, the ambitious

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soldier, and the lying speculator, who disquiet the minds of the conquered and excite the sordid appetites of the conquerors. And as the eye of thought rests on these sinister features, it hardly seems possible for us to believe that any fair prospect is approached by so foul a path."

It might reasonably be expected that, with the overthrow of the Dervish power, the second and more humdrum phase in the civilising of Somaliland had been reached; and that the local administration would now be in a position to devote its energies to the development of the country so that the Somali tribes, or the "people without a pillow," as they were once aptly described, might experience for the first time in their history the benefits of peace and plenty. But, alas! it seems most unlikely that any such expectations will be realised in the immediate future. For the passing of the Mullah has been followed by a period of unrest throughout the Somali country. A proud and liberty-loving people have witnessed the subjection of the only representatives of their race who were not prepared to admit allegiance to any one of the four alien and Christian nations among whom the Somali country has been parcelled out.

Such an event has inevitably aroused a variety of emotions in the excitable and uninstructed Somali mind. Moreover, the overthrow of the Dervish power has also entailed the dissolution of the tie which for two decades united the Somali tribes to their British protectors in the face of a common foe. Suspicion and mistrust have replaced gratitude and loyalty. But great as the difficulties in Somaliland have been in the past, great as they are to-day, and great as they certainly will be in the immediate future, the time must surely come when the Somali tribes will take their place as happy and prosperous members of the British Commonwealth. That this

may not be long delayed is the earnest prayer of the many Englishmen who have known Somaliland in its darkest days and have learnt to like and respect a very proud, intelligent, and virile native race.

APPENDIX (A)

(GLOSSARY OF LOCAL EXPRESSIONS OCCURRING MORE THAN
ONCE IN THE TEXT.)

- Adone*.—A negro tribe whose home is on the banks of the Webbi Shebeli. They are subject to the Somalis.
- Akil*.—Headman of a tribal section.
- Atan*.—Peace ; a guarantee of freedom from molestation of punishment j the schoolboy's " *pax*."
- Askari*.—East African native soldier.
- Buggalow*.—Sailing vessel; *cf.* dhow.
- Buraad*.—Highwayman ; roving bands of robbers.
- Din*.—Religion.
- Ergo*.—A deputation ; delegates.
- Fttaurari*.—An Abyssinian military title, meaning commander of the advance guard.
- Fitna*.—Dissension and quarrelling; criminal intrigues or conspiracies.
- Galla*.—The pagans whom the Arab invaders of Somaliland conquered in the seventh century. Hence, infidel or unbeliever.
- Gantazmatch*.—An Abyssinian military title, meaning commander of the right wing.
- Gerazmatch*.—An Abyssinian military title, meaning commander of the left wing.
- Ghee*.—Clarified butter.
- Gurgi*.—Portable Somali hut, made of bent sticks and camel mats.
- Haroun*.—The Mullah's head-quarters ; the armed encampment in which he dwelt.
- I Halo*.—Somali scout.
- Jangli*.—Bushman.
- Jihad*.—Holy war of Mohammedans against infidels.
- Jilib*.—A tribal outpost.
- Kasoosi*.—Intimate associates and advisers.
- Kharia*.—Somali movable village.
- Kharia-wallah*.—A villager from the interior; hence an unsophisticated, rustic fellow.
- Miskin*.—A destitute.
- OIL*.—A Somali tribal army.

Rer.—A clan within a tribe.

Shaab.—Official residential quarter at Berbera, probably derived from the Arabic root meaning "separated."

Sharieh.—The sacred law of Islam.

Tarika.—Religious communities; settlements of Mullahs, corresponding to the Christian monastery.

Tobe.—The conventional dress of the Somali, made of cotton cloth and resembling the Roman toga.

Wadad.—Somali equivalent for Mullah.

Walt.—Governor.

Zariba.—A temporary barricade usually composed of thorn-bush and used to enclose and protect a camp.

Zikr.—Religious ceremonies.

APPENDIX (B)

(CHAPTER IV)

ORGANISATION OF COMMANDS AND STAFF—THIRD EXPEDITION

General Officer Com- Lieut.-Col. (local Brig.-General) W. H.
manding. Manning, Indian Army (with Obbia
Force).

OBBLA FORCE

Chief Staff Officer - Major (local Lieut.-Col.) G. T. Forestier-
Walker, Royal Field Artillery.
D.A.A.G. - Major C. L. Petne, D.S.O., Manchester
Regiment.
D.A.Q.M.G. for I. - Major E. M. Woodward, Leicestershire
Regiment.
Principal Medical Lieut.-Col. J. F. Williamson, C M.G.,
Officer. Royal Army Medical Corps.
C.R.E. - Captain W. B. Lesslie, R.E.
Chief Transport Offi- Captain M. L. Hornby, D.S.O., 56th
cer. Infantry.
Chief Supply and Captain H. de B. Codrington, Supply and
Transport Officer. Transport Corps, Indian Army.
Inspecting Veter- Major A. F. Appleton, Army Veterinary
inary Officer. Department.
Superintendent, Post Mr. C. W. Wynch.
Office.
Commanding Lines Major W. H. Rycroft, nth Hussars.
of Communication
and Base.
Staff Officer - - Brevet-Major A. R. Hoskins, D.S.O.,
North Staffordshire Regiment.

TROOPS

28th Mountain Battery (one section).
One company British Mounted Infantry (King's Royal Rifles).
Burgher Contingent.
Bikanir Camel Corps.
One company Punjaub Mounted Infantry.
No. 17 Company 3rd Sappers and Miners.
52nd Sikhs.

No. 15 British Field Hospital (one section).

No. 69 Native Field Hospital.

1st King's African Rifles.

3rd King's African Rifles (detachment).

5th King's African Rifles,

together with detachments of the following corps, services, and departments :

Wireless Telegraph.

Army Ordnance.

Marine Transport.

Survey.

Medical.

Army Pay.

Supply and Transport.

Remount.

Army Veterinary.

Field Post Office.

BERBERA-BOHOTLEFORCE

Commanding Berbera-
Bohotle Lines of
Communication and
Base

Lieut.-Col. J. C. Swann, 101st Grenadiers.

D.A.A.G. - - - Capt. J. H. W. Pollard, Royal Scots Fusiliers.

Intelligence Officer - Captain G. M. Rolland, Indian Army.

Senior Medical Officer Major W. S. P. Ricketts, Indian Medical Service.

Chief Ordnance Officer Captain H. A. Anley, Army Ordnance Department.

Supply and Transport Officer Captain L. M. R. Deas, Supply and Transport Corps, Indian Army.

Chief Transport Officer Brevet-Major C. Ballard, Norfolk Regiment.

In Charge of Telegraphs. Captain G. B. Roberts, Royal Engineers.

Inspecting Veterinary Officer Lieutenant H. M. Lenox-Conyngham, Army Veterinary Department.

TROOPS

Telegraph Section R.E.

3rd Sappers and Miners (detachment).

101st Grenadiers (half battalion).

107th Pioneers.

No. 65 Native Field Hospital.

2nd King's African Rifles.

Indian Contingent, British Central Africa.

Camel Corps

Mounted Infantry)
Infantry) 6th King's African Rifles and Somali Levies,

together with detachments of the administrative services and departments.

APPENDIX (C)

(CHAPTER V)

ORGANISATION OF COMMANDS AND STAFF—FOURTH EXPEDITION

General Officer Com- manding.	Major-General Sir C. C. Egerton, K.C.B., D.S.O.
A.D.C. - - -	Captain R. G. Munn, 36th Sikhs.
CS.O.	Lieutenant J. B. Egerton, 23rd Cavalry. Major H. E. Stanton, D.S.O., Royal Artillery.
D.A.A.G. -	Major R. G. Brooke, D.S.O., 7th Hussars.
D.A.Q.M.G.	Major C. O. Swanston, D.S.O., 18th Tiwana Lancers.
A.Q.M.G. (I.) - -	Major (local Lieut.-Col.) G. T. Forestier- Walker, Royal Field Artillery. Captain R. W. C. Blair, 123rd Out- ram's Rifles. Major F. Cunliffe Owen, Royal Artillery. Lieutenant I. S. C. Rose, King's Royal Rifle Corps.
Intelligence Officers	Captain A. W. H. Lee, 10th Gurkha Rifles. Captain G. H. Bell, 27th Punjaubis. Lieutenant R. D. Marjonbanks, 107th Pioneers.
C.R.E.	Major R. F. Allen, Royal Engineers.
Adjutant R.E. -	Captain W. B. Lesslie, Royal Engineers.
Superintendent Army Signalling.	Captain H. B. Protheroe Smith, 21st Lancers.
Provost Marshal	Commander E. S. Carey, Royal Navy.
Principal Medical Officer.	Lieut.-Col. J. F. Williamson, CM G., Royal Army Medical Corps.
Inspecting Veterinary Officer.	Captain C. B. M. Harris, Army Veteri- nary Department.
Assistant to Inspecting Veterinary Officer.	Captain W. A. Wood, Army Veterinary Department.
Director Supply and Transport.	Lieut.-Col. W. R. Yeilding, C.I.E., D.S.O., Supply and Transport Corps, Indian Army.

Assistant to D.S. & T.	Captain H. de B. Codrington, Indian Army.
Principal Ordnance Officer.	Captain E. P. Carter, Royal Artillery.
Survey Officer -	- Captain G. A. Beazeley, Royal Engineers.
Field Controller -	- Major T. H. Henderson, Military Accounts Department, Indian Army.

MOUNTED TROOPS

Officer Commanding -	Major (local Lieut.-Col.) P. A. Kenna, V.C., D.S.O., 21st Lancers.
Staff Officer, Mounted Troops.	Captain A. Skeen, Indian Army.

TROOPS

No. I Corps	(1st Company British Mounted Infantry.
	2nd Company British Mounted Infantry.
	3rd Company British Mounted Infantry.
	4th Company Somali Mounted Infantry.
	5th Company Somali Mounted Infantry.
No. II Corps	• \ 6th Company Poona Mounted Infantry.
	• 7th Company Umballa Mounted Infantry.
No. III Corps	1 Bikanir Camel Corps.
No. III Corps	Tribal Horse.
No. IV Corps	• Gadabursi Horse.

1ST BRIGADE

General Officer Commanding.	Lieut.-Col. (local Brig.-Gen.) W. H. Manning, C.B., Indian Army.
A.D.C.	- Lieutenant H. W. Peebles, Reserve of Officers.
D.A.A. & Q.M.G. Signalling Officer	Captain J. H. Lloyd, 6th Gurkha Rifles.
Brigade Supply and Transport Officer.	Captain H. S. Hammond, Dorset Regiment.
	Lieutenant J. A. Longridge, Supply and Transport Corps, Indian Army.

TROOPS

King's African Rifles (Camel Battery).
 No. 4 Company (Somali) Mounted Infantry.
 No. 5 Company (Somali) Mounted Infantry.
 Indian Contingent, British Central Africa,
 1st Battalion King's African Rifles.
 2nd Battalion King's African Rifles.
 3rd Battalion King's African Rifles.
 5th Battalion King's African Rifles.
 Somali Levies.

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2ND BRIGADE

General Officer Commanding.	Lieut.-Col. (local Brig.-Gen.) C. G. M. Fasken, 52nd Sikhs.
D.A.A. & Q.M.G.	Captain P. C. Elliott-Lockhart, Corps of Guides.
Signalling Officer	Lieut. A. W. H. M. Moens, 52nd Sikhs.
Brigade Supply and Transport Officer.	Captain D. G. Bryce, 76th Punjaubis.

TROOPS

28th Mountain Battery.
 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment (half battalion).
 27th Punjaubis.
 52nd Sikhs.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Officer Commanding	Lieut.-Col. (local Colonel) J. C. Swann, Indian Army.
D.A.A.G. -	Captain J. H. W. Pollard, Royal Scots Fusiliers.
D.A.Q.M.G.	Captain G. M. Molloy, 34th Poona Horse. <i>I</i> Captain W. F. B. R. Dugmore, D.S.O., North Staffordshire Regiment.
Section Staff Officers	Brevet-Major A. R. Hoskins, North Staffordshire Regiment. Brevet-Major A. W. S. Ewmg, North Staffordshire Regiment. Lieutenant E. C. W. Conway-Gordon, 3rd Skinner's Horse.
Director of Telegraphs Provost Marshal	Captain G. B. Roberts, Royal Engineers. Brevet-Major A. G. Maxwell, 6th Cavalry.
Senior Medical Officer	Lieut.-Col. J. W. Rodgers, Indian Medical Service.
Veterinary Inspector -	Captain H. M. Lenox-Conyngham, Army Veterinary Department. <i>I</i> Lieut.-Col. P. J. H. Aplin, 107th Pioneers. Brevet Lieut.-Col. C. J. Melliss, V.C., 109th Infantry.
Post Commandants	Major A. P. A. Elphinstone, 106th Hazara Pioneers. Captain P. C. R. Barclay, 120th Rajputana Infantry.
Base Commandant	Major E. M. Woodward ^Leicestershire Regiment.

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Base Staff Officer	Lieutenant W. B. Roberts, 101st Grenadiers.
Base Medical Officer -	Major F. W. Gee, Indian Medical Service.
Base Supply and Transport Officer.	Captain F. W. Hallowes, Supply and Transport Corps, Indian Army. 4
Advanced Base Supply and Transport Officer.	Captain A. R. Burlton, Supply and Transport Corps, Indian Army.
Marine Transport Officers.	Commander C. J. C. Kendall, Royal Indian Marine. Lieutenant E. W. Huddleston, Royal Indian Marine.
Remount Officer	Captain Hon. T. Lister, 10th Hussars.
Adjutant and Quartermaster Military Base Depot.	Captain C. R. Kelly, Royal Garrison Artillery.

TROOPS

No. 17 Company 3rd Sappers and Miners.

No. 19 Company 3rd Sappers and Miners.

101st Grenadiers.

107th Pioneers.

together with detachments of the following corps, services, and departments:

Telegraph Section R.E.	Postal.
Field Park R.E.	Provost.
Survey.	Military Accounts.
Marine Transport.	Veterinary.
Supply and Transport Corps (including Army Service Corps).	Remount.
Medical.	Indian Ordnance.
	Protectorate Paymaster.
	Water-boring Establishment.

APPENDIX (D)

(CHAPTER VII)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS.

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,

BERBERA,

3rd December, 1912.

The Camel Constabulary having now obtained a sufficiency of animals and equipment to enable it to move, it is desirable that the Corps should leave Berbera and form a camp in the interior, where the camels may benefit by the better grazing and where more complete training can be given to the men. For this reason I have approved of your proceeding to Mandera, and making that place your temporary head-quarters.

2. At this juncture I think it advisable to repeat to you what has already been expressed in conversations regarding the status of the Constabulary and the nature of the duties which it will be required to carry out.

3. There is a widespread idea among Somalis that the Government is about to revive the *status quo*, and to reoccupy the former posts in the interior. No harm is done at the moment by this belief; it will, in fact, tend to simplify the work of the Constabulary while that Corps is asserting its influence at the outset. But the creation of the Corps does not in any way imply a reversal of the accepted policy of coastal concentration, and there is no intention of occupying permanent posts in the interior.

4. The fundamental reason for the raising of the Corps is the necessity, which two and a half years of lawlessness have clearly demonstrated, to keep open the trade routes for caravans visiting the coast, and also to put an end to that constant internal warfare among the *fneendhes* which renders them incapable of resisting aggression from the outside, and it is for these main objects that the Constabulary will be used.

5. Natives, generally, are looking for a speedy and complete settlement of all claims, large and small, which have arisen since the evacuation in respect of thefts, loots and blood-money. You are probably aware of the enormous accumulation of these claims, and of the complex difficulties caused by counter-claims. So great is this accumulation that, in my opinion, and also in

that of others, even including Somalis, the task of seeking, arriving at and enforcing a settlement in each case would be beyond the ability of any European officer, or, at least, would occupy him for several years. Moreover, a settlement by discussion—the expedient of the past two years—has proved entirely ineffective, and it would be a false step to adopt that method at the present juncture, and so deprive the Constabulary of its moral effect and its usefulness. Therefore, as I shall now announce, it will be necessary to proceed on the assumption that the Government cannot assume responsibility for disentangling the confusion into which two years of Somali management have brought their own affairs, and that we must now start with a clean slate, taking notice of and awarding punishment only in those cases of looting and fighting which occur henceforth.

6. At the same time, the amnesty cannot be complete, and the past aggression of certain tribes, which has reduced others to rum and starvation, cannot be overlooked. Therefore, the Government will reserve the right of interfering and enforcing restitution in any such former cases as it sees fit to take up, especially where serious feuds remain on account of them. These cases will not now be specified, but will be announced from time to time as expediency requires. No doubt instances of disappointment will thus result, but the principle is the only one which it is possible to adopt, and, in fact, mutual agreement to an amnesty is, at times, adopted by the natives themselves after serious and prolonged feuds.

7. The Constabulary, therefore, will not assume a political character, but is to be regarded as a striking force which may be used to repress disorder, and to insist on compliance with any decision arrived at in Berbera. You will receive instructions from me in each instance where coercion seems to offer the only solution of a difficulty. At the same time, I must allow you to exercise your discretion in matters of less gravity, such, for instance, as the loot of a caravan reported to you as having recently occurred within reasonable distance of your camp of the moment. In such cases there would be no time to refer to me for orders, prompt action being necessary for recovery of the loot.

8. It is important to avoid giving the impression that the Corps exists for the purpose of making war on the friendlies; they must understand that it exists solely to give them protection and assistance; any idea to the contrary might foster a combination of sections for purposes of resistance. That any resistance will be met with is highly improbable and, owing to deep dissensions, the probability of combination is exceedingly remote, but the possibility must be borne in mind. When

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using coercion you will take all possible precautions to avoid bloodshed, but should any armed opposition be offered you will crush it at once, promptly and sternly. One example of this kind will, I believe, prevent the possibility of a recurrence of the trouble.

9. I believe that you fully share my opinion that the Corps is of ample strength for the work it has to do, and that if it succeeds in its objects the beneficial effect in general will be incalculable. At the same time I wish you to realise fully that at this juncture we cannot afford to fail. Small successes at the outset are essential in order to give the men confidence in their own strength, and to instil respect for the Constabulary into the tribal mind. You will, therefore, bear this constantly in mind, waiting always for favourable opportunities to act, and not permitting yourself to take undue risks which, if they resulted in failure, would entail serious embarrassment for the Administration.

10. There is not any present prospect of your encountering Dervish raiders, but should you receive news of the near presence of any considerable force, you would carefully avoid being attacked or surrounded, and would at once retire on the coast. For this reason I intend that for some little time to come you should not form a temporary base more than 50 miles—a day's march—from the coast. Subsequent movements will be dictated by developments, and you will obtain my assent to any proposal to move into a fresh grazing camp. You must assume that the Constabulary is part of the force available in Berbera, and **that** it is based on Berbera, occupying temporary camps in the interior for purposes of convenience.

H. A. BYATT,
HIS Majesty's Commissioner.
The Commandant, Camel Constabulary.

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