

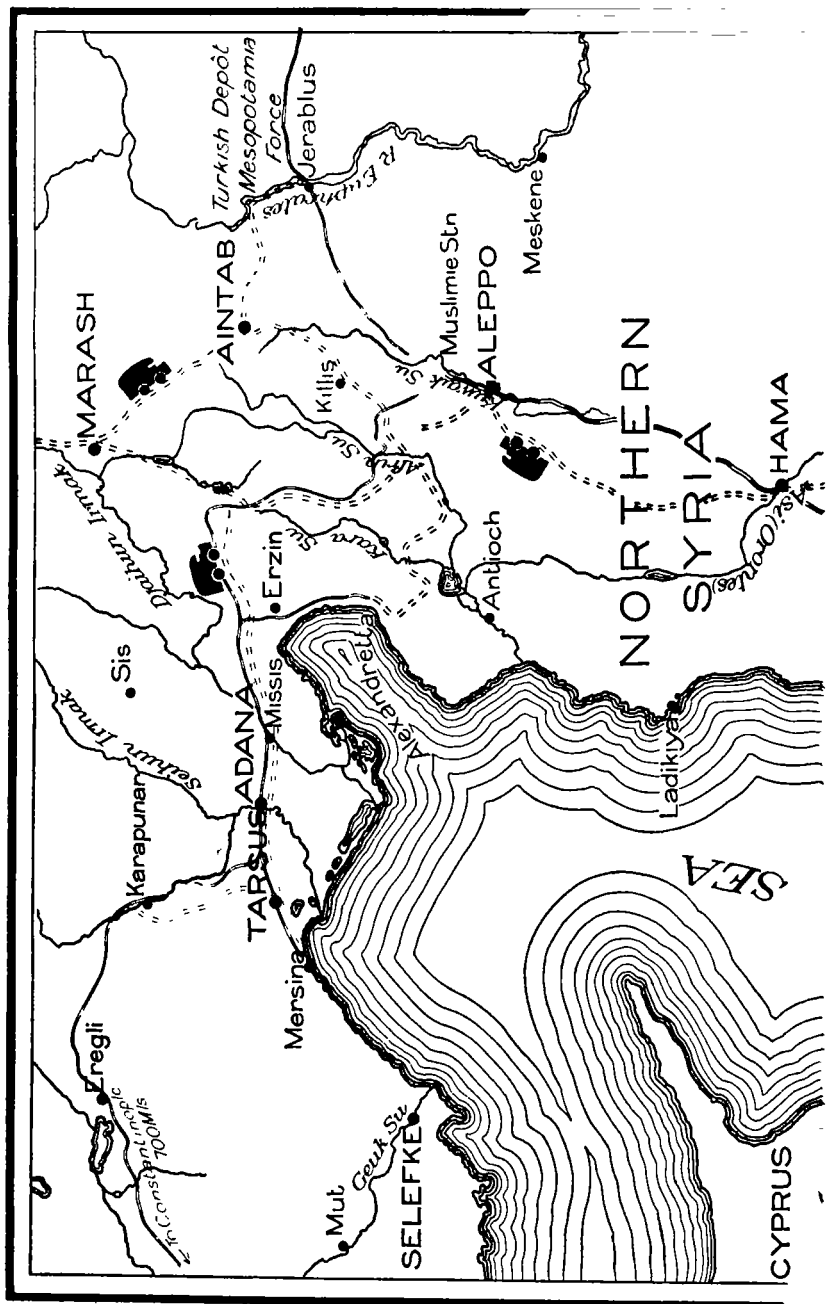
## CHAPTER XLV

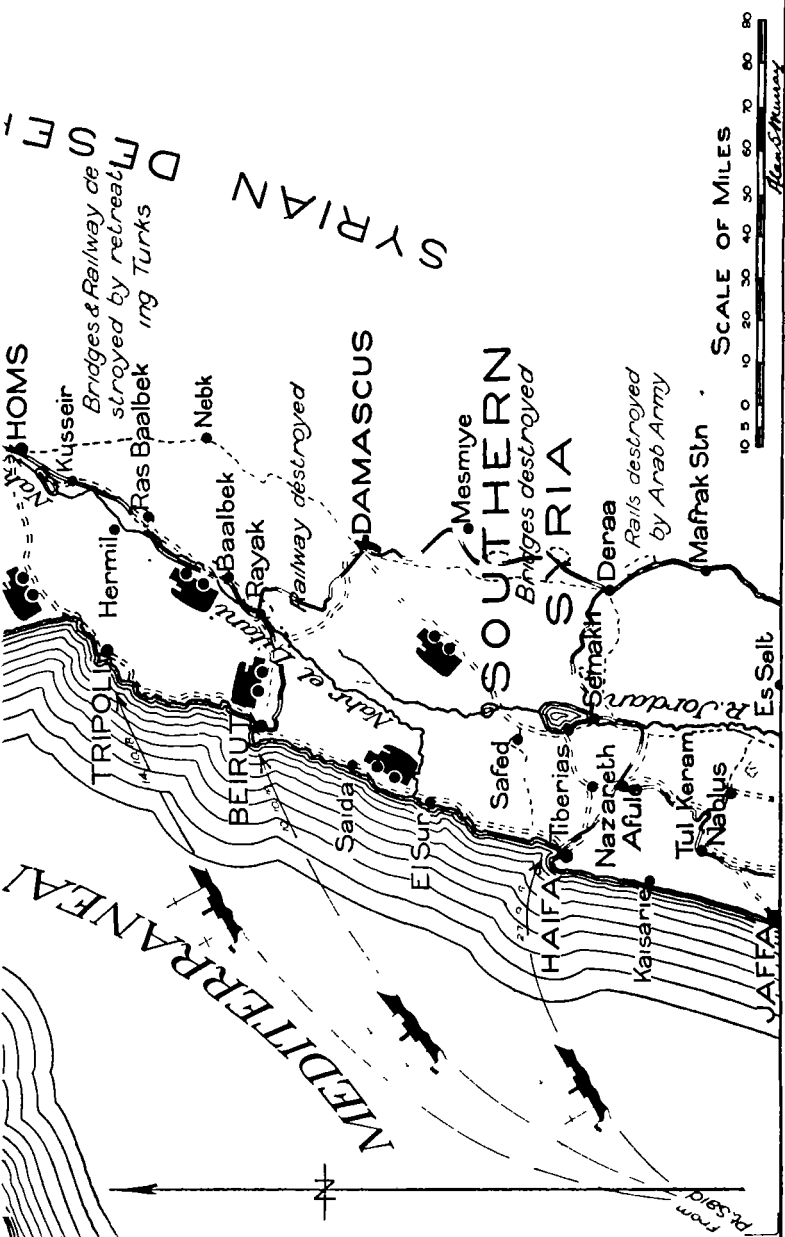
### ALEPPO AND THE ARMISTICE

MEANWHILE Chauvel was advancing towards Aleppo, 200 miles north of Damascus. A leader less bold and confident in execution than Allenby might have justified a halt of more than a few days at Damascus. His three cavalry divisions, it is true, had by October 3rd, when he ordered Chauvel forward, suffered very little wastage from battle casualties; and the sickness, which came so swiftly just afterwards, was not then pronounced. But his horsemen had covered 200 miles in forced marches, and communications and supplies, already strained, must become precarious before Aleppo was reached. On October 3rd the 7th (Meerut) Infantry Division began to march from Haifa to Beirut along the coast; and Allenby, anticipating an open port there and at Tripoli further north, could count on drawing rations for his cavalry across the Lebanons from the coast. Nevertheless his decision was born of rare ambition and resolution.

At the conference with Feisal on October 3rd he had arranged with Chauvel that the Australian Mounted Division should guard Damascus, while the 5th Cavalry Division, followed by the 4th, passed west through the Barada Gorge to the Baalbek plain between the Lebanons, and attacked Rayak. The Arabs, marching north from Damascus on the east of Anti-Lebanons, were to join up with the British at Homs. Rayak, which is the junction of the main broad-gauge railway from the Bosphorus with the narrow-gauge services to Beirut and Damascus, was reported to be occupied by a few thousand Turks and Germans. Macandrew moved from Damascus on the 5th, accompanied by armoured cars and the No. 1 Australian Light Car Patrol under Captain E. H. James. The enemy withdrew from Rayak on his approach and fled north, after burning thirty aeroplanes and great quantities of materials; but much of the rolling-stock, ammunition, and stores left behind was in good condition. An armoured-car reconnaissance to Beirut on the 7th discovered that the enemy had evacuated, and that







BRITISH AND TURKISH LINES OF COMMUNICATION AFTER THE CAPTURE OF ALEPPO.



French warships had already entered the port. Zahle, a few miles north of Rayak, was taken by Macandrew without opposition; the armoured cars entered Baalbek, with its glorious ruins, on the 9th, and secured 500 distressed Turks who had surrendered to the inhabitants. The Meerut Division, after a fine march over the Ladder of Tyre—where the Indians in a few hours of strenuous labour cut round the cliff a roadway capable of carrying wheels—marched up the picturesque road past Tyre and Sidon along the narrow fringe between the Lebanons and the sea, and reached Beirut on the 8th. Here the inhabitants handed over 660 Turks who had thrown themselves on their mercy, and the division pressed on for Tripoli. This advance at once eased the transport problem for the cavalry on the Baalbek plain, and the 5th Cavalry Division entered Homs on October 15th, two days after the armoured cars and corps cavalry, preceding the 7th Infantry Division, had reached Tripoli.

Aleppo was still 100 miles away. Some 20,000 Turks and Germans were believed to be in the city, but only 8,000 were fighting men, and Allenby was confident that they would be in poor fighting condition. He therefore ordered the rapid continuation of the march. But disease was now rampant in the cavalry. During one week in October, one of the mounted brigades evacuated 61 per cent. of its men; another brigade lost 58 per cent., and a division 40 per cent. within ten days. Barrow's division, which was to have followed Macandrew's, was so reduced on reaching Baalbek that not enough men were left to attend to the horse-lines, and its further employment became impossible. Chauvel therefore decided to push for Aleppo with Macandrew's division alone, to withdraw Barrow's strongest brigade to guard Damascus, and to advance the Australian Mounted Division to Aleppo as rapidly as possible.

Reinforced by two additional light-armoured motor batteries and another light car patrol, Macandrew moved from Homs on the 20th. Crossing the Orontes at Er Rastan, after the bridge destroyed by the enemy had been restored, he divided his force, and pushed on himself with the armoured cars, the light car patrols, and the 15th Cavalry Brigade, leaving the rest of his cavalry to follow. Hama was

entered without opposition, and the enemy was not met until Khan Sebil was reached on the afternoon of the 22nd. Here a force of Turks and Germans was seen, but on the appearance of Macandrew's force they fled in motor-lorries covered by one armoured car. In the sporting chase which followed the armoured car was captured, and James with the Australian patrol, after making a wide *détour*, cut off one of the motor-lorries. Next day the Australians in their cars had a wild chase over very rough country after a cavalry patrol, and returned with some prisoners.

Macandrew appeared before Aleppo on the 22nd, with the Sherifian force—which had been joined by a considerable body of the Aneze Arabs—well up on his right, and demanded the surrender of the town. The Turkish commander, however, who had about 8,000 troops in the city, and was not impressed by Macandrew's slight column, refused to capitulate. Macandrew therefore decided to wait for the remainder of his force before attacking, and the 24th and 25th passed without activity. On the 25th a German airman, seeing a long column of motor-lorries bearing supplies to Macandrew from Tripoli, reported to the Turks that the British cavalry was receiving substantial reinforcements of infantry, and the commander resolved to surrender Aleppo on the morning of the 26th. During the night of the 25th he began to withdraw his troops from the city, but, as they marched, a body of the Sherifian troops, made up chiefly of Aneze Arabs, appeared in the streets. The Arabs fiercely attacked a Turkish rear-guard battalion, which, after being severely mauled, fought its way out in square formation. When Macandrew advanced into the town on the morning of the 26th, he found the Arabs in possession, and the pursuit of the enemy was at once resumed by the 15th Cavalry Brigade and the armoured car column. Eight miles north-west of Aleppo a body of about 2,500 Turkish infantry, with 150 cavalry and from eight to ten guns, took up a position astride of the road to Alexandretta. The British at once attacked. While the armoured car column attempted to turn the enemy's right, the cavalry gallantly charged in on his left. The Mysore and Jodhpur Lancers galloped clean through the lines; many Turks were taken on the spears, and most of

the others threw down their arms. But the Indian squadrons were very weak from sick wastage; the Turks, taking courage, picked up their rifles and reclosed their ranks, and the cavalry and cars were compelled to break off the engagement. At nightfall the Turks resumed their march to a position in the hills about twenty miles north of Aleppo on the Alexandretta road.

Allenby still aimed at the utter destruction of the enemy force. But Macandrew's division, which had already marched 400 miles in thirty-eight days, was incapable of further effort, and it was decided to await the arrival at Aleppo of the Australian Mounted Division before resuming the offensive. Hodgson moved out from Damascus with his division (less the 10th Light Horse Regiment) on October 27th. Moving briskly, the Australians reached Homs early on the morning of November 1st, the last march having covered fifty miles. But the campaign was over. At 4 p.m. on October 31st, when the division was about Hasi, Hodgson received news that an armistice had been concluded with the Turks. After more than two and a half years in the saddle, marching and fighting almost incessantly in a desert alien land, the light horsemen might have been expected to greet this armistice with demonstrations of relief and joy. But the news was received calmly, almost with stolid indifference. In some measure the absence of excitement was perhaps due to the fact that the armistice had been fully anticipated, but in the main it was due to mental and physical weariness and to sharp personal sorrow. The Australians had taken battle casualties in the spirit of old soldiers, and had seldom shown outward signs of grief for those who had fallen; but the general state of disease at Damascus, and the many deaths, had shaken all men's nerves and left the regiments depressed and weary beyond expression. Supply and water difficulties made it impracticable for the division to halt on the ground which it occupied when the cessation of hostilities was proclaimed; and, as the column marched towards Homs throughout the night of the 31st, the men rode in a strange silence, as though grim action was still ahead—or like a force defeated rather than one whose victorious achievement, now complete, was scarcely paralleled in all the red story of the war. Throughout Allenby's army

the same quiet note prevailed, and even in Cairo, among the staff officers and troops on leave, there was very little rejoicing or merrymaking. Men who with such great-hearted purpose had carried the campaign to its triumphant end seemed incapable of the energy necessary for ostentatious celebration.

With the Turkish forces south of the Taurus annihilated, Allenby had no need to maintain a strong force on the occupied territory during the armistice. The splendid voluntary service of the Australians was recognised to be at an end, and the policing deemed essential was allotted mainly to Indian and British troops, whose term of duty in Palestine had been comparatively brief. Early in November the Australian Mounted Division marched across the Lebanon from Homs to Tripoli, where they went into a well-supplied and comfortable camp, while transport was arranged to Australia.

Meanwhile the Anzac Mounted Division, after its swift decisive raid from the Jordan valley to Amman, had been withdrawn first to Jerusalem and Bethlehem, then down to Richon and Wady Hanein and the surrounding sand-hills. Chaytor's Force had unhappily, like the divisions in the north, suffered severely from disease. The fighting around Amman was scarcely over before malaria, pneumonic influenza, and other maladies ran like fire through the ranks. Indians, British West Indians, and Jews shared in the suffering which followed; but the Australians and New Zealanders were especially afflicted. The 1st and 2nd Light Horse Brigades, with the 3rd Light Horse Brigade and the New Zealanders, had, alone of all the troops under Allenby's command, been subjected to the rigours of the campaign from the first crossing of the Canal. The remaining light horse regiments had been as long at work in the desert, but not in actual contact with the Turks. Other troops engaged in the advance had come and gone, sharing in all the hard knocks while they were in Sinai and Palestine, but then moving off to other fronts and enjoying restful periods of sea voyage and the stimulation of change.

From April, 1916, to the end of the war the Australians and New Zealanders had been the one constant force in the campaign, and of all the divisions engaged none had a record

of work and fighting to compare with the famous Anzacs commanded first by Chauvel and then by Chaytor. Fighting Romani, Magdhaba, and Rafa almost single-handed, they had cleared the Sinai Peninsula; they had led in Allenby's first advance when Beersheba was assailed; they had been the first troops into the Jordan valley, and the last to leave that sinister area. When they rode up to Amman, therefore, they were even lower in physical tone and in resistance to disease than the Australians of Hodgson's division. As they advanced from their lines in the Jordan valley, which the fine work of the medical service had kept relatively clear of malaria-bearing mosquitoes, many of them had spent a night or two on infested ground from which they had driven the Turks. There they were assailed by mosquitoes; and, after the period of incubation, the disease arising from that source alone was widespread and severe. Hundreds of other men, who had already suffered from the evil, relapsed as they climbed from the burning plain to the cold heights of Gilead. So sudden and general was the sickness that within a few days of the close of operations there were 900 stretcher cases concentrated around Jericho alone. As the various diseases developed, some of the regiments were so reduced that, when the withdrawal from Amman took place, the riderless horses, for the first time in the campaign, were driven along the tracks in mobs. Deaths were frequent. Among well-known officers of the Anzac and Australian Divisions who died at about this time were Lieutenant-Colonel McLaurin (commanding officer of the 8th Regiment, and a Gallipoli veteran) and Major Hudson, staff-captain of the 1st Brigade—a business man from the Blue Mountains in New South Wales, who was the most effective supply officer in adverse circumstances in all Palestine. Hudson's good humour, insistence, and ingenuity never failed to win foodstuffs for his brigade from the most obstinate and secretive village sheikhs. But, if the campaign closed in an atmosphere of sickness and death, exhaustion and depression, the consciousness of the amazing final victory, and thoughts turning to home, soon revived the spirits of the troops.

Little more need be said of Allenby's bold and splendid strategy, the perfection of his preparations, the superb working

of his vast and intricate machine, or of the spirit and sheer fighting efficiency of his troops. No army was ever in better trim for battle, nor was a force ever more completely under the influence of its commander. And perhaps not since the campaigns of Napoleon had a great decisive operation owed so much of its success to the individual strategy and will of its leaders. All that troops could have done was done by the men under Allenby's command; but the achievement must always be regarded as pre-eminently a staff victory. Chauvel's work with his three cavalry divisions was the dramatic and dominating feature of the advance; and here again, it was the faultless planning, and the rare success of the Australian leader in synchronising the work of his scattered columns—the most difficult of all tasks in warfare—rather than the actual fighting, which dismayed and overwhelmed the enemy. The dazzling ride of the cavalry, however, was dependent all the way upon the maintenance of supplies; and in this branch also the guidance and phenomenal resource and energy displayed were a triumph of individual genius. Had it not been for the grand dash of the infantry at the outset, the cavalry would never have been released for action; and the infantry advance was only rendered possible by the success of the huge secret concentration. Considered from any angle, therefore, the achievement must ever stand as a unique triumph for the Commander-in-Chief and his staff. The completeness with which his plans succeeded is illustrated by the destructive work of the air force, and especially by Chaytor's subsidiary operations east of Jordan. Chaytor's success was, to a greater degree perhaps than with the main operation, due to his own independent skill and timely aggressiveness; but his advance was almost in precise detail a fulfilment of his orders from Allenby.

In its range and the thoroughness of its victory, the advance completely vindicated the employment of a strong cavalry force against modern weapons. Without his four divisions of horse Allenby might have overthrown the Seventh and Eighth Turkish Armies on Samaria and Sharon; but only a prolonged series of pitched battles would have carried his infantry up to Damascus, and disease would probably have destroyed his army long before he reached that goal.

To Chauvel's cavalry alone was due not only the complete destruction of the enemy's forward armies, but the capture or annihilation of his reserves, his supply service, his dumps, his hospitals—in fact of every enemy appliance used in the war, and of nearly every man, from the fighting soldier to the labourer on roads and railways, between the plain of Sharon and Aleppo more than 300 miles to the north. On September 18th the enemy's war-machine was complete—a vast, intricate, but smooth-running organisation, served by scores of trains and thousands of vehicles on a great system of railways and roads, and by thousands of miles of telephone and telegraph wire; mighty, formidable, and instantly responsive to a single will. Within a month the whole fabric had vanished. The three armies were destroyed; the British had taken 75,000 prisoners (including 3,700 Germans and Austrians), more than 360 guns, 800 machine-guns, 210 motor-lorries, 50 motor-cars, 90 railway engines, 470 trucks and carriages, and 3,500 transport animals. By the middle of October scarcely a Turk was to be seen between Jaffa and Aleppo; and only isolated groups of guns, already rusted, and fragments of shattered wood and twisted iron deemed too worthless or heavy for removal by the looting natives, remained to tell of the strong foe and all his proud gear of war. That miraculous clearance Allenby owed to Chauvel and his cavalry.

Immediately after Chaytor's occupation of Amman, Colonel C. E. R. Mackesy<sup>1</sup> of the New Zealand force was appointed military governor of Es Salt and Amman. But, in conformity with the British policy east of the Jordan and the Lebanons, steps were immediately taken to transfer control to the Arabs. Sherif Abdulla Ibn Hamza, brother to Feisal, was already in the district, and on October 27th Gaafar Pasha, of the Sherifian army, arrived at Amman from Madeba. On the following day he formally took over the government of the Kerak, Amman, and Es Salt areas, and the Sherifian flag was unfurled. Colonel Mackesy and a few British officers remained to advise and assist the new administration; but with the departure of the 1st Light Horse Brigade, which was the last unit of Chaytor's Force to recross the Jordan, Moab

<sup>1</sup> Col C E R Mackesy, C M G, C B E., D S O. Land-owner and estate agent; of Whangarei, Auckland District, N.Z.; b. Dublin, Ireland, 9 Jan., 1861. Died. 20 Nov., 1925.

and Gilead were virtually surrendered to their traditional owners.

The Arabs had been richly rewarded for the part they played in the destruction of the Turks. If they had been unreliable as allies and unconvincing as fighters, they had, as the story of the campaign shows, been of great assistance to the British advance. Even if British troops had been available for a blow at the Turks in the Hejaz, their employment as an independent force about the holy shrines—or even against the railway, which is deemed sacred by the Moslems—would have had an extremely dangerous effect upon religious feeling in India, and would probably have aroused the hostility of the Arabs themselves. But future students will probably decide that the reward which British military power, and the Foreign Office policy, gave the Arabs for their services was far beyond their deserts. Their casualties were slight, the hardships they endured insignificant. All the way they were paid heavily in gold and enjoyed a prosperity never known in all the long history of their frugal race and desert land. Their compensation in territory, culminating in the possession of rich and bountiful Damascus, was on a scale of grandeur.

Above all, the war brought to the Arabs a revivifying influence which could not have come to them in centuries of peace. Their strong parochial jealousies were in some degree broken down; the bitter animosities of tribe against tribe were softened. For the first time for hundreds of years Arabs over a thousand miles from north to south came together for a common cause. It was true they were prompted by no high ideal, animated by no patriotism. They fought as mercenaries for British gold, and assailed the Turks as men lusting for easy plunder, rather than as men fighting spontaneously for the deliverance of their land from a hated alien yoke. Allowing all that, the war served to unite them, and gave them, as nothing else could have done, an opportunity of building again a great Arab state and taking their place among the lesser powers of the world. And still stronger than the acquisition of a great rich territory and the breaking of the old tribal barriers, in its influence upon their future and the part they are to play in the affairs of the Near East, was the

lesson they learned from the British in Western methods of war. Before their revolt in 1916 the tribes of Arabia and eastern Palestine were a people primitive in the extreme. They knew nothing of the industry and the civilisation of the outside world; their lives were less disciplined, and less complex, than the lives of the Israelite tribes in the wilderness. Their possessions were limited to horses, camels, tents, or squalid villages; their practice of agriculture in the fertile patches of their desert home was primitive. Their arms at the beginning of the war were long-barrelled, muzzle-loading, flint-lock rifles of antique pattern, and knives and daggers which were for show rather than use, since they disliked combat at close quarters. British policy poured tens of thousands of modern rifles into the country, and built up for Feisal a considerable, if somewhat miscellaneous, force of modern artillery, supplemented by a strong arm in machine-guns. After the armistice a foolish, short-sighted decision handed over to them a great number of additional guns and machine-guns captured from the Turks by the British. Throughout the campaign small-arms ammunition was flooded into the country, and, despite the noise-loving Arab's disposition to fire it into the air, a huge quantity of cartridges was hidden away for future use. The Arabs also acquired a large number of motor-cars, and many of them became expert in the handling of mechanical transport and in the ways of telegraph and telephone.

Before the rise of the Young Turks, the Government at Constantinople had dominated and held them with scattered light garrisons armed with modern weapons; and the Arabs, divided into antagonistic tribes, unarmed and penniless, and governed mainly by their own chiefs—who shared with the Turks in their exploitation—had neither the means nor the initiative to resist. At the close of the war they were loosely united; they had shared in the enjoyment of what was to them a miraculous shower of golden British wealth, and in the plunder of the fallen Turk; tribes had forgotten their old animosities as they followed the holy green standard of Mecca; they had acquired and mastered western weapons; they were rich in munitions. Successful in revolt, their narrow racial passion was inflamed, and they were in no

mood, after having, as they believed, overthrown the Turks by their valour almost unaided, to tolerate any alien Power in their land. This spirit burned from the Mediterranean to the mouth of the Euphrates, and augured ill for the Jews in Palestine, the French in Syria, and the British in Mesopotamia; further, it began at once to add fuel to the smouldering unrest in Egypt. Early in 1919 it became a common saying among the Nationalists in Cairo that, if the camel-drivers of the Hejaz were worthy of independence, so surely were they. England's alliance with Hussein was to have far-reaching effects upon British relations with subject Moslem peoples. Arab sovereignty, based upon Holy Mecca, was to England one of the most portentous developments of the war.

The armistice was followed at once by the Allied occupation of the Dardanelles and Constantinople, and sentiment prompted a decision that the Australians and New Zealanders should be represented in the force landed upon the Gallipoli Peninsula. Jaded as were the men from the two Dominions, and eager as they were to return home, all regiments bid for the honour of visiting sacred Anzac. The choice, which was dictated by the circumstances of the moment, fell upon the 7th Light Horse Regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Richardson, and the Canterbury Mounted Rifles, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel J. Findlay.<sup>2</sup> Embarking from Kantara at the end of November, the two regiments landed in the Narrows on December 5th, and went into billets in "a very dirty and verminous" Turkish hospital between Maidos and Kilid Bahr. The weather was extremely cold; but the Australians and New Zealanders, who were attached to the 28th British Division, soon made themselves comfortable, and the six weeks they spent upon Gallipoli was a season of deep interest to all ranks. All, or nearly all, the officers and many of the men had fought at Anzac, and they explored the old position with feelings of emotion stronger and deeper than any other battle-ground of the war could awaken in the hearts of Australians and New Zealanders. While there, they joined in the holy task of locating the graves of fallen Anzacs,

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<sup>2</sup> Col. J. Findlay, C.B., D.S.O., V.D. Canterbury Mtd. Rifles. Farmer; of Ashburton, N.Z.; b North Taieri, N.Z., 11 March, 1869.

and in collecting trophies for the Australian national memorial collection. Parties of Australians under Lieutenant C. E. Hughes<sup>3</sup> (Engineers) and Lieutenant W. H. James (of the 1st Light Horse Regiment) were officially charged with this work. The mounted men were treated with much consideration by the British Command, and nearly all the officers and some of the men were enabled to visit Constantinople. References in Richardson's report to the beaten Turks have a poignant interest. "The Turkish army on Gallipoli," he said, "is nearly all demobilised; only a few are being left here and there as caretakers, but large numbers of men in uniform, very shabby and ill-fed looking, wander about the villages. We used a number of these as sanitary men and scavengers." Writing of Constantinople, he said, "The attitude towards the British is friendly, even from the Turks, though most of the officers seem to feel their position very keenly. The Turkish soldiers are very ragged and shabby."

The Australians and New Zealanders in Gallipoli were shortly withdrawn. In their camps at Tripoli and on the Philistine plain the light horsemen waited, eager in the prospect of early return to Australia.<sup>4</sup> But an unfortunate incident was destined to throw a shadow over the last days in Palestine of Anzac Mounted Division. Close to the camps of the three brigades in December was the native village of Surafend. All the Arabs of western Palestine were thieves by instinct, and those who dwelt close to the Jewish settlements were especially practised and daring. Throughout the campaign the British policy, as already noticed, was to treat these debased people west of the Jordan as devout Moslems, kin not only to the Arabs of the Hejaz but to the Mohammedans of India. And the Arabs, a crafty race, quick to discern British unwillingness to punish their misdeeds, exploited their licence to extreme limits.

They learned, also, that there was a disposition in the British Army to assume without justification that any looting and other similar offences practised by the troops against the natives had been committed by the Australians. Consequently,

<sup>3</sup> Lt.-Col. C. E. Hughes, C.B.E.; 1st Fld. Sqdn., Engrs. Chief Adm'n. Officer, Imperial War Graves Commn., Eastern District, until 1936. Civil engineer and surveyor; of Deloraine, Tas.; b. Launceston, Tas., 6 Sept., 1890.

<sup>4</sup> During this period a passing unhappiness was occasioned by the destruction of aged horses and the sale of the remainder to native and other local buyers.

if the Arabs missed a sheep from their flocks, they were emphatic that a soldier in a big hat had been seen prowling in the neighbourhood. Seldom punished, they became very impudent in their thefts from all British camps, and at times ventured to murder. All troops may have suffered equally; but, while the British endured the outrages without active resentment, the Australians and New Zealanders burned with indignation, and again and again asked for retaliation, but without obtaining redress. After the armistice a few men of Anzac Mounted Division were shot by the Arabs, and the resentment in Chaytor's division became dangerously bitter.

The natives of Surafend were notorious for their petty thieving. Prompted, perhaps, by the knowledge that the Anzac camps would soon pass for ever from their midst, and emboldened by the immunity they enjoyed, they grew audacious in their pilfering. They were reinforced, too, by a body of nomad Bedouins camped close to their village. The Australians and New Zealanders, sleeping soundly, were a simple prey to the cunning, barefooted robbers, and night after night men lost property from their tents. One night a New Zealander of the machine-gun squadron was disturbed by an Arab pulling at a bag which served him as a pillow. Springing up in his shirt, he chased the native through the camp and out on to the sand-hills, shouting to the picquets on the horselines as he ran. As he overtook the native, the man turned, shot him with a revolver through the body, and escaped. The New Zealander died as the picquets reached him. The camp was immediately aroused, and the New Zealanders, working with ominous deliberation, followed the footsteps of the Arab over the loose sand to Surafend. They then threw a strong cordon round the village and waited for morning, when the head men were summoned and ordered to surrender the murderer. The sheikhs were evasive, and pleaded ignorance. During the day the matter was taken up by the staff of the division, but at nightfall the demand of the men for justice was still unsatisfied.

Meanwhile they had resolutely maintained their guard about the village, and no Arab was allowed to leave. That which followed cannot be justified; but in fairness to the New Zealanders, who were the chief actors, and to the Australians

who gave them hearty support, the spirit of the men at that time must be considered. They were the pioneers and the leaders in a long campaign. Theirs had been the heaviest sacrifice. The three brigades of Anzac Mounted Division had been for almost three years comrades in arms, and rarely had a body of men been bound together by such ties of common heroic endeavour and affection. From the Canal onward men had again and again proudly thrown away their lives to save their wounded from the enemy. Not once in the long advance had a hard-pressed, isolated body ever signalled in vain for support. The war task was now completed and they, a band of sworn brothers tested in a hundred fights, were going home. To them the loss of a veteran comrade by foul murder, at the hands of a race they despised, was a crime which called for instant justice. They were in no mood for delay. In their movement against Surafend, therefore, they felt that, while wreaking vengeance on the Arabs, they would at the same time work off their old feeling against the bias of the disciplinary branch of General Headquarters, and its studied omission to punish Arabs for crime. They were angry and bitter beyond sound reasoning. All day the New Zealanders quietly organised for their work in Surafend, and early in the night marched out many hundreds strong and surrounded the village. In close support and full sympathy were large bodies of Australians. Good or bad, the cause of the New Zealanders was theirs. Entering the village, the New Zealanders grimly passed out all the women and children, and then, armed chiefly with heavy sticks, fell upon the men and at the same time fired the houses. Many Arabs were killed, few escaped without injury; the village was demolished. The flames from the wretched houses lit up the countryside, and Allenby and his staff could not fail to see the conflagration and hear the shouts of the troops and the cries of their victims.

The Anzacs, having finished with Surafend, raided and burned the neighbouring nomad camp, and then went quietly back to their lines. In the morning all the disciplinary machinery of the army was as active as hitherto it had been tardy. General Headquarters demanded the men who had led the attack and had been guilty of the killing. The Anzacs stood firm; not a single individual could definitely be charged.

Allenby wasted no time in expressing his mind to the division. The brigades were assembled on foot in hollow square, and the Commander-in-Chief addressed them in strong, and even, one might say, ill-considered language. He used terms which became his high position as little as the business at Surafend had been worthy of the great soldiers before him. The division fully expected strong disciplinary action for Surafend, and would have accepted it without resentment. But the independent manhood of the Anzacs could not accept personal abuse from the Commander-in-Chief. Allenby's outburst left the division sore but unpunished. The affair had unfortunate consequences.

A strained situation continued until about the middle of 1919, when, after the suppression of the revolt in Egypt, the embarkation of the colonial forces was resumed. The Australians of the 2nd Light Horse Brigade and New Zealanders were on the eve of departure, yet the division had not been recognised by the Commander-in-Chief since the speech at Surafend. Allenby was then in control of the affairs of Egypt; he was visited by an Australian, who pointed out to him the unsatisfactory position which existed. He expressed surprise at hearing of the feeling engendered by his speech; the Surafend incident, he insisted, had deserved all that he said of it at the time; but it had not shaken, nor could anything shake, the deep admiration and even affection he felt for the Anzacs, nor could he adequately express his appreciation of their campaigning qualities and services. He issued at once a glowing and appreciative farewell order to the Australians, and at the same time wrote personally a tribute to their work in Palestine which is remarkable for its discernment of their distinctive qualities. This letter read as follows:—

“I knew the New South Wales Lancers and the Australian Horse well in the Boer War, and I was glad to meet some of my old friends of those days when the light horse came under my command just two years ago.

“When I took over command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in July, 1917, the light horse were already veterans, tried and proved in many a fight. Since then, they have shared in the campaigns which achieved the

destruction of the Turkish army and the conquest of Palestine and Syria, and throughout they have been in the thick of the fighting. I have found them eager in advance and staunch in defence. At Beersheba, a mounted charge by a light horse regiment, armed only with rifles, swept across the Turkish trenches and decided the day. Later, some of the regiments were armed with swords, which they used with great effect in the pursuit of last autumn.

"On foot, too, they have equally distinguished themselves as stubborn fighters. They have shown in dismounted action the dash and enterprise of the best type of light infantry.

"The Australian light horseman combines with a splendid physique a restless activity of mind. This mental quality renders him somewhat impatient of rigid and formal discipline, but it confers upon him the gift of adaptability, and this is the secret of much of his success mounted or on foot. In this dual rôle, on every variety of ground—mountain, plain, desert, swamp, or jungle—the Australian light horseman has proved himself equal to the best.

"He has earned the gratitude of the Empire and the admiration of the world."

There, between their great Commander-in-Chief and the Australians and New Zealanders, the painful Surafend affair rested. It was characteristic of the strong temper and of the frailties of both. Both had erred in anger. The sincerity of Allenby's final words to them was never doubted by the troops. Surafend, however, should not be forgotten. Without making excuses for the Anzacs, it may be said that the affair arose out of the simple fact that British regular officers entrusted with Australian commands in Egypt and Palestine, with a few notable exceptions, too often failed to grasp the vital fact that the narrow traditional methods of handling the soldiers of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are not by any absolute law also the way to handle young men of the dominions. There is in the young British peoples oversea a genius, strong and distinctive, which must be considered in war as in peace.

From Tripoli, early in 1919, the Australian Mounted Division was brought by sea to Kantara for embarkation. The Anzac Mounted Division (less the 2nd Regiment at Jerusalem, and the 5th at Semakh) was still at Rafa. At this juncture there broke out in Egypt a rising which caused all regiments, except the 1st and 2nd, to be hurried to the affected area and detained until the trouble had been temporarily suppressed.<sup>5</sup>

The 1st and 2nd embarked for Australia on March 3rd. The 3rd Regiment followed in May. Before the end of the summer the whole of the Australian force from Palestine, with the exception of a few details, was clear of Egypt.

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<sup>5</sup> A more detailed account of the part taken by the Australians in quelling these riots is given in the *Appendix*.