

1,500 miles in length. The responsibility of supervising it was great, but, thanks to Sir E. Wood's ability and energy, and to the efficient support he received from the large staff of officers under his command, the army operating in the front was well fed and provided with all it required. The officers and men of the Egyptian army, under General Wood's immediate orders, worked along this line with indefatigable earnestness, and with the best possible results to the welfare of the expedition.

6. It is very desirable to utilize to the full the opportunity which active service affords of gauging the military ability of our officers. Every campaign enables a selection to be made among those whose proved skill in the field and thorough knowledge of their profession mark them out as fitted for higher rank. Brigadier-General Brackenbury, R.A., comes, I consider, prominently under this category, and, in the interests of the army and the State, I would strongly recommend him to your favourable consideration. When Major-General Earle was killed at Kirbegan, Brigadier-General Brackenbury assumed command of the Nile column, and led it in its advance towards Abu-Hamed. In this, and throughout the operations in the Soudan, he proved himself to be one of the ablest officers in Her Majesty's Army, and he would be a most valuable addition to our present List of General Officers.

7. The column intended to operate from Suakin in the direction of Berber, and to construct a railway to that place was despatched last February, partly from England and partly from India, with a rapidity that was highly creditable to our military and naval organization. Great numbers of camels and other transport animals were safely and quickly disembarked at Suakin during the month of March, and three brigades of infantry and one of cavalry took the field there before the end of that month, destroying Osman Digna's power in the hard fought action of the 22nd March, under Major-General Sir J. McNeill. The quickness with which this column was organized for active service is most creditable to Sir Gerald Graham, and to the zeal and ability of the officers under his command. He speaks in high terms of the manner in which Major-General Sir George Greaves, K.C.M.G., C.B., performed the duties of Chief of the Staff to his force. I do not believe there is any officer who has a more extensive knowledge of the working of our army than Sir George Greaves, nor one who can use his great staff and administrative experience to better purpose.

8. I attach to this Despatch a list of those officers, non-commissioned officers and men whose services are, I consider, specially deserving of mention, and in it I have included those of the Suakin Force who, I think, have done the best work.

9. The various Departments were administered to my entire satisfaction by the following officers:— In the Intelligence Department, Colonel Sir C. Wilson, K.C.M.G., C.B., R.E., kept me fully supplied with information as to the enemy's doings and intentions, and showed himself eminently qualified to conduct the duties of that Department. At Suakin similar information was furnished by the exertions of Major Grover and Major Chermiside, both of the Royal Engineers. The last-named was Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral, and has rendered valuable service to the State for a lengthened period.

The Medical Department was administered with ability by Deputy Surgeon-General O'Neil. I have never seen the sick and wounded better

cared for. The arrangements were good, and the medical officers worked with untiring zeal and great devotion to their duties. At Suakin Deputy Surgeons-General Barnett and Hinde directed all medical matters with great credit to themselves and to their Department. Both there and on the Nile the work done by the nursing sisters was highly appreciated by doctors and patients. The Commissariat duties were well performed throughout, the Department being excellently directed by Assistant Commissary-General Hughes. At Suakin, Assistant Commissary-General Robertson did good work; all his arrangements were satisfactory.

Lieutenant-Colonel Furse, the Director of Transport, carried on his duties in a most creditable manner, and produced good results under considerable difficulties. The system of separating those duties from those of the Commissariat answered admirably. Lieutenant-General Graham speaks in high terms of Lieutenant-Colonel Walton, who was the Director of Transport to the Suakin Force, and of Lieutenant-Colonel Beckett, who was in charge of the Indian Transport.

Assistant Commissary-General of Ordnance Pease, on the Nile, and Assistant Commissary-General Skinner, at Suakin, evinced a thorough knowledge of the detail and working of the Ordnance Store Department. All the officers under them worked zealously and well.

Owing to the great length of the line of communications up the Nile Valley, and to the number of stations upon it, the work of the Pay Department was difficult and very heavy. Great credit is due to Colonel Olivey for the efficient manner in which it was performed. The pay duties at Suakin were satisfactorily carried out by Lieutenant-Colonel Craig.

The Reverend J. Brindley, the Senior Chaplain with the Army up the Nile, won the esteem of all by his untiring devotion to his sacred duties, and by his unflinching and cheerful kindness.

Veterinary-Surgeons Burt and Waters well performed the work that fell to them.

The Volunteers were represented by men of the Volunteer Engineers and of the Post Office Corps who, both by their zeal and their soldierlike bearing, sustained the reputation of the Service to which they belong.

10. The Indian Contingent, under Brigadier-General Hudson, C.B., showed high, soldierlike qualities, and was of the utmost value in the operations round Suakin.

11. The assistance rendered by the Royal Navy was willingly given, and of the greatest importance. I cannot praise too much the manner in which officers and men under the command of Captain Boardman, R.N., helped us in fitting out our boats, in working them over the worst cataracts of the Nile, and in keeping open our line of communications along that river. In previous Despatches I have dwelt upon the excellent services rendered by the Naval Brigade, under Captain Lord C. Beresford, R.N., an officer whose readiness of resource and whose ability as a leader are only equalled by his daring. At Suakin, Commodore More-Molyneux was untiring in his exertions to help the troops; and the naval transport duties were most successfully carried on, under the direction of Captain Fellowes, R.N.

12. Great credit is due to Colonel Butler, C.B., and to Lieutenant-Colonel Alleyne, R.A., for the care and thought with which the whalers for Nile service were designed and fitted out, under their immediate superintendence. The experience they had gained in boat work during the Red River