

attitude of the natives was noticed to be hostile, and as the party penetrated further its march was dogged by armed bands whose numbers daily increased, a general attack being only averted by the determined attitude of the little force. Seeing the futility of attempting to carry out his instructions in face of this ever-increasing opposition, Colour-Sergeant Boardman* skilfully withdrew his force by night and by covering 120 miles in four days managed to shake himself clear of the pursuing Nyam Nyams with but few casualties, except in transport animals and baggage, including the presents for Yambio.

In February, 1904, a patrol of 100 men and two guns under Captain Wood (Royal Irish Fusiliers) was sent to again attempt to open negotiations, but met with even less success, as it was ambushed and treacherously attacked by a party of Nyam Nyams under Rikhta, a son of Yambio, who had professed friendship to Government and volunteered to aid it with supplies and transport. The losses on this occasion were Captain Haymes (Royal Army Medical Corps), who died of his wounds, two men killed, and eight wounded. After the fight the patrol was unable to proceed further owing to no supplies or transport being available at Rikhta's—the natives in this district having all fled. The patrol retired slowly to Mvolo (latitude 6° 6', longitude 29° 58') in order to keep in touch with a Belgian scientific mission which, with a large armed escort, under Commandant Lemaire, had established itself there within Anglo-Egyptian territory. This force withdrew southwards, and as it was thought, evacuated Soudan territory.

It was evident after these two attempts, that peaceful negotiations were out of the question, so I obtained sanction for the dispatch of an expeditionary force of sufficient strength to overcome any opposition likely to be met with, and to permanently establish the authority of the Anglo-Soudan Government in this portion of the Bahr-el-Ghazal.

Composition of Force and Plan of Operations.—The force, which was placed under the command of the late Major W. A. Boulnois (Royal Artillery), Commandant and Governor of the Bahr-el-Ghazal Province, was organized in two columns and composed as detailed in (A) and (A 1) attached.

The Eastern Column, under the command of Captain A. Sutherland (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders), was ordered to advance from Rumbek via Mvolo into the eastern portion of the Nyam Nyam territory, engage the attention of Mangi, the most powerful son of Yambio, and, by enforcing his submission, prevent him coming to the assistance of his father; whilst the Western Column, under the immediate command of Major Boulnois, advanced via Tambura and N'Doruma directly against Yambio himself.

Concentration.—The Eastern Column was concentrated at Mvolo by the 1st January, on which date it began its advance towards Mangi's. The Western Column completed its concentration at N'Doruma's, 255 miles south of Wau, in the third week in January, and began its advance to Yambio's on the 26th of that month.

The Operations.—The eastern column marched southward along the Rhol River, mostly through uninhabited country, till the 30th January, when it came across a post of Congo Free State troops located at Iré (latitude 4° 55', longitude 29° 48'), which Captain Sutherland ascertained were a portion of the "Lemaire mission," previously referred to, and which were supposed—

erroneously as it turns out—to have evacuated Soudan territory. Subsequently it transpired that Commandant Lemaire had established five posts in all in Soudan territory, the withdrawal of which is now forming the subject of negotiations between King Leopold and His Britannic Majesty's Government. On the 12th February the column crossed the Meridi River and proceeded westward to Mangi's village, where it effected a junction with the Western Column on the 25th. There was practically no serious opposition on the part of the Nyam Nyams to the advance of this column, which was attributable undoubtedly to the presence of the Congo Free State forces in their midst and to a heavy defeat which these forces had inflicted on them when attacking one of their posts a short time before.

The Western Column on the 30th January reached Zugumbia, where the sick, and most of the transport and baggage, were left under a guard, and advanced on the 2nd February with eight days' rations. On the 3rd February the mounted infantry scouts located an ambush of the enemy, who retired after a short skirmish. On the 6th February a large force of the Nyam Nyams was found massed to oppose the column, but retired on its determined advance on the 7th. Yambio's village was occupied, Yambio fleeing into the bush. On the 8th a column under the late Lieutenant Fell (late R.N.) advanced, located Yambio himself, and dispersed his force again after a slight skirmish. That evening three columns went out to effect the capture of the Sultan, which was successfully accomplished by Major Carter's column, Yambio receiving a mortal wound in the skirmish, of which he died that night. By Yambio's death the country was relieved from a barbarous and cruel despotism which had pressed heavily on the people for many years. It was, therefore, hailed with satisfaction, as was evidenced by the numbers who, in a short time, came in gladly to Government, and further resistance ended. On the 22nd February two companies under Captain Gordou (Leicester Regiment) were detached from the column to join hands with the Eastern Column, and one company under Major Carter (Lancashire Fusiliers) sent to locate the four other Congo Free State posts, reported to be established in Soudan territory.

Remarks and Recommendations.—The expeditionary force, although not exposed to any heavy fighting, underwent considerable hardships and arduous marching on short rations under difficult climatic and other conditions.

The presence of the tsetse fly in a large portion of the country traversed caused heavy mortality amongst the transport animals, and necessitated only the absolute necessities of life being carried with the columns.

The bearing and behaviour of the troops were excellent, and the cheerful spirit with which the difficulties inseparable from an advance through dense bush were met and overcome, is deserving of the highest praise.

Resistance to the advance of the columns would undoubtedly have been more serious had not the Nyam Nyams—as I pointed out before—been so severely handled by the Congo Free State forces just previously, which naturally made them loth to try conclusions with a relatively stronger force armed with modern weapons so soon again. But all this was not known till afterwards, and the force expected—and had to be prepared for—serious opposition from this powerful and warlike tribe.

The objects of the expedition, though gained with but little bloodshed, have been completely

* Granted the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his services on this occasion.—London Gazette, September 11, 1903.