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1st /5th Queen's and Kut

It has been our sad duty during the last few months to record the deaths of several 1st /5th Queen's men who were taken prisoners by the Turks at Kut. In almost all these cases the particulars are the same. Though the men died as long ago as August and September 1916, the news has only recently come through, and in most cases the cause of death is given as dysentery, and the place as Yarbashi. We do not wish to harrow the feelings of relatives, but there is only too much reason to conclude that most of these unfortunate men were victims of the horrible callousness and neglect of the Turkish officials, as disclosed in the report recently issued. The terrible record was supplemented only last week by a letter from an officer who witnessed with horror and nausea the pitiable conditions of the captives. The treatment of these men, weak and ill after a long and heroic siege, their enforced march of 100 miles to Baghdad, and thence 500 miles further across the Syrian desert in the heat of the abnormal summer, without proper food and attention, constitutes one of the blackest chapters in the history of the war. Of the 2,680 British captured at Kut 1,306 died and 449 are untraced, and there is no doubt that a large proportion were left to die by the roadside after having dropped from sheer exhaustion. We hear much of punishment of Germans for the ill treatment of prisoners but we hope the Government are taking steps to trace and deal fittingly with the Turkish brutes who were responsible for condemning so many of our gallant men to a lingering death in Mesopotamia and Syria.