MILITARY SERVICE AND ADVENTURES IN THE FAR EAST

AGAINST THE AFGHANS IN 1839, AND THE SIKHS IN 1845-6.

BY A CAVALRY OFFICER. (1847) Vol. II

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Sani H. Panhwar (2023)

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BY A CAVALRY OFFICER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

MILITARY SERVICE IN THE FAR EAST.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RETURNS TO ENGLAND—DISASTROUS INSURRECTION THROUGHOUT AFGHANISTAN—JELLALABAD HOLDS OUT, AND GENERAL POLLOCK ADVANCES UPON CAUBUL.

After the breaking up of the army of the Indus, Sir John Keane proceeded down the Indus, and shortly afterwards embarked for England, where those honours, titles, and pecuniary rewards awaited him, which would have entitled him to the appellation of one of the most fortunate soldiers who ever acquired laurels in India—had he survived long to enjoy the distinction.

Fortunate, indeed, may Sir John Keane be termed, in having brought to an apparently successful conclusion a campaign which was founded in error and injustice, and placed in the hands of the commander-in-chief with the fullest assurance of the directing arm of Providence leading the small band through a country of which the little that was known should have induced a supposition that an army provided with an insufficient amount of supplies must meet with enormous difficulties. By some unaccountable fatality, the Afghans neglected the advantages thus afforded them, and thereby induced a supposition that the warlike spirit of the tribes who had overrun and conquered Hindostan had departed for ever; and that a handful of British soldiers would be sufficient to maintain possession of a country inhabited by a nation whose hands were fitted at their birth to the cimeter, and whose eyes, when capable of distinguishing objects with accuracy, were directed along the barrel of a rifle.

Trusting, doubtless, in the resources of their monarch to repel the British invasion, no coalition was formed amongst the mountain tribes; but when the abhorred Feringhee had seized their king and established himself in the land of their fathers, and when, moreover, they beheld him, lulled into security, break up his forces and march the greater portion of his army homewards through the jaws of the tremendous portals of Afghanistan, the lighted torch flew with resolute speed from the valley of Quetta to the mountains of Kohistan. The Ghilzie, whose heel had been bruised, but whose arm was not unnerved, roused his brethren to vengeance, and the eloquence of Akbar, pleading for the diadem which had been snatched from his ambitious hopes, found a responsive echo in the heart of every true Barukzye.

A tribe of insolent plunderers had established themselves in the Khoord Caubul, and had the audacity to interfere with the letter-carriers. The gallant Sale, with his brigade, hastened to brush these intruders from the surface of the mountains, but the band of

robbers had swollen to an army; and though, by desperate valour and unwearied exertion, a passage was forced through every obstacle, yet the passes closed upon the isolated brigade, and the communication with the ill-fated garrison of Caubul was cut off for ever.

Red with the slaughter of their enemies, and faint from their own wounds, the wearied band of soldiers, under Sale, threw themselves into Jellalabad. Then burst the startling intelligence over the plains of India that an insurrection had broken out amongst the far-distant mountains of Afghanistan, and that our fellow-soldiers were ill provided with sustenance, short of ammunition, and enveloped amongst countless swarms of enemies. I will not enter minutely on the details of that insurrection, which shook the fabric of our Eastern power to its centre, brought unmerited obloquy on the British name, and entailed the most harrowing series of disasters on the hapless army in Afghanistan that England's history can record in her military annals.

The task of recapitulating the succession of horrors which took place in Caubul has been undertaken by eye-witnesses and sufferers from the small remnant of the Caubul garrison who escaped.

Amongst that catalogue of miseries and massacre we have the consolatory reflection that the Afghans found no grounds to assert that the British, though worn with toil, and pierced by incessant cold, derogated in aught from their national fame. From the first struggle on leaving the entrenched camp at Caubul, unto the final catastrophe at Gundamuk, the Afghans were cautious of meeting our fellow-countrymen at close quarters. When they tried the experiment, led by the alluring satisfaction of revelling in Feringhee gore, they found that, although heart-broken and disorganized, the Briton was ever ready to die facing his enemy. Peace to the manes of those maligned and hapless warriors, whose bones are bleaching on every height and valley of that rugged desolation (fit scene for such a catastrophe) which disfigures the face of the country, from the gates of the Bala Hissar to the walls of Jellalabad! And, peace to the ashes of the worthy and amiable Elphinstone! It rested not with him that, suffering under bodily weakness and worn by mental anxieties in his arduous command, he should have lived to end his honourable days in an enemy's camp. The soldier has no choice but to obey the authority which places him in command, and those authorities are answerable to their countrymen for the selection.

But the British power fell not with her general and his army. Kandahar was held with security in the iron grasp of Nott.[1] The little garrison of Khelat-i-Ghilzie held resolutely their post against the repeated and determined attacks of their blood-thirsty foe; and the haughty Akbar, with the bravest of his mountain tribes, was checked in his murderous career under the walls of Jellalabad. The "illustrious garrison" maintained their isolated

[1] Ghuzni, with its garrison, under command of Colonel Palmer, fell into the enemy's hands.

post against cold, starvation, the overwhelming mass of vaunting Afghans, and against the convulsions of nature when an earthquake cast down their fortifications and left no artificial barrier, beyond their weapons, between the hordes of Afghanistan and Sale's devoted band.

Vain were the efforts made by the Native Infantry Brigade, from Peshawur, to force the passage of the Khyber, for the spirit of those savage mountaineers was roused; every hill was watched with untiring vigilance, and the two regiments which penetrated to Ali Musjid had little cause to congratulate themselves on their undertaking. At length, the "avenging army," under the guidance of General Pollock, having traversed the Punjaub with rapid strides, arrived at the gorge of the Khyber, and joyfully received the tidings of Jellalabad being still in the hands of Sale.

Resting awhile to give breath to his soldiers, and to see his army properly equipped, the gallant general (armed with full discretionary power from the noble and sagacious Ellenborough, whose strong arm now guided the helm of India) prepared to advance. From every village and fastness of the gloomy Khyber the gathering call had gone forth, and the ready mountaineers hastened to the defence of their hereditary defiles; but their haste was of no avail, for the Britons were advancing to save their gallant countrymen, to retaliate on the authors of the Caubul atrocities, and to rescue their countrywomen from captivity. Advancing, with his main body in the jaws of the defile, whilst his two wings spread over the flanking mountains, General Pollock drove the reluctant Khyberees from hill and sungahe[2] of their mountain chain, and, with a trifling loss, stood inside the barriers of Afghanistan, and within a few marches of Jellalabad; but Sale's daring band of warriors had provided for their own safety. Their bastions had sunk into dust before the earthquake, which rolled from the mountains of the Indian Caucasus across the Punjaub and into the heart of India; but, undaunted in heart and resolution, the garrison of Jellalabad opposed their breasts to the enemy, whilst the workmen repaired the damages: and let Akbar Khan (the treacherous and cold-blooded assassin) and the remnant of his twenty thousand companions in arms, bear witness to the unimpaired energy and courage of the garrison of Jellalabad. Heedless of the approaching reinforcements from India, they sallied, scarce two thousand in number, from the gates of their fortress, piercing the centre of the Afghan hosts, where the flashing sabre and deadly bayonet inflicted a partial retribution on their enemies, still reeking with the blood of the Caubul Tragedy.

That victory was purchased with the life of the heroic Dennie.[3] But where, save on the battle-field, should the soldier hope to fall, and when can the dart of death be more welcome to the warrior's breast than when, falling in the arms of victory, he feels the immortal laurel wreath rest lightly on his brow? Maligned by those who were jealous of

[2] The sungah is a stockade of loose stones, thrown up on the hill-side, or crest.

[3] Colonel Dennie, of H. M. 13th Light Infantry, was killed by a matchlock ball from a fort which he stormed when this sally was made.

his fame and acquirements, he fell in the vigour of manhood, and we may sadly concur with the panegyrist of Moore, in exclaiming—

> "Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
> And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him;
> But nothing he'll reck if they let him sleep on
> In the grave where a Briton has laid him."

I can neither envy nor estimate the feelings which must have occupied the hearts of his invidious traducers, (and one especially, high in rank and authority, though ennobled only by name,) when the deeds and fate of the talented and lion-hearted Dennie wrung from the senate of England, after his death, that well-merited tribute which had not fallen to his lot during a life of gallant exploits, hardships, and sufferings.

The simultaneous advances of Generals Pollock and Nott from Jellalabad and Kandahar, were almost daily marked by the defeat or flight of the savage tribes who had aided in the massacre of the ill-fated garrison of Caubul. Ghuzni was not defended a second time, but evacuated on the approach of Nott, who dismantled its blood-stained fortifications, and thence moved, unopposed, to unite his army with Pollock's at Caubul. The tribes under Akbar Khan were more resolute in their defence; but light mountain troops, without artillery, and ignorant even of the most simple methods of rendering their passes more difficult of approach, present but a contemptible barrier to a well-organized and effective army. Marching over the heights, which were strewn with the mangled corpses of their ill-fated comrades, peals of British musketry rung a tardy death-knell to their memories, but wrote the epitaph in the blood of their assassins.

Leaving Khoord Caubul, the most formidable barrier to the metropolis, undefended, Akbar and his forces fled from the field of Tezeen, and left the country again in the hands of the British conquerors.

The capture of Istalif closed the three years' tragedy enacted amidst the rugged defiles of Afghanistan.

The unexpected release of the prisoners crowned the successes of this fortunate expedition; and it now remained only to retire, with as good a grace as possible, from a country where the most extraordinary vagary which had ever invaded the head of civilized man had originally conducted the army of the Indus.

As a last memento of the British invasion, the arched bazaars of the city of Caubul were destroyed, and buried in a confused mass of blackened ruins. This has always appeared

to me rather a wanton mode of exciting the hostility of the harmless bunneahs[4] of Caubul against us: for the insurrection and its concomitant disasters arose not amongst the mercantile community of Caubul, but amongst the warlike mountain tribes. To punish the unfortunate house-owners of the bazaars, was not a dignified retaliation for our losses.

In November, 1842, the united forces quitted the metropolis of the Afghans, leaving the inhabitants of these barbarous regions to their wonted occupation of cutting each other's throats ad libitum. That soil can surely never flourish, which is eternally watered with human blood. The earliest records of Afghan history present to us the same prevalence of murderous tastes, from the days of Sinkol, the contemporary of Romulus, throughout the Middle Ages, down to the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and forty-two, when the British Government wisely resolved to have nothing more to do with Afghanistan.

Were the invasion of that country a measure conducive to our interests, it follows that the occupation thereof must have been necessary, in order to render it a bulwark against the nations lying to the north-west, of whom, in 1838, such unnecessary apprehensions were entertained. As this measure required a large subsidiary force to be maintained in the country, entailing a consequent augmentation of our army in the East, which was not convenient to the wishes or coffers of the Anglo-Indian Government, there cannot exist a doubt of the wisdom of Lord Ellenborough's administration in correcting the errors of his predecessor, and withdrawing the army from a country which was never likely to become a profitable territory.

The question of its advantages as a military position, may form a theoretical subject for discussion; but practically, the utter inability of the country to pay and maintain a large subsidiary force, and the impracticability of the exhausted revenues of India furnishing the sinews of war, sets the question at rest.

The finishing stroke yet required to be put to the Afghan policy, in disposing of Dost Mahomed, who had remained for some time in our hands; but now that his country was no longer an object of interest, of course the ex-king was less so. The release of that monarch, and his return to the throne—to hurl him from which had impoverished India, besides draining it of some of its best blood, was the practical and final satire on the Caubul campaign.

I have not been diffuse in entering on minute details of the losses experienced on our march into that country, because I cannot flatter myself that the subject possesses sufficient general interest; but should anyone have any curiosity regarding the number of men, camels, horses, bullocks, and asses that died during the first campaign, together

[4] Shopkeepers.

with the minutest particulars, more than the most inquisitive disciple of Hume could require, let him not languish in ignorance, for are they not written in the Book of Hough?

Our questionable allies, the Sikhs, having been a cause of some disquietude, it was thought prudent to assemble a large force on the north-west frontier, at the close of the year 1842, which was denominated the "Army of Reserve." This force, encamped on the banks of the Sutlej, in the vicinity of Ferozepore, awaited the return of the victorious troops from Afghanistan, and Lord Ellenborough was present in person to welcome the arrival of the Caubul warriors under a triumphal arch which he had caused to be erected at the extremity of a bridge of boats thrown across the Sutlej. The united forces, when Generals Nott and Pollock had joined us, exceeded forty thousand men; and thus the nations of the East were shown that Afghanistan was not abandoned owing to any weakness in a military point of view.

After two reviews of the army on the frontier, at which some of the Sikh Durbar were present, in the beginning of January, 1843, the army was broken up, and marched to their cantonments in Bengal.

CHAPTER II.

VISIT TO AGRA—JOURNEY THROUGH CENTRAL INDIA VIA GWALIOR, AND INDORE TO BOMBAY.

All chance of active service in India being apparently over, I availed myself of leave of absence, and began preparations for my journey towards Bombay. The route through central India, from Delhi or Agra, was at that time rarely travelled, and presented numerous attractions from the accounts I had read of its wild country and inhabitants. I was fortunate enough to find four acquaintances, who were also about to proceed homewards, and desirous of taking the nearest road, as the season was now far advanced, and the heat a little later becomes severe. Having appointed Agra as our rendezvous, I proceeded, with my valued friend L—— in advance. Our marching establishment to Delhi consisted of our riding-ponies and three camels, to carry our baggage, which, on arrival at that city, we agreed to reduce to the least possible compass. Having traversed the rich tract of country lying between Kurnaul and Delhi, we arrived on the fourth morning at that city. We now reduced our baggage to a pair of light boxes each; and leaving our tents, ponies, and other encumbrances, got into our palanquins, and at the usual rate of about four miles an hour, were jolted into Agra, and safely deposited under the verandah of our hospitable entertainer, Mr. A. Plowden, of the civil service.

During my sojourn in India, I had hitherto had no opportunity of visiting Agra, much and anxiously as I had wished to see its numerous objects of interest, but above all, the far-famed Taj Mahal.

The town itself presented little to interest the traveller; and having ridden through its narrow bazaars, we made a point, during the remainder of our stay, to avoid their unalluring precincts, even at the expense of an extra mile or two of ground.

The second evening of our residence, we petitioned our friend to delay no longer the visit to the Taj; and in accordance with our request, the dog-cart made its appearance, and I mounted beside our host, while L—— took up his place behind, to take charge, as he professed, of the whole concern. As we wound about the rocks in the suburbs of the city, the Jumna lay winding its tortuous course beneath us, and the summit of the glorious Taj suddenly opened on our view from amongst its graceful garland of thick cypress groves.

We had no time to express our admiration of the sight, for L——, who had been, as usual, overflowing with spirits the whole way, now exclaimed, as we were tearing

along towards the monument at a pace which did credit to our little hack, "It matters more to you men of weight, physically speaking, than to me; but I do think there ought to be a linch-pin in the wheels of this uneasy machine."

Our host was turning round to make some rejoinder, when away spun the wheel in right earnest, and each occupant took involuntarily a line of country of his own. Fortunately for us, the road was some two feet deep in very fine dust, and we rested unharmed, though rather bewildered, on its woolly surface. After a few seconds, we all wheeled about, and meeting face to face, burst into laughter at each other's ludicrous appearance.

In the midst of our merriment, a britzka drove rapidly round the corner, and pulled up beside us, when we were rejoiced to find that its fair tenant was our hostess. Having committed the damaged cart to the charge of two sable attendants, we proceeded to our destination in the britzka, though not before L—— had carefully inspected the linch-pins of the carriage.

The shades of evening were thickening fast around us as we drew up at the archway, where it is necessary to dismount, and proceed on foot into the gardens of the Taj. Strolling on through avenues of cypress, speckled occasionally with basins of white marble amongst the evergreens which surround them, we arrived at the foot of the square platform on which the monument rests, at each angle of which rose an elaborately carved minaret.

The Taj itself is built entirely of white marble, and conveyed to my senses the very poetry of architecture. A good drawing might convey a better idea of its exterior than any amount of description could effect; but I have never seen one which at all satisfied me. The interior of the edifice, which is octagonal, and inlaid with mosaic of precious stones representing fruits and flowers, no drawing could ever do justice to. In the centre, surrounded by a screen of exquisitely-wrought white marble fretwork, stand beside each other the tombs of Shah Jehan and his sultana, Mumtaza Zemâni. As we gazed with solemn and mute admiration on the glorious objects around us, feeling that she who had stood unrivalled amongst the favourites of the East while living, had prevailed even beyond the grave in tenanting a resting-place which asserts an easy superiority over the handiworks of the children of men, a low strain of music arising from the waters of the Jumna poured its soft melody through the gratings of the edifice, and echoed in gently-repeated harmony along the roof.

As the last faint notes died away, we gradually awoke to the world around us, which we had long before quitted for the realms of imagination, and were almost startled by the tones of a human voice informing us that the music was of this earth, and had been provided for the occasion by our considerate host.

Never will be obliterated those happy hours from my memory, which I passed wandering amongst the groves and terraces of that type of symmetrical beauty. I have often thought, that should any immoderate afflictions fall to my lot in after life, I would make a pilgrimage to this spot; and there, though oblivion might be denied, yet, under the soothing influence of such a scene, the mind must be rendered more qualified to ascend from the highest and most perfect works of men to the throne of Him who controls their destinies.

Never having been a very enthusiastic admirer of architecture, and cordially admitting that "God made the country, man the town," I approached the Taj, dishonestly prejudiced against it, especially as I had heard the united voices of men raised in its favour; but no sooner had sufficient time been allowed for the mind to comprehend all its beauties, than I succumbed, and became a most passionate admirer of the Eastern sultana, so lovely in death.

Afterwards, we visited many other beautiful structures in the vicinity of Agra, especially the tomb and gardens of the Emperor Akbar; but we ought to have visited them first, for it was now too late; my affections had been engaged, and were ever recurring to, and dwelling with, the absent beauty on the banks of the Jumna.

Nearly a week having now elapsed since our arrival at Agra, and the whole of our travelling-party being assembled, a council of war was called, to debate on our future proceedings. It was ascertained, that in Agra barely a hundred men could be mustered to accompany us, as palanquin-bearers, across to Indore; and as thirty were required for each palanquin to carry it and our baggage an average rate of thirty miles a day, it became necessary to divide our party, two procuring horses and ponies for the transport of themselves and impedimenta, as the Romans appropriately termed it; and three, including Colonel L——, my friend L——, and myself, proceeding with the main body of Palkee bearers. We could only procure one servant to accompany us, (for the natives of Bengal seldom migrate to Bombay,) and the restless and untiring Dereah undertook that arduous office on the understanding that we provided him with treble wages, and a pony for the transport of his almost imperceptible person.

All arrangements having been completed, we left the sacred city, on the evening of the 10th of February, accompanied by as yelling and motley a crew of gentlemen in black as ever followed the track of a roving band of Pindarrees.

After numerous stoppages during the night, and angry expostulations with our detainers for the delay, and waste of strength by thus interrupting our rest, we arrived at Dholpore, a distance of about thirty-five miles, early next morning.

The Rajah of Dholpore, who resided near the stage bungalow where we halted, very politely sent us a present of rice, milk, fowls, and sweet-meats, for which we returned

our hearty thanks, having nothing more valuable to offer, and we hoped few things could have been more acceptable.

At Dholpore we held a council to arrange plans for directing, with some regularity, the movements of our numerous forces, which, in their present state of anarchy, were not so effective as could be wished. Colonel L—— was unanimously elected as our commander-in-chief. Captain S—— was appointed quartermaster-general, and I was nominated to the united duties of adjutant-general and military secretary. Major L—— was appointed to superintend and represent the infantry, and, being unhappily very badly off for cavalry, Captain U—— undertook to represent that important branch of the service, and forthwith assumed command of the cook, Dereah; but to this an immediate objection was made, the commander-in-chief claiming him as a private orderly.

It now occurred to us that a most material omission had been made in neglecting to provide any artillery; but, after much deliberation, this difficulty was removed by Major L—— kindly volunteering to officiate also in that capacity. This offer was accepted by universal acclamation, as that gallant officer wore in his belt a pistol in proportion to his own stature, and was moreover known to have made as much noise since he came into the world as qualified him to compete, in that respect, with the artillery of the whole British army.

Leaving Dholpore in the evening, and walking most part of the way, for the road was very wild and rugged, we arrived, late at night, on the banks of the river Chumbul. After a detention of many hours, in consequence of no notice having been sent to the ferry, we were, early in the morning, transported across under the auspices of a boatman, who we agreed must have been Charon's representative on earth, for a more grim and ungainly looking savage I never beheld. He either could not or would not use his tongue, answering our inquiries about the road with impatient gestures. Giving him the benefit of the doubt about the use of his tongue, he escaped chastisement.

We reached the city of Gwalior about mid-day, and were kindly entertained at the house of the British resident, Colonel Spiers.

A few days before our arrival, the King of Gwalior had died, and, as usual, in states not completely under British control in India, this event caused a great commotion, which did not subside before they had been embroiled with the British government[5] and taught to be quiet.

In the course of the day a Vakeel arrived from the Gwalior-court at Colonel Spiers' residence, and, hearing that we were about to proceed across the Gwalior territories, he

[5] The war was decided, in one day, by the actions of Maharajpore and Punniaz.

volunteered to send with us an escort of Native Cavalry, who, he informed us, would be of use in procuring supplies from the villages, as also in acting as guides. We gladly accepted his offer, and, in the afternoon, quitted the residency with our savage-looking escort of Mahratta cavalry, dressed in flowing robes of cotton or silk of various colours, confined at the waist, with a coarse shawl or cotton kummurbund,[6] bound closely round the body, and furnished with an armoury of crooked knives and long pistols. Their legs were ensconced in long deerskin boots, and their heads in steel semicircular helmets, with a loose piece of chain armour attached and hanging over the shoulders. In the heat of the day a part of the silk or cotton round the waist was detached, and bound over the helmet to protect the wearer from the rays of the sun, which, striking on the polished steel, would have rendered it nearly intolerable. Behind their backs were slung matchlocks of great length of barrel; and in their hands, or thrown loosely on the hollow of the shoulder, were lances, calculated to reach an enemy at about ordinary pistol-shot range. We now really began to feel that we were an army, and, on entering on the duties of office, I received orders from the commander-in-chief, of the most peremptory nature, to take care that he was always provided with milk for breakfast. This duty I assigned to the most brawny looking warrior in our escort, and he received the order with as much gravity as if I had desired him to charge a host of Pindarrees.

Passing the fortress of Gwalior, constructed on a rocky eminence, we wound about the city, which is prettily situated beneath a semicircle of low hills, and appeared to have been built with more attention to substantial comfort and cleanliness than is generally bestowed on eastern cities. In the north-western quarter, where the cantonments are situated, the ground was laid out in large squares for parades, and shaded by rows of fruit trees fronting each side.

Having walked nearly five hours, enjoying the beautiful and temperate night, in company with my friend L——, we ascended our palanquins, and woke not till the sun was high next morning, when we put up, during the heat of the day, under the friendly shade of a banyan tree, and beside a small village, where, alas! no milk was procurable for the commander-in-chief's breakfast. My Mahratta friend brought two of the chiefs of the village at the point of his spear, who, after numerous salaams, protested most earnestly that there were no goats in their village to afford milk; and, after earnest protestations of their poverty, they were silent, and looked like condemned criminals. I told them it was a most grave offence they had committed, in not having or procuring any milk; but, being disposed to leniency, I would overlook the offence if they brought immediately some fresh eggs. This was at once complied with, and the village delinquents, having received payment for the same, retired overjoyed at this unexpected munificence. The commander-in-chief's resentment was in some measure appeased by using a fresh egg as a substitute for milk; and a young peacock and a brace

[6] Waistbelt.

of partridges, which I shot in time to be placed in Dereah's hands for breakfast, earned a full pardon.

We continued to traverse a bare rocky country for many leagues, travelling all night, and putting up, during the heat of the day, under some friendly tree or shed, where, with the produce of my gun, and the assistance of collections made by our escort in the villages, (when any were met with, but here they were few and far between) we reached the cantonment of Sipree on the 15th of February. The Sipree contingent were absent on active service, in the jungles of Bundelkund; but we put up at the house of one of the officers, which was situated on a hill commanding an extensive view over the bare country, and where the breeze whistled most musically along the verandahs.

The character of the country we now traversed was the opposite to that of Bengal: high and rocky hills skirted us on each side, and occasionally crossed our route: now, we plunged into a dense and apparently endless jungle, from which we suddenly emerged on a tract intersected by ravines, which nearly broke our palanquin bearers' hearts.

The most unaccountable animals of our party were the cook, Dereah, and his little Agra pony, which was rarely known to feed during our toilsome journey. The cook, his master, was certainly never found napping except during one hour previous to our evening meal, whilst the pea-fowl soup was simmering on the embers, and both readily and cheerfully resumed their route, as if that was the only really important object of their lives.

At the frontiers of Scindiah, our escort was relieved by another cavalcade of similar strength, who proved equally useful; and the commandant seemed much offended at our tender of money for their services. He requested we would give him a note to testify that all had faithfully discharged their duty; which was, of course, done.

At length, we reached Indore, which was about half-way to Bombay, and had, by this time, become thoroughly weary of our narrow palanquin abodes.

On our arrival at Indore, we found that Sir Claude Wade, the British resident, was absent on a tour of inspection in the jungles, but we were taken charge of by Dr. Bruce, the medical attaché of the residency, and we required much at the hands of our kind host.

I do not remember having seen any place in India bearing a resemblance to Indore. The residency is a magnificent building, situated on a rising ground, and overlooking a country which resembled an English park, in its pastures, trees, and evergreens. The trees looked thoroughly English; the turf, though something of a bilious hue, deserved the name; and the deer which speckled it completed the picture we had been drawing in our imaginations of some English grandee's residence. Nor was there anything to

interfere with the comparison, until, arriving at the hall, you were greeted by a challenge from the Sepoy sentry, an incident decidedly at variance with an English landscape.

Having remained two days at Dr. Bruce's house, we proceeded to Mhow, about fourteen miles distant, the frontier station of the troops in the Bombay Presidency, where we put up at a stage bungalow built by Government for the convenience of travellers. Bungalows are shortly to be constructed at regular intervals along the whole road which we have traversed. Our palanquin bearers refused to proceed any further, save at an exorbitant rate, whereupon L—— and I quietly paid our people their demands, and requested them to depart in peace, adding that we would seek more useful and expeditious means of proceeding. Colonel L——, unfortunately, had suffered much from fatigue; he consequently retained all his people, and proceeded with the other half of our party, who were provided with ponies, whilst L—— and I started off to the bazaar to see what means of conveyance were procurable. We found a Parsee merchant, with whom we made friends by making some purchases, and were by him introduced to a great proprietor of ponies, who engaged to carry all that was required by us, ourselves included, as far as Dhoolia cantonments, whence, we were informed, bullock-carts might be obtained to take us on to Kirkee, which was our destination for the present.

We continued our journey, mostly on foot, over the wild and beautiful Ghauts, on this frontier, and in a few days came to a regular chain of stage bungalows, which afforded us comparative luxuries, after our long sojourn amongst sheds and native serais. After a weary journey in bullock-carts, we reached Ahmednuggur, from whence one night's ride, with relays of horses furnished by our friends at the latter station, brought us to Kirkee, where I met with a friend, to visit whom had been the principal object of my expedition to this part of the world.

To this meeting I had long looked forward with much delight, for there is no happiness to which this life has treated me, surpassing, in my estimation, that of meeting with a dearly-loved friend after a long separation. Upwards of seven years had elapsed since we parted. We had each been wandering in various parts of this beautiful world; we had passed from the embryo period of life to manhood; and I firmly believe our friendship had lasted untainted by experience and intercourse with the rough edges of the world; an attrition which is apt to render the patient too callous to understand the true meaning of friendship.

I dwell with fond but mournful reflection on that meeting, for, alas, it cannot be repeated on this side of the grave! A few months after I had quitted India, my noble and highly-gifted friend met with a sudden and tragical death. The trigger of a pistol, incautiously handled, was touched, and the fatal slip of the thumb off the hammer, destroyed, in a few seconds, one of the noblest of mankind. Possessing a mind of

gigantic natural ability, aided by an accurate and retentive memory, and great power of application, he was qualified to be an ornament to any profession or country. With pride and confidence I looked forward to a future brilliant career, when his capacity should be known to those who might have the means of serving him and his country by its development. But in the enjoyment of robust health, and unrivalled bodily strength, the irresistible arm of Destiny interposed and led him to the grave.

"Ω, πολυπονοι, πολυσονοι, γενος εφαμεοών
Αευσσεθ' ωζ παṗ ελπιδας ἡ μοιοα ζαινει
Και βροτών πας ασταθμητος αιων."

Farewell, forever, my fondly-valued, Sydney! Though in this world we shall not meet again, I yet shall never part with your image; in contemplating which I shall learn to admire and reverence a character in strange contrast with the result of daily experience—a character surpassing in reality those imaginative sketches on the monuments of the posthumous successors to virtue, or the titled inheritors of greatness they never earned, who are flattered into the presence of their God with a lying epitaph, when—

"On the tomb is seen,
Not what they were, but what they should have been."

If a life of stern and undeviating integrity, and a practice of the duties enjoined to man by Him who made the stars, afford hopes of immortality, Sydney, you alone, of those with whose characters I have been conversant, possess an irreproachable title.

CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL IN CALCUTTA—DEPARTURE FOR THE SOUTH-WESTERN FRONTIER—ARRIVAL AT MERUT—STATE OF AFFAIRS ON THE NORTH-WESTERN FRONTIER—THE SIKH MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT—THE BRITISH POSITION.

After two years' absence, early in October, 1845, I disembarked from one of those monster steamers at Calcutta, by whose assistance the months occupied in our former intercourse with India are reduced to weeks, and the probability of arrival, not only to a day, but almost to an hour. Not ten years ago I remember hearing an eminent lecturer in London prove to the complete satisfaction (apparently) of a crowded amphitheatre, that steam communication with India, via the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf, was impossible. We were told that the monsoons, the shoals in the Red Sea, and the tornadoes which rush from the gullies across its fatal waters, were too much even for the iron heart of a steamer to encounter; and should any fortunate passengers escape these evils, the sands of the desert between Suez and Alexandria were prepared to overwhelm the caravan of presuming adventurers.

The practical comment of 1846 and some preceding years, has reduced these imaginary terrors to their proper value; and a railroad across the Isthmus, if the Pasha have the wisdom to benefit his country and many others, by adopting the suggestions of British engineers, will bring India three days nearer to Europe. Steam has so far substituted time for distance, that I am sure I shall be excused for adopting the modern change of terms. Miles and other barbarous terms may continue to be used for many years to come in uncivilized climes, but who would think of talking of the number of miles between London and Bristol, when the Great Western authorities announce it to be, by express, precisely two hours and forty-five minutes.

When will this happy system of railroads be applicable to India? or, rather, when will it be applied? for a more favourable surface for operations could hardly be selected in the world, and the advantages to Government are incalculable. A British force, after defeating the Burmese on the banks of the Burhampooter, might be steamed up to the Sutlej in time to repulse the malignant Sikhs before supper the following evening, and then proceed on their tour of conquest as long as the steam could be kept up or an enemy found.

These may be termed little more than idle visions to the patient sufferer who is about to undergo a transportation to the upper provinces of Bengal, at the mournful average of three miles an hour, if the weather be favourable—considerably less if a heavy fall of

rain should occur; and in October, 1845, the rain did come down in real earnest, as I left Calcutta.

I shall not pause to acquaint the reader with the latitude and longitude of Calcutta, neither will I expatiate on the beauties of Government House, or the relative numbers and merits of the Hindoo and Mussulman inhabitants. As the gazetteer can give that and much more valuable information on the same head, I will not rashly enter into competition with one possessed of so much general information, but refer the curious to its pages, whilst I invite the less particular to accompany me in a journey to the south-western frontier, and I will do my best to entertain my companions.

Hearing that there was no necessity for being in the upper provinces just now, inasmuch as the governor-general, and all India, except the Delhi Gazette, seemed bent to maintain the most profound peace ever known in Hindostan, I gladly seized the opportunity of paying a visit to a valued friend dwelling amongst the jungles of the south-western frontier.

In company with a brother officer, who was travelling the same road, I embarked in a palanquin amidst the torrents of rain which descended in streams, threatening to convert our sturdy little bearers into strong resemblances of water-rats.

We managed, fortunately, to ford the Damooda river before the storm had attained its maximum, or the journey might have been seriously interrupted, for during very heavy storms this river is subject to violent inundations, when a rolling column of water, several feet in height, and resembling the bore[7] on the Ganges, rushes down the river's course, flooding the neighbouring country, and causing many calamities. On the right bank of the Damooda was a shed, which afforded a partial shelter to our exhausted palanquin bearers, and here we rested in hopes of the tempest abating.

About midnight, a lull took place, and we proceeded, the bearers staggering with difficulty through the swamp, which the surrounding country had now become. Travelling that night, and the following day, with the tempest bursting in fitful gusts, we reached the dwelling of an indigo planter, in the lonely jungles, late in the evening, where we were hospitably received, and rested a few hours.

At midnight we proceeded en route, and arrived, as the day broke, on the bank of a swollen torrent. The primitive mode of crossing, which we were compelled to adopt, was by means of a raft, made of bamboos, bound together, crosswise, over a dozen large earthenware jars.[8] Trusting to the declared experience of our bearers, we embarked on this singular conveyance, the natives swimming alongside, and safely

[7] Though from a different cause, the bore of the Ganges proceeding from spring tides forced up the narrow gorge of the Bay of Bengal; that on the Damooda, from the inundation bursting its obstructions.
[8] If there happen to be rocks in the stream, a strike is apt to prove fatal to the raft.

landing everything on the opposite shore in two or three expeditions. Whilst our bearers were engaged in this manner, I observed, a few yards above the raft, something resembling a rope being dragged across the torrent, and running down to the edge to ascertain what it was, an enormous serpent landed beside me, and departed, without any delay, into the woods. Although the stream was running with great rapidity, he had made nearly a direct course across the torrent.

We proceeded onwards, during the whole day, through a heavy jungle, scarcely meeting with any human abode—except the small sheds where our relay of bearers awaited us, at the end of each stage of ten or twelve miles—whilst the storm of rain continued with unabated vigour. At nightfall we reached another torrent, or nullah, as they are called in India, where our progress seemed altogether arrested, for it proved to be more than ten feet deep, was running like a sluice, and no raft of any kind was procurable; nor did our attendants seem disposed to make any attempts; they remarked that an indigo shed was close at hand, and that we should be all drowned if we attempted to cross. Then patiently seating themselves, they looked steadily in our faces to await the decision. The choice was not a matter of difficulty; we preferred the indigo shed to being drowned, hoping that by daybreak the waters might in some degree subside.

The ancients indulged their mirth at the simplicity of the

"Rusticus expectans dum defluat amnis."

Yet the inhabitants of India have been pretty often constrained to adopt the practice.

The indigo shed, after some demur on the part of the native in charge, was opened for the reception of our palanquins and travelling cases, which had long since been thoroughly soaked. We soon found that we were not destined to be the sole tenants of the shed, for the swarms of mosquitoes exceeded any display of the kind I had seen before. We obtained a jar of charcoal to boil the kettle for our frugal meal of tea and biscuits, which soon produced a suffocating sensation. We left, in hopes of being rid of our tormentors by this expedient; but they had not apparently the same objections as ourselves, and were buzzing with renewed delight and welcome on seeing us return. In vain we closed the doors of our palanquins, and nearly stifled ourselves with heat; our active enemies forced a passage through the crevices of the blinds; they would not be baulked of their rightful food, and it was evident that a white victim was no ordinary delicacy.

We anxiously watched for the break of day, and when the dawn was perceptible, arose from our restless mats, stirred up the sleeping establishment, and proceeded to the banks of the nullah. The weather had moderated a little, and, about mid-day, the water had sunk to about five feet, which gave rather a precarious ford. As the deep part was

not very wide, though exceedingly rapid, our bearers consented to make the passage with the empty palanquins on their heads, and afterwards to carry each article separately, whilst we stripped and took the water in support of the sable army. This mode was practised, and successfully performed, though the passage of the palanquins was rather precarious: to have lost them in these wild jungles would have been an irreparable disaster.

From hence, our journey through the jungles and hilly country, which we afterwards entered, was slow, but unobstructed. In many parts, the country was eminently beautiful; especially so in the neighbourhood of Ranchee, where dwelt the excellent and hospitable friend, to visit whom had been the object of my journey.

The Kholes, who inhabit this tract of country, lay claim to be aborigines of Hindostan; nay, more: they designate themselves as the first people created, "except the English," added a polite barbarian, who was recapitulating the claims to antiquity, with this unfortunate exception, which tended to overthrow the whole fabric.

Early one morning, as we were sitting in the verandah of my friend's house, two inhabitants of a neighbouring village made their appearance, and began a most dolorous tale regarding the devastations committed among their kindred by a cruel ghost, to eject which they solicited the sahib's aid.

"It is well," replied the controller of spirits; "go, the ghost shall be caught."

With a submissive reverence due to such power, the two gentlemen in black took their departure, evidently satisfied with the success of their mission.

The ghost complained of was the cholera, which pays frequent visits to this country, but rarely resides more than a few days in a village, when he takes wing in search of fresh victims.

A chuprassie, or messenger, dressed in the belt and insignia of office, is sent to the village, and ordered to await until the scourge abates; and as imagination, beyond a doubt, has much influence in this disease, the arrival of the chuprassie, sent officially to catch the ghost, has no doubt a salutary effect on the superstition of the sufferers; and probably, on leaving, there is not a soul in the place foolhardy enough to doubt that the ghost has taken his departure under the chuprassie's belt.

In this part of India, a few years back almost unknown, and affording a safe asylum for the predatory tribes of Pindarrees until the wise policy of Lord Hastings' government uprooted those daring tribes of banditti, the most profound tranquillity now prevails. The natives have learned, not only to respect, but to love, the mild authority which has restored the golden era, enabling all to repose in security, and to lead the life of

inoffensive simplicity for which the Hindoo is eminently qualified, but which the oppressive rule of the Mussulman conquerors long forbade him to enjoy.

The climate in this hilly district is temperate, presenting a favourable contrast to the execrable damp heat of Calcutta, at the close of the rainy season. The numerous conical hills, hinged with thick jungle, afford an agreeable change of view to one accustomed to the monotonous flat surface of the Bengal provinces from the Rajemal to the Himalayah mountains; and these belts of jungle merit the sportsman's attention, owing to the colonies of tigers, bears, and leopards which seek their shelter. In the thick forests and prairies, further to the west, is found a large beast of the bison kind,[9] whose courage and ferocity recommend him to the most adventurous of Eastern sportsmen; indeed, few would enjoy the daring toil and sport long, unless provided with a heart and eye correctly placed.

My visit to these alluring regions, and to the residence of my kind and valued friends, will always continue the most pleasing recollection afforded by my sojourn in India; but that happy time was curtailed by letters which reached me from Upper India. The aspect of affairs on the north-west frontier, upwards of a thousand miles distant from my present abode, was so warlike, that I felt it my duty to lose no time in prosecuting that long and tedious journey, as my regiment were cantoned in a neighbourhood which rendered the requisition for their service a certainty, in case of hostilities ensuing.

Sending on our palanquins and bearers in the morning, we followed, in the afternoon, on elephants, through the heavy jungles and deep, gloomy ravines; and, travelling at a rate of about five miles an hour, reached Hazarebaugh in the course of the next day.

Some of the Ameers of Scinde,[10] who had been recently deposed, were then residing at this deserted cantonment under surveillance, and we paid them a visit in the evening, accompanied by the officer in charge. They were living in spacious bungalows, under little restraint, and with many of their own people around them. Were it not that those who have once been possessed of power seem to languish under its loss—should the privation have been involuntary—I should have said that the Ameers had more reason to be contented with their present lot than when placed at the head of a lawless and warlike race, whom they were unable to control, and of whom they stood in constant dread.

But the recommendation of sages, and the advice of poets, "privatus ut altùm dormiret," have been alike disregarded; and although, from the reign of Commodus to the

[9] Known in India as the "gour." Those who may be desirous of reading an animated description of the pursuit of this noble game, will find an article in the first number of the "Indian Sporting Review," signed "Junglee," written by a sportsman who has few rivals and no superiors. He is the acknowledged monarch of the jungles, and long may he reign.

[10] The remainder resided near Calcutta, at Dum-dum, the artillery cantonment.

accession of Constantine, every Roman emperor, save Claudius, was assassinated, yet was there no dearth of candidates for the fatal purple.

On informing the Ameers that we had recently arrived from England, they eagerly questioned me as to the probability of their reinstatement.

They smiled incredulously, when I told them I was in no way connected with the India house, and unable to afford them any information. We then conversed upon Scinde, which I told them I had visited on a former occasion, when with Sir John Keane's force, and they politely declared that they remembered me well, an Asiatic façon de parler, for during my Scindian tour, I had not seen one of the Ameers of the present party.

After an exchange of trifling presents, we took our leave of the Ameers, and the same night left Hazarebaugh in our palanquins. After a hot and tedious journey along the main trunk-road, resting for two or three hours during the heat of each day at the government bungalows, erected for that purpose, we reached Cawnpore. At this place, we found that a great improvement[11] had taken place in the mode of travelling, by placing the palanquin on a truck drawn by a horse, which is relieved every ninth or tenth mile, and the traveller is thus enabled to proceed at the rate of eight miles an hour in lieu of three.

I accomplished the journey to Merut in about thirty hours, having had only one upset, and a few trifling bruises; for the horses seemed to have come to an understanding with each other that they were to take any direction, at first starting, but that of the main road. At almost every stage, this system of bolting was attempted; but when once impelled to a canter, they seemed generally to acknowledge the error of their former ways, and to atone for it by making the best and steadiest progress in their power. Though occasionally some headstrong novice would try the effect of a few rapid swerves, he generally got the worst of it in the end, receiving pretty smart chastisement from the native driver, accompanied by torrents of abuse bestowed on the delinquent and his whole generation, frequently intermingled with most opprobrious, and doubtless unmerited, epithets on his mother and sisters. This is, I am sorry to say, but too common a practice amongst the natives throughout India; whenever man or beast offends them, they are in the habit of retaliating immediately on his inoffensive female relatives. Thus, lovely woman is ever wont to become the meek and unsuspecting victim of him who should have been her protector; from Queen Pomare to Mrs. Caudle, in modern times, from Medea to Xantippe, in ancient, they are always right, and almost invariably suffer wrong. The main cause of this injustice may be attributed to their having neglected to maintain their undoubted right to a voice and seat in the legislature; and though, from amiable weakness, or more laudable modesty, they have hitherto refrained from urging their claims, it is base oppression to take advantage of

[11] The credit of this improvement is due to Lord Ellenborough.

such honourable causes of reluctance. If a type of power be wanting, it may be adduced at once; for did not the greatest political despot of these, or any other times, refuse to accept office until her Majesty would assent to change her female friends? A general revolt, especially if the fair rebels only held out long enough, would be certain of ultimate success. I speak only with regard to civilized countries; for in the East, there are reasons which might interfere most materially with the success of such a proceeding.

On my arrival at Merut, I found all parties deeply interested in the news daily arriving from the frontier; the question of peace or war decidedly held the next place in importance in the estimation of the European community after that of the impending race meeting.

As the Merut races may not afford matter of so much general interest elsewhere as they did in the north-western provinces of Bengal, I will enter first on the question of secondary importance.

Notwithstanding the hostile attitude assumed by the Sikh army, Sir Henry Hardinge continued to declare publicly his pacific wishes and intentions, though, as a precautionary measure, the British regiments had been drawn from the lower provinces of Bengal to strengthen the north-western frontier.

The Sikh soldiery had held the upper hand of power since the demise of Runjeet Singh, and, having elected their own Punchayut to legislate in all matters connected with the army, an increase of numbers and advance of pay had been the consequence, although the latter still continued some months in arrears. The Ranee had continued to hold the name of regent for her child Dhuleep Singh; and, being possessed of much address and natural cunning, she had contrived to retain some semblance of authority over the soldiery. Many of the sirdars, being possessed of considerable wealth and a proportionate suite of dependents, might, had they been united, have held a counteracting influence; but, in the present state of affairs, they were compelled to seek popularity with the soldiery as the most probable means of advancement. Those who of late had held the responsible office of vizier, had found little cause to exult in the precarious honour; for, when unpopular with the army or brought into collision with rival chiefs, a bullet or a cimeter had speedily ended their career. The last and recent victim had been the Ranee's own brother, Jowahir Singh.

The winter was now far advanced; the main body of the Sikh army assembled, as usual, at Lahore, or in its vicinity; and none of the sirdars having of late become particularly

obnoxious,[12] the soldiery were at a sad loss in the selection of some victim to satisfy their thirst for blood and plunder.

The idea soon suggested itself (home being nearly exhausted) to look abroad for conquest and rapine. The most obvious and tempting prize for their cupidity was Hindostan. The wealth of Delhi, Agra, Benares, Calcutta, were proverbial; and the hateful Feringhees, what masses of rupees must lay hidden in their store-houses! The British troops were much scattered about the face of the country; many of the sepoys might probably be induced to desert by the promise of increased pay; and were not the Khalsas assembled together, ready for action, and irresistible? These reflections were carefully fomented by a representation that the governor-general was on his progress to the frontier, and had resolved to demand from the Sikhs a cession of all lands on the British side of the Sutlej.

What could be more conducive to the interests of the Ranee and many of the sirdars than these projects? What easier than to write to the British authorities a lamentation of her inability to restrain the licentious soldiery? Should they be repulsed, the British government must place them in a tractable and organized condition, but could never deprive an inoffensive child, and the hereditary successor to the throne, of its rights, for acts unauthorized by his advisers. The moderation of the Indian government, in its successes against the native powers, warranted such a conclusion. On the other hand, should the Sikh army be successful, they must look to the Ranee in authority at Lahore for numerous requisites to be supplied for the army in the progress of the campaign, and in case of success how faithfully they would have been supplied. Does the matter admit of a doubt? Her faithful and confidential adviser, her more than friend, marched with the forces, as second in command, Rajah Lal Singh.[13]

Of late, the Ranee had devoted herself much to intoxicating liquors, and had indulged so freely that, according to the accounts forwarded by the governor-general's agent, Major Broadfoot, she had lost much of the energy and intelligence which used to mark her character; nor was she by any means singular in this propensity, for the greater portion of the Sikh sirdars followed zealously in the steps of their mistress. The Shalimar gardens, a few miles distant from Lahore, have witnessed scenes of drunkenness and debauchery, unparalleled, perhaps, in any of the capitals of modern Europe. The letters from the governor-general's agent on the north-western frontier, from May 8th to August 10th, 1845, will throw as true a light on the occupation and morality of the court and army of Lahore as could be sought or desired.

[12] Some of the soldiers had suggested the murder of the sirdars, Lal Singh and Tig Singh (two chiefs of the army), as a temporary amusement, but the majority being indifferent to the measure, the subject was allowed to drop.

[13] al Singh's presence with the army was deemed, by the Punchees, (military delegates,) a politic measure, and a sort of security for the good behaviour of her respectable majesty the Ranee.

Rajah Ghoolab Singh,[14] the richest and most powerful of the chiefs, having narrowly escaped the fury of the soldiery, on a recent occasion, at Lahore, and being, moreover, unpopular with the Ranee, remained in his own territories at Jamoo, in the hill districts, wisely resolving to watch the progress of events, now evidently hurrying to a crisis, and to play his own game in due season, which, in the sequel, it will be acknowledged, he executed in masterly style. He was continually invited and urged to descend and take a part in the impending hostilities, but was so earnestly engaged in making preparations on an extensive scale that it took him many weeks to reach the capital.

On more than one occasion the Sikh army had actually marched from Lahore towards the Sutlej, with the avowed intention of invading the British territories, but had, on second thoughts, returned to Lahore to discuss the matter once more.

The most effective branch of the Sikh forces were the Aeen battalions, whose discipline and formation had been the result of many years' exertion, in the days of Runjeet, on the part of European officers in his service. Their arms and uniform resembled much that of our native troops, except the peculiar Sikh turban; and, until the revolutions which succeeded Runjeet's death, their discipline had been strictly maintained. As the officers who had brought them to a state of efficiency and discipline had all either left the country, died, or been otherwise summarily disposed of, the general supposition was that these troops would no longer be very formidable, but this impression proved incorrect. The Aeen forces have occasionally varied in strength and numbers, but amounted at this time to sixty battalions, whereof about forty were with the army of Lahore, and the remainder principally quartered in the neighbourhood of Peshawur.

Six hundred men constituted the full effective strength of each battalion, and to each were attached its own four pieces of cannon with their complement of artillerymen.

The Sikh artillery we had seen at exercise on former occasions, and their fire was known to be rapid and tolerably accurate; they had, in fact, enjoyed the reputation of being, in all respects, the best appointed arm of their service. All had been done that lay in our power to render them effective, for, on previous occasions, when the governor-general paid his visits to the Lahore Durbar, it had been usual to present the best pieces of artillery procurable, which served for excellent models in the Lahore arsenal.

The Sikh Regular Cavalry had been abolished, and replaced by hordes of irregulars; and as no petty chief in the Punjaub appears on public parade without a band of armed retainers, generally well mounted and equipped, the irregular cavalry were almost numberless.

[14] Ghoolab Singh, Soochet Singh, and Dyan Singh, were three brothers who had risen to eminence in the time of Runjeet, from comparative obscurity. The two latter fell, during the wholesale massacres at Lahore, a short time ago.

There were also some corps of irregular infantry or Bundookcheras; these irregulars, both cavalry and infantry, might, on emergency, be mustered to a numerical force at least double that of the regular troops.

With an enemy of this description assembled forty miles from the British frontier, and with fords innumerable along the line of the Sutlej, between Ferozepore and Loodiana, during the cold season, it must be acknowledged that the game was not an easy one to Sir Henry Hardinge, when desirous of appearing peaceably disposed.

By the treaty of 1809, Runjeet Singh bound himself not to cross any armed parties into the protected Sikh states, beyond what were necessary for the collection of revenue; and when any large body of troops were moved, an intimation of the march and the causes was always sent to the British political agent. The vizier, Jowahir Singh, insisted that this custom should be abolished, alleging that the Lahore government had a right to send over any body of troops they might deem requisite to suppress disturbances occurring in the lands in question, without awaiting for the permission of the British authorities. The protected Sikh chiefs, being mostly possessed of lands on both sides of the Sutlej, concurred in Jowahir Singh's views, which tended to establish their own independence, by permitting the passage of troops from their possessions on one bank, to those on the other—a measure evidently at variance with our interests and security, as it must render all efforts to ascertain the numerical force of armed parties in the Cis-Sutlej states abortive.

The actual assemblage of an army on the Sutlej was considered, by Sir Henry Hardinge, unadvisable, as tending to display hostile intentions on our part, and likely to cause a rupture with the Sikh forces in their present excited state; yet, by refraining from such a measure, our frontier was exposed, at any time during the winter and spring,[15] to the ravages of an army which might commit serious depredations before a British force could be assembled to oppose it.

The forts of Ferozepore and Loodiana were perfectly secure; the former, being constructed on modern principles, and garrisoned by British troops, might have held out as long as required; but both cantonments and native towns were exposed to the will of the enemy. This was a fundamental error in both positions, which, being thrown so far forward from any support, should have been actually fortresses only, constructed on the best modern principles, and unencumbered by large towns and indefensible cantonments.

On the British side of the river, the population in the protected Sikh states being intimately connected with that of the Punjaub, and many portions of the land actually

[15] In the hot season, when the rains set in, the heavy floods and inundations are a sufficient protection to the frontier.

the property of Sikh sirdars with the army, it is natural to suppose that we possessed but doubtful friends in case of their being called upon. On the other hand, it was maintained that the position of these lands would be a guarantee for the good behaviour of their owners residing in the Punjaub, whose interests would probably suffer in case of a rupture.

The Rajah of Puttealah, the most powerful chief residing in the protected states, had long been a firm ally of the British Government, but his power to restrain his followers was doubtful; at the best, no doubt was entertained that they would not act in offensive measures against their Sikh kinsmen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BRITISH FORCES—THE SIKH ARMY CROSS THE SUTLEJ—THE BATTLE OF MOODKEE—POSITION AND OPERATIONS CONSIDERED.

Under the circumstances thus briefly detailed, it would appear to have been expedient to bring matters at once to a crisis; for this annual threatening posture assumed by the gigantic incubus which Runjeet Singh had created on our threshold, could not be suffered permanently to draw the strength of the British forces in the presidency to guard their frontier. But it was generally understood that the wishes of Leadenhall Street were strongly in favour of a pacific line of conduct, and thus the governor-general had little choice as to the line of operations to be pursued.

No actual increase of numbers over the preceding year took place on the frontier, but nearly every British regiment in Bengal had been marched to the north-western provinces.

Umbala was the cantonment for the main body of the army, to which Ferozepore and Loodiana were the outposts on the Sutlej, distant respectively one hundred and ten, and seventy miles, whilst the base line connecting the latter places measured about seventy-five miles.

The reserve force remained at Merut, which, being one hundred and fifty miles from Umbala, and more than two hundred and sixty from Ferozepore, might appear the most defective part of the arrangement.

The whole of the Bengal presidency had been so drained of British troops to supply the north-western provinces, that from Merut to Calcutta (nearly nine hundred miles,) there remained but one British infantry regiment[16] to overawe the numerous independent principalities of India, to garrison Fort William, and to show the people of Hindostan that the British had not altogether forsaken them in their ardour to form new acquaintances on the frontier. No one will assert that the gallant 39th had not a handful of responsibility assigned them, and none were more capable of undertaking whatever Britons could effect, than the victors of Maharajpore.

The forces at Ferozepore, Loodiana, and Umbala, including the regiments at the hill stations of Kussowlie and Subathoo, amounted to about twenty thousand men, with seventy pieces of cannon, (six and nine-pounders, and twelve and twenty-four-pound

[16] H.M. 39th. The 61st Regiment landed in December, and were immediately ordered up the country.

howitzers.) This force having been warned some weeks previously to complete their marching establishment, were available for field service at a few hours' notice.

The regiments composing the above-named force were as follow:—H.M.'s 3rd Light Dragoons, and seven regiments of Native Cavalry; H.M.'s 9th, 29th, 31st, 50th, 62nd, and 80th Regiments; the Company's European Regiment, and fourteen regiments of Native Infantry, exclusive of the Sirmoor and Nusseeree battalions, which were destined to garrison Loodiana in case of emergency.

The reserve force, at Merut, amounted to more than four thousand men, including H.M. 9th and 16th Lancers, 3rd Native Cavalry, H.M. 10th Regiment, two corps of Native Infantry, and two troops of Horse Artillery. An elephant battery of twelve-pounders also moved with the reserve force. Other corps in the neighbourhood or on the line of march might complete the whole reserve force to a numerical strength of about eight thousand men.

Thus, within a month, the whole army might, when concentrated on the frontier, amount, in round numbers, to nearly thirty thousand men, with one hundred pieces of artillery. Nearly one-third of which force would consist of British troops, including the artillery, of which not more than one-third were natives.

With such an army at his disposal, Sir Henry Hardinge cannot be deemed guilty of having despised his enemies.

On the 20th of November, Major Broadfoot[17] communicated to the governor-general that the information which he had received from Lahore led him to suppose that the Sikhs had resolved on an advance towards the Sutlej, for the purpose of invading the British territories, and the next day's accounts tended to corroborate this statement.

On the 24th and 25th of November, a great portion of the Sikh army were on their march towards the Sutlej, openly proclaiming their intentions of crossing the river. On this news reaching the governor-general's camp, the Sikh Vakeel (ambassador) was called upon for an explanation of this hostile attitude, and being unable to give any satisfactory answer, was ordered, on the 4th of December, to quit the governor-general's camp at Umbala, and return to the Punjaub.

After the Vakeel's departure, Sir Henry Hardinge continued to advance peaceably towards the frontier, visiting the protected Sikh states; nor were orders issued for the movement of any portion of the army until the 8th of December, which order did not reach army head-quarters before the 10th of that month.

[17] Governor-General to the Secret Committee. Letter No. 9.

Sir Henry, in common with the primates in office, had unhappily so far misjudged the Sikh character, as to suppose it was the intention both of their government and soldiery to provoke, but not to commit, hostilities.[18] The attitude and operations of the enemy, when once the war broke out, evidently displayed the aggressive policy which guided their efforts. One cause of ill-feeling engendered in the Punjaub against the British Government, may be traced to a journal published in the north-western provinces of India, whose inflammatory articles had long-pointed out the Punjaub as a worthy object of cupidity, and such sentiments, when circulated amongst the proud and suspicious Sikhs, were doubtless mistaken for an exposition of the views of Government, and must have gone far to stir the national jealousy.

When the Sikh forces had actually quitted Lahore in progress to the Sutlej, there could remain no doubt of the object of their march, however sceptical many might be of the continuation of their humour; and had it then been decided to move the Merut force[19] towards the frontier, the features of the subsequent operations must have undergone a material change by such an accession of strength, and especially of cavalry, of which there was a sad deficiency. In lieu of being moved on the 26th of November, the main column of that force did not quit cantonments until the 16th of December, only two days before the action fought at Moodkee. In the governor-general's dispatch, it is stated that all troops destined for service on the frontier had marched by the 12th of December. Sir John Grey's division of the army were not all on the line of march before the 16th, as before stated.

When the Sikhs had moved six brigades towards the Sutlej, on the 25th of November, the most prudent and fastidious of the peace party could not have reasonably objected to the advance of the reserve to Kurnal, which would have brought them eighty miles nearer the scene of action, and within three or four days reach of Umbala.

The force at army head-quarters having moved, pursuant to orders, under the personal command of his Excellency Sir Hugh Gough, on the 11th and 12th of December, all doubt of the requisition of their services was cleared up on the 13th, by receipt of intelligence at the governor-general's camp, that the Sikhs, who had been assembled in great force, for some days, at Hureeka ford, about twenty miles above Ferozepore, had at length commenced the passage of the Sutlej. For two or three days previously to their crossing, their hostile spirit was fully evinced, by firing upon our reconnoitring parties from Ferozepore.

[18] Vide Governor-General's Minute, dated, "Camp, Umbala, Dec. 4, 1845."

[19] H.M.'s 9th Lancers were actually moved about this time, by mistake, but, three days afterwards, were counter-marched to Merut again, the commander-in-chief's measures being cancelled. Sir H. Gough's letter to Major Broadfoot, Nov. 20, 1845.

Sir John Littler, who was in command at Ferozepore, immediately occupied a defensive position, but was not in sufficient force to oppose the passage of so numerous an army as the Sikhs displayed, and amply provided with heavy artillery to cover their landing.

It was fortunate that this important news reached head-quarters so safely and expeditiously; for thenceforth a long farewell was taken of all communication between the provinces and the interesting field of operations on the north-west frontier.

On hearing that the enemy had actually invaded our territories, Sir Henry Hardinge hastened with the small force at Loodiana[20] to form a junction with Sir Hugh Gough, near Bussean, and issued a proclamation, calling on the chiefs in the protected Sikh states to be quiet and faithful, whilst the British army hastened to encounter and chastise their treacherous invaders.

The junction between the Umbala and Loodiana forces was effected without interruption; and all heavy baggage with the force having been deposited at Bussean, where a large depôt for commissariat supplies had been established, in case of the army being called into the field, the forces hastily advanced towards Ferozepore to encounter the enemy.

Worn and harassed by forced marches,[21] and a constant scarcity of water, the united forces, under the command of Sir Hugh Gough, advanced, on the morning of the 18th of December, towards the fortified village of Moodkee, pressing forward "with hot haste," lest the heart of the Sikhs should fail them, and no fight take place. At least, such appears to have been the object of these forced marches, for it is distinctly asserted that Ferozepore was not considered in any danger, as the fort could hold out for an indefinite time, and the town and cantonment could not have been entitled to more consideration than was bestowed on poor forsaken Loodiana.

On the memorable 18th of December, the cavalry and horse artillery reached the village of Moodkee, about one P.M., after a severe march of twenty-one miles, the greater portion of the infantry being still a considerable distance in the rear, and, of course, much fatigued.

The cavalry pickets were moving to their posts soon after arrival, as usual, when clouds of dust were discerned through the jungle, which announced the approach of the enemy. Previously to arrival at Moodkee, a small reconnoitring party of horse had been descried, who fell back forthwith; but the enemy had scoured the whole country in the

[20] The few men incapable of severe duty were left in the fort of Loodiana. The cantonments were unoccupied.

[21] Some petty chiefs manifested their hostility by shutting their gates and refusing supplies, but were speedily brought to submission.

morning, with their cavalry, and taken an officer prisoner,[22] and the probable time of arrival had been well calculated. Major Broadfoot, whose experience of native warfare had been gleaned amongst the rugged defiles of Afghanistan, where his gallantry and intelligence had earned him an undying fame, was firmly convinced of the enemy's vicinity, and had some hours before intimated his belief: but doubts were still entertained.

Moodkee is a small compact fort, situated on a mound commanding the country, which is open and sandy for a circle of about three quarters of a mile radius, taking the fort as a centre; thence, the country becomes close, with stunted trees and bushes at a few yards interval from each other, affording excellent shelter for irregular troops, but mainly obstructing operations of regular cavalry, or bodies moving in compact order from manœuvring with precision.

When the alarm of the Sikhs' approach reached camp, the cavalry and horse artillery moved forward towards the jungle, and the infantry, as each brigade arrived within reach of the scene of operation, hastened to take part in the fray.

The enemy, whose numbers and intentions were effectually masked by the nature of the ground which he occupied, opened a heavy fire of artillery, which crashed through the jungle with serious effect upon the advancing column, who received the deadly blows without perceiving whence the missives proceeded.

Our light guns were brought rapidly into play; but the advantage of position was with the Sikhs, added to which, they came fresh into the field. The struggle under these disadvantages threatened to be severe.

As each of the brigades of infantry endeavoured to fall into its place in advancing, they found themselves so much impeded by the number of stunted trees, that it was difficult to ascertain their relative positions or to form with their accustomed regularity, whilst the Sikh cavalry, hovering in the vicinity, threatened momentarily to charge.

The infantry, being ordered to deploy, effected that movement with as much regularity as the ground permitted, whilst the cavalry were directed to attack and turn the Sikh flanks, and to disperse the hordes of Goorcheras[23] who infested the jungle. The gallant 3rd Dragoons, sweeping the Goorcheras from before them, penetrated the heavy covert, and, riding through the Sikh artillery, silenced their fire for a time; but the enemy's matchlock men, from behind the hillocks and bushes, and many of them perched amongst the branches of the low trees, whence they could act with impunity, inflicted a severe loss on the Dragoons. When this fact was ascertained, the pistol and carbine were

[22] Captain Biddulph, who was taken prisoner at Moodkee, was restored, two days after the battle, having undergone great hardships.
[23] Sikh irregular horse.

brought into play with some effect on these jungle fowl, but many a gallant fellow was stretched on the ground in this unequal contest.

The Sikh artillery, having again opened fire, continued to tell with murderous effect, and did material damage to our Light Artillery, whose horses, wearied with a long march, were not in the best condition for hard work.

Meanwhile, our infantry, having approached the Sikh position, poured in a steady rolling fire, which was, however, as steadily met, whilst the grape-shot from their battery in the centre caused fearful gaps amongst the British ranks.

The enemy, under cover of the hillocks and thick patches of jungle, maintained his post with the utmost resolution, whilst the declining light favoured this mode of warfare on the part of the Sikhs. Our troops continued gradually to advance, whilst the enemy, falling back, and having abandoned his heaviest battery, was not disposed to await the issue of the bayonet, when the choice rested on his side.

A bright December's evening enabled the contending parties faintly to distinguish each other's outline, but the Sikhs had now suffered severely; and, having failed in their main object of surprise, Lal Singh conveyed the orders to his troops to retire. The enemy therefore abandoned the field to the British, having been compelled to suffer a loss of fifteen guns and to cast others into the wells in the village in rear of his position.

When it was ascertained that the Sikhs had finally retired, the men rested themselves for the first time during that toilsome and eventful day; but bodily fatigue was a trifling evil when compared with the parching thirst from which all had long suffered, and from which there was yet no relief. But if those who escaped unharmed had undergone incredible hardships, the agonies of the wounded can scarcely be conjectured, as only partial relief could be afforded amongst the crowds of sufferers.

The enemy having made no demonstrations of renewing the attack, the troops were withdrawn, about midnight, to their encampments at Moodkee.

The forces engaged on the British side, during this action, amounted to something less than ten thousand men and forty-five guns. The return of losses gives two hundred and fifteen killed and six hundred and fifty seven wounded.

The enemy's force encountered at Moodkee was estimated, in the despatches, at fifteen thousand Infantry, as many cavalry, and forty guns.[24] Of course it is necessary to form some estimate of the enemy's force on such occasions; but though always a difficult

[24] I was informed, at Lahore, that their whole force at Moodkee was under twenty thousand men; but it was only the bare assertion of a Sikh officer, and may be taken at its value.

operation with regard to native armies, in this instance it could be no more than mere conjecture, for the jungle prevented the chance of giving anything resembling an accurate judgment.

The enemy's loss was never ascertained; but, judging from the bodies scattered over the country, the number of killed may be set down at about three hundred. Their wounded were carried to Ferozeshuhur and the villages in the neighbouring country, so that the Sikhs themselves were, doubtless, never aware of the actual amount.

Amongst the officers who fell in this action was the gallant Sir Robert Sale, whose leg was shattered by a grape shot. The shock proved fatal to him in the course of the night of the 18th.

Ever foremost in the numerous actions in which he was engaged, it is only a matter of wonder that so fearless a soldier should so long have been spared. The battle-field was his element; and had the fates permitted him to select his last resting-place, he would have asked no other than the path of victory, beneath which he sleeps. The combined roar of eighty pieces of cannon saluted the parting spirit of the hero of Jellalabad on the field of strife; and though his remains rest on the far-distant eastern plains which have witnessed his warlike achievements, yet will his name descend to posterity bright in the ranks of England's departed heroes.

Sir Hugh Gough heartily congratulated the troops on their gallantry. Such an eulogium is valuable, coming from a veteran, whose undaunted bearing and personal example (on every occasion in the front, or "where death came thickest,") was the universal theme of applause in the army.

When we consider the position and the circumstances under which the action was fought, the principal difficulty that presents itself for explanation is the extreme alacrity manifested to commence the engagement before the whole army was prepared. It has long been the practice in India to hasten forward under all disadvantages, and attack an enemy when once within reach; but, although this system has often been successfully practised, under the impression that such active and bold measures inspire confidence and daring amongst our native army, it becomes a critical experiment when brought into play with a more enterprising foe.

After crossing the Sutlej, the Sikhs, leaving a small force to watch Ferozepore, advanced more than twelve miles into our territories, and occupied a position, which they speedily entrenched, at Ferozeshuhur. From the latter place a division of their army was detached to Moodkee, with the evident intention of surprising the Governor-general's camp, after a long march.

On the arrival of the Governor-general at Bussean, it is probable that the enemy's spies gave intelligence of the Loodiana force being at Bussean with the Governor-general; and the enemy, unaware of the junction which had been arranged with Sir Hugh Gough, conceived that when the force advanced to Moodkee a master-stroke might be effected, at the outset of the war, by surprising and capturing Sir Henry Hardinge, and destroying the force which accompanied his excellency as an escort. Had they imagined that the main body of the army were advancing on Moodkee, the enemy would surely have attached a larger force of artillery, on which arm, as before stated, they place their main confidence.

At two P.M. on the day of the battle—viz., at the time our troops turned out to attack, the cavalry and artillery had just arrived, much jaded after their long march, and the infantry brigades had not all arrived, but received their orders whilst on the line of march, to hasten forward with all possible speed, and take up their posts on the field of action. On riding over the ground, sometime after the action was fought, it appeared to me that the fortified village of Moodkee would have afforded an admirable position to be occupied by such portion of the wearied infantry and artillery, as had arrived on the ground; and their numbers would have been concealed from the enemy. This would have afforded them rest, and water, of which there was an abundance around the village; and our cavalry pickets, falling back, would have drawn the enemy most probably upon the open ground, which he had then nearly reached; and, being emboldened by perceiving few of the British forces, and those not advancing, is it not reasonable to conclude that he would have become the assailant? Had the Sikhs attacked us while so posted, the force in Moodkee might have engaged the attention of the enemy, whilst our cavalry and rear brigades of infantry, by making a trifling detour in the jungle, would have taken the Sikh forces in reverse, and probably given them more cause to regret their advance from Ferozeshuhur than as matters actually befel.

Had the Sikhs not attacked when our cavalry pickets retired upon Moodkee, our forces would have been fresh, and better prepared for action the following morning; and the 19th of December ought to have yielded more favourable results, under such circumstances, than the 18th.

Taking, as a third supposition, that the Sikh force would have fallen back during the night on their main column at Ferozeshuhur, the conclusion is, that there would have been no battle of Moodkee, and that Ferozeshuhur might have been fought on the 20th, in lieu of the 21st and 22nd of December, in neither of which cases can I see any ground for supposing that our interests would have suffered.

I have heard it suggested, that if the enemy had not been engaged at Moodkee, there was a probability of his turning our flank, and threatening the provinces; if such had been his intention, it is probable that he would have taken another line of country, and not the road by which our forces were advancing, for the country affords anywhere a

ready passage for troops, and they are not confined to any particular track, as in inclosed countries.

RETURN OF KILLED AND WOUNDED IN THE ACTION OF MOODKEE, DEC. 18, 1845.

	KILLED.			WOUNDED.		
	Officers.	Native & non-commissioned.	Privates.	Officers.	Native & non-commissioned.	Privates, Fifers, & Drummers.
Personal staff	2			2		
General staff	1			1		
Artillery Division.						
(Col. Brooke, com.)						
Horse	2	3	11	4	3	19
Foot	1	1	2			8
Cavalry Division.						
(Brig. White.)						
Staff				2		
H.M.'s 3rd Light Dragoons	2	5	53	3	3	29
Body-guard (natives)	1		6	2	2	15
4th Native Cavalry			2			4
5th ditto			8	2	1	16
9th ditto Irregulars		1	3		1	7
1st Infantry Division.						
(Sir Harry Smith.)						
Staff	1			4		
1st Brigade, H.M. 31st Rgt.	1	2	22	7	4	121
" 47th Native Infantry			6	1		8
2nd ditto H.M. 50th Rgt.	1		11	5	5	87
" 42nd Native Infantry	1	1	25	1	6	55
" 48th ditto		2	5		7	28
2nd Infantry Division.						
(Gen. Gilbert.)						
Staff				1		
45th Native Infantry			1			1
2nd ditto			14	3	6	48
16th ditto		1	2		9	32
3rd Infantry Division.						
(Sir J. M'Caskill.)						
Staff	1					
H.M.'s 9th Regiment			2	1	2	47
26th Native Infantry					1	3
73rd ditto			1		1	5
H.M.'s 80th Regiment		1	3	1		19
11th Native Infantry						
41st ditto						

Killed.

European officers	13
Native ditto	2
Non-commissioned officers, privates, &c.	192
Syces, followers, &c.	3
Total 210	

Wounded.

European officers	39
Native ditto	9
Non-commissioned officers, privates, &c.	588
Syces, drivers, &c.	21
Total	657

LIST OF OFFICERS KILLED AND WOUNDED.

Killed.

Head 2nd staff	Major-General Sir R. Sale.
"	Major Herries, A.D.C.
"	Capt. Munro, A.D.C.
Artillery	Captain Trower.
"	Lieut. Pollock.
3rd Light Dragoons	Capt. Newton.
"	Cornet Worley.
Body-guard	Lieut. Fisher.
Staff Capt.	Van Homrigh, 48th N.I.
H.M.'s 31st	Lieut. Hart.
H.M.'s 50th	Assistant-Surgeon Graydon.
42nd N.I.	Lieut. Spence.
3rd Division	Major-General Sir J. M'Caskill.

Wounded.

Head 2nd staff	Major Grant, D.A.G., dangerously.
"	Capt. Hillier, A.D.C., severely.
"	Capt. Edwards, A.D.C.
"	Capt. Dashwood, since dead.
"	Lieut. Cox.
Artillery	Lieut. Wheelright.
"	Lieut. Bowie.
"	Brigadier Mactier, severely.
"	Brigade-Major Capt. Harrington, do.

3rd Light Dragoons	Lieut. Fisher, ditto.
"	Lieut. Swinton, ditto.
"	Lieut. Cureton, ditto.
Body-guard	Capt. Dawkins, ditto.
"	Lieut. Taylor, ditto.
5th Cavalry	Major Alexander.
"	Lieut. Christie.
1st Division	Brigadier Bolton, since dead.
"	Brigadier Wheeler, severely.
Engineers	Lieut. Nicolls, ditto.
H.M.'s 31st	Captain Lugard.
"	Lieut.-Col. Byrne, since dead.
"	Capt. Willis, dangerously.
"	Capt. Bulkeley, ditto.
"	Capt. Young, ditto.
"	Lieut. Pollard.
"	Lieut. Brenchley, since dead.
47th N.I.	Lieut. Pogson, dangerously.
H.M.'s 50th	Capt. Needham, severely.
"	Lieut. Bishop, ditto.
"	Lieut. Young, ditto.
"	Lieut. Montmorency, ditto.
"	Lieut. Carter.
42nd N.I.	Lieut. Holt.
H.M.'s 9th	Assist.-Surgeon Gahan, dangerously.
"	Lieut. Hanham, slightly.
Staff	Major Codrington, severely.
2nd N.I.	Captain Bolton, ditto.
"	Captain Gifford, ditto.
H.M.'s 80th	Ensign Walden, ditto.
"	Colonel Bunbury, ditto.

RETURN OF ORDNANCE CAPTURED AT MOODKEE.

Number.	Ordnance.	Metal. in. tenths.	Calibre.	Weight of shot.
6	Guns	Brass	4 6	12 pr.
1	Howitzer	Ditto	6 5	6½
4	Guns	Ditto	4 2	9 pr.
3	Ditto	Ditto	3 6	6 pr.
1	Ditto	Ditto	2 9	3 pr.
15				

It was impossible to compute the metal in these guns; but it was evident they were heavier than those of similar calibre in the Bengal artillery.

The carriages all in good repair, except one or two, struck by our shot. The whole were destroyed, and the guns left at Moodkee.

Four guns, reported to have been dismounted, and left on the ground by the men of the Horse Artillery, for want of means to bring them away.

(Signed) G. Brooke,
Brigadier, Artillery.

CHAPTER V.

THE ARMY ADVANCE TO ATTACK THE SIKHS IN THEIR ENTRENCHED CAMP AT FEROZESHUHUR—THE ACTIONS OF THE 21ST AND 22ND OF DECEMBER—SIKHS RETREAT BEHIND THE SUTLEJ—OBSERVATIONS.

On the morning of the 19th, intelligence was brought by the spies that the whole forces of the Sikhs had resolved upon advancing to attack the British army at Moodkee. Preparations were made to receive them, and a more advantageous post than that of the former day was taken up, to act on the defensive, as reinforcements were hourly expected.

The spies' reports proved false, as is not unfrequently the case in Indian warfare, and on the night of the 19th, the arrival of H.M. 29th Regiment, and the Company's 1st European Regiment, from their hill cantonments, was welcomed with much satisfaction.

The 20th of December was given to the army to recruit their strength, after the toil they had endured, and to prepare for the approaching struggle.

Authentic accounts having been received of the enemy being in position at Ferozeshuhur, about nine miles from Moodkee, and twelve from Ferozepore, and on the direct line of communication between those places, orders were sent to Sir John Littler, commanding at Ferozepore, to move out, with his division, from cantonments, and unite with the main column in the attack on the enemy planned for the following day.

Early on the morning of the 21st of December, the British forces advanced from Moodkee, having left the wounded in charge of a small party in the fort, and marching slowly in order of battle, moved obliquely from the enemy's position towards Ferozepore. Having marched across about fifteen miles of country, covered mostly with the same stunted trees as at Moodkee, and in other places with a sandy soil, on which grain and wheat had been planted, Sir John Littler's division was descried advancing about one in the afternoon.

Sir John Littler having left two regiments of Native Infantry to protect Ferozepore, and eluded the vigilance of the enemy's cavalry, who were posted to watch his division, effected a junction with the main column unmolested by the enemy.

The position of Ferozeshuhur was then hastily reconnoitred. The Sikh camp, consisting of a dense and confused mass of tents, encompassed the village of Ferozeshuhur, which occupied a rising ground, and was armed with batteries of heavy guns. The entrenchments, which had been thrown forward to cover the village, were an irregular quadrangular figure, of upwards of eighteen hundred yards in length, and rather more than half that distance in breadth, and consisted of a ditch, about four feet in depth and from six to seven in breadth, the deblai earth from which formed a parapet, protecting the defenders from fire of grape or musketry. Batteries of the enemy's lighter guns were disposed at intervals in rear of the parapets, where the ground was uniformly flat, save in the centre of the position, where it rose gradually into the mound, covered by the mud-houses of the village, as before mentioned.

In front of the entrenchment, every obstacle to the range of fire had been removed, and a plain, mostly bare, or producing scanty crops, presented no shelter for the assailants; such trees or shrubs as might have afforded any cover, having been lopped or cleared away by the enemy.

The village of Ferozeshuhur is situated on the road between Moodkee and Ferozepore, but the road is rarely a matter of much consideration in military operations in India, where the country is usually flat, and unobstructed by fences.

It was past four in the afternoon when the British forces advanced to storm this position, defended, as it was conjectured, by an army of more than fifty thousand Sikhs. The investing force, numbering altogether about sixteen thousand five hundred men, with sixty-six pieces of artillery, (six and nine-pounders, twelve and twenty-four-pound howitzers, and two eight-inch mortars,) were formed in two lines; the first consisted of Generals Gilbert and Littler's divisions, and Col. Wallace's brigade, with the principal force of artillery in the centre, and one troop of horse artillery on each flank.

The reserve force, comprising the division of Sir Harry Smith, the cavalry, and a troop of horse artillery, formed a second line.

Sir Hugh Gough personally directed the operations of the right, and Sir Henry Hardinge, who had volunteered his services, as second in command, superintended the movements on the left.

When at a distance of about eleven hundred yards from the works, the oppressive silence was broken by the voice of our mortars hurling their loads of hissing iron through the air. The enemy's batteries opened forthwith, and soon enveloped the works in smoke. The light field batteries now began their part in the fray, at a distance of about eight hundred yards, to cover the advance, and shortly afterwards the whole of our artillery opened at a nearer range; but the Sikh fire told with deadly effect, and many of the British light guns were disabled, even before they were unlimbered. It soon became

evident that the Sikhs had the range of their batteries accurately measured, and that our light guns were unable to cope with the enemy's artillery, which being of very heavy metal, though not of large calibre, they were enabled to use double charges of powder, grape, and round shot.

Under cover of the clouds and dust which wrapped the scene of contention, our line of infantry continued to advance, and the commander-in-chief, perceiving that the contest could only be decided by a hand to hand struggle, ordered the entrenchments to be stormed with the bayonet.

One incessant stream of fire continued to issue from the canopy of smoke which enveloped the works, and the deadly breaks in each regiment told with what murderous effect the enemy served his batteries; yet their assailants, though broken and checked, still approached the entrenchments with invincible resolution; but now, from behind the batteries, poured forth a rolling shower of musketry, which seemed to threaten utter annihilation to the daring and exposed force of Britons, now reduced from brigades to regiments.

Night was fast approaching; the Sikh army continued to pour death into our ranks, and received the roll of our musketry, under cover of their trenches, with comparative impunity.

With that unconquerable determination which has marked the British soldier in the hour of direst carnage, that gallant band rushed onwards, seeking only to close in hand to hand conflict with their galling antagonists, through the iron shower which tore their ranks at every step, checked only where death had made so wide a gap, that time was required to fill the deadly intervals, and give breath to the survivors.

At one point, on the left of the attacking line, where Sir John Littler's division was engaged, the incessant stream of fire from the batteries, and the rain of musketry from behind them, was such, that one British regiment (the 62nd) was nearly destroyed.[25] One-third of the regiment were stretched on the field, when the brigadier, seeing the utter hopelessness of carrying the enemy's strongest battery, defended by thousands of musketeers, with the shattered remainder of the 62nd, which had been left to do the work single-handed, gave orders to retire.

On the centre and right the attack was more successful, the enemy's entrenchments being penetrated, after a desperate struggle, at several points, by General Gilbert's and Colonel Wallace's attack; but so intermixed were the combatants, and so stunning was

[25] Much has been said and written concerning the carnage and retreat of the 62nd, which has engendered, unnecessarily, some ill feeling. Sir John Littler states explicitly, in his despatch, that the Sikh fire was "furious and irresistible;" therefore if he expected that regiment to accomplish what he allows to be impossible, we need not set any value on the unfortunate general's opinion.

the din of battle around the entrenchments, which were enveloped in impenetrable clouds of smoke and dust, that it was impossible for the leaders to ascertain the success or even the position of other brigades. Cheering on his men, and just surmounting the enemy's entrenchments, fell Colonel Taylor, at the head of his regiment, the gallant 9th, which he had led so often to victory, but never before under such a fire as poured from the trenches of Ferozeshuhur.

Chafing under the obstinate resistance of the enemy, the rash Broadfoot, with his characteristic contempt of danger, charged, single-handed, one of the enemy's howitzers with countless defenders, and fell at its mouth.

Sir Hugh Gough and Sir Henry Hardinge were ever with the foremost in the fight, cheering all to renewed exertions, and affording personal examples of contempt for danger which were gloriously followed by their dauntless comrades.

Three batteries were captured, and on those points the enemy fell back from their entrenchments; but from the village and the inner trenches on the flanks still streamed forth the iron shower, rendered less deadly by the obscurity of evening. In the meantime, the reserve, under Sir Harry Smith, had forced their way through every obstacle, and, having penetrated the entrenchments, established themselves in the village, unaware of the post of the remainder of the army; but there, in the midst of the enemy's lines, stood the banners of the glorious fiftieth.

Hoping that yet, ere night had fallen, the Sikhs might be driven from all their entrenchments, an order was issued for Colonel White's brigade of cavalry to charge the daring front which was still presented for defence. With alacrity was the order obeyed, and the exhausted British infantry rested for an interval on their arms, whilst a rushing sound, as of a suddenly bursting tempest, was heard approaching the fray, and onwards came H.M. 3rd Light Dragoons to the charge. The entrenchments and the batteries were equally futile obstacles to oppose those gallant cavaliers, though the former brought many a horse and rider to the ground, and the latter tore a deadly gap through their ranks. Onwards poured the glittering squadrons, in spite of all resistance, over the entrenchments, past the batteries, through the very heart of the enemy's camp, the Sikhs falling back bewildered at this unexpected mode of warfare.

Though paralyzed for a time by the strange onslaught of these bold horsemen charging for a second time resolutely into the midst of their army, yet the Sikhs, recovering from their surprise, began to pour a destructive fire of musketry amongst the Dragoons,[26] who had been much scattered, owing to the ground over which they had charged; and, as each saddle was emptied, countless knives and tolwars awaited the ill-fated soldier who was dismounted.

[26] The enemy's fire was opened from the low doorways of the tents, inaccessible to horsemen.

Having ridden throughout the enemy's lines, and being much broken and thinned in numbers, they now charged back again, though scarcely bringing two thirds of their numbers unwounded out of the enemy's lines.

One officer, Lieut. Burton, having lost his charger amongst hordes of the enemy, and sought hopelessly for another, perceived a party of dragoons close to him, and, seizing the tail of a horse, was dragged by him at full speed through the camp, until, on arriving at the entrenchments, the trooper, bounding over the ditch, dashed the officer with such violence against the counterscarp that he lost the hold he had so desperately retained, but still lives to confirm the tale.[27]

Darkness now caused the fire on each side to slacken, part of the enemy's camp and field works being in our possession, whilst the Sikhs continued to hold the remainder; but darkness brought no rest to the brave and wearied soldier; for the enemy's expense magazines continued to explode in various parts of the works, the slow matches or burning cartridges falling amongst them, and several were blown up or scorched thereby. The main column of our troops were, in consequence of these disasters, ordered to withdraw outside the trenches, where they lay amongst the bodies of their dead and dying comrades, worn out with their almost unremitted exertions; faint from hunger, but, worse than all, parched with intolerable thirst, as few of the water-carriers who accompany an Indian army on active service had ventured to the ground where the Britons lay during that awful night.

The enemy had no intention of allowing the time to pass unprofitably while darkness prevailed, but, on ascertaining the position occupied by our soldiers outside the entrenchments, they sent spies who indicated the direction by tinkling a bell and running off, or by affixing a blue light to a stick, which was placed in the ground and lighted to serve as a direction for the Sikh guns, which forthwith opened a galling fire. One cannon of heavy metal was plied with such effect that H.M. 80th Regiment, and 1st Europeans were ordered to advance and take it, which duty they speedily accomplished.

The night of the 21st of December, naturally the longest of the year, seemed almost an eternity to the wearied "army of the Sutlej," and unhappily proved so to many, for the Sikhs lost no opportunity of inflicting injury.

[27] Another officer of the 3rd Dragoons, who had been dismounted and wounded in this charge, whilst wandering among the entrenchments, met a body of native soldiers, who demanded ransom, and ordered him to strip off his jacket; he pointed to his broken arm; but they were not chivalrous enough to admit this appeal, and, taking his uniform, allowed him to escape. This was the sole act of clemency on the Sikhs' part I have heard recorded.

The thirst which afflicted many was so oppressive, that it overcame all other considerations, and many of the soldiers strayed in search of water towards the village, heedless of the vicinity of the enemy.

A portion of Sir Harry Smith's division, which had occupied the village in the entrenchments, remained a great part of the night in that post, darkness preventing them from ascertaining the position occupied by the remainder of the army. In the pell-mell assault, regiment had become so intermixed with regiment, that it is difficult to particularize the exploits of an individual corps, as a portion of some other, in all probability, bore a share of the labour.

In the course of the night Sir Harry Smith's division withdrew from their advanced post, and, being unable to discover the commander-in-chief's column, retired to a village at about a mile and a half's distance from the trenches.

Sir John Littler's division was also unsuccessful in finding head-quarters during this awful night of errors, nor did either of these divisions reach the main column of the army till they had renewed the attack on the following morning.

The dawn of day on the 22nd of December served to restore some order amongst the troops, and to discover the enemy still occupying the entrenchments. The British soldier was again called to action, sinking with hunger, thirst, and toil, and responded to that call on which hung the fate of the British empire in India, with untiring devotion. A line was formed of our shattered forces, and Sir Hugh Gough, animating all around him by his zeal and example, pressed forwards to clear the entrenchments, and again began the work of death.

The enemy's position, the whole of which was again manned, was for the second time stormed by the British infantry; but, as they were assailed now from a nearer range, the struggle was on more favourable terms, though the overpowering numbers of the enemy rendered his losses comparatively trifling, whilst ours was most severe, considering the small band of warriors now opposed to the foe. The Sikh dead, intermixed with our own, strewed the face of the soil, and the footing of the combatants was slippery with blood. Never had so resolute an enemy opposed the British arms in India, and never had the aspect of British interests in the East rested on so slender a thread. But the Sikh powers of endurance had reached their limit; and, deeming the British indomitable, they fell back, leaving their camp and guns in the hands of the victors. Pressing forward upon the retiring enemy, the British line swept the Sikh soldiery from the whole position, and rested on the Sutlej front of the works.

The resolution and courage of the British troops had probably never undergone a more severe test than on the field of Ferozeshuhur, and when victory at length appeared to

have crowned their efforts, a heartfelt cheer burst from the ranks. No thoughts were entertained of pursuing the enemy, for both strength and ammunition were expended.

Congratulations on the ultimate success of the day went round amongst the victors as they rested on their arms; and perhaps the sudden and successful result was hailed by none with more sense of thankfulness than by the two chiefs of the army.

But this satisfaction was destined to be of short duration; for scarce two hours had elapsed after the retreat, when the enemy were seen advancing again. The British troops were eagerly searching for water in the blood-stained village of Ferozeshuhur, having piled their arms outside, when the alarm was given of the enemy's advance. The column which now approached was ascertained to be the reserve force under Tej Singh, consisting principally of cavalry and horse artillery, with some of the Aeen battalions; this force had advanced from their position near the river, to take part in the fray, and were estimated at about twenty-five thousand strong.

Again burst the storm of artillery over our army, and apparently with a sure prospect of success for the enemy; for our guns were all crippled, the ammunition was exhausted, and the troops now advancing to attack were fresh, and doubtless well provided with all material for action.

There remained now only the prospect of allowing as many of the enemy's missiles to fly over the soldiers' heads as would take that desirable course, and to bring the matter as speedily as possible to the final issue of a hand to hand struggle. This the enemy also seemed resolved to expedite; for having altered his front of attack, he appeared desirous of turning the left of the British, and intercepting all retreat, while the main attack was directed on the village.

A partial change of front was made on the British side to meet this, and the cavalry advanced against the enemy's right flank; which threatened attack, Sir Hugh Gough states, in his despatch, he intended to have supported with infantry. The fatal crisis had now apparently arrived; but our soldiers had become of late too intimate with death to think of avoiding it. At all events, the Sikhs would not have obtained a bloodless victory, though our ammunition was expended; but at this critical moment the battle was ended in the most unexpected and sudden manner, by Tej Singh withdrawing his forces from the field. Although not suffering from a hostile fire, nor in any way incommoded in his operations or intentions, the enemy suddenly converted his threatened attack into a precipitate retreat, and fell back towards the fords of the Sutlej, where the main column of his army had already preceded him.

This extraordinary conclusion of the battle was soon ascertained by our cavalry reconnoitring parties to be no feint on the part of the enemy, but a final retreat.

The only means of accounting for Tej Singh's extraordinary departure, after having beforehand stood his ground so manfully, is on the supposition that his second advance with the reserve force under his personal direction, was meant only to cover the retreat of the main column, and that he knew not the extent to which the British forces were crippled.

The supposition that the movement of Colonel Harriott's brigade of cavalry towards Ferozepore alarmed the Sikh general, lest we should intercept his retreat by that manœuvre, is almost too wild a conjecture to be entertained.

No attempt, of course, was made to pursue the enemy: he had already been sufficiently obliging, and such a proceeding would have been ungrateful.

The cannon taken from the enemy in this action amounted to seventy-three pieces, which, added to their loss at Moodkee, made a total of eighty-eight captured during the two actions. Some were afterwards discovered thrown into wells in the village, when rendered unserviceable.

The return of killed and wounded on the British side was not published for some time afterwards, which caused an injurious effect, when the news of the battle reached the provinces, as it opened a path for much exaggeration. It was confidently whispered amongst the natives of Hindostan that the British had met with their match at last; and though the Sikhs had recrossed the river, that they had left their opponents in such a condition, as to be unable to reap any advantages from their victory. The state of suspense in which the friends and families of those engaged at Ferozeshuhur were kept, for want of authenticated returns of the casualties may be well imagined; but the mystery which enveloped this sanguinary engagement was, for a time, so impenetrable, that the reserve force under Sir John Grey were actually unaware of the killed and wounded amongst their comrades, when they crossed the field of battle a fortnight afterwards, and recognised amongst the corpses many of which yet lay unburied, the friends of whose fate they had been ignorant.

The forces engaged on the British side in this action were, seven troops of Horse Artillery, and four companies of foot; one regiment of British Dragoons, seven regiments of British Infantry, seven regiments of Native Cavalry, and fourteen regiments of Native Infantry.

The casualties were, 694 killed, and 1721 wounded; but, of these, the British regiments suffered a heavy proportion, losing nearly 500 killed, and more than 1100 wounded. These losses, added to those at Moodkee, gave a sum total of 3287 hors de combat, out of an army amounting altogether to about 16,000 actually engaged.

Those who had fallen in action were only partly interred in the trenches, for the wounded demanded all the attention that could be bestowed.

The enemies' bodies were left to the disposal of the jackals and vultures, who fulfilled their task very imperfectly, satiety having made them epicures.

The country, from the field of Ferozeshuhur to the fords of Hureeka, marked the track of the enemy's retreat by the corpses of soldiers wounded in the battle, who had died on the road, but the actual number of the enemy's loss could not have exceeded our own.

The whole army with which Tej Singh crossed the Sutlej has been estimated at sixty thousand men; but more than this number must be allowed them if the entrenchments of Ferozeshuhur held fifty thousand defenders, as conjectured; for Sir Hugh Gough conceives that Tej Singh, when renewing the action of the 22nd of December, brought up several fresh battalions, supported by thirty thousand Goorcheras, and the greater portion of these must have constituted the force which was placed to watch Ferozepore, or to cover their retreat.

A field hospital was established for the wounded: those regiments which had suffered most severely were moved to Ferozepore, where they were enabled to receive medical attention under better cover than could be provided in camp. The main column of the army under Sir Hugh Gough proceeded towards the river, and encamped about twelve miles north-east of Ferozepore, and three miles from the banks of the Sutlej.

The enemy, immediately after crossing, had taken up the position he now occupied near the fords of Hureeka, anticipating, no doubt, that an immediate passage of the river would be attempted by the British generals. The Sikhs, in coming to this conclusion, were evidently ignorant of the amount of injury which they had inflicted, and of the state of our magazines on the north-western frontier.

Immediately after the action of Ferozeshuhur, when thanks had been returned to the Supreme Being for deliverance, every available regiment was ordered to the frontier, and an ample siege train from the Delhi magazine, with abundant supplies of ammunition, and every requisite for the prosecution of the campaign, were ordered forward with the most urgent despatch.

Regiments of irregular cavalry,[28] and large levies of infantry, were ordered to be forthwith raised with all the energy which the critical situation of affairs demanded, for a golden opportunity now offered itself to any malcontent chiefs in Hindostan to take advantage of the concentration of the Bengal army on the far-distant frontier. These

[28] This expedient has often been resorted to in critical times, as it gives employment to many doubtful characters, and raises a temporary bulwark, which can easily be disposed of when danger is over.

orders were now enabled to reach the provinces in safety, as the population of the protected Sikh states no longer considered it prudent to interrupt the communication after their friends had recrossed the Sutlej.

The 21st and 22nd of December will ever be the most memorable (if it be not also deemed the most critical) epoch since the establishment of British supremacy in India.

Had the British forces been overwhelmed by the continual influx of fresh troops from the enemy's reserve force, and the failure of ammunition on their own, the sole barrier to the advance of the Sikh army into the British territories was the Merut force, less than five thousand strong, under Sir John Grey. And, that such a casualty had been deemed more than possible, may be concluded from the fact of Count Ravensberg, who accompanied the Governor-general's camp (and of whom continual mention is made in the despatches) being requested to quit the field, that he might not be a witness of, or a sufferer in, the issue which was anticipated. That nobleman, following the request which had been conveyed to him, proceeded reluctantly to Ferozepore, and thence to Buhawalpore on the Indus, before news reached him of the unexpected issue of the struggle.

In entering upon a consideration of the tactics adopted, let me not be judged guilty of such unpardonable presumption as that of canvassing the measures of officers whose conduct has been rewarded by the highest honours their country could bestow. My humble remarks are addressed to my brother officers of the subordinate ranks; and if these casual observations should succeed in meriting the attention of anyone who takes sufficient interest in his profession to discuss such topics, I profess my readiness to give up my imaginary line of operations as soon as I am convinced that the position is untenable. These subjects, when we had little else to think of, or talk about, formed an ample theme for discussion; and though they have often provoked the remark that "all the subalterns of the army had promoted themselves to generals," the cavil did not produce any argument against so advantageous and extensive a brevet. Indeed, such a line of promotion might give an opportunity to the military chiefs of later days to earn the applause of their countrymen before the weight of years should finally consign the military hero to the family physician or the nursery.

When the Sikh forces fell back, on the night of the 18th of December, from the battle-field of Moodkee upon the main body in the entrenchments of Ferozeshuhur, the reserve force, stationed to watch Ferozepore by the Sikh general's orders, continued to occupy the same position.

The avowed object in the hasty attack on the enemy's strong position at Ferozeshuhur was to prevent the Sikh forces from forming a junction, and to relieve Ferozepore.

Had the enemy been desirous to effect the junction alluded to, it would appear difficult to account for his not taking advantage of the respite on the 19th and 20th of December to ensure the movement. But, perhaps, a strong reason for his not doing so may be adduced by the fact of the area of his entrenchments being already so crowded with defenders, that it is almost difficult to assign places within the dimensions[29] of the works for such hordes of Sikh soldiery as, by the published estimates, would seem to have occupied the position.

In the next place, had the Sikhs been anxious to attack Ferozepore, it is strange that they neglected to attempt the siege or investment between the 13th and 18th of December. Nay, instead of doing so, they immediately advanced and took up a strong position, leaving a reserve force to watch the garrison, and perhaps to cover their own retreat in case of a reverse, whilst they pushed boldly forward to occupy a position in the direct route of our forces, which post, judging from former military transactions in India, they expected would be immediately stormed.

The force detached to Moodkee, having failed in their object, fell back upon Ferozeshuhur, where no disposition was manifested for a farther retreat; but the enemy calmly awaited, in that advantageous position, the attack which they doubtless hoped would ensue.

By following the line of operations expected by the Sikhs, the British forces came into action late in the afternoon, having been under arms and marching the whole of that day, and weakened from want of food and water; whilst the horses, already much jaded, were ill prepared for the work they had to undergo. These evils, great on the night of the 21st, were not alleviated after the sanguinary struggle; and on the 22nd, being far from all resources and supplies, the failure of ammunition might be viewed as an almost desperate misfortune.

The veni, vidi, vici principle has been in some measure warranted, in Indian campaigns, by the great precedents of Assye and Lord Hastings's Mahratta campaigns. It had been employed with considerably less success during the Goorkha war, where the reverses of other divisions of the army were fortunately counteracted by General Ochterlony's prudence and foresight. But the Sikhs were a far different enemy[30] from the Mahrattas or any power we had hitherto encountered in India, and worthy of the respect which they inspired after the first two engagements.

To view the subject under its various phases, I will now proceed to consider the probable results had the army been advanced to a position in the vicinity of Ferozeshuhur, where free communication could have been maintained with the

[29] About eighteen hundred yards by nine hundred and fifty, as well as a horse's stride enabled me to judge.
[30] I allude only to their bravery and discipline. Their generalship brought the war to a speedy conclusion.

garrison of Ferozepore, and where, as the enemy had established himself in a fixed position, his intercourse with Lahore might have been threatened at the same time that we had free range of the country.

In such a position, the enemy might have been safely watched, whilst preparations were made to attack his entrenchments in due form,[31] and our troops would have been fresh, and ought not to have been without ammunition in case of being suddenly brought into action. The Merut reserve force, with the 9th and 16th Lancers, H.M. 10th Regiment, and four regiments of Native Troops, accompanied by three troops of Artillery and the elephant battery of twelve pounders, would, by using despatch, have arrived in less than ten days[32] had an order been forwarded from Bussean, and such a force would have been beyond the reach of any coup-de-main of a detachment from the enemy's camp. Then, with properly constructed batteries, (for the fort at Ferozepore contained some heavy guns) and with regular approaches, the Sikh position would have been advantageously assailed, and there is little doubt that a well directed fire of artillery, poured into such crowded works, would have been severe in its effect, and would ultimately have compelled the enemy to evacuate them. When the Sikhs should have been once compelled to take to the open ground, their heavy siege guns would have been too unwieldly to manœuvre, whilst our light artillery would have been on advantageous ground, and, with an effective force of cavalry, the victory ought to have been speedy, and the enemy's retreat to the ford not altogether unmolested.

To all this, perhaps it may be objected that the Sikhs would assuredly not have awaited a concentration of our forces, and these preparations for attack. In reply, it must be borne in mind that the choice of battle rested with the British, unless the enemy vacated his post, when the advantages to be derived in the open plain would have been ours, and rendered a much easier victory a matter beyond a question with an army like our own, whose whole "materiel" were expressly qualified for action in the open plain, where superior discipline and rapidity of movement, with a fresh and well appointed army of sixteen thousand men, ought to have ensured success upon easier terms than when storming the same enemy in a strong position.

With an effective British force of 16,000 or 20,000 men in the open plain, I conceive it to be a matter of unimportance whether a native enemy be double or treble that amount; for when confusion once ensues amongst a half-disciplined multitude, it doubtless is greater in proportion to the number.

In the battle of Ferozeshuhur, the fate of the day was committed to the gallantry and bull-dog qualities of the British soldiers, and the issue proved that they had not been

[31] The batteries at Ferozeshuhur were attacked in front. Had they been taken in flank or reverse many heavy guns in fixed positions could not have been brought to bear readily against the assailants.

[32] That is, they might have reached Moodkee by the 28th of December. The advanced guard of the reserve were within hearing of the cannonade of Ferozeshuhur.

over-rated; but as these were resources which would always have remained in reserve, and ready for action when called upon, a question may be raised as to the policy of employing this reserve before the advantages of strategy had been employed.

The result of this action would hardly answer to establish a precedent for the repetition of similar measures under similar circumstances; for three or four such battles would have used all the European material, and British regiments cannot be hastily recruited or replaced in India.

RETURN OF KILLED AND WOUNDED AT FEROZESHUHUR, DEC. 21ST AND 22ND.

	KILLED.			WOUNDED.		
	Officers.	Native & non-commissioned.	Trumpeters, Drummers,	Officers.	Native & non-	Privates.
Personal staff				2		
General staff	1			1		
Artillery Division.						
(Col. Brooke, com.)						
Staff				2		
Horse	2	1	26	1	7	54
Foot		2	10	1	5	18
Cavalry Division.						
(Col. White.)						
Staff				3		
1st Brig. H.M. 3rd Lt. Drag.	3	2	55	6	6	80
" 8th Native Cavalry		1	3		2	7
" 9th Irregulars		2	8			11
2nd ditto, Body-guard						2
" 5th Native Cavalry		1				2
" 8th Irregular Horse			1			4
3rd do. 4th Native Cavalry			9		2	6
" 3rd Irregulars			3			13
1st Infantry Division.						
(Sir Harry Smith.)						
Staff				3		
1st Brigade, H.M. 31st Rgt.	2	2	57	5	4	92
" 24th N. I.	1	3	4	1	2	24
" 47th ditto			9		2	24
2nd ditto H.M. 50th Rgt.			27	6	5	86
" 42nd Native Infantry	1	4	10	2	5	35
" 48th ditto		2	13	2	3	46
2nd Infantry Division.						
(Gen. Gilbert.)						
Staff	2			1		
1st Brigade, H.M. 29th Rgt.	2	1	67	2	6	110
" 45th N.I.		2	14	1	2	30
2nd do 1st European Regt..	2	2	43	6	12	139
" 2nd Native Infantry	1	2	15	2	5	43
" 16th ditto	1	2	11	1	10	51
3rd Infantry Division.						
(Brigadier Wallace)						
Staff	1					
1st Brigade, H.M.'s 9th Rgt.	3	1	66	6	5	192
" 26th Native Infantry	2	1	8		3	42
" 73rd ditto	1	1	19		6	31
H.M.'s 80th Regiment	4		20	3	1	53
4th Infantry Division.						
(Sir J. Littler.)						
Staff	1			2		
1st Brigade, H.M. 62nd Rgt.	7	6	76	10	5	156
" 12th Native Infantry		1	10	4	5	61
" 14th ditto		3	12	5	5	59
2nd ditto, 33rd ditto		2	6		8	32
" 44th ditto			9		2	14
" 54th ditto			2			6
Grand total	73	44	613	78	120	1523

	Killed.
Personal Staff	Capt. Hare, Deputy Secretary.
Artillery—	
2nd Troop, 1st Bat.	Capt. Todd.
3rd " 3rd "	Lieut Lambert.
Cavalry—	
H.M. 3rd Lt. Drag.	Capt. Codd.
"	Cornet Ellis.
"	Cornet Bruce, 16th Lancers.
1st. Division (Infantry)—	
H.M. 31st Regt.	Lieut. Pollard.
"	Lieut. and Adjutant Bernard.
24th N.I.	Brevet-Major Griffin.
42nd N.I.	Lieut. Woollen.
2nd Division—	
Staff	Capt. Lucas, B.M.
"	Capt. Burnett, ditto.
H.M. 29th Regt.	Capt. Molle.
"	Lieut. Simmons.
1st European Regt.	Capt. Box.
"	Ensign Moxon.
2nd N.I.	Ensign Armstrong.
16th N.I.	Major Hull.
3rd Division—	
	Lieut.-Col. Wallace, B.
H.M. 9th Regt.	Lieut.-Col. Taylor.
"	Capt. Dunn.
"	Capt. Field.
H.M. 80th Regt.	Capt. Best.
"	Capt. Scheberras.
"	Lieut. Warren.
"	Lieut. Bythesea.
26th N.I.	Lieut. Croly.
"	Lieut. Eatwell.
72nd N.I.	Capt. Hunter.
4th Division—	
Staff	Lieut. Harvey, A.D.C.

H.M. 62nd Regt.	Capt. Clarke.
"	Capt. Wells.
"	Lieut. Scott.
"	Lieut. M'Nair.
"	Lieut. Gubbins.
"	Lieut. Kelly.
"	Lieut. and Adjutant Sims.

Wounded.

Personal Staff	Lieut.-Col. Wood, A.D.C., severely.
"	Lieut. Haines, A.D.C., ditto.
"	Major F. Somerset, Military Secretary, since dead.

Artillery—

Staff	Capt. Warner, Commissary of Ordnance, slightly.
"	Capt. Mackenzie, B.M., ditto.
1st Troop, 3rd Bat.	1st Lieut. Paton, ditto.
3rd Company	1st Lieut. Atlay, ditto.

Cavalry—

Staff	Lieut.-Col. Harriott, ditto.
"	Capt. Havelock, H.M. 9th Regt., Assistant Quartermaster-Gen., ditto.
"	Lieut.-Col. White, 3rd Light Dragoons, Brigadier, ditto.
H.M. 3rd Lt. Drag.	Major Balders, ditto.
"	Lieut. Morgan, severely.
"	Lieut. Burton, slightly.
"	Cornet Orme, severely.
"	Lieut. White, slightly.
"	Lieut. Rathwell, ditto.

1st Division (Infantry)—

Staff	Capt. Lugard, 31st Regt., A.A.G.
"	Lieut. Galloway, Assistant Quartermaster-General.
"	Lieut. Holdich, A.D.C.
H.M. 31st Regt.	Major Baldwin, severely.
"	Lieut. Plasket, ditto.
"	Lieut. Pilkington, ditto.
"	Ensign Paul, slightly.

"	Ensign Hutton, ditto.
H.M. 50th Regt.	Capt. Knowles, ditto.
"	Lieut. Chambers, ditto.
"	Lieut. Moualt, ditto.
"	Lieut. Barnes, ditto.
"	Ensign White, ditto.
"	Lieut. and Adjutant Mullen, ditto.
24th N.I.	Ensign Grubb, ditto.
42nd N.I.	Lieut. and Adjutant Ford, ditto.
48th N.I.	Ensign Wardlaw, ditto.
"	Lieut. Litchford, ditto.
"	Lieut. Taylor, ditto.

2nd Division—

Staff	Lieut.-Colonel Taylor, H.M. 29th Regt., Brigadier.
H.M. 29th Regt.	Major Congreve.
"	Capt. Stepney.
1st European Regt.	Capt. Clerk, severely.
"	Capt. Kendall, dangerously.
"	Lieut. Beatson, severely.
"	Lieut. Fanshaw, slightly.
"	Ensign Wriford, ditto.
2nd N.I.	Ensign Salusbury, severely.
"	Capt. Bolton, ditto.
"	Ensign Hodson, slightly.
16th N.I.	Ensign O'Bryen, ditto.
"	Lieut. Hamilton.

3rd Division—

H.M. 9th Regt.	Capt. Barton, severely.
"	Lieut. Taylor.
"	Lieut. Vigors.
"	Lieut. Sievewright, dangerously.
"	Lieut. Cassidy.
H.M. 80th Regt.	Ensign Forster, contused.
"	Major Lockhart.
"	Capt. Fraser, since dead.
"	Lieut. Freeman.

4th Division—

Staff	Capt. Egerton.
"	Capt. Burnett, B.M., slightly.

H.M. 62nd Regt.	Lieut.-Col. Reed, Brigadier, ditto.
"	Major Short, ditto.
"	Capt. Graves, badly.
"	Capt. Sibley.
"	Capt. Garroch, slightly.
"	Lieut. Gregorson, badly.
"	Lieut. Craig, ditto.
"	Lieut. Ingall, slightly.
"	Ensign Roberts, severely.
"	Ensign Hewett, slightly.
"	Lieut.-Col. Bruce, very severely.
"	Capt. Holmes, ditto.
"	Lieut. Tulloch, ditto.
"	Ensign Ewart, slightly.
"	Capt. Struthers.
"	Capt. Walsh.
"	Lieut. Wood, severely.
"	Lieut. Lukin, slightly.
"	Ensign Weld, severely.

Return of Ordnance captured at Ferozeshuhur.

Number.		Calibre.	Length.	Weight of shot.
		inch. tenths.	feet. inch.	
1	Gun	4 5	5 10	9 lbs.
2	Howitzer	7 0	14 10	42
3	Gun	5 0	7 0	18
4	"	5 0	6 9	18
5	"	5 0	6 0	18
6	"	4 5	5 10	9
7	"	4 5	5 10	9
8	"	4 5	8 4	9
9	"	4 0	6 4	8
10	"	4 5	7 0	9
11	"	4 5	6 0	9
12	"	4 5	6 0	9
13	"	5 0	6 9	18
14	"	4 2½	6 0	9
15	"	4 2½	6 0	9
16	"	5 5	7 6	18
17	"	4 0	7 9	8
18	"	4 0	5 9	8
19	"	4 0	5 6	8
20	"	3 7½	4 7	6
21	"	4 5	5 9	9
22	"	4 7½	6 0	12
23	"	3 8	4 11	7
24	"	3 8	4 11	7
25	"	4 0	6 5	8
26	"	5 3	10 0	18
27	"	5 0	7 6	15
28	"	4 7	6 6½	11
29	"	5 7	2 1	24
30	"	2 8	3 11	3
31	"	2 8	3 11	3
32	"	3 7	7 11½	6
33	"	5 7	3 11½	24
34	"	3 7	4 11¾	6
35	"	3 8	4 11	6

Return of Ordnance captured at Ferozeshuhur.

36	"	4 0	6 6	9
37	"	2 7	3 0	3
38	"	3 9	4 11½	8
39	"	3 7	4 11	6
40	"	4 0	6 0	9
41	"	4 2	6 1	9
42	"	4 0	6 2	9
43	"	4 5	6 1	12
44	"	4 3	6 1	10
45	"	3 5	6 4½	6
46	"	3 8	4 11½	8
47	"	4 7	7 11	12
48	"	4 3	6 1	10
49	"	4 3	6 9½	10
50	"	4 7	4 10	12
51	"	3 8	4 11	8
52	"	2 7	3 11½	8
53	"	4 2	7 11½	10
54	"	4 3	7 11½	9
55	"	3 8	4 11	8
56	"	3 8	4 11	8
57	"	4 2	5 8	9
58	"	2 7	3 0	2
59	Mortar	9 5	2 5	10 in.
60	Gun	2 8	3 11½	3 lbs.
61	"	3 6	4 6	6
62	"	3 8	4 11	8
63	"	3 7	4 11¾	7
64	"	2 8	2 11	3
65	"	3 8	4 11	8
66	"	3 8	4 11	8
67	"	6 0	3 9	32
68	"	4 3	7 10¼	9
69	Mortar	5 7	2 0	24
70	Gun	4 3	7 10½	9
71	Howitzer	4 3	3 9	9
72	Gun	5 2	8 8½	18
73	"	6 0	8 9	30

Many of these guns have long Persian inscriptions,[33] and very old dates, some are highly ornamented. The carriages are closely assimilating to those in use with the Bengal artillery, the whole well fitted for post guns. The metal is much heavier than those of a similar calibre in use with the Bengal artillery.

Two more guns were discovered at Sooltan Khan Wallah, of which no return has yet been received.

(Signed) G. Brooke,
Brigadier, &c. &c.

[33] The inscriptions on these guns, like that on the celebrated pocket-pistol at Dover, were much given to boasting.

CHAPTER VI.

ASSEMBLAGE OF THE BRITISH FORCES ON THE SUTLEJ—SIKHS THREATEN TO RECROSS—SIR HARRY SMITH DETACHED TOWARDS LOODIANA—SKIRMISH NEAR BUDDEWAL.

During the first week in January, the reserve force, under Sir John Grey, joined the main column of the army, and took post near the river, along which pickets were thrown out by the divisions nearest the enemy's position, to watch their proceedings on the opposite bank.

Nearly every soldier in the north-western provinces was at, or approaching, the head-quarter camp, which extended over no inconsiderable portion of ground. Large supplies had been laid in for the army at Ferozepore and from the country bordering on Bussean. The British generals now became masters of their own time for the planning and prosecution of further operations.

On the opposite bank of the Sutlej, the Sikh camp, with its hives of parti-coloured canvas, speckled the country as far as the eye could reach, and appeared to shelter a mighty host, notwithstanding their recent losses. Nearly opposite the village of Sobraon the tents appeared more closely packed together, about a mile distant from the river, and thence the banks sloped gradually towards the water; but, about three miles higher up, and immediately above the fords of Hureeka, the banks rise precipitously, on the right shore, to a height of about forty or fifty feet, and overlook the British side of the river where the slope is very gradual and nearly uniform.

The country on the left bank is mostly bare, except near the river and close above Hureeka, where some thick reeds and underwood served as a cover for the enemy's spies and stragglers to watch or fire upon our videttes, but this jungle was shortly afterwards burnt.

Opposite Sobraon the Sikhs appeared to be remarkably busy, and it was shortly discovered that they were employed in constructing a bridge of boats across the Sutlej. This, at the time, was considered a mere piece of bravado. Few conjectured that the enemy would have the hardihood to attempt a passage in the face of the British army, and they were left, unmolested, to complete their purpose. In a few days the bridge was complete save four boats, and we began to suspect that the deficiency, which was of some days' continuance, was intentional, when one morning the gap was filled up, and their workmen were seen busily constructing a tête-de-pont on the British shore.

A battery of Sikh guns was posted on the right bank which would sweep the bridge, and it was conjectured that the enemy had mined some of the boats, so that in case of the British attempting to use them they might at any time be blown up; but no inclination was manifested on our part to accept this invitation.

The hum in the enemy's camp towards nightfall, and the glare of their camp fires, caused the scene to resemble the vicinity of a large city, whilst the occasional arrival of a chief from Lahore was greeted with acclamations and the roar of cannon. From the ramparts of a small fortified village on the right flank of our position, we could observe the Sikh battalions turning out every evening for parade and exercise, and their artillery practice was almost unremitting. The fire of cannon and musketry, which was constantly heard even after nightfall, made us frequently conjecture that some point of our position had been attacked, but it proved that the enemy were only amusing themselves.

Our spies brought word that an attack on the British army was meditated on the part of the enemy, who only awaited a report, from their astrologers, of the stars being favourable to the success of the undertaking.

On the 13th of January, a battery of guns was brought up by Sir Hugh Gough's orders, and placed in position; and, as soon as the daylight enabled him to ascertain the distance, a cannonade was opened on their advanced lines, which was promptly replied to by the enemy. Little or no damage ensued except the bursting of our largest gun (an iron eighteen pounder), which wounded an artilleryman severely, and put an end to the game. That evening the Sikhs struck their tents, which had been impudently pitched so near our position, not wishing to risk the effects of a chance shot on a repetition of that day's proceeding; but they might have spared themselves the trouble, for the first experiment was sufficient.

Occasional skirmishes took place at the outposts along the river, which served to interrupt in a measure the tedium of camp routine. The Sikhs, who now crossed in great numbers during the day to work at their entrenchments, and usually retired towards nightfall, amused themselves with ball practice at any moving object they could discern within musket range.

A small look-out tower, which we had thrown up to watch their proceedings, served the Sikhs for constant practice, and the compliment was returned upon such of their marksmen as ventured to offer themselves for targets.

As our officers were strictly interdicted from the pursuit of small game in the jungles which bordered on the river, some were obliged to content themselves with this inferior sport, but the practice, being at a long range, was nearly innocent.

One night a party of Sikhs made a successful foray upon a picket of irregular cavalry, and killed three or four of them. As the enemy occupied the high ridge above Hureeka ford, which precluded any view into the interior, it was impossible to ascertain the post or strength of their pickets, although the videttes on the bank were always visible. The Sikhs had therefore the advantage of commanding the fords whenever they pleased to make use of them for predatory excursions.

Our inaction at this time, when in face of the whole Sikh army, may appear strange to many, but the British generals had wisely resolved that offensive operations should not be resumed, if avoidable, until the means were at hand for striking an effective blow and pursuing the advantage when gained. The siege train had only quitted Delhi early in January, and the pontoon train at Ferozepore was, in the meantime, being secretly but effectively prepared for service. Any operations which might be undertaken before the whole machinery could be brought into action would therefore have been of little avail.

The time dragged slowly and monotonously on with us. The outpost duties of outlying and inlying pickets and camp guards were severe and tiresome; but even when free from such restraints, few quitted the lines of their regiments, as we knew not the hour we might be called on for action.

This state was not destined to be of long duration. Reports had already been forwarded to head-quarters that Loodiana was threatened by the enemy, and about the middle of January the communication with that place was interrupted.

The Sikh army, swollen daily by the influx from Lahore, began to experience a scarcity of provisions, which induced them to send foraging parties across, on the line of the upper Sutlej, to procure supplies. As our line of frontier was too considerable to be properly watched without an extension of front, which was deemed imprudent, the fords of the Sutlej being very numerous, the enemy were enabled hitherto to communicate freely with the opposite shore.

It now became necessary, however, to sweep the country of the obstacles to a free communication with Loodiana. To effect this object, Sir Harry Smith was detached, on the 17th of January, with the first brigade[34] of his division, two corps of Native cavalry, and a light field battery, to clear the country of the enemy.

The day after the major-general had quitted camp, intelligence arrived which proved that the enemy were in much greater force than had been at first supposed, and had committed some ravages at Loodiana, which place was now threatened by a considerable body from the right bank.

[34] H.M.'s 31st Regiment, 24th N.I., 47th N.I.

On the 19th, Brigadier Cureton was despatched, with the 16th Lancers and two troops of Horse Artillery, to reinforce Sir Harry Smith.

Brigadier Cureton, after two forced marches, overtook the major-general at the town and fort of Jugraon, where H.M.'s 53rd Regiment, on its route from the lower provinces, also joined Sir Harry's column.

Accounts were received at Jugraon, of the enemy being in great force on the British side of the river; and it was stated that a portion of the cantonments of Loodiana had been destroyed by the Sikhs, who had afterwards encamped on the plain below the town, and between it and the river.

Brigadier Godby now held the cantonments with one corps of native cavalry and three of native infantry, (including a Goorkha[35] battalion, recently arrived from their mountain quarters,) and a light field battery. The fort, which stands in the town of Loodiana, on the side looking towards the river, but beyond cannon-range from the Sutlej, was garrisoned by a few convalescents, and the depôt of the 50th.

The enemy were reported to have thrown an advanced party into the fort of Buddewal, which lay on the road between Jugraon and Loodiana, and belonged to the Ladwa Rajah, a Sikh chief, who had instigated this expedition, and had conveyed his family and valuables from the protected Sikh states into the Punjaub.

A small party belonging to the Puttealah Rajah had for some time before the arrival of Colonel Godby's force occupied the town of Loodiana, but had not stirred a hand in defence of the cantonment.

Sir Harry Smith had met with none of the enemies' parties on his march to Jugraon, except in the fort of Durrumkhote, where a few shrapnel induced the garrison to abandon the place, and a small party of sepoys were placed to occupy it.

At two o'clock on the morning of the 21st of January, the British forces moved from Jugraon towards Loodiana, instructions having been forwarded to Brigadier Godby to march out of cantonment, and effect a junction with the advancing column, on its line of march, about daybreak. The heavy baggage and wheel-carriages were ordered to be left in the citadel of Jugraon, which was occupied by two companies of sepoys. The cavalry and horse artillery took the head of the column; and after a slow and weary march in

[35] The troops commonly called "Goorkhas," are three battalions, termed the Sirmoor, Nusseeree, and Goorkha, which are recruited in the Himalayahs. They are a small, hardy race of mountaineers, and the best soldiers in the native army.

the dark,[36] Sir Harry's forces arrived about sunrise within two miles of Buddewal, all baggage being kept in rear of the column, to prevent any obstruction in the operations which might be requisite.

During the halt, a native spy arrived with information of the enemy having advanced, and occupied the fort of Buddewal in strength; but the general discredited the report, and the advance was sounded without any alteration of route being determined on. Brigadier Godby's forces did not make their appearance, although the time for meeting as appointed had passed; it was therefore evident that they must have taken another route, and have probably missed us in the dark.

On issuing from the close country upon the plain, a cloud of dust was discerned rising over some trees on our left flank, and soon afterwards, some Goorchera horsemen, galloping through the grove, announced the enemy to be on the alert. In a few minutes, the grove was swarming with the Sikh irregular cavalry, who continued to move parallel with our brigade, which advanced steadily into the plain, having wheeled into open column of troops. Several of the Sikh chiefs rode boldly up within a hundred yards of us, and watched the cavalry brigade passing in review, and approaching the fort of Buddewal. On our front, and to the right, nearly as far as the eye could reach, stretched a sandy plain, with scarcely a bush on its surface, beyond which lay Loodiana, about six miles distant. Our left was flanked by groves of trees, and on the left front was the town and fort of Buddewal, frowning over the low range of mud houses in its neighbourhood, the whole of which swarmed with the enemy's infantry.

The fort was a brick building of some solidity, in which were placed the heaviest guns; but entrenchments and abattis were thrown up round the town, which were defended by lighter guns and musketeers.

The cavalry and horse artillery continued to advance into the plain, and deployed under cover of some sand hills, whilst Sir Harry Smith rode along the position, to reconnoitre the enemy. Several Sikh chiefs continued busily employed in the same manner; but as yet, no hostilities had taken place, though each sought eagerly an opening to give the first advantageous blow. At length, the head of our infantry column came in sight, and the Sikhs, who had been intently watching their movements, now ranged themselves in continuous line amongst the trees up to the walls of the town. A quick flash from the Sikh position, succeeded by a cannon-ball, which plunged heavily into the sand, announced the enemy's hostile intentions; but the cavalry brigade were cleverly posted among the sand hills, which defiladed them from fire in a great measure, although they were too low to be quite effectual for that useful purpose.

[36] During this night march, large fires were constantly lit by the camp-followers, which must have indicated our line of march to the enemy. These blazed with such vehemence on every elevated spot we reached, that it looked more like design than accident.

The infantry, as they advanced into the plain, toiling through the deep sand, fared much worse; for the Sikh light guns, being pushed forward, soon got the range, and the shot tore through the ranks with deadly precision.

The enemy's shells were comparatively harmless, being made of pewter or lead, and simply loaded with powder; but the round and chain-shot came hurtling through the air, or playfully ricochetting from the sand ere they plunged through or over our line, seldom missing their object by an interval which the next discharge was not likely to correct.

One direct shot from a battery, which must, I think, have been a chain-shot, I saw strike a subdivision of infantry on the flank, and turn over every man. At length, the toilsome and blood-stained advance was accomplished, and the infantry, nearly exhausted, formed a second line to the cavalry, and halted to recover breath.

The Sikhs, emboldened at the paucity of our numbers, advanced from under cover into the open plain, whilst a body of cavalry, issuing from the grove of trees before-mentioned, pounced upon our baggage, which had not yet reached the open ground. Two Ressalahs of irregular horse, and details of a few men from each regiment, were marching with the baggage. The enemy, taking two light field-pieces with them, fired upon the confused heap of cattle, and soon caused such a scene of commotion, that they were enabled to plunder as much as they could carry away; and a great portion of the sick men, carried in doolies,[37] fell into the enemy's hands. Some were taken prisoners, but the greater part were massacred.

The rear portion of the baggage, by taking to flight, escaped to Jugraon; and a few stray camels, with drivers possessed of some presence of mind, by making a circuit, arrived safely at Loodiana. A small guard of H.M.'s 53rd Regiment, under the command of the quarter-master, kept together, and saved a portion of the regimental stores of that corps, with which they retired on Jugraon.

In the meantime, the enemy, having drawn up his forces on the open plain, seemed disposed to follow up his advantage, and the Sikh chiefs, galloping along the front of their line, were seen directing the advance, and animating the soldiers. Our artillery being advantageously posted behind some low sand-hills, now opened a well-directed fire of shrapnel upon the enemy's left, which soon appeared to check their ardour, and seriously disturb the meditated operations.

Brigadier Cureton pushed forward with the 16th Lancers, in echelon of squadrons, to follow up the confusion which had ensued from the fire of our artillery, and threatened

[37] "Doolies" are litters for carrying the sick or wounded men off the field, or on the line of march.

a charge on the left flank of the Sikhs, when the movement was countermanded by Sir Harry Smith's orders.

The British General having found himself much outflanked by the enemy's line, (and the infantry being greatly exhausted by the toil they had undergone,) resolved not to hazard an action under such disadvantages, and before a junction with Brigadier Godby, who had not yet been discovered. Orders were therefore sent to the cavalry to retire, but to keep the enemy in check.

The cavalry-brigade having deployed, retired by alternate squadrons, covering the line of infantry, which had, in the meantime, made a partial change of front, to repel a demonstration which the Sikhs had made against the British left. The enemy, advancing boldly, when he discovered that Sir Harry was unwilling to come to close quarters, opened a galling fire of artillery along his whole line; but the front shown by the British cavalry-brigade deterred him from coming up to attack.

Under the able direction of the gallant Cureton, the cavalry were manœuvred as steadily as at an ordinary field-day. Presenting a moveable target, which called forth all the skill of the Sikh artillerymen, the 16th Lancers, 3rd Cavalry, and Captain Hill's Irregulars, continued to menace the enemy, and to despise the deadly missiles which showered around them; whilst, among that overwhelming host of Sikh Goorcheras, not one effort was made to measure lance or sabre with their opponents. They were content to leave us to be dealt with by the artillery.

The prudence of such a measure on the enemy's part was perhaps unquestionable.

Thus, gradually retiring across the plain, and placing on the ammunition carts, or on horseback, the unfortunate men who were wounded by the incessant cannonade to which the Sikhs subjected the force, we reached a distance of about two miles from Buddewal, when the enemy ceased to advance.

When our retreat was first commenced, nearly all the officers conjectured it was Sir Harry's object to draw the Sikh forces well out of their position, and attack them in the open plain; but as we continued to retire, it soon became evident that no action was to take place, and we were compelled to receive the numerous kicks which were bestowed upon us with all the philosophy that could be mustered. "Now we are going at 'em—now for it, lads!" burst from the ranks on many occasions, when the squadrons faced about and confronted the foe; but the fatal "threes about," gradually diminished these hopes, and at last the homely observation of "By G—, if we are not bolting from a parcel of niggers!" called something between a blush and a smile to many a cheek.

About sunset, the troops arrived before the half-burned cantonments of Loodiana, and bivouacked on the plain. Hardly a tent or a native follower made their appearance in

our gloomy lines, and many a bitter lamentation was vented over departed comforts and luxuries seized by the ruthless Sikhs. Nearly all the hospital stores had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, which was a heavy misfortune; but we dwelt with some satisfaction on the probability of their being mistaken for wines and liqueurs, in which event we anticipated, with much glee, the effects likely to ensue, and only regretted we had no chance of witnessing the commotions which would prevail in the Sikh camp on the auspicious occasion.

Late in the evening, a few camp-followers, and a very few baggage-animals, came straggling into the lines, having made a detour, and avoided the plunderers. With the usual native propensity for exaggeration, they expatiated on their own hairbreadth escapes, and gave mournful details of the tragic sufferings and deaths of most of those who were missing. One man was describing in glowing terms the resolute defence of a fellow-servant, who fell, covered with innumerable wounds, when the innocent hero of the tale actually walked up, and had the honesty to confess that he owed his safety to his fleetness of foot.

Very few of our camp-followers were maltreated by the enemy, beyond taking away any property found on their persons, and keeping some of them prisoners a few days, whilst they extracted any intelligence they were able to afford. Most of the prisoners were then turned loose, and furnished with the information that the Sikhs entertained no animosity towards the natives of Hindostan, but had resolved to conquer and rule the country, and would not fail to massacre every Feringhee who was foolhardy enough to give them an opportunity. At the same time, with the candour becoming true chivalry, they strongly recommended the British to abandon all useless resistance, to submit to the modest Khalsas, or take to flight—in fact, to do anything rather than fight, as that might be inconvenient.

The actual loss at Buddewal has never been published, as a great portion of those reported missing had escaped to Jugraon, and six or seven were carried prisoners to Lahore.[38] The total amount of killed, wounded, and missing, were between three and four hundred, but more than half this number subsequently made their appearance. The report which prevailed in India, that the losses were amalgamated in one return with those killed at Aliwal, is a stupid fabrication.

Early in the day, Captain A.W. Campbell, of H.M. 14th Regiment, was killed by a cannon-shot, whilst acting as aide-de-camp to Sir Harry Smith. He had only succeeded in reaching the army the preceding night, after a hasty journey from Calcutta, and was struck down on his first field of action: but whoever accompanies Sir Harry Smith in battle, must be prepared to encounter the thickest of the fire.

[38] These prisoners were released and restored after the British forces crossed the Sutlej and reached Kussoor.

In our destitute condition, we were most hospitably treated by Col. Godby's Brigade, who had marched out in the morning to meet us, according to the instructions received, but we had missed each other, owing to the brigadier supposing that we should not march directly under the guns of the enemy's position.

On the day succeeding our arrival, some of the scared merchants of Loodiana disclosed their hidden stores in cellars and outhouses, and we were enabled to replace many deficiencies.

The fort of Loodiana was garrisoned by a few convalescents from the 50th Regiment, and a small detail of native troops; but being on the outskirts of the town, the Sikhs had not ventured within sweep of its guns to pillage, and had satisfied themselves with burning the furthest and most exposed part of the cantonments.

The Puttealah Rajah's troops, who were stationed as a protection for the buildings, viewed the proceedings with indifference, nor was it to be expected they would be very energetic in our cause, against their own countrymen. The small party of Sepoys then at Loodiana were quite insufficient for hostile measures, but the damages have been much exaggerated. The brunt of the losses fell on the officers and men of H.M. 50th, and if ever a regiment deserved to be indemnified, the gallant half hundred have earned the claim.

Our spies, returning from the enemy's post at Buddewal, reported that the Sikhs had come to the determination of attacking us immediately, most probably that night, as the stars were propitious. Being now reduced to the lightest possible marching order, it was impossible to find us better prepared for an active campaign; and we looked forward with much satisfaction to the visit, which was promised on the fine open plain on which we were bivouacked. To ascertain the time of arrival, our pickets were posted far in advance, and patrols and reconnoitring parties were constantly on the move.

At sunrise, on the 23rd of January, news arrived of the enemy being in motion, and the forces immediately turned out with much alacrity. The cavalry and Horse Artillery moved under a ridge nearly parallel with the Sutlej, and marking the limits of its extreme course, whilst the infantry shortly afterwards took the upper route on the same line. About 9 A.M. we were informed that the whole Sikh forces had quitted Buddewal, and were marching towards the heights of Valore, which flank the direct road between Loodiana and Ferozepore, and extend to the waters of the Sutlej.

Brigadier Cureton, who was in advance with a small party of cavalry, sent an urgent request for the cavalry brigade to push forward, as he had come up with the enemy's rear guard, and could cut them off with a large quantity of baggage and ammunition under their care; but Sir Harry Smith was unwilling to make the experiment. After halting for about two hours, information was sent from the reconnoitring party that the

Sikhs had taken up a position near Valore. On receipt of this intelligence Sir Harry Smith ordered his forces to advance and occupy the enemy's vacated position at Buddewal. On arriving at that place in the afternoon, we found the fort and town completely deserted, the Sikhs having marched out during the night and left quantities of grain and stores behind them, for which they had no carriage, as we had encumbered them with a superfluity of valuables, which were, no doubt, ere then safely lodged in the Punjaub.

Buddewal was speedily and thoroughly ransacked, but very little was found worth carrying off. Tents, empty trunks, and crazy furniture abounded in and around the palace (as it was called) of our friend the Ladwa Rajah, the author of the Sikh expedition into this neighbourhood, and a quantity of grain and cattle were found in the town.

Our camp followers soon made the place a wreck; nor did their vengeance stay here, but, wandering in parties about the country, they set fire to several villages in the vicinity, and nightfall exhibited a long series of conflagrations marking their track. This was condemned in the severest terms by Sir Harry Smith, and all officers of the army were called upon to exert themselves in suppressing a system which tended to engender a spirit of animosity towards us among the inhabitants of this country, who were not guilty of the origin of these hostilities.

Our camp followers, in palliation of their conduct, declared that the inhabitants of all these villages had taken an active part in plundering them and our camels on the 21st, which was not at all improbable.

The bodies of several soldiers who had fallen in the recent skirmish were found on the plain near Buddewal, and interred. Amongst the slain, Captain Campbell's body was found, and buried by two officers, who went for the purpose of discovering the body of their fallen comrade.

Many of our servants, who had escaped to Jugraon with part of the baggage, now rejoined us, and also a great portion of the sick under protection of the Shekawattee brigade, which added one thousand native troops to our force.

Some of our servants, having escaped from the Sikhs, came to the outposts with their mouths full of the extensive armament which the Sikhs were preparing for our destruction; but all united in asserting that reinforcements were pouring into their camp from the opposite side of the river. Our best spies were furnished by Captain Hill's corps of Irregular Horse, many of whom, disguised as faqueers, entered the Sikh camp and brought accounts of the enemy being about forty thousand strong, with seventy or eighty guns, and of their being employed in throwing up entrenchments similar to those of Ferozeshuhur. This burrowing system was universally practised by the enemy,

even when they were meditating offensive measures, and therefore it formed no clue to their present intentions.

Our cavalry reconnoitring parties were daily in the enemy's vicinity, and officers were employed to form plans of their position; but our adversaries had great objections to this inquisitive practice, and threw forward their outposts to check the intruders. But, amongst the whole army, for constant activity and careful observation of the enemy's proceedings, none, even in the prime of life, displayed more alacrity than the two generals, Sir Harry Smith and Brigadier Cureton.

Daily, at the first peep of dawn, our indefatigable commanders were hovering around the enemy's post, whilst the whole of the troops stood ready accoutred for immediate action in case of the enemy being equally vigilant; but our opponents testified less appetite for the keen morning air.

The Sikhs talked boldly in their own lines of their daily intention of coming out to attack us, and the spies failed not to report the resolution; but as it had now been deferred so many days, there appeared some probability of their being anticipated.

The main object of the Sikh's change of position seemed to be to secure a post on the river where they could receive reinforcements which had been sent from their head-quarter camp, and at the same time occupy our direct[39] road of communication with the main column. The siege train, which was approaching from Delhi with a very small escort of native troops, was also, beyond doubt, the ultimate object of their manœuvres, although it had not yet approached within reach of a safe "dour."

By advancing from Loodiana to Buddewal, Sir Harry Smith was better enabled to watch the enemy until the time for action; and the post being (as we recently experienced) on the line of communication with our head-quarters, by Jugraon and Dhurrumkote, the main object of the Sikhs was, in a great measure, neutralized, and we had much reason to be thankful to them for having given us so eligible a lodgment without a struggle. In the meantime, reinforcements were in full march, to join Sir Harry Smith, from head-quarters by the Jugraon route; and two eight inch howitzers were being equipped for field service, having been hastily mounted and brought to Buddewal from the fort of Loodiana.

[39] The route we had taken by Dhurrumkote and Jugraon is not the direct line between Ferozepore and Loodiana.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR HARRY SMITH ADVANCES TO ATTACK THE SIKHS IN THEIR CAMP—THE BATTLE OF ALIWAL—THE ENEMY DEFEATED AND DRIVEN ACROSS THE RIVER—OBSERVATIONS.

On the 27th of January, all the reinforcements which had been on the march to join our column had arrived, and Colonel Godby's force, part of which were in Loodiana, moved out in the evening to Buddewal. The whole force, which amounted to about ten thousand men, were brigaded for the approaching struggle, and verbal orders were issued to the several commanders.

The cavalry,[40] which were formed into two brigades, were placed under the direction of Brigadier Cureton, of H.M. 16th Lancers; and to the cavalry division were attached the four troops of horse artillery.

The infantry consisted of four brigades, under Brigadiers Hicks, Wheler, Wilson, and Godby.

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[40] Cavalry—
1st Brigade H.M. 16th Lancers.
" 3rd Native Cavalry.
" 4th Irregulars.
2nd Brigade Body-Guard.
" 1st Native Cavalry.
" 5th ditto.
" Shekawattee Horse.

Infantry—
1st Brigade H.M. 31st Regt.
" 24th Native Infantry.
" 47th ditto.

2nd Brigade H.M. 50th Regt.
" Sirmoor battalion.
" 48th Native Infantry.

3rd Brigade H.M. 53rd Regt.
" 30th Native Infantry.

4th Brigade 36th Native Infantry.
" Nusseeree Battalion.
" Shekawattee Infantry.
" Sappers.

A nine-pounder, light field-battery, and the eight-inch howitzers completed the sum of the force under Sir Harry Smith's command.

Shortly before daybreak on the 28th of January, the "Arouse bugle" from the general's quarters, taken up by each regiment successively along the line, summoned all to prepare for the fray.

The camp was speedily levelled, and all camp-followers and "impedimenta" (as the Romans aptly termed their baggage) were left in charge of a detail of Native Cavalry and Infantry at the fort of Buddewal.

Slowly and silently the dark masses of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, fell into their respective places on the sandy alarm post in front of the general's quarters, and soon after daybreak the army advanced in compact order, over the open plain, under the guidance of the acting engineers.

Advanced guards, and flanking parties of cavalry, were thrown out from the main column, and every eye watched eagerly for the first glitter of the Sikh weapons.

The suspense was not destined to be of long duration; for soon after sunrise, having marched about eight miles, we reached the verge of a sandy ridge, beneath which lay a hard, level plain, nearly two miles in breadth, and about one in length, flanked on our right by the Sutlej, and on the left by trees, through which an open country could be discerned to a considerable distance.

To our right front lay the fortified village of Aliwal, and to our left front that of Boondree, amidst a thin grove of trees. Along the ridge connecting these villages were thrown up light field entrenchments, (then invisible to us,) from whence a gradual slope towards the ridge where we stood gave the position a resemblance to the glacis of a low fort, and rendered it peculiarly suited for defensive purposes.

Descending into this plain, in column of threes, the cavalry deployed, and advanced a few yards, whilst the infantry and artillery formed a second line, masked effectually by the advance.

The enemy were soon perceived rapidly occupying the position between the villages of Aliwal and Boondree, pouring from their entrenched camp, which lay about a mile in rear of the second ridge, on the bank of the river, but concealed from our view.

Sir Harry Smith, whose watchful eye, from the top of a village-hut on the first ridge, had detected the enemy in motion from their camp, now rode forwards to make his dispositions for the battle, which the most sanguine had not ventured to anticipate as likely to take place on open ground, whilst a fortified camp lay scarcely a mile in rear.

The British line was speedily formed. The 2nd Brigade of Cavalry, under the personal direction of Brigadier Cureton, stretched nearly to the banks of the Sutlej; the infantry and artillery held the centre; and the 1st Brigade of Cavalry, under Brigadier M'Dowell, formed the left wing of the army.

It was reported to the general, that morning, by a spy, that the Sikhs were about to move forward on Jugraon as a new position, and there is some reason to suppose that we found them actually commencing their march. Be that as it may, they manifested an equal alacrity with ourselves for action; the cannon soon opened their iron mouths upon us, but with little effect, the distance being as yet too great.

Sir Harry Smith, with his characteristic readiness, had formed his plan of attack. Perceiving that the village of Aliwal, the strongest point of the enemy's position, was apparently weakly garrisoned, the first and fourth brigades were ordered to advance and carry it by a coup-de-main, which was soon effected, after a faint resistance. The remainder of the British line continued steadily to advance, and when under fire of the Sikh batteries, our own artillery opened along the whole line.

The enemy, although Aliwal was carried, and that important battery silenced, bravely maintained their position, and poured a steady rolling fire upon our advancing line. The noble 50th Regiment being in the centre, and opposed to the heaviest battery, fell fast under the fire; but their path has ever led to victory, and no storm of round shot and grape, supported by countless musketry, has yet availed to repulse those gallant warriors.

A small band of Sikh horsemen, many of them richly attired, suddenly rode forth from behind the batteries, and charged wildly down upon our advancing line;[41] but they never lived to reach it; a sheet of fire streamed from the centre, and a cloud of smoke slowly drifted over the writhing forms of the devoted Goorcheras.

Brigadier Cureton, whose experienced eye observed the enemy's left gradually giving way, now advanced his second brigade of cavalry, sweeping the banks of the river towards the enemy's camp, in hopes of cutting off that change of front, should the enemy attempt the manœuvre, and also of intercepting all communication with that quarter, and the fords of the Sutlej in the vicinity.

The left of the Sikh line having been much doubled up by the foregoing operations, and Runjoor Singh finding it now impracticable to hold his present ground with a reasonable chance of success, endeavoured, by a retrograde movement, taking

[41] I have particularized this case, because there were few instances of the Sikh cavalry emulating the example of their comrades on foot during the whole campaign.

Boondree as the pivot of his manœuvre, to change front left back, and thus take the British line in flank, whilst his own troops might regain their order.

A large body of Goorchera horsemen thrown forward amongst the groves of trees in the neighbourhood of the village of Boondree, announced some new intention on the enemy's part.

The extreme British left then consisted of the 1st Brigade of Cavalry, under Brigadier M'Dowell, (H.M. 16th Lancers and the 3rd Native Cavalry,) who had continued to advance until they had become a target on which the Sikh artillerymen had hitherto practised with impunity. The bold approach of the Sikh Goorcheras on the British left, soon altered the aspect of affairs in this part of the field. A squadron of the 3rd Native Cavalry, supported by one from H.M. 16th Lancers, were detached to check the operations of these Sikh Goorcheras. The Native Cavalry advanced through the trees towards the Goorcheras, but, finding them in considerable force, retreated, when the left squadron of the 16th Lancers advancing and wheeling to the left, charged through the grove of trees, breaking and putting to flight a band of Goorchera horse, who, whilst retiring at full speed, wheeled round in their saddles, and fired their matchlocks at their pursuers, but with trifling effect.

Returning from their charge, this squadron suddenly found that a regiment of Aeen infantry had advanced from Boondree to secure Runjoor Singh's new change of front, and were in possession of the ground over which the squadron had recently passed. The Sikh infantry hastily formed square, and a sharp rattle of musketry emptied several saddles, but "Charge!" from the squadron leader soon put the cavalry at full speed, and, although interrupted by a small grove of trees in their course, they tore like a whirlwind through the enemy's ranks, hurling numbers to the earth, and putting the whole in a state of hopeless confusion.

On the other side of the square, the fourth squadron joined the third, which was returning from a similar charge made on a square of Aeen infantry,[42] and with similar success, though the cavalry had suffered severely, owing to the isolated charges they had been fated to accomplish.

At this juncture two guns of the Horse Artillery, under Lieut. Bruce, dashing to the front, sent a flight of shrapnel whizzing amongst the enemy's disordered masses, which diversion was seconded by the 3rd brigade of infantry, who hastened, by a flank movement, to the scene of action, and followed the enemy through the village of Boondree, in which they would otherwise have made a stand.

[42] These Aeen troops were Avitabile's battalions, formed and drilled by him at Peshawur. Their uniforms were scarlet with green facings; their arms were a musket and sword. The Sikh irregular infantry were usually dressed in white, and armed with a matchlock, sword, and shield—the latter slung on the back.

Just before these operations had taken place, on the extreme left of the British line, the right wing of the 16th Lancers, having stood exposed to the fire of a galling battery in their direct front, were advanced to the attack under the directions of their gallant leader Major J.R. Smyth,[43] commanding the regiment. The two squadrons, moving forward in compact and beautiful order, charged home, and captured every gun under a storm of fire, for the Sikh artillerymen and musketeers stood their ground and fought with desperate bravery and resolution. Venting their unconquerable hatred in savage yells of abuse, the swarthy warriors cast away their discharged muskets, and rushed sword in hand, to meet their abhorred opponents, preferring death to retreat; but no efforts of despair could now restore the day to the Khalsas, for their line had been doubled back and penetrated in several places, and the greater part of their artillery captured or abandoned.

The Khalsa army, hurled from the ridge on which they had taken up their position, now directed their retreat on the nearest fords of the Sutlej below the entrenched camp.

Sir Harry Smith, ordering the artillery forward, and still keeping his forces in compact order, descended from the ridge towards the retreating enemy, saluted by the deafening cheers of each regiment as the gallant and victorious general rode past them. One such day is worth years of repose and inactivity to the soldier, and Aliwal has inscribed the name of Sir Harry Smith on the deathless scroll of British conquerors.

The Sikh general had conducted his retreat with such precipitation, that when the British forces approached the bank of the river the greater part of the Sikh army had crossed, though many, losing the fords or trampled by the cavalry, had been swept down the Sutlej and drowned.

A few shots were fired, on our advance, from some pieces of cannon on our side of the river, but they were the last those guns were destined to fire against the British army, as the enemy were compelled to abandon them, and provide for their own safety on the further shore.

Our artillery, having formed on the bank, opened a fire of shrapnel on the retreating masses upon the further shore, who soon dispersed, some taking refuge in villages near the river, and others directing their retreat towards the fortress of Philore, which is nearly opposite Loodiana.

As the sun sunk beneath the horizon, the whole British force, drawn up in line on the bank of the Sutlej, rested on their arms for the first time since the morning's dawn had lighted their path to victory.

[43] In this charge Major Smyth was severely wounded; but, regardless of personal injury, he continued to direct the operations of his regiment until the Sikhs finally abandoned their position.

The enemy's deserted camp on the river, protected by a semicircular entrenchment, had long been in the hands of our Native Cavalry, and when our brigade arrived at their bivouac, at nightfall, it was found most effectually stripped,[44] and I did not hear of any of the Buddewal sufferers recovering as much as a stable jacket from the wreck. A few books and other trifles of which the Sikhs could make no use, found their way back to the original proprietors; but the newspaper-report, that we had enriched ourselves with Sikh precious stones and metals is, unfortunately, quite devoid of foundation. Those who had carried away any Sikh metals usually found them more troublesome than useful.

Camels, laden with tents, strayed in different directions over the plain; but most of them were furnished with owners in the course of the night, although our camp followers remained huddled together in their den of safety at Buddewal. Enormous quantities of ammunition had been collected in the Sikh camp, to carry on the long operations they meditated against the British forces, and the cartridges, which were packed in large wooden cases, continued to explode during the night. Large portions were collected by our parties sent out for the purpose, and, when fired, shook the earth as with an earthquake, and lit up the surrounding country, causing our horses to break loose from their pickets, when, conceiving that they had not been sufficiently worked during the day, they galloped wildly through our bivouac.

The day of slaughter was certainly followed by a night of confusion; but the Sikh army had been beaten, and few in our camp gave much thought to anything beyond the exploits of the day. Covered with such fragments of tents, or Sikh horse clothing as we could lay our hands upon, or rolled in our cloaks, (the few happy men to whom Buddewal had left such a garment,) we clustered together and discussed the day's proceedings. Most of those who had escaped unwounded were splashed with the blood of their comrades or enemies, and the field where we lay was amply spotted with ghastly looking corpses, which would have afforded valuable subjects for newspaper tales of horror; yet few, if any, of our numerous party complained of their night's slumbers being interrupted or haunted by such apparitions.

The human organ of destructiveness requires exercise for its development, and with those advantages it becomes, with many, one of the most engrossing of earthly passions. I have seen instances in many veterans of men whose eye never brightened with such radiance at any prospect as that of returning to their old gory pastime; ay, and amongst that number were examples of warm-heartedness and benevolence, which it would puzzle the metaphysician to reconcile with their destructive propensities. Ambition is perhaps the best cause or palliative for these inconsistencies; and I trust,

[44] It was here that the Shekawattee brigade and body guard earned their undying renown. This was the last chance for them, as, during the day, they had not come into collision with the enemy.

from the examples above alluded to, it may be deduced that war does not necessarily harden the heart, though it nourishes the ambition of its votary. I will never admit that worldly distinction is sought invariably on selfish motives; for the gratification of one who is prized more than life is a sufficient inducement, and I do not envy the soldier without some such guiding star.

At daylight, on the morning of the 29th, orders were issued to change ground from our bivouac, to the neighbourhood of Aliwal, a short distance higher up on the same bank of the river, whilst parties were detached to inter the bodies of the soldiers who had fallen the preceding day.

A field-hospital had been established at a village on the ridge whence we first descended into the plain of Aliwal, before the action. Parties from each regiment, when the battle was over, took the wounded to this place.

At daylight, on the morning of the 29th, so industrious had been the plunderers accompanying the army, that scarcely a soldier's corpse remained unstripped, with the exception of those whose numerous and deep gashes had rendered any article they wore unserviceable.

The plunderers had the prudence to accomplish their desecrations under the cover of night; had they been detected in the daylight, a short shrift and an ounce of lead would have been their well-merited reward; and, for my own part, I would rather have bestowed the contents of my pistols on one of them, than on the most fanatic Alkali in the whole Sikh army.

It was not easy to determine whence the miscreants had come, for the Sikh villages were all deserted, and the camp-followers, who must have heard the firing until nightfall, were not the most likely people to venture forth ten miles on such an errand. Some of the natives in the field-hospital, doubtless, assisted in the undertaking, but the task was too laborious to be completed by them alone.

The amount of losses on our part were, in killed, wounded, and missing, five hundred and eighty-nine men, and three hundred and fifty-three horses. The enemy's loss, by their own statement, exceeded three thousand. Many went to their homes, after the defeat, disheartened, and laid aside the profession of arms against the British as an unprofitable business.

The ordnance captured amounted to sixty-seven guns, mortars, and howitzers, and forty swivel guns,[45] which were destroyed as an incumbrance.

[45] These swivel guns were fired from camels' backs, and usually carried balls of about one pound weight.

During the 29th and 30th of January, cartloads of captured ammunition were taken to the enemy's forts in the neighbourhood, all of which were deserted, and continual explosions told far into the Punjaub the tale of their destruction. These forts belonged to the troublesome Ladwa Rajah, who had instigated the recent expedition across the Sutlej, mainly in order to carry off the most valuable portion of his moveable property in the protected Sikh states, which feat having been performed more easily than he expected, he was emboldened to act on the offensive.

The announcement of Buddewal having become a blackened heap of ruins, was generally received with a savage degree of satisfaction, and the very name of the place became a convenient resource and by-word for all stray articles. Our native servants made it answer their purpose as a receptacle for every valuable article afterwards missing, until the end of the campaign, or an inventory checked the useful excuse.

A deserter from the Bengal Horse Artillery (John Porter, by name) fell into our hands during the enemy's retreat, and was recognised by some of his former associates. He had been some time in the Sikh service, and had been instrumental in directing the fire of the light guns upon his countrymen, for which employment he would have been speedily consigned to the tender mercies of the kites and vultures, had not the soldiers who captured him been restrained from carrying their resentment to such lengths, and the political agent, hoping to make some use of the renegade, saved his life. Mr. John Porter had apparently imbibed a strong predilection for his adopted country, and maintained that it would be impossible to subdue the Sikhs with the present forces which the British Government had assembled on the north-western frontier; but his opinion on this and other matters was hardly of sufficient value to have saved his life.

This man was more fortunate than another Englishman in the Sikh ranks at Ferozeshuhur, who, during the storm of the works by the British infantry, fell amongst the assailants, crying aloud—"Spare me, lads! I am an Englishman, and belonged to the old 44th!" His appeal was answered by several bayonets and execrations.

On the afternoon of the 29th of January, the field-hospital, with the wounded men, was removed into Loodiana. I rode over to see a brother-officer who had been seriously wounded, and shall never forget the sad scene of human suffering presented to view. Outside the hospital tents were lain the bodies of those who had recently died; many in the contorted positions in which the rigid hand of death had fixed them; others, more resembling sleep than death, had calmly passed away, struck down in full vigour and robust bodily health, when the human frame, it was natural to suppose, would have struggled more fiercely with its arch enemy; but the groans of the sufferers undergoing painful surgical operations were more grievous to the senses than the sight of those who needed no mortal aid. Pain, in all its degrees and hideous varieties was forcibly portrayed on every square yard of earth which surrounded me; and, passing from sufferer to sufferer, I felt, or fancied I felt, each patient's eye following wistfully the

movements of such fortunate visitants as were exempted from the services of the knife or lancet, and sometimes dwelling reproachfully on the useless spectator of their sufferings. I felt it was almost a sacrilege to remain in such a place without being useful; but the medical officers and hospital-assistants so zealously fulfilled every minute detail for the relief of their patients, that sympathy was the only offering we could present to our stricken comrades.

Whilst raising the canvas door of a dark tent which I was entering, I stumbled, and nearly fell over the leg of someone stretched across the entrance. When I turned to make apologies to the owner, I found it had none, but, on a pallet beside it, lay its former possessor, who had just undergone amputation; beyond him lay a dead artilleryman; and further on, amongst stumps of arms protruding from the pallets, lay my wounded brother-officer, who appeared to suffer much more from the surrounding objects than from his own severe personal injuries. But the attention bestowed on those wounded at Aliwal, differed much from a preceding occasion,[46] where the hospital stores and conveniencies had been so far outmarched, that only two rush-lights were procurable to illuminate the hospital.

In the course of the 29th, at Loodiana, better shelter was afforded; and its proximity to the sanatorium in the mountains gave a cheering prospect for the approaching hot season to those who were not qualified to become food for powder.

On the evening of the 29th, the remains of all the officers who had fallen in action were interred in front of the standard guards, and amongst them were many deeply regretted by their comrades. All were young, and most had fallen in their first field; but a soldier's grave has, from the earliest records of mankind, been deemed the most honourable, and often the most desirable passage from this scene of trial. No mourning group of relatives surround the couch of the attenuated sufferer, to aggravate the grief of parting—no lingering shaft of fate reduces the vigour of manhood to pitiful imbecility, but the winged messenger or the flashing steel summons the victim, and amidst the roar of battle's thunder, he bows to the destroying angel. The warrior's grave, dug on the field of strife, and his bier shrouded by the proud flag of his country, and surrounded by war-worn veterans and faithful comrades, are funeral obsequies befitting the close of the soldier's career. The hearse bedecked with lugubrious trappings and nodding plumes, which conveys the remnants of frail mortality to the sepulchre, the train of hired mourners, with their insignia of office and the pompous mockery of woe, have always been, to my mind, objects of peculiar disgust. Why should we seek to dress out death in such fantastic guise, when the ceremonial can only be calculated to harrow the feelings of suffering relatives by protracted mummery? The active scene of the undertaker's solemnities closes with the church portals upon the retiring crowd; but the mouldering corpse has yet to undergo the sculptor's operations;

[46] At Moodkee.

and the carved sarcophagus tells to posterity, as far as time will permit, how great and good a worm has crawled out its allotted course on this scene of trial; and wondering acquaintances are often astonished to read, after death, a catalogue of virtues which they had failed to discover during a life of apparent uselessness. I never could comprehend the object of these strange, but not uncommon, deceptions. Friends and acquaintances must have formed their own estimates before the closing scene, and can hardly be deceived by an epitaph; the opinion of strangers must be a matter of indifference; and the recommendations of a monument can hardly be expected to pass current as an introduction to the invisible world. I cannot think otherwise than that—

> "Praises on tombs are trifles vainly spent;
> A man's good name is his best monument."

But the poet and the cynic appear to have railed at, and ridiculed the custom in vain, for the stone-mason continues to flourish with unabated vigour.

The operations of Sir Harry Smith's division of the army afford interesting matter for consideration, in a military point of view, both on account of the enemy's embarrassing manœuvres against the weakly-defended points on the upper line of the Sutlej, and also because the Sikhs ventured to fight for the first time on the open plain: the light entrenchments, thrown up to cover partially the working of their guns, will hardly obstruct the use of that term.

It will be remembered, that when Sir Harry Smith was first detached from Hureeka, the intention was merely to re-open the communication with Loodiana, brushing away such foraging or predatory bands as were supposed to infest the intervening country. Dhurrumkote, about twenty-six miles distant from army head-quarters, and an insignificant fort, had refused an entrance, but three or four shrapnel speedily induced the garrison to sue for terms, and a small detachment of native troops were established in the place, which was hastily put under repair.

In progress from that place, it was first ascertained that the enemy were in greater force than was before supposed; and no sooner did reinforcements move to join Sir Harry Smith, than a column of dust, extending from the Sikh camp up the river, announced a corresponding movement on the enemy's side, and the reports of our spies soon corroborated the supposition.[47]

I think it hardly admits of a doubt, that the enemy's flank movement at Loodiana, besides a predatory excursion, was intended to act against our siege train, on its arrival at or near Bussean; for on the approach of Sir Harry Smith's division, the Sikhs

[47] This imitative propensity of the Sikhs had often amused us. If a new picket were ever posted in any out of the way place, the Sikhs invariably posted a party of similar strength within a few hours. If the videttes or sentries were doubled, their shadows forthwith appeared on the opposite bank.

advanced to Buddewal, retreating again only to cover the passage of their reinforcements, and again moving forwards towards Jugraon (as it was supposed), on the morning of the 28th of January, when Sir Harry Smith fortunately met them on their march.

Sir Harry has been violently assailed by the Indian press for the operations in the neighbourhood of Buddewal; but it must be remembered that his authority for the enemy occupying that position rested solely on the report of a spy on the line of march; nor did he make any report as to the batteries being manned and ready to open on us; the General, therefore, saw no reason to suppose that it was more than an advanced post, as had been intimated to him the preceding day.

The order for the march, on the morning of the 21st, had already provided for that measure; and a party of irregular horse had been directed "to watch the small fortress occupied by the enemy."

Our gallant General frequently expressed himself in the strongest terms hostile to credulity in rumours, and doubtless acted on this principle on the 21st of January. Had he decided to halt that morning, when the enemy were first discovered, there was an excellent position beyond the reach of their batteries, where the troops might have been assembled, and the march towards Loodiana resumed over the open plain, and out of reach of the Sikhs' heavy artillery.

Sir Harry had resolved upon reaching Loodiana that day, according to the orders for the march; and when it became apparent that the enemy was in full strength, and had unmasked his batteries, the British General immediately perceived the disadvantages under which he must have suffered had a general action ensued, and withdrew his forces with a masterly hand, although the Sikhs exhibited an equally masterly one over our baggage.

Few military men will venture to blame Sir Harry Smith for declining an action with the enemy on the 21st of January, when it is taken into consideration—firstly, that Colonel Godby's force, taking another line of country, had not arrived when the Sikhs were upon us; secondly, that our infantry were nearly exhausted by fatigue, and scarcely able to make their way through the deep sand, whilst the enemy were quite fresh; and, lastly, that the Sikhs could have compelled us to attack them under cover of their batteries in Buddewal, for which operations we had no sufficient ordnance.

When also a great disparity of numbers exists, as on the occasion in question, there can be no doubt of its being incumbent on the General to bring the lesser body at least fresh upon the field, where so much activity is required to counterbalance the opposing force; and in the open plain the Sikhs so far outflanked our line, that Sir Harry was compelled

to make a defensive change of front when threatened by a demonstration made by Runjoor Singh against the British left.

The want of heavy guns, and the paucity of our numbers compared to the Sikhs, caused the attack of their post to be deferred, after our bivouac at Loodiana, until the arrival of reinforcements from head-quarters. After the enemy had evacuated their position at Buddewal, and our expected reinforcements had arrived, many were strongly of opinion that no attack could in prudence be attempted until guns of heavier metal were procurable. Sir Harry Smith, however, wisely foresaw the evil effect which must have ensued, should it be promulgated throughout India that the right wing of the British forces had been checked by the Sikhs, and continued inactive at Loodiana, apparently unable to commence offensive operations.

The news of a daring conspiracy[48] at Patna had, at this juncture, reached the Governor-general's camp; and an immediate and decisive blow was especially necessary, to convince the people of India that the British resources were sufficient to crush the invaders and to punish domestic sedition. The whole province of Bengal having been nearly denuded of British troops, any internal disaffection being allowed to develop itself might have led to most disastrous consequences; but this was happily discovered, and repressed in due season.

Had the Sikhs retreated across the Sutlej after the skirmish at Buddewal, carrying off their booty unmolested, the result of Sir Harry Smith's expedition would have been far from satisfactory; but, fortunately for that gallant officer, the enemy had been inspired with so much confidence, that they not only remained on the left bank, but actually came out of their entrenched camp, and gave him battle on the very day and hour he desired to bring on the engagement.

To so high a pitch had Sikh confidence risen since the operations of the 21st of January, that there appears every reason to suppose that their movement on the morning of the 28th was intended as much to intercept us from the main column, as to threaten the siege train advancing from Delhi. Had the Sikhs been in earnest in this manœuvre, and gained Jugraon by a forced march, the character of the subsequent operations must have undergone a material change, the fort of that town being of solid masonry, and capable of standing a siege; and there is little doubt that they would have gained an acquisition of force when in the protected Sikh states, by so bold an advance. But such a movement must ultimately have proved fatal to their interest, when cut off from the river, and placed between the two British columns.

[48] Some men of influence and property in the neighbourhood of Patna tampered with the native officers of a sepoy regiment quartered there, but the plot was divulged and crushed in its infancy.

It was reserved for the issue of the battle of Aliwal to teach our enemies how rapid a defeat the best of their troops must suffer when opposed in the open plain to a well organized British army, directed by an experienced, brave, and intelligent leader.

In manning the position they had assumed, much had been neglected on the part of the Sikhs. The fortified village of Aliwal, which covered their left flank, and would have insured a most galling fire on our advancing line, if resolutely defended by an effective garrison, was occupied by an insufficient body of irregular troops, and defended only by two or three pieces of ordnance, which were carried with little resistance. Such an oversight must be attributed to surprise; for, if the enemy were actually on their march towards Jugraon on the morning of the 28th, they certainly had not time to throw a sufficient force, with heavy guns, into the village (which held an advanced position) before Sir Harry Smith was upon them.

When Aliwal was once carried, the only resource left was that which was readily adopted by Runjoor Singh, namely, changing front left back, thus endeavouring to throw his left into the entrenched camp on the Sutlej, whilst his right rested on Boondree. But even this manœuvre was almost desperate, for the extent of front along this new position was so great, that ere the movement could be effected, his flanks were doubled up and his line pierced in several places, nor were the Sikhs a sufficiently disciplined army to manœuvre steadily under fire. When driven at every point from their well chosen position, the Aeen battalions fell doggedly back, but never condescended to fly, though plied with musketry and shrapnel. They retreated, maintaining the character they had earned, and facing about at intervals to check their pursuers by a retreating fire. Those troops, the pupils of Avitabile, did credit that day to themselves and their master; and, however we may abhor their treachery and thirst of blood, displayed in the revolutionary annals of the Punjaub since the death of the old Lion of Lahore, we must at least bear witness to their resolute courage and soldierlike bearing.

The Goorcheras and Irregular Infantry (as we were subsequently informed) had not the same heart in the cause as the Aeen battalions, of whom war was the profession and livelihood, and plunder and assassination the pastime.

It has been asserted that Sir Harry Smith might, without difficulty, have crossed the Sutlej with his victorious army after the battle of Aliwal, and seized on or destroyed the fortress of Philoor, which had been the harbour of assemblage for the Sikhs whilst threatening Loodiana; but it must be taken into consideration that the British general's directions were only to clear the left bank of the enemy, and that our forces were not equipped for an incursion into the Sikh territories. Had such a measure been deemed prudent, it would have called for extensive commissariat arrangements. To have crossed merely to destroy the innocent fort of Philoor, and then to retire, would have been useless and undignified.

But there were stronger reasons even than these. Sir Harry Smith had no authority to cross the Sutlej. The Sikhs were playing our game so industriously on our own side of the river, in crossing and occupying in force their most inexplicable position near Hureeka, that the final act of the tragedy was at hand, for which it was necessary to concentrate the whole British strength.

RETURN OF KILLED AND WOUNDED AT THE BATTLE OF ALIWAL, JAN. 28TH, 1846.

	KILLED.			WOUNDED.			Missing.
	Officers.	Non-commissioned officers.	Trumpeters, Drummers, Rank & File.	Officers.	Non-commissioned officers.	Trumpeters, Drummers, Rank & File.	
Cavalry Division—							
1st Brigade:							
H.M. 16th Lancers	2		56	6		77	1
3rd Light Cavalry		2	27		1	21	
4th Irregulars	1					2	
2nd Brigade:							
Body-Guard							
1st Cavalry			9	2		14	
5th ditto			1		1	8	
Shekawattee Cavalry			1		2	12	
Artillery			3			15	5
Infantry—							
1st Brigade:							
H.M. 31st Regt.			1	1		14	
24th Native Infantry				1		5	7
47th ditto			1			9	
2nd Brigade:							
H.M. 50th Regt.	1		9	10		59	4
48th Native Infantry		1	9	4	1	36	
Sirmoor Battalion			9		1	39	
3rd Brigade:							
H.M. 53rd Regt.			3			8	2
30th Native Infantry			4			24	1
4th Brigade:							
36th Native Infantry			3	1		10	1
Nusseeree Battalion			6			16	
Shekawattee Infantry			2			13	4
Total	4	3	144	25	6	382	25

Horses killed	177
" wounded	79
" missing	97
Total killed, wounded, and missing,	589 men,
" "	353 horses.

Nominal Roll of Officers Killed and Wounded at the Battle of Aliwal, 28th Jan. 1846.

Killed.

1st Cavalry Brigade—

H.M. 16th Lancers	Lieut. Swetenham.
"	Cornet G.B. Williams.
4th Irreg. Cavalry	Lieut. and Adjutant Smalpage.

2nd Infantry Brigade—

H.M. 50th Regt.	Lieut. Grimes.

Wounded.

1st Cavalry Brigade—	
H.M. 16th Lancers	Major Smyth, severely.
"	Capt. E. Bere.
"	Capt. L. Fyler, severely.
"	Lieut. W.K. Orme, ditto.
"	Lieut. T. Pattle.
"	Lieut. W. Morris.
2nd Cavalry Brigade—	
1st Light Cavalry	Cornet Farquhar, mortally.
"	Cornet Beatson, slightly.
1st Infantry Brigade—	
H.M. 31st Regt.	Lieut. Atty, slightly.
24th N.I.	Lieut. Scott.
2nd Infantry Brigade—	
H.M. 50th Regt.	Capt. O'Hanlon, badly.
"	Capt. Knowles, dangerously.
"	Capt. Wilton, severely.
"	Lieut. Frampton, dangerously.
"	Lieut. R.H. Bellers, slightly.
"	Lieut. W.P. Elgree, slightly.
"	Lieut. A.W. White, severely.
"	Lieut. W.C. Vernett, ditto.
"	Lieut. T. Purcell, ditto.
"	Lieut. W. Farmer, ditto.
48th N.I.	Capt. Troup, slightly.
"	Capt. Palmer, ditto.
"	Lieut. and Adjutant Wall, severely.
"	Ensign Marshall, slightly.
4th Infantry Brigade—	
36th N.I.	Ensign Bagshaw.

Return of Ordnance captured from the Enemy in action at Aliwal, by the 1st Division of the Army of the Sutlej, under the personal command of Major-General Sir Harry Smith, K.C.B., on the 28th Jan. 1846.

Camp, Aliwal, 30th Jan.

13 Howitzers:

8 inch, brass, 2ft. 9in., serviceable.
24 pounder, 3ft. 11in., do.
13 pounder, copper, 3ft. 9in., do.
12 pounder, brass, 4ft. 9in., do.
12 pounder, do. do. do.
7 pounder, do., 3ft. 5-1/2in., unserviceable.
12 pounder, copper, 3ft. 9in., serviceable.
12 pounder, do. do. do.
12 pounder, do. do. do.
12 pounder, brass, 3ft. 9in., highly ornamented, serviceable.
9 pounder, copper, 3ft. 11in., do. do.
9 pounder, do., 2ft. 9-1/2in., do.
12 pounder, do., 3ft. 4-1/2in., do.

4 Mortars:

10 inch, brass, 2ft. 3in., mounted, and field carriage, serviceable.
8½ inch, copper, 1ft. 9in., do. do.
6 inch, brass, 1ft. 4-1/2in., a curious old piece, with highly carved and ornamented carriage, do.
4½ inch, brass, 1ft. 4-1/2in., do. do.

52 Guns:

1. 8 pounder, brass, 10ft. 2in., ornamented with dolphin and rings, apparently a French battering
gun, heavy metal, serviceable.
2. 8 pounder, copper, 4ft. 11-3/4in., do.
3. 8 pounder, brass, 4ft. 11in., do.
4. 8 pounder, brass, 5ft. 1in., do.
5. 7 pounder, do., 4ft. 11in., heavy metal, do.
6. 7 pounder, do., 4ft. 3-1/2in., do. do.
7. 6½ pounder, copper, 5ft. 1in., do.
8. 6 pounder, brass, 5ft., do.
9. 6 pounder, do., 4ft. 1in., do.

10. 6 pounder, copper, 5ft. 3-1/2in., do.
11. 6 pounder, brass, 5ft. 5-1/2in., heavy metal, unserviceable.
12. 6 pounder, do., 4ft. 11in., do., serviceable.
13. 6 pounder, do., 4ft. 10in., inscription in English characters—Owner, King Runjeet Sing; Commander, Meg Sing Kakur; Maker, Rai Sing; Lahore, 1833, No. 1, serviceable.
14. 6 pounder, do., 4ft. 8in., do.
15. 6 pounder, do., 4ft. 11-1/4in., highly ornamented carriage, do.
16. 6 pounder, do., 4ft. 11in., do., same as No. 13, do.
17. 6 pounder, 4ft. 8in., Persian inscription, do.
18. 6 pounder, do., 5ft., do.
19. 6 pounder, copper, do. do.
20. 6 pounder, brass, 4ft. 10-1/2in., do.
21. 6 pounder, do. do. do.
22. 6 pounder, copper, 4ft. 11in., highly ornamented carriage, inlaid with brass and steel, do.
23. 6 pounder, do. do. do. do.
24. 6 pounder, brass, do. do. do.
25. 6 pounder, 4ft. 9-1/2in., do. do.
26. 6 pounder, copper, 4ft. 10-3/4in., do. do.
27. 6 pounder, gun metal, 4ft. 10-1/2in., apparently a capital gun, do.
28. 5¾ pounder, brass, 5ft. 7in., Persian inscription, do.
29. 5¾ pounder, 5ft. 9in., heavy metal, would ream out to a 9 pounder, do.
30. 4 pounder, 4ft. 7in., heavy metal, do.
31. 3 pounder, copper, 3ft., Persian inscription, do.
32. 3½ pounder, brass, 4ft. 7in., heavy metal, do.
33. Unknown, sunk in the Sutlej.
34. Do. do.
35. Do. do.
36. Do. do.
37. Do., spiked on opposite bank.
38. Do. do.
39. 6 pounder, brass, do., taken possession of in the fort of Gungrana.
40. 9 pounder, do., do., do.
41. 6 pounder, 4ft. 11½ in., serviceable.
42 to 52. Unknown, sunk in the Sutlej, or since brought in.

Abstract of Captured Ordnance:

Serviceable, 12 howitzers, 4 mortars, 33 guns.
Unserviceable, 1 howitzer, 2 guns.

Sunk and spiked, 13 guns.
Since brought in, 2 guns.

Grand total, 67 guns.

Forty swivel camel guns also captured, which have since been destroyed.

(Signed) W. Barr,
Lt. and Bt. Capt. II. Artillery,
Adjt. Artillery Division.

(Signed) G. Lawrenson,
Major 2nd Brigade H.A.,
Commanding Artillery 1st Divn.
Army of the Sutlej.

N.B.—The quantity of ammunition captured with the artillery, and found in the camp of the enemy, is beyond accurate calculation, consisting of shot, shell, grape, and small-arm ammunition of every description, and for every calibre. The powder found in the limbers and wagons of the guns, and in the magazines of the entrenched camp, has been destroyed, to prevent accidents. Six large hackery loads have also been appropriated to the destruction of forts in the neighbourhood. As many of the shot and shell as time would admit of being collected, have been brought into the park. The shells, being useless, have been thrown into the river. The shot will be appropriated to the public service.

(Signed) G. Lawrenson,
Major 2nd Brigade H.A.,
Commanding Artillery 1st Divn.
Army of the Sutlej.

(Signed) W. Barr,
1st Lieut. and Bt. Capt. Adjt.
Artillery Division.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIR HARRY SMITH'S DIVISION MARCH TO REJOIN THE HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY—PREPARATIONS TO EJECT THE ENEMY FROM THEIR POSITION ON THE BRITISH SIDE OF THE RIVER.

Sir Harry Smith's forces, with the exception of details of native troops, left for the protection of Loodiana, having been recalled to head-quarters, commenced their march on the morning of the 3rd of February, taking the direct road near the banks of the Sutlej.

To Brigadier Wheler was entrusted the command of the forces left at Loodiana, (consisting of twelve guns, the 1st Cavalry, 4th Irregulars, and four regiments of Native Infantry.) These troops were intended to act as a moveable column for the protection of the line of country between Loodiana and Dhurrumkote. Matters were thus placed on a more organized footing; a communication being secured with Loodiana, the fords of the Sutlej watched, and the Sikh predatory bands confined to excursions amongst the villages on their own side of the river, which were by this time pretty nearly exhausted.

Most of the regiments returning from Aliwal presented a sadly diminished front; and H.M.'s 31st and 50th, the former of which had been present in every action and skirmish hitherto fought with the Sikhs, scarcely covered the ground of one weak battalion. In the officers' lines, the diminution was equally perceptible; and in the reduced mess-tents of each regiment, wide and melancholy intervals around the once-crowded tables told but too truly of the fatal precision of the enemy's fire, and of the ready and forward breasts which had been presented to their aim.

Wine had become scarce at every table; but the absence of this incentive to the spirits and conversation of the assemblies did not produce a very depressing effect. The stirring events of the campaign, in which all had been engaged, afforded ample subject for discussion; but the sharp routine of duty, and the daily call to arms at break of day, made early hours universally fashionable and headaches scarce.

The literary characters of the army (not a very numerous class) were perhaps more at a loss than their comrades; for our books had nearly all deserted to the enemy on the 21st of January, and a very scanty sprinkling were recovered when the Sikh camp was captured on the 28th.

Most of the army were utterly at a loss to know what that camp contained; but perhaps the mystery may be solved by the Shekawattee cavalry, or the irregular horse, whose operations were principally confined to that part of the field.

My own share of plunder on that occasion amounted to a bottle of London porter, wrapped carefully in a Sikh blanket, and stowed on a camel's back. A native follower was stalking hastily away with this inestimable treasure, when my groom overtook the delinquent, and I scrupled not to appropriate the booty to my own use.

I never tasted more refreshing beverage than that same bottle contained; and I do not remember ever having found a blanket more acceptable than on the night of the 28th of January, 1846.

On the morning of the 6th of February, Sir Harry Smith's column, bringing as trophies a portion of the Sikh ordnance captured at Aliwal, returned to their former position near Hureeka ford. On arrival, they were met by the gallant commander-in-chief with his staff. Sir Hugh rode along the line, and expressed in the warmest terms his approbation of the services rendered by each regiment; and the emotion with which the kind-hearted veteran spoke, effectually supplied the place of the studied oratory in general use for parade purposes.

Our pickets were again thrown out on the Sutlej, and resumed nearly the same position which had been occupied previous to the late operations; and nothing, apparently, gave evidence of the recent important events, save the diminished strength of the squadrons and companies under arms. The Sikh videttes, at regular intervals, stood, like so many white statues, on their allotted posts, and the patrols sauntered hourly along the high banks between the chain of pickets.

During our excursion to Loodiana, the Sikhs had not remained inactive. Their bridge of boats having been completed and strengthened, the enemy had crossed, and thrown up a large, semicircular entrenchment, embracing the re-entering sinuosity of the river, with a face of about three miles in extent. At first, the Sikhs crossed only in small numbers, sufficient to protect the working-parties in the trenches; but finding these unmolested, they brought their guns across the Sutlej, and established themselves in full strength in their strange position.

Parties of Goorchera horsemen, fording daily above and below the bridge of boats, showed us that the transit of the river near Sobraon might be accomplished with facility by the whole army when it should be deemed requisite. Formerly, the Sikhs had been in the habit of crossing a few thousand by day, and retiring again at nightfall; but now that the works had assumed a more permanent appearance, the enemy seemed to have nearly vacated their camp on the right shore, and to have occupied permanently the entrenchments with battalions of regular infantry. The cavalry spread themselves along

the banks, scouring the immediate neighbourhood, and watching for any aggressive movement on our part.

A better system also prevailed at the outposts: no firing at each other, or useless waste of human life, took place; and on more than one occasion, Sikh officers visited and returned from the British camp.

The redoubtable Ghoolab Singh had arrived in Lahore from his mountain principality of Jamoo, and the Sikh soldiery gained much confidence from this supposed acquisition of strength, which they hourly expected to reinforce their camp. It was reported that Ghoolab Singh had brought with him his whole army, amounting to thirty pieces of artillery, and upwards of thirty thousand men; but this account afterwards proved to be incorrect; his forces did not exceed, in all, ten thousand troops.

However, Ghoolab and his army seemed to have taken root at Lahore; and no entreaties of his countrymen prevailed with that cunning chief to commit himself by joining the Khalsa army in front of Sobraon. Nor is it matter of surprise, that so cunning a diplomatist as the aforesaid rajah proved himself, should have wished to see the result of the struggle which was now impending, before he openly joined an army which had already experienced three defeats. The chances of a British alliance were too favourable a reserve to be sacrificed, so long as a double game could be played with any chance of success.

On the 8th of February, a portion of the long-desired siege train, consisting of twelve ten-inch howitzers, and a large quantity of ammunition, arrived in camp, after a laborious march from Delhi, with an escort of one regiment of native cavalry and small details of native infantry; and Sir Hugh Gough at length found himself prepared with materials for recommencing active operations when such should be deemed advisable.

The main body of the British army was now encamped in line nearly parallel with the Sutlej, and about three miles distant from the bridge of boats at Sobraon. One brigade of infantry occupied the fortified post at Rhodawallah, on the left, whence a good view was obtained of the Sikh camp and proceedings. The enemy's advanced posts were thrown forward into a small fortified position, within musket-shot of Rhodawallah, and a chain of pickets environed the whole front of his works.

Sir Harry Smith's division, at an interval of about three miles on the extreme right of the army, continued to watch the fords of Hureeka. Sir John Grey's division, consisting entirely of native troops, were with the Governor-general at Ferozepore, about sixteen miles distant; and the engineers were busily occupied in preparing, on the river near that town, a pontoon train, by which it had been resolved that the British army should cross when the position at Sobraon had been stormed, and the theatre of war transferred to the Sikh territories in the Punjaub.

We were, of course, all aware that the day of action could not be far distant, as the long-expected siege-train had now poured the greater part of its materials for destruction into camp; but the precise time of operations had not as yet been announced.

On the evening of the 9th of February, as I rode along the river, in company with some brother-officers, we perceived that the enemy had just brought six guns into a village on the high bank above Hureeka. These were probably planted to defend the ford, in case the British cavalry should attempt to cross the river at the same time that the entrenchments were attacked.

About sunset, we observed the enemy's patrols taking their usual excursion along the banks; and so proud were the troops in the village of the new playthings which they had got, that they could not resist the temptation of showing us they were all kept in good order, by firing two or three rounds from each gun.

European nations are not much in the habit of wasting ammunition in that playful manner, and when a battery opens, it generally means something; but this is by no means the case amongst the Asiatics. The Sikhs especially delight in noise, and neglect no opportunity of indulging the propensity. Indeed, it was a matter of surprise to us, how they could ever rest with such a perpetual clatter of cannon and musketry going on in their camp.

With the above-named exception, the Sikh pickets did not appear more on the alert than usual; nor were they strengthened at any point; so that there is no reason to suppose the enemy anticipated the attack which was to ensue in a few hours.

That night, when assembled in our mess-tent, we indulged in a discussion as to the means available for repelling the Sikhs from the insolent position they had assumed on our territories; but many were of opinion that the day of aggression was yet far distant; and some thought—nay, decided—that Sir Henry Hardinge would not feel himself prepared to cross the Sutlej before the ensuing autumn. The argument, when at its height, was interrupted by the hasty arrival of a staff-officer, with orders for the brigadier. Those orders were for the preparation of the mighty machinery which was to be brought into operation ere the morning sun had lit the rival camps, and which was destined to hurl the boasting invaders from the segment of land they occupied, headlong into the pitiless waters of the Sutlej.

A few weeks ago, the eve of a battle, suddenly announced, would have sent half the party at table to make their wills, or to prepare for the coming event as well as a few hours' notice would permit; but now, most of these preparations had already been made;—(and as few were sanguine enough to suppose they could last much longer, as fully half their comrades had been killed or crippled, and the enemy appeared fresher

than ever,)—the approaching struggle excited perhaps a trifle more of interest than would have been bestowed on a hurdle-race or steeple-chase, to come off next morning.

We were ordered to be under arms and moving about two hours before daybreak; and therefore an early retreat was advisable, in order to be in proper condition for the labours which the coming day threatened to entail on some, and to terminate for ever with others.

However lightly the subject may be treated, with lively companions and flashing lights around you, yet, when the scene is changed to the dusky canvas walls of a solitary tent, and the subsiding hubbub of the camp leaves one to court sleep or reflection, I confess, for my own part, that the eve of a battle has never been the calmest of my nightly rests. The probability that ere to-morrow's sun has set we may be one of that loathsome class for whom the "hiatus maxime deflendus"—"to be filled up by spade and mattock"—is awaiting, usually causes a retrospect which, unless with a man possessing the philosophy or vanity of a Cicero,[49] must be somewhat perplexing. When the deeds of a life are hurriedly compressed into a few hours' consideration, I have always found the dark side inevitably gaining the ascendance, and no effort of will would cause the imaginary sphere to revolve and present a luminous surface to view. That austere judge, whom the ancients described as inflicting punishment on the hapless shades who, though guiltless of heinous crimes, had yet neglected numerous opportunities of benefiting mankind, appeared to me to discharge his duty so rationally, that I could not impugn the decision.

Although our actions may be matter of very light reflection whilst time floats gaily onwards, yet a life of uselessness does not afford a very satisfactory retrospect, especially when it appears likely to come to an abrupt conclusion. Seeking earnestly for some familiar spirit to avert the unpromising theme, the demon Ambition rises, and points, with beckoning gestures, to worldly distinctions, success, and military renown. The fascinating vision then appears entitled to be treated with some respect, and away flies Mammon with his unresisting victim. Cruel seducer! As in the case of a rustic caught by the recruiting serjeant with a bunch of coloured ribbons and an Eldorado in the distance, sad experience alone unmasks the sombre reality, and the disappointed aspirant to a shadow, finds that rank and honours are reserved for the soldier's declining years; but youth and glory are rarely companions.[50] Perhaps it may be good policy to keep the phantom hovering in sight, when possession destroys the mistaken pursuit, or at all events, discovers its true value. Notwithstanding these trite complaints, the subordinate regimental ranks have ever proved faithful to their duty,

[49] Cicero declared, that if any deity permitted him to live his life over again, he should refuse, on the plea of being unable to do better.

[50] None under the rank of field-officers are promoted to the honours of the "Bath;" and knighthood is usually reserved for generals.

and the English soldier has continued "to conquer under the cold shade of aristocracy."[51]

In the midst of reflections of this useless nature, I was roused by the mild voice of a native attendant whispering, as softly as if he feared the enemy might overhear him, that the camp was stirring, and that the appointed hour had arrived. To my surprise, I found that the hands of my watch confirmed the Hindoo's assertion; and my night of intended repose had slipped away in a less profitable employment.

Hastily buckling on my equipments, and having seen that my saddle was equally prepared for the emergencies of the day, I rode on to where the dark array of troops were gathering on their alarm posts in the dim star-light. Each brigadier had received, overnight, his instructions for the position to be occupied on this momentous occasion; and the movement of the forces was conducted with that silence and regularity which complete discipline, and an intimate knowledge amongst those in command of their respective duties in the field, can always ensure. Each word of command, though softly uttered, was effectually obeyed, and the column proceeded to take up their position on the extensive curve assumed by the investing army.

The atmosphere, laden with heavy vapours, spread a darkening veil between the rival hosts, and thousands of eyes watched earnestly for the rising of the curtain and the beginning of the tragedy.

[51] Vide Napier's "*Peninsular War*," vol. iii. p. 272.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BATTLE OF SOBRAON—THE ENEMY DEFEATED AND DRIVEN ACROSS THE RIVER WITH ENORMOUS LOSS.

It has before been mentioned, that the Sikh entrenchments presented to us a semicircular figure, the rear of their position resting on the re-entering sinuosity of the river. On the left of the enemy's works, a high parapet had been thrown up, and part of this front was protected by a nullah, with a steep bank acting as a counterscarp, and the bed of this watercourse was filled, in some places, by deep pools of stagnant water, which extended along the centre. On the right flank, the track of the nullah was but faintly marked; and in this quarter, the works had not been completed, and were not more formidable than the trenches at Ferozeshuhur, before described. Batteries were disposed along the face of the entrenchments, and the whole area had been defended with traverses and ditches, which defiladed the garrison from a direct fire, in any direction where our guns could be brought to attack. A raised battery of the enemy's heavy guns, placed at the bridge, commanded the approaches, and swept the whole works in reverse. Guns were also placed on the opposite side of the river, which threatened the position, in case of its falling into the hands of the British.

The works were garrisoned principally by regular battalions of infantry, whose cantonments consisted of wicker-work huts, behind the parapet along the right.

The British forces advanced to envelop these works, one regiment being ordered to precede and carry the enemy's main picket at the point of the bayonet, when the mortars and howitzers, which were to be advanced to the front, were to open on the Sikhs.

The cavalry formed a wing on each flank of the British attack, to guard against any diversion which might be attempted by the enemy's cavalry, which swarmed in incalculable numbers near the fords on the opposite bank of the Sutlej.

As we lay under arms on our allotted posts, every ear was intently listening, in expectation of the first boom from the mortars and howitzers, which were to announce the commencement of the work of death.

All awaited in silent and earnest attention the appointed signal, and scarcely the clash of a sabre could be heard which might convey to the enemy's pickets an alarm of the approach of the formidable host which were preparing to assail the doomed garrison. Not even an expiring groan or shriek had been heard from the Sikh advanced posts,

which had been marked for destruction, and we were speculating whether the misty appearance round the horizon would be dispelled by the increasing light of day, when a flash from our batteries, succeeded by the roar of one of the monster howitzers, and the rushing sound of the hissing mass of iron hurled forth and bursting over the Sikh entrenchments, was the long-expected herald of battle.

Light flashed upon light in regular succession from the batteries, but the fuses of the shells were too short, and they burst high in the air, much to the enemy's comfort. The fire from the howitzers appeared to be more effectual, and we marked them bursting and ricochetting along the entrenchments. Hitherto, not a shot had been returned by the Sikhs, and we almost conjectured, owing to this unusual silence, that the enemy had either evacuated their position, or had lost heart, and resolved to retire. The heavy guns were limbered up, and advanced further to the front, and when daylight began to show with some distinctness the neighbouring objects, our batteries once more opened at a nearer range.

All doubt as to the Sikhs being still in their works was soon cleared up, for no sooner had they felt the weight of our shot, and perceived we were in earnest, than a fierce reply of defiance was hurled from every battery, and the stunning roar of the rival artillery rolled in tremendous waves along the plain.

The dense clouds of smoke which enveloped the front of the contending armies, rolled thicker and thicker, penetrated by the angry and rapid flashes from the heavy guns; and as the destroying missiles hissed and ricochetted along the hard ground, it appeared wonderful that any were spared from the iron paths of devastation torn along the soil in almost every direction.

Our mortars still continued to burst harmlessly in the air, and the Sikh works were so well defiladed from direct or even ricochet fire, that it soon became evident that the enemy would never be driven from his position by a cannonade, which was answered with unabated vigour. The investing force was therefore ordered to advance to closer quarters, whilst the artillery, which was disposed in positions with each division, covered the approach by an incessant cannonade. The centre and right divisions of the British line were intended to engage the enemy's attention, whilst the real attack was directed against the Sikhs' extreme right, where the entrenchments were known to be weakest, being incomplete. Each brigade moved forwards with alacrity to the attack, hastening onwards, under cover of the wreaths of smoke which rolled along their front.

No sooner did the Sikhs perceive that the storm of their works was resolved upon, than the whole of their infantry lined the parapets, and the roll of musketry which tore through our ranks, accompanied by the steady and regular booming of their guns from every battery along their position, seemed to threaten our army with ultimate destruction. Struggling forward a few paces, and then lying down whilst the iron storm

swept over them, each brigade continued to advance, including the centre and right, for the enemy's numbers were so great, that he was enabled to maintain the defence of his whole extensive front.

A rolling fire of musketry now burst from the line of British assailants, as they neared the object of attack in sadly diminished numbers, and with numerous breaks, caused by the obstinate and incessant storm of destruction poured from the Sikh batteries and entrenchments.

On the British left the struggle was less fierce, for the Sikhs had most unaccountably placed fewer numbers to defend their weakest points, and the fifth brigade of Sir Robert Dick's division penetrated the enemy's works with trifling loss, thus taking the position in reverse. But, in the meantime, each brigade along the line had closed with the entrenchments, marking their advance by a crimsoned track of fallen soldiers upon the glacis, where the dead and wounded told an incontrovertible tale of the resolution with which Sobraon had been defended.

On the left centre of the British attack, Lieut.-Col. Franks, of the 10th Foot, had led his regiment to within a distance of about one hundred and fifty yards of the entrenchments, when, reserving their fire, they rushed forwards, and bore down all opposition, driving before them the Bundookcheras, and using the bayonet with a deadly effect, and such as served to refute, for a second time, Colonel Michel's strictures on that incomparable weapon.[52] This advantage being gallantly seconded by every brigade in the division, placed the ultimate success of the day beyond a doubt, though it was purchased by the life of their leader, the gallant Sir Robert Dick.

On the extreme right of the British attack, the enemy's works had been completed, and more resembled a fortification than a common field-work. The storm of this post had been assigned to Sir Harry Smith's division, and to them were opposed the flower of the Sikh army. The resolution with which it was defended was tragically proved by the mangled and shattered bodies of the assailants strewed along the front. Twice had H.M. 31st Regiment nearly surmounted the lofty parapets, when they were hurled back by the overpowering weight of the defenders, and reduced to the mere skeleton of a regiment;[53] but the gallant 50th rushed forwards in support of their old comrades; and these two regiments, conjointly, overcame every obstacle, and plunged amongst the masses of the enemy, where the conflict raged for a time with desperate ferocity.

One of the enemy's howitzers, served with incredible activity, committed dire havoc amongst the British ranks. Lieut. Smyth, of the 50th Regiment, being on that flank, dashed forward with the remnant of his company to capture the obnoxious engine of

[52] Vide Col. Michel's "Abuse of the Bayonet."

[53] The enemy, sallying from their works, massacred the wounded soldiers lying near the entrenchments.

destruction. When within a few yards' distance, the howitzer was trained upon the intrepid assailants, and discharged its murderous contents of grape-shot upon the devoted band.

The greater portion of the storming party, including their leader, were swept down by the fire; but the eight or nine men remaining untouched, rushed with irresistible fury on the foe; and the wounded officer, when he arose, found that the shattered remnant of his soldiers had bayoneted the artillerymen beside their howitzer, and repulsed the defenders, who exceeded their assailants by at least five to one. I consider this individual instance serves as an illustration of how the enemy were defeated on this as on previous occasions. When a small body of devoted soldiers, careless of life, resolved on victory, and united by the iron bands of discipline, are brought to bear on a portion of an enemy who want confidence in each other, the attack must be successful, although the loss sustained may be severe.

In the meantime, whilst the combat raged with unabated fury at the entrenchments, Gen. Gilbert's division, to whom was allotted the attack of the centre, had been exposed to the fire of the heaviest batteries, and a shower of musketry, which would have staggered and repulsed any but the hardiest British veterans. Winning their way gradually, though occasionally wide gaps were torn through the line by the sweeping fire from the batteries and parapets, this gallant band at length surmounted the entrenchments, which were as formidable an obstacle as had fallen to any soldier's lot to carry during this campaign. When once within the works, and the mortal hand-to-hand conflict raged around, the result was no longer doubtful, although the obstinacy of the enemy's resistance promised a piteous bill of mortality in this division.

Under General Gilbert's command were the Sirmoor battalion, which had joined the force at Loodiana, and these fine little Goorkhas gave evidence that they had not degenerated in military prowess since the memorable Nepaulese war. The corps is composed of riflemen, carrying in their girdles a crooked knife, (termed a "kookery,") to give the coup-de-grace to the wounded, and they used the hideous instrument with unaccountable zeal against the Sikhs. As they were known to possess relatives and connexions amongst the Khalsa troops, it had been a matter of doubt with many that their hands would have been amongst the foremost in the field, but the battle-cry roused their hereditary ardour, and overcame every other consideration. Their gallant leader, Captain J. Fisher, whose exploits with the rifle are well known to those who have been his companions in the hunting-fields of the Dhoon,[54] had just surmounted the parapet, when he perceived a battery not sixty yards distant from him, which continued to gall the assailants with incessant rounds of grape. Seizing a rifle from the hands of one of his Goorkhas, Fisher rested his arm on the parapet, and the next second pierced with a rifle-ball the artilleryman, who was about to apply the slow match to the

[54] The Dhoon is a rich valley under the foot of the Himalayahs, and the head-quarters of the Sirmoor battalion.

touch-hole of a cannon. Receiving the loaded rifles from the hands of the soldiers, who handed them up to their commander, he continued to deal rapid destruction amongst the Sikh golundauze.

A party of Sikh infantry, who were placed in defence of the battery, at last perceived the marksman, who was quickly silencing their cannon, and, pouring a volley in that direction, the gallant soldier rolled back amongst the corpses which strewed the exterior of the works.

The field of Sobraon did not bear on its crimsoned surface a soldier more deeply regretted by all who knew him than the fallen chief of the Sirmoor battalion.

The Sikh breastworks had now been carried at several points, and the enemy fell back towards their second lines. Slowly retreating towards the inner entrenchments, and yet holding their assailants in check whilst retiring, they now received a cross-fire from the left division of the British, which had gained their position by a flank attack, and with inconsiderable loss. A rolling and tremendous fire now opened along the whole victorious line of the British, which tore the Sikh battalions with murderous effect, as their order became more compact from being compressed on each side. Still, the enemy retired in creditable array, and showed a threatening front, whilst mown down by musketry, and charged by the 3rd Light Dragoons, which were led by Sir Joseph Thackwell into the Sikh entrenchments. Forced backwards, step by step, towards the river, the foremost of the retreating enemy thronged upon the bridge of boats, which soon gave way under the inordinate weight, and left the fugitives to perish in the waters under the accumulated pressure of their wounded and drowning comrades. Most of the Sikh battalions, finding the bridge destroyed, entered the fords, still preserving their ranks to the very edge of the river; but the waters had risen considerably during the night, and the fords were nearly impracticable.

The banks of the Sutlej were now lined by the whole force of our infantry; and the horse artillery having hastily taken up the most advantageous position which could be found for pouring destruction into the retiring army, the storm fell with merciless violence upon the fugitives, who were now struggling in one mighty, confused mass to reach the opposite shore. So large a mark as the enemy's commingled hordes presented, could scarcely be missed; and the round shot, musketry and shrapnel, which swept the surface of the river with deadly precision, soon converted the greater portion of the Sikh army into a hideous and straggling wreck of humanity.

The sluggish waters of the Sutlej, clogged with human carcases, swelled and foamed over wounded and unwounded, locked in the struggling embrace of mortal peril, and bore them slowly onwards to destruction, making room for succeeding crowds destined to share a similar fate. The scattered remnants of the battalions which had defended the entrenchments of Sobraon with such gallantry and resolution, landing on the opposite

shore, fled wildly from the awful scene of carnage; and half a winter's day served to destroy for ever those daring and organized battalions, to accomplish whose discipline and efficiency had occupied the lifetime, and employed unceasingly the energies of the old Lion of the Punjaub. Had the master and founder of the Sikh military power been spared, or his sagacity and political wisdom been inherited by any of his successors, this day of death would have been averted, or at least deferred to a succeeding generation. But the God of Christians, Sikh, and Mahomedans, ordained it; and let the cavillers at our day's labour turn over the pages of the Old Testament, and study the military commission of Joshua, before they exclaim against the catastrophe of Sobraon.

Sixty-seven pieces of cannon were abandoned by the enemy in their entrenchments, and round every gun in the batteries lay the golundauze, who had sworn to conquer or die, and had fulfilled their oath.

Every trench was filled to the brim with Sikh corpses, and the blood-stained area of the entrenchments told a fearful tale of massacre; but whilst that overgrown assemblage of lawless soldiery continued in existence, the Punjaub or the British frontier could entertain no hope of permanent security. Every Sikh carcase which floated on the Sutlej, or lay stiffening on the gory field of Sobraon, was one obstacle removed to the re-establishment of order and good government; and with such an object in view, the destruction of the Sikh army became a more imperative duty than the removal of any noxious or venomous animal which might lie in the path we are about to pursue.

The enemy's cavalry, and a few battalions of infantry, which had been posted in a threatening attitude at the fords of Hureeka, when the result of the day became apparent, opened a harmless cannonade, from their nine pounder battery, on the British Cavalry Brigade (which had been placed to check any diversion in that quarter), and then departed, taking the route leading towards Lahore.

Before the sun had reached the horizon, not a vestige of that mighty host which had so long insulted our north-western frontier was to be seen, save a few dusky tents on the verge of the plain, and the lifeless bodies lying in the trenches of Sobraon, the lawful inheritance of the vulture and jackals.

Abundance of Sikh ammunition and stores for carrying on the war, found in the works, were collected by our artillery and destroyed. To a late hour of the night of the 10th of February the explosion of these magazines caused the earth to tremble as with an earthquake, and sounded like the expiring echo of the thunders which had rolled in deafening peals throughout the morning.

Immediately the enemy had finally disappeared, parties were detached from each regiment to bury their dead, and the British army returned to the quarters which they had quitted on that memorable morning. The 10th of February brought no rest to our

gallant chief, who hastened, after the enemy's defeat, to Ferozepore, to direct the passage of the Sutlej by Sir John Grey's division on that very night, when, it was natural to suppose, there was little likelihood of the Sikh army taking any measures to oppose our progress. The pontoon train, under the direction of our engineers, was in readiness for this important movement, and the advanced guard of the army crossed without any accident on the bridge, which was finally completed within two days for the transit of the whole army.

The wounded on the British side had been better provided for than on any former occasion, although the number of soldiers who had been struck down caused a scarcity of conveyances. All were as speedily as possible removed into Ferozepore, where the whole cantonment had been converted into a hospital, and every attention was bestowed which medical aid could afford or humanity suggest.

On the day following the action, many Sikhs came across, unarmed, in search of their deceased comrades, and no interruption being offered to them in the discharge of these sacred duties, in a short time small fires were seen to arise on various parts of the field of battle, and many of the fallen warriors were consigned to the flames.

Two days after the battle, the strange sight was witnessed of British and Sikhs, Hindoos and Mussulmen, wandering indiscriminately over the field where all had so recently been engaged in mortal contest.

Return of Killed, Wounded, and Missing, of the Army of the Sutlej, under the command of his Excellency Sir Hugh Gough, Bart., G.C.B., in the action of Sobraon, Feb. 10th, 1846.

	KILLED.			WOUNDED.			Missing.
	Officers.	N. C. officers.	Rank & File.	Officers.	N. C. officers.	Rank & File.	
General Staff				2			
Artillery	1		3	1	1	33	
Engineers			2	3	1	16	
Cavalry—							
1st Brigade:							
H.M. 3rd Lt. Drag.			5	4		22	
4th Cavalry						5	
5th ditto						10	
9th Irregulars							
2nd Brigade:							
H.M. 9th Lancers			1			1	
2nd Irregulars							
3rd Brigade:							
H.M. 16th Lancers.							
Body-Guard.							
3rd Light Cavalry.							
1st Infantry Division—							
Staff	1			3			
1st Brigade:							
H.M. 31st Regt.			35	7		112	
47th Native Infantry		1	7		4	64	
2nd Brigade:							
H.M. 50th Regt.	1		41	11		186	
42nd Native Infantry			8	2	3	53	
Nusseeree Battalion.			6	1	6	74	
2nd Division—							
Staff	2			3			
3rd Brigade:							
H.M. 29th Regt.		1	55	13	7	132	
41st Native Infantry		2	14	8	8	100	
68th ditto		1	10	2	3	67	
4th Brigade:							
1st Europeans	2	2	31	10	16	142	
16th Native Infantry			6	2	23	123	
Sirmoor Battalion	1		13		7	123	
3rd Division:—							
Staff	1						
5th Brigade:							
H.M. 9th Regt			5	1	2	26	
26th Native Infantry			3	2	3	19	
H.M. 62nd Regt.	1		3		7	123	
6th Brigade:							
H.M. 80th Regt.			13		7	123	
33rd Native Infantry	1	2	3	1	5	54	
63rd ditto		1	2	3	5	26	
7th Brigade:							
H.M. 10th Regt.	1	1	29	2	2	98	
43rd Native Infantry			7	2	9	85	
59th ditto			4	1	7	53	
H.M. 53rd Regt.	1		7	8	1	104	

Abstract:

13 officers, 3 native officers, 301 non-commissioned officers and rank and file, killed.
101 officers, 39 native officers, 1913 non-commissioned officers, and rank and file, wounded.
Lascars, Syces, and drivers, 3 killed, 10 wounded.
Grand total of killed and wounded, 2383.

Nominal Roll of Officers Killed and Wounded at the Battle of Sobraon, Feb. 10th, 1846.

Killed.

Artillery—	
1st Troop, 2nd Brig.	1st Lieut. H.J. Faithful.
1st Infantry Division—	
Staff	Lieut Hay.
H.M. 50th Regt.	" Grimes.
2nd Infantry Division—	
Staff	Lieut.-Col. C. Taylor, Brigadier.
"	Lieut. T.S. Rawson.
1st Europeans	" Shuttleworth.
"	Ensign F. Hamilton.
Sirmoor Battalion	Capt. J. Fisher.
3rd Infantry Division—	
Staff	Major-Gen. Sir R. Dick, K.C.B., K.C.H.
H.M. 62nd Regt.	Lieut. Bartley.
33rd N.I.	" Playfair.
H.M. 10th Regt.	" W. Beale.
H.M. 53rd Regt.	Capt. Warren.

Wounded.

General Staff	Lieut.-Colonel Gough, Q.M.G., very severely.
"	Lieut.-Col. Barr, A.G., severely and dangerously.
Artillery—	
2nd Troop, 2nd Brig.	Brevet-Major C. Grant, slightly.
Cavalry—	
H.M. 3rd Lt. Drag.	Lieut. J.B. Hawkes, slightly.
"	" H.W. White, ditto.

"	Cornet Kauntze, severely.
"	Quartermaster Crabtree, slightly.
1st Infantry Division—	
Staff	Lieut. Holdich, severely.
"	Lieut.-Col. Penny, ditto.
"	Capt. Garvock, ditto.
H.M. 31st Regt.	Lieut. Law, ditto.
"	" Elmslie, ditto.
"	" Timbrell, dangerously.
"	" Gabbet, slightly.
"	" H.G. Tritton, mortally.
"	Ensign Jones, severely.
"	Lieut. and Adjt. Bolton, ditto.
47th N.I.	Lieut. and Adjt. Renny, ditto.
"	Lieut. James, slightly.
"	Ensign Walcot, ditto.
"	" Oyston, ditto.
H.M. 50th Regt.	Lieut.-Col. Ryan, dangerously.
"	Bt.-Lieut.-Col. Pettit, ditto.
"	Capt. G. Tew, ditto.
"	" Bonham, ditto.
"	" Needham, ditto.
"	" Wilton, very severely.
"	Lieut. Hough, severely.
"	" J.G. Smyth, ditto.
"	" C. Mouat, ditto.
"	Ensign Slessor, slightly.
42nd N.I.	Lieut. C. Tottenham, ditto.
"	Major Polwhele, slightly.
"	Lieut. Macqueen, severely.
Nusseeree Battalion.	Capt. C. O'Brien, ditto.
2nd Infantry Division—	
Staff	Major-Gen. Gilbert, slightly.
"	Lieut. F. Gilbert, A.D.C., ditto.
"	Lieut.-Col. Maclaren, C.B., dangerously.
H.M. 29th Regt.	Lieut. G.H. Jones, very severely.
"	Capt. Stepney, severely.
"	" Young, slightly.
"	" Murchison, ditto.
"	Lieut. Henry, severely.
"	" Duncan, ditto.

"	" W. Kirby, very severely.
"	" C. Macdonnel, severely.
"	" Walker, slightly.
"	" St. G. Nugent, severely.
"	" G. Henderson, contusion.
"	" Scudamore, severely.
"	Ensign Mitchell, very severely.
1st Europeans	Capt. Magnay, severely.
"	Lieut. Patullo, ditto.
"	" Lambert, ditto.
"	" Dennis, ditto.
"	" Hume, dangerously.
"	" Staples, slightly.
"	Ensign Palmer, ditto.
"	" Davidson, mortally (dead).
"	" Innes, slightly.
Sirmoor Battalion	Lieut. Beatson, severely.
16th N.I.	Capt. Balderston, ditto.
"	Ensign Hodson, slightly.
41st N.I.	Capt. Halford, severely.
"	" Cumberlege, ditto.
"	Lieut. J. Stephen, slightly.
"	" Onslow, ditto.
"	" Kemble, ditto.
"	Ensign Scatchard, mortally (dead).
"	" Aikman, slightly.
"	" J. Bennet, ditto.
68th N.I.	Lieut. Robertson, slightly.
"	Ensign Dorin, ditto.
3rd Infantry Division—	
H.M. 9th Regt	Lieut. Daunt, slightly.
26th N.I.	Lieut. Mackenzie, severely.
"	Ensign R. White, slightly.
H.M. 62nd Regt.	Lieut. Haviland, severely.
H.M. 80th Regt.	Capt. Cookson, slightly.
"	Lieut. Crawley, severely.
"	" Kingsley, ditto.
"	Ensign Wandesford, ditto.
33rd N.I.	Lieut. Tulloh, ditto.
63rd N.I.	Capt. Ormsby, ditto.
"	Lieut. Morrison, slightly.
"	Ensign Barber, ditto.

H.M. 10th Regt.	Lieut. R. Evans, ditto.
"	" C. Lindham, ditto.
43rd N.I.	Capt. Lyell, very severely.
"	Ensign Munro, severely.
59th N.I.	Lieut. H. Lumsden, ditto.
H.M. 53rd Regt.	Capt. Smart, severely.
"	Lieut. Chester, ditto.
"	" Stokes, ditto.
"	Ensign Dunning, ditto.
"	Lieut.-Col. Gold, slightly.
"	Lieut. Breton, ditto.
"	Lieut. Clarke, severely.
"	Ensign Lucas, slightly.

(Signed) P. Grant,
D.A. Gen. of the Army.

(Sixty-seven pieces of artillery captured, of which no official description is published.)

CHAPTER X.

THE BRITISH FORCES CROSS THE SUTLEJ, AND ARE CONCENTRATED AT KUSSOOR—VISIT OF GHOOLAB SINGH AND DHULEEP SINGH TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL—THE ARMY ADVANCE TO LAHORE—THE SIKH ARMY DISPERSE AND SURRENDER THEIR GUNS.

No action ever fought in the East was more decisive than that of Sobraon, and few battles of modern times have exhibited a greater loss in proportion to the numbers engaged.

It must appear that the enemy's intentions in building a bridge of boats across the river, in face of the British army, was to deter Sir Henry Hardinge from transferring the war to the opposite shore, where the Sikh soldiery were well aware that they had much to apprehend from national dissension as well as private intrigue amongst the sirdars.

As the British army, after its concentration, subsequent to the battle of Ferozeshuhur, remained some time inactive, awaiting the arrival of the siege train, the enemy began to regain confidence. It appears probable that the Sikhs would, ere long, have commenced active hostile measures, otherwise the attitude assumed at Sobraon must be quite inexplicable.

It is almost superfluous to notice the error committed by the Sikhs in neglecting to complete their entrenchments, (for which they had ample time,) and in weakly garrisoning the weakest part of their works. To that cause, and fighting with a river in their rear, which offered a main obstacle to their retreat, must be attributed the enormous losses suffered by the enemy, from which a hasty retirement had saved them on former occasions.

In each action, the Sikhs had lost nearly all their cannon, and the greater part of their artillerymen; and as these could not be replaced by raw levies, each defeat had been more serious than at the first glance it may have been considered. Indian history offers no parallel to the resolution displayed by the enemy in preparing for a renewal of active measures immediately after each defeat.[55] It had long been a favourite saying with military men in India, that the Sikhs would certainly fight one good battle when

[55] Trained from childhood to the profession of arms, every Sikh is by the tenets of his religion a soldier, not even excepting the priesthood; nay, these church militants were the most intolerant and unmanageable—the noisiest and worst soldiers in the army.

hostilities ensued, and that the remainder of the war would amount to no more than the reduction of their forts. This established maxim, however, did not prove that we were very thoroughly acquainted with the Sikh disposition—and after Ferozeshuhur, it lost all its advocates. The military theorists were compelled to trace a new line of operations, which proved, even after Sobraon, tolerably indefinite, for there were few officers in the army who did not expect a smart action on the opposite shore.

The heavy losses suffered by the British at Sobraon, were mainly owing to the strong works which the centre and right divisions of the army so gallantly stormed. Had the attack upon those points been delayed until the enemy's weaker parts on his right had been carried, (the Sikh entrenchments being then taken in reverse,) his batteries would have been rendered unserviceable, whilst our horse artillery might, with the sappers' assistance, have been brought into the area of the works, to act against the disordered masses. Under such circumstances, it appears likely that the action would have been sooner over, and Sir Harry Smith's and General Gilbert's divisions spared the storm in which they suffered so heavily. At the same time that the enemy would have been compelled to face his new assailants, being attacked by the reserve division, his retreat would have been completely intercepted, and his final and utter destruction been apparently inevitable.

As it happened, the Sikh losses were undoubtedly enormous. The entrenchments were defended by about thirty thousand troops, Aeen battalions and Bundookcheras, besides irregulars and cavalry, who retreated early from the scene of action. Of this army, fully one half were destroyed in the trenches, or in the passage of the river. During the battle, four boats, connecting the bridge of boats with the opposite shore, had been removed, which caused the whole fabric rapidly to give way when oppressed with the weight of the retreating multitude. This removal of the boats was generally understood to have been a pre-concerted arrangement with Ghoolab Singh, for the destruction of a force which caused him, as well as many others, considerable disquietude. I give this merely as a prevalent report, and one likely enough to be true, judging from the accomplishments in treachery which the Sikh history evinces, in common with other nations of Hindostan; but the secrets of the political department are necessarily maintained for a time, and have not yet become public.

The revelation would certainly be inconvenient to Ghoolab Singh; and its suppression, if founded in fact, is perhaps incumbent on those in authority.

Whilst the Sikhs were thus being effectually repelled from our north-western frontier, the force in Scinde, under Sir Charles Napier, was rapidly advancing, to co-operate with the British main column. That energetic warrior hastened towards the scene of warfare, in advance of his forces, but did not succeed in reaching the field of operations before the final act of the tragedy had been performed, and the curtain had fallen. Those who

are acquainted with that chivalrous family may judge of the disappointment endured by a Napier arriving too late for a battle!

At the same time that the British army were concentrated at Kussoor, Brigadier Wheler's division at Loodiana crossed the Sutlej, opposite the fortress of Philoor, unopposed by the Sikhs, although a portion of the Khalsas made their appearance in the neighbourhood; but finding that the ground had been preoccupied, no attempt was made to molest the British general.

On the 11th, 12th, and 13th of February, the whole of the British army having been poured across the bridge of boats, advanced, and took post on the strong defensible ridge at Kussoor, where a picket of the enemy, which had occupied that position, fell back, and left them in undisputed possession of the strongest ground between the river and the metropolis.

The shattered remnant of the Sikh army, after the defeat at Sobraon, had fallen back, and bivouacked in the neighbourhood of Umritsir, where they remained irresolute, and awaiting the result of the deliberations going on at Lahore. The whole materiel of that army had been so utterly dismantled, that little apprehension was entertained of even such efforts as might be prompted by the influence of despair. Their guns,[56] in which the main confidence of the Sikh army had ever been placed, had been nearly all captured, and their artillerymen lay on the field of Sobraon. The Aeen battalions, who had readily and gallantly borne the brunt of battle in defence of the batteries and entrenchments, had suffered most severely, especially in the two last engagements. Under this combination of disasters, the Khalsa army was from that day forth no longer worthy of consideration; nor is there any probability that the Sikhs will ever again, during our time, arrive at the same military predominance which they once possessed.

Still, it appeared doubtful that our advance towards the capital would be effected without another struggle, for their mettle had been now too fully tested to be treated any longer with contempt; though any efforts which might be made when reinforced from Lahore must have been hopeless, as no time had been allowed them to entrench themselves. It was conjectured that the sirdars would willingly come forward to sue for terms, but their influence with the Punchayut was not reckoned on with much certainty.

In the midst of all doubts on this head, on the 15th of February Rajah Ghoolab Singh, who had long corresponded through secret emissaries with the British government, approached the lines of Kussoor in order to sue for a suspension of hostilities, and, accompanied by a slender escort, arrived at our outposts.

[56] Thirty-six pieces of cannon were all that could be scraped together by the residue of the Sikh forces, and these were the guns which had been used to man the batteries on the right bank.

The Sikh chieftains, with little show of the pride or pomp of other days, and dressed in the simplest garb of Asiatic soldiery, were conducted to the quarters of Sir Henry Hardinge, and received with solemn distrust.

No eagerness was manifested on the part of the British government to negotiate with the deputation from the Lahore court; but Ghoolab Singh and his companions exhibited such unquestionable proofs of uneasiness, anxiety, and humility, that it was almost painful to behold the stately and chilling deportment which it was deemed politically expedient to assume towards the humbled Sikh chieftains. No firing of cannon, no ceremonious salutes were made use of on the occasion; and when Ghoolab Singh tendered his nazzur[57] he was requested to keep his presents until he had sufficiently testified, by his future fidelity, the dependence which might be placed upon his amicable professions towards the British.

The crest-fallen chiefs appeared willing and anxious to assent to such conditions as were demanded, and listened with affected humiliation and evident apprehension to the catalogue of iniquities laid to the charge of their countrymen. When, at length, Ghoolab and his chosen colleagues retired to a secret and conclusive interview with the secretaries, it was more with the air of malefactors about to receive their sentence, than with the bearing of men who professed themselves the firm and faithful advocates of British supremacy. The Sikh chiefs were vested with full powers from the Lahore Durbar and the military Punchayut, to arrange whatever terms could be obtained, and, after an interview protracted to a late hour of the night, the rajah took his departure, having assented to every proposal, and no doubt much relieved to find the terms were not more stringent.[58]

The conditions demanded on our part, and agreed to on that of Ghoolab Singh, were—

1. The surrender to the British of the lands[59] lying between the rivers Beeas and Sutlej.[60]

2. The payment of one and a half crore of rupees (a million and a half pounds sterling) as an indemnity for the expenses of the war.

3. The disbandment of the Sikh army, and its reorganization on the system and pay of the time of Runjeet Singh.[61] The limitation of this army to be determined in communication with the British government.

[57] Presents offered at all amicable meetings with native powers.
[58] The Sikh chiefs expressed much anxiety that the army should not advance to the capital; but this suggestion was sternly refused, and they were informed that the Governor-general would sign no treaty except under the walls of Lahore.
[59] Governor-general of India to the secret committee, letter dated Feb. 19, 1846.
[60] This tract is a strongly defensible country overlooking the principal cities.
[61] The pay of the soldier, as before stated, had been greatly increased.

4. The surrender of all guns used in the late campaigns against the British.

5. The entire control of the river frontier, and the organization of future administration in the Punjaub.

It was also arranged that the young Maharajah, Dhuleep Singh, should be sent from Lahore to meet the Governor-general on his advance from Kussoor, and to accompany him to the capital.

Before leaving Kussoor, an officer and six privates, who had been taken prisoners at Buddewal, were sent from Lahore, where they had experienced the most liberal treatment from their captors, especially after the news of Sobraon reached the capital.

The population of the district in which we were encamped professed much satisfaction at the change of administration about to be effected. One hoary headed old Mahommedan advanced towards a group of officers in our lines, smacking his lips, and protesting that he felt immense confidence in the new government, and had already enjoyed a fair taste of its benefits, by eating a portion of a slaughtered bull,[62] a food of which he had not partaken for upwards of forty years. The superannuated epicure met with very little encouragement from our party.

On the morning of the 18th of February the whole British army advanced from Kussoor towards Lahore, marching in order of battle, to guard against any change of mind on the part of our newly acquired friends.

A brigade of cavalry were left in charge of the baggage, and this onerous duty caused the troops to march more in the semblance of a funeral procession than that of the advance of a victorious army.

The weather, at this season, was fine, though the sun at noon was becoming rather severe. The country was generally open and cultivated, but with large patches of low jungle or underwood interspersed, which rendered it unfavourable for cavalry manœuvres, and would have afforded excellent shelter for the enemy's Light Infantry; but they had had fighting enough to satisfy them for the present.

On the evening of the 18th, after our arrival in camp, at a small village named Lullianee, the Sikh chiefs arrived from Lahore, escorting their youthful Maharajah. The deputation were fully as humble in their deportment as the most punctilious despot could have required; and Dhuleep Singh, having been graciously forgiven for the offences of his countrymen, and raised to the precarious honours of acknowledged sovereignty, was at

[62] The bull is sacred amongst the Sikhs, and their Mussulman subjects were prohibited from tasting the holy flesh.

last treated to a royal welcome from the voices of our heavy cannon. A proclamation had been issued from Kussoor, giving notice that territorial aggrandisement was not the object of the British government, but that they were desirous only of establishing such authority at Lahore as would be competent to restrain the soldiery from the perpetration of outrages similar to the past. The chiefs and sirdars were invited to act in concert for the furtherance of such an arrangement, and as the wording of the proclamation gave a special invitation to the "well wishers of the descendants of Runjeet Singh," the Lahore Durbar were made aware that the semblance and name of a kingdom would not be taken from them.

Subsequently to Dhuleep Singh's visit at Lullianee, a second proclamation was issued from our camp, giving notice that the Durbar had acquiesced in all the terms, and that if no further opposition were offered to the British arms, measures would be taken to re-establish the descendants of Runjeet, and to protect the inhabitants.

The British army, continuing to advance in the same order as before, came in sight of Lahore on the morning of the 20th of February, and took up their encampment about three miles from the city, forming three sides of a square, and occupying the parade ground and cantonments recently held by the Aeen battalions.

The soldiers were strictly required not to stray from their lines or visit the city, which at present was crowded with people of every denomination, few of whom, it may be supposed, could feel very favourably disposed towards their conquerors. The troops of Ghoolab Singh were encamped near the walls, and held the most important positions in the capital.

On the afternoon of our arrival, the secretary to government, accompanied by a large military escort, under the directions of Brigadier Cureton, proceeded to the palace with the young Maharajah. Marching round the walls of the city, nearly suffocated with dust, which rolled in dense columns and obscured the whole scene, we were received and saluted by Ghoolab Singh's forces, drawn up on their several posts around Lahore. Most of these were fine wiry looking soldiers, and bore some resemblance in appearance to our Goorkha battalions, though inferior in appointments, and evidently not half disciplined. The gateway to the palace, then occupied by the Ranee, opened from the north-western quarter of the city, and the escort formed line fronting the citadel, whilst the governor-general's representative and his party proceeded on their mission. On arriving at the entrance, the political agent and a few officers proceeded to the interior, and shortly afterwards a salute from the light guns announced that the boy whom we had set up to be a king over the Sikhs had been placed in the hands of his anxious mother, the Ranee, of drunken notoriety.

The interview was not of long duration, much to our relief, as the sombre walls which we were left to contemplate did not present a very cheerful aspect, and the inhabitants of Lahore evinced no interest or curiosity in the transactions.

The ceremonial being ended, we wound about the exterior of the city towards our camp, thus completing the whole circuit of the walls, and returned to our quarters about nightfall, after a tolerably fatiguing day; but we had now become so well used to living in our saddles, that it was rather a variety to pass the day anywhere else.

As the conclusion of the war now rested in the hands of the political department, we were at length able to lie down at night, with some hopes of not being trumpeted into our saddles before we had well fallen asleep; and there were few soldiers of the British army who did not take full advantage of this immunity, save the unfortunate members of the standard guards and outlying pickets.

The remainder of the Sikh forces still continued encamped between the river and Lahore, but an intimation was sent to them, that such as chose to come into Lahore would receive payment of all arrears due to them, and must then consider themselves as no longer required for military service. The Irregular Cavalry hastened in crowds to take advantage of this offer, but the regular battalions heard at first with feelings of indignation that they were to be disbanded, and professed their resolution to hazard another battle with the remaining thirty-six cannon which had been saved from the wreck at Sobraon, owing to their remaining on the opposite bank. The chiefs, Tej Singh and Lal Singh, seeing the game was up, refused to lead the soldiers to action, and having also assured the Sikh army that a great portion would be re-enlisted for future service, and that those who were most ready to accept the proffered terms would undoubtedly have the first choice in re-enlistment, these arguments produced a salutary effect.

The surrender of all the cannon which had been used against the British was at length reluctantly complied with, for the attachment of native troops to their guns is proverbial throughout the East, and when this point was carried, the complete dispersion of the regular battalions ensued.

The reluctance on the Sikh part to abandon their profession, must appear an inexplicable matter to those who judge of soldiers' attachment to their trade by its unpopularity amongst our countrymen; but throughout the greater portion of Asia military zeal is a prevalent feature, and in the Indian armies, dismissal from the service has hitherto been deemed one of the gravest punishments which could be inflicted.

The most surprising feature in this campaign was the readiness with which the Sikhs rose after each defeat, fresh for another contest. But with that nation war is one of the principles of religion, and as the wily Mahomet led his daring soldiers to believe that

they were fighting their way to Paradise, so the presumptuous Sikh was taught that his greatest moral obligation consisted in being a brave soldier. To further this object, he was trained in early youth to the use of his weapons, and learned to consider them as the most useful part of his costume. Under this hardy regime they rose from a sect into a formidable nation. In this instance they formed no exception to the general rule amongst all nations, where military prowess has always been a necessary condition in the scale of ascendancy.

CHAPTER XI.

RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY—OBSERVATIONS ON THE EFFECTS LIKELY TO BE PRODUCED THEREBY—CONCLUSION.

The restrictions regarding officers visiting the city of Lahore being removed, we hastened to take advantage of this liberty. The streets and bazaars were so thronged with inhabitants, and the recently disbanded soldiery, that it was exceedingly difficult to force a path on horseback, and an elephant was found to be the most advantageous mode of travelling. A brigade of our native infantry were cantoned in the Badshahee mosque, a large, half-dismantled building, which had stood the test of a good many pieces of artillery during the late effervescences in Lahore. The walls which enclose it were speckled with the prints of grape-shot and bullets, and the angry passions of men had left their marks on every portion of the once sacred edifice. The mosque afforded a strong military position, and Allah's mansion promised a commodious quarter for Christian, Mahommedan, and Hindoo.

The gardens, amidst this general revolution, had not shared the same fate, or had been more easily restored, for the flowers and shrubs were flourishing and exhaling fragrance around, nourished, perhaps, by the gory manure which had been lavishly spread on the parterres.

Adjoining these gardens, was the tomb of the old Lion of Lahore—Runjeet Singh—as yet unfinished, but a humble monument to the memory of such a chief. The Sikh nation, since Runjeet's death, had been too busily employed in slaughtering each other to afford leisure for national testimonies to the founder of their dynasty; but that chieftain can dispense with monumental records to hand his name to posterity. History will not neglect him.

Our engineers were actively employed in repairing the Badshahee mosque, and in improving its defences, that it might become an eligible situation for the garrison, which was destined to remain at Lahore for the present, according to the articles of the treaty.

In other parts of the city, we found Lahore little altered from the condition in which we left it on our return from Afghanistan in the winter of 1839-40.

Very few European adventurers had withstood the late turbulency of the population.

A German, who had superintended the manufacture of gunpowder, a Spaniard, who had planned the engineer's work at Sobraon, and a Frenchman, (Mons. Mouton,) who

had held a subordinate command in the cavalry and artillery, formed the wreck of the European officers in the Sikh service.

The inhabitants, having now so far regained their confidence as to feel assured that the British had no intention of plundering the city, reopened their shops, and our camp was daily crowded with itinerant tradesmen, offering their wares for sale. The prices put on their goods led to a supposition that the vendors entertained a high opinion of our wealth and a low one of our knowledge of the value of their merchandize.

The Shalimar Gardens, about four miles from the city, formerly the chosen scene of the Ranee's entertainments, were a favourite resort for our leisure hours. The luxuriant shrubberies and flower-beds, with marble aqueducts and fountains, rendered these gardens a delightful retreat from the noonday sun, which was now becoming oppressive under our canvas abodes on the plain.

During several interviews held with the Sikh Durbar, the terms of arrangement with the Lahore chiefs were finally settled, which provided for the fulfilment of all the clauses specified in the before-mentioned treaty with Ghoolab Singh. That chief[63] was selected as prime vizier, whilst the Ranee continued as regent during the minority of Dhuleep Singh. A force of 10,000 British troops, under command of Sir John Littler, were named to occupy Lahore,[64] and assist the Sikh Durbar in the fulfilment of the measures which were deemed necessary for the future government of the country.

The native army of Lahore were to be re-enlisted under a reduced system of pay—viz., under the same footing as they enjoyed during the lifetime of Runjeet Singh; and their establishment was never to exceed twenty-five battalions, of eight hundred men to each battalion, with 12,000 cavalry.

The Sikh Durbar, being unable to raise at once the sum of one and a half crore of rupees demanded as an indemnification for the war undertaken by the British government, ceded in perpetual sovereignty, as equivalent for one crore of rupees, (one million sterling,) all interest in the territories lying in the hill districts, between the Beeas and Indus, including the provinces of Cashmere and Hazarah.[65]

Fifty lacs (500,000£.) were paid down before the ratification of the treaty.

[63] Rajah Lal Singh was afterwards made vizier, but recently deposed for treachery.

[64] These troops to be withdrawn as soon as affairs have been satisfactorily settled.—Government notification, Camp, Umritsir, March 16th. Within the last few months, the Sikh government, feeling themselves still inadequate to continue the government unassisted, petitioned that the British force might for the present be retained at Lahore, which was agreed to, the Lahore government paying for their protectors.

[65] Treaty between the British government and the court of Lahore, Nov. 4.—Government notification.

If the British government should at any time wish to send troops through the Punjaub, on notice being given, they are to be allowed to pass through the Lahore territories. The Maharajah is never to retain in his service any British subject, nor the subject of any European or American state, without the consent of the British government being previously obtained.

The Maharajah agreed to recognise the independent sovereignty of Ghoolab Singh to such hill territories as were guaranteed to him by the British government, and that Sirdar was to be admitted to the privilege of a separate treaty with the British, in consideration of the good services rendered by him in procuring peace.

The limits of the Lahore territories are not to be changed without the British concurrence.

This treaty, consisting of sixteen articles, was signed by the Maharajah and his ministers, and by the governor-general of India and his secretaries, on the 9th of March, 1846.

The day following the signature of this treaty, on the governor-general paying a visit to the Lahore court, a paper was read, conveying the thanks of the Sikh Sirdars to his excellency for his generosity, kindness, and mercy shown towards the Sikh nation, and for having consented to leave a force for the maintenance of the Sikh government, until a satisfactory settlement of affairs could be arranged, provided that could be effected within twelve months.

In the separate treaty concluded with Ghoolab Singh, the British government transferred, as an independent possession to that chief, all the hill countries east of the Indus[66] and west of the Ravee.

In consideration of this transfer, Ghoolab Singh bound himself to pay to the British Government a sum of seventy-five lacs of rupees, (750,000£. sterling.)

Ghoolab Singh bound himself to refer any disputes between himself and any other state to the arbitration of the British Government. Also to join, with his whole force, the British troops, when employed within the hills adjoining his possessions; and the British engaged to aid in protecting the sirdar from external enemies.

Ghoolab Singh engaged to take no British subject, nor European, nor American, into his service without the consent of the British; and, in acknowledgment of the supremacy of

[66] This includes the whole of Cashmere, and other smaller tracts, in addition to the lands formerly held by Ghoolab Singh.

the British Government, promised to present, annually, a horse, twelve shawl goats, and three pairs of Cashmere shawls.

This treaty was concluded at Umritsir, on the 16th of March, 1846.

Whilst these treaties were in progress, continual meetings between the chiefs occurred, and it was a matter of much interest to view the changed deportment which the vis fortioris had inflicted on the Sikh sirdars. Runjoor Singh, who had directed the operations at Buddewal and Aliwal, requested a special introduction to his friend, Sir Harry Smith; and Tej and Lal Singh, the commandants at Moodkee and Ferozeshuhur, now converted into ministers of state, were most diffuse in their expressions of friendship and gratitude towards the British chiefs.

The coin which was brought for the payment of the fine inflicted, proved pretty correctly that the vast treasures stored by Runjeet Singh in the treasury of Govindghur, had been melted down into soldiers' pay, and that the sirdars had been too lavish in their expenditure to retain much ready money for the benefit of the commonwealth.

Russian, Persian, Chinese, and Afghan currencies, intermingled with gold and silver jewellery, were scraped together to meet the exigencies of the case, and the far-boasted wealth of the Punjaub appeared to have evaporated during a two months' campaign.

Silver being the current coin throughout India, the counting out of large sums occupied a very considerable time, and thus afforded leisure to the Lahore Durbar to make exertions to raise the sums of money demanded, which they had with much alacrity promised to pay, but which they counted out with much difficulty and evident reluctance.

News having ere this reached the furthermost parts of the country of the termination of the war, it became necessary to hasten the reduction of the Sikh forces to the stipulated amount; and orders were forwarded to the killedars of forts, and commandants of districts, to take measures for effecting this purpose. Less difficulty than was apprehended was experienced with the portions of the army which were cantoned in distant parts of the country, and, with the exception of a fortress of great strength, named Kote Kangra, in the hill districts, none of the Sikh officers held out for any time against the British mandates.

The army of the Punjaub had been so heavily disabled at Sobraon, and during each of the previous actions the loss in artillery had been so considerable, that these circumstances could not be concealed from their fellow-soldiers and countrymen, which tended to dishearten the rest of the army for any further resistance.

The fanatic Akalees, so notorious in the military annals of Runjeet Singh, and who had been exceedingly abusive formerly to such British officers as had attended at reviews of the Sikh army, were scarcely ever beheld during our late engagements, nor did I see a man wounded by a quoit[67] during any of the battles. I was told by a Sikh officer in Lahore, that this race of priest soldiery had been so active and forward during the Lahore massacres of the few preceding years, that the greater portion of them had met with the fate they so amply deserved, and were nearly destroyed. If this be true, it is certainly one of the chief benefits conferred on the Punjaub by their sanguinary revolutions.

The fate of the Sikh sirdars, since Runjeet's death, has presented also a tragical catalogue: thirty-five have been murdered, seven died a natural death, eleven were killed in the late actions, twelve remain living at Lahore.

Under the present reduced state of the Sikh army, it is not the least probable that the nation can ever become again the formidable enemy which they have lately been found.

In the first place, their military establishment being numerically reduced to one-third of their late numbers, and the extent of the country requiring these to be quartered far apart, a British force of superior numbers could, in a few days, in case of an insurrection, take post under the walls of Lahore. The reduction of an army must, doubtless, impair the martial propensities of a nation, and when these weakened battalions are under the surveillance of the keen-eyes of the British agents, who must, henceforward, dwell in Lahore, we may reckon almost as safely on information reaching us of any irregularities, as we might in the native forces of India.

But, as I have before stated, the principal confidence of all Indian armies is placed in their guns. As the greater part of these are in our possession, and the Lahore arsenal cannot be as busily employed now, without our knowledge and consent, as formerly, the scarcity of cannon will be an obstacle, to which it ought not to be difficult to add a scarcity of artillerymen, for the profession is a noisy one, and therefore their practice is easily overheard, and without unremitting attention and practice, artillery are not usually very formidable.

In Ghoolab Singh, the British Government ought to possess a tower of strength, for they have made him a greater man than he ever was before; and it must palpably be his interest to maintain amicable relations with the British, having paid beforehand for his alliance in solid rupees. The tribute of a few goats and shawls cannot be very irksome to the governor of Cashmere, as the price of the guarantee for his dominions; and not being himself a Sikh by parentage, and most of his army being also aliens to the

[67] The favourite weapon of the Akalees.

Punjaubees, there cannot be much danger of a collusion between that chief and any Sikh sirdars who might desire a change of administration.

The establishment of so powerful a chief as Ghoolab Singh as our ally, on a line of hill territories bordering the whole Punjaub on the north, has afforded a security sufficient to deter the Sikhs from any thoughts of hostility, so long as the chief of Cashmere remains contented with his principality, or unable to discover more powerful friends than the British.

I cannot for one moment do Ghoolab Singh the injustice of supposing, that he would prefer the precarious sovereignty of the Punjaub to his present secure and extensive government. The lesson which that sirdar must have learned, when within a hair's breadth of being sacrificed to a popular turmoil in Lahore, operated so favourably, that he manifested the utmost desire to return to his mountains as soon as practicable after the departure of the British authorities from the Sikh capital. But should ambition whisper such a wild project in his ear as to aim at the throne of Lahore, prudence would surely suggest that the Sikh nation had recently experienced how much could be done against the British with a chance of success.

The tract of country between the Beeas and the Sutlej, known as the Jullundur Dooab[68] which was ceded to us in the first treaty arranged by Ghoolab Singh at Kussoor, though extending over territory, will, on reference to the map, be seen to contract the actual frontier line.

That frontier, uniting at the northern angle with the territories of our ally, Ghoolab Singh, and overlooking, from a strongly defensible country, the city of Umritsir and fort of Govindghur, has materially altered our position relative to the Punjaub.

The new forts built as our outposts on that frontier will not, it is to be devoutly hoped, be encumbered by large towns and cantonments; or, if that be deemed indispensable, the area of the new fortresses should be sufficiently extensive to admit all European inhabitants to take refuge within their defences.

The part enacted during the late war by our old enemies, the Afghans, has been a matter of surprise to many. The natural and religious antipathy between the Afghans and Sikhs is a sufficient cause for a want of co-operation at the outset, but the overthrow of the Feringhee would have been a temptation which, if gilded with a fair chance of success, must have overcome all minor prejudices. Situated at a distance of five hundred miles from the scene of action, and the news travelling at anything but a railroad pace over this long interval, the Afghan chiefs learned of the Sikh invasion and the result of the actions under so many shapes, that they were at a loss which to believe.

[68] Dooab (two rivers) is a term applied to any tract of land lying between two rivers.

Akbar Khan, having assembled his forces, was hurrying in a state of commotion towards the lower gorge of the Khyber pass, when the news of the Sikh defeat at Sobraon reached him, which induced that chief to refrain from any further proceedings. If any entertain a doubt as to whether his real intentions were to co-operate with the British or with the Sikhs, this last measure must amply explain them, for what better opportunity could have presented itself to the mountain chief for striking a blow at Peshawur than the period of paralyzation ensuing after so many rapid and severe defeats of the Sikh forces?

Had matters befallen otherwise, there is little doubt that success on the part of the Sikhs would have ensured the performance of the promises of assistance sent by Akbar Khan to Lahore, and such a swarm of Eastern warriors would have spread over our north-western provinces, as had never been seen since the days of the victorious Nadir Shah.

Affairs being now in a train for settlement, it was no longer deemed necessary to keep the whole army concentrated at Lahore. Two regiments (the 16th Lancers and 31st Foot) were permitted to volunteer previously to proceeding to Calcutta and embarking for England, and as, during such occasions, liquor is freely administered, and discipline necessarily relaxed, the camp afforded daily evidence of the prevailing tastes of the English soldier.

It is a general opinion in the service, and I believe a correct one, that soldiers who have served long in India are not the best material for home employment. It does not at all surprise me, that men who have been employed in storming batteries and overcoming armies, whose days have been passed in marching under the fiery beams of an Eastern sun, and whose nights have been spent in watchfulness through the chilling damps of a January night in India, should not feel much relish for resuming their recruit's skin. When a man has done the utmost which the service requires of him, nay more, when his conduct has become the theme of encomium, and he has enjoyed a private's full share of the thanks of Parliament, he is not generally over well pleased when set assiduously to work at battalion drill with a herd of recruits, to help and make a new regiment. It is on this account, I think, that soldiers who have served in India are not the best qualified for English duties, and not because the habits they have contracted in the East have become so inveterate that they are unable to shake them off. Yet, with this conviction on my mind, it certainly was a painful sight to witness the breaking up of a regiment, which must ensue under the volunteering system. A man awakes on the morrow after his intoxication, and finds that he had bound himself with hopeless fetters to exile. Another presents himself as a willing offering for service in the East, which he could hardly hope to see to an end, abandoning all ties of home and kindred, and embracing with satisfaction, as his adopted country, in lieu of old England, the land of the stranger and of the heathen. How many an anxious mother, or orphan sister, has looked forward, with eager expectation, for the return of a regiment to their native country, and found

that after all the perils of war had been overcome, the blandishments of an Eastern bazaar had induced the expected son or brother to abandon and forget the natural ties of kindred, and to separate himself for ever from those who ought to have some hold on his affections!

On the evening of the 3rd of March, previously to the breaking up of the army, the three British cavalry regiments which had been engaged in the late actions, assembled to dine together, when the extensive tables spread under long rows of tents exhibited a motley array of uniforms, and an equally varied collection of dinner-equipage, such as will rarely be met with again. The number of black bottles would have been startling to the advocates of plate and decanters; but on this occasion they were all applied to their legitimate purposes. Formerly, the case had been widely different; for many regiments, after the sorrows of Buddewal, had devoted those unseemly flagons, not only to the service of wine, but to the more urgent calls of illuminating the tables; and Guinness's portly bottles had often stood in homely familiarity beside their more slender and elegant claret brethren; both alas! degraded to the vile purpose of supporting wax candles.

The next morning, the two regiments above-named quitted their fellow-comrades to commence their roasting expedition towards Calcutta; and a few days afterwards, the greater part of the army returned towards their allotted cantonments in India, leaving Sir John Littler, with ten thousand men, to form the garrison of Lahore.

The Governor-general, who had now been raised to the honour of a peerage, proceeded by the sacred city of Umritsir towards his summer abode in the Himalayah mountains; and the forces under Brigadier Wheler, with some additional native corps, occupied the newly-ceded territories in the Jullundur Dooab.

Amidst this general departure and dispersion of our forces, there remained but one troublesome and refractory party, in the killedar, or native governor of a fort, near the foot of the hills, called Kote Kangra. Deaf to the orders from the Lahore Durbar, he resolutely objected to surrender his command; and the fort was known to be so strong, that it was found necessary to despatch additional troops, with some guns of heavier metal, to reduce the place.

For upwards of three months, this obstinate killedar continued to refuse possession of his fortress. After numerous parleys and conferences, which were accorded with the humane intention of preventing any further bloodshed on either side, a suitable train of battering-guns reached the British camp, when, seeing that any further resistance would be hopeless, the commandant of the fort surrendered to the detested Feringees, marching out his garrison with the honours of war.

Thus ended the sanguinary struggles with an enemy who had caused the British supremacy in India to quake to its foundations, and who had so far profited by the often-repeated lessons taught them in European tactics, that it is not surprising that clauses should be inserted in the treaties to restrict such inconvenient knowledge for the future. But, although the instruction may be discontinued, yet the information gained, and the practical purposes to which it has been applied, cannot be annihilated by treaties and proclamations. Few will now venture to question the soundness of the maxim, that our Indian empire must be maintained by the sword.

The practical comment on the late war has been a large reduction of our native army, recently promulgated. If this be followed by an augmentation of the European troops employed in the north-western provinces, we may understand the economy, and applaud the policy, which dictated such a measure; but if, with the extension of territory, a reduction of the forces—which already had just sufficed to turn the scale in our favour—should ensue, a second campaign on the Sutlej will be likely to render the abolition of the Queen's and Company's forces in India a probable result.

My tale of Eastern Wanderings, and of the campaigns in which it has been my lot to bear a humble share, is told.

The subject of these pages has beguiled many a leisure hour in camp and quarters. I hope I may not have retaliated unfavourably on such of my readers as have been liberal enough to accompany me throughout my long journey.

I have spoken freely on all subjects connected with military matters, because I take the deepest interest in my profession, and feel convinced that the trade of war cannot be better served than by a minute and free investigation of all its details.

If, in the description of active operations, any errors of details may be detected, let me be judged leniently; for the confusion of the field of battle not only prevails at the moment, but its din will often bewilder the mind of the eye-witness long after the cannon have ceased.

That it is not an easy matter to be accurate in such details, may be inferred from the fact, that in the despatches of Sobraon, especial thanks were given to a brigadier for his exertions in the field during that day, when the innocent hero of the despatch was fast asleep on a sick bed at Ferozepore. Such is the fortune of war, that the feather-bed is often more prolific of honour than the path of thorns, and "the bubble reputation sought in the cannon's mouth."

Now that the scene of active operations has closed, I cannot flatter myself that the author of these volumes can have excited sufficient interest in his movements to be followed any further in his pilgrimage. Therefore, on the sun-burnt plains of Lahore we

will part; and we cannot do so under more favourable terms than those emphatically recommended by the eccentric Terence—

"Vos valete et plaudite."