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SINDH POLICY

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A FEW COMMENTS ON MAJOR-GENERAL W. F. P. NAPIER'S DEFENCE (1845)



REPRODUCE BY:

SANI H. PANHWAR (CALIFORNIA 2015)

SCINDE POLICY:
A FEW COMMENTS
ON
MAJOR-GENERAL W. F. P. NAPIER'S
DEFENCE
OF
LORD ELLENBOROUGH'S GOVERNMENT.

Nul n'aura de Pesprit, hors nous et nos amis.
MOLIERE.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1845.

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SCINDE POLICY.

THE name of Napier is one which claims attention, and commands respect; for it is borne by a family, the several members of which have been much before the public with credit to themselves in their different capacities. Most of them have been distinguished by their talents, and equally remarkable for their good fortune in having those talents duly appreciated and amply rewarded.

To the successful general and the victorious admiral, the meed of public approbation and national recompense has been awarded with no sparing hand, and in no niggardly spirit; and to the talented historian of his country's Peninsular glories, a large measure of commendation has been extended, although tempered, it is true, by the expression in different quarters of dissent from his opinions, and even denial of his statements.

The literary reputation of Major-General W. F. P. Napier, the author of the "History of the Peninsular War," if not such as to command undivided approbation, was still of a high order.

Many applauded, without discrimination, his literary labours; others, while admitting the merits of the author, deplored what they deemed to indicate the partiality of the partisan : but all accorded a ready acknowledgment of the talents of the writer; and even those who disputed his statements, or denied his facts, ascribed his errors to the blindness of over-zeal, rather than to any intentional obliquity of vision, and if they differed with the historian, they gave all credit to the officer and the gentleman.

The work now before the public, the "History of the Conquest of Scinde," Part I., is a striking illustration of the extent to which a mind possessing a high order of talent will deteriorate under the influence of party prejudice and personal feeling. The *cacoethes scribendi* has once more laid hold of the gallant General, and led him to take the (literary) field in a bad cause and in a bad spirit; and if his motives escape condemnation, it will be because the public will readily ascribe the ill-judged proceeding to the excusable desire of vindicating the professional character of a brother, rather than to the wish to disparage the measures and wound the feelings and reputation of parties who are not on the spot to defend themselves.

All who have read the "*History of the Peninsular War*" must have seen with regret that an author gifted naturally with great power of language, may be led by the foolish taste for what is vulgarly termed fine writing, to forget that, unless it be indulged with much judgment, vigor and richness of expression are apt to degenerate into verbosity and redundancy.

The "*Conquest of Scinde*" is indeed a melancholy proof that literary vices, like those of our moral nature, are aggravated by age.

It is not, however, the bombast of the author's style which would have called for censure, had his ambition been limited to the innocent display of his powers in that particular. He might have indited page after page of the "phraseology sailing in ballast" with which the work abounds, but for the danger to be apprehended, that an undue weight might attach to opinions and dicta enunciated with such an *ad captandum* display of rhetoric, and that the public might be so misled by the glitter of a meretricious and inflated style, as to accept unsupported assertion for conclusive evidence, and receive grandiloquent denunciations against men and measures, as an authoritative condemnation of policy or principle.

Had General Napier been content to clothe in fustian the character of his gallant brother, and confined his laboured effusion to the simple object of protecting the Governor of Scinde from what he considered calumny and misrepresentation, the motive would have commanded respect, however much the manner might have excited ridicule; the amiable partiality, too, which induces him (*risum teneatis, amici?*) to draw a parallel between his gallant and aged relative and the "Roman Paulus who conquered Macedon in a single battle at the same period of life" (!) and to trumpet forth the wide-spread fame of the different members of his family – even such mistaken and misplaced eulogy would have been forgiven: and though the public would have shrugged its shoulders, yet the foolish vanity of the proceeding would have been considered as partly counterbalanced by the fraternal affection so touchingly displayed, and whatever might have been thought of the author's head, his heart would have been shown to be worthy of respect.

In the pamphlet before us, however, the display of rodomontade is not only indulged in for the pardonable purpose of investing with a delusive halo of glory the character of his immediate relatives, and from them of reflecting its effulgence on his own comparatively unobtrusive name, but it is made the vehicle of violent political sentiments, – of coarse personalities and unsparing abuse of the conduct and objects of parties, of whose motives and actions he individually has had no opportunity of judging but such as is enjoyed by all other of Her Majesty's subjects who are like himself far removed from the scene of action, – of startling, unscrupulous, and unsupported assertions, the truth of

which the public are expected to take on trust, – of offensive and uncalled-for vituperation of a distinguished Body, who, by their decision, disinterestedness, and dignified independence, have secured the approbation of all high-minded men, – and above all, of fulsome adulation of one, whose conduct has been the theme of general condemnation, except with the peculiar clique whom chance has made the instruments of his insane policy, whose vanity has been flattered by his countenance, whose , objects have been promoted by his agency, and in whose distempered judgment, warped by their personal predilections and private interests, military success, no matter what the cause, is national glory, and the reckless acquisition of territory and prize-money the legitimate object of the statesman and the philanthropist.

The author of the proclamation regarding the Somnauth Gates is evidently not only the Magnus Apollo, but the model, of our gallant General, by whom his Lordship's ambitious style has been closely imitated. As is usual, however, the copy lacks the piquancy of the original; but the one is as unworthy of the historian, as the other is unbecoming in the statesman and the man of sense.

Whatever claims the Ex-Governor General may have on the gratitude of General Napier and his family, it is to be feared that this mode of evincing that most commendable feeling will be viewed with anything but satisfaction by his Lordship. The bold and manly tone of impeachment conveyed in the pages of a recent pamphlet¹, the instances of incompetency and irrefragable proofs of inconsistency and disingenuousness which those pages so unanswerably demonstrate, – must all have appeared to his Lordship in a measure harmless as compared with the weak advocacy of his imprudent ally. The taunts of an open enemy may be retorted, and the sarcasms of a declared opponent partially disregarded, from the belief that the recollection of the source from which they spring will lessen their force in the minds of others: but when the weakness of his cause is exposed by its professed defender, when the self-constituted advocate betrays by the meagerness of his arguments, the imprudence of his assertions, and the loss of his temper, how desperate is the task he has undertaken, – then indeed may his Lordship exclaim with bitterness, as he has good reason to do, “Preserve me from my friends, and I will take care of my enemies.”

In the prefatory notice attached to the work, the public is informed that the portion now before them is the first of three distinct parts, and is now published separately, with the object of rebutting the factious accusations made against a successful general, in the hope of wounding through him the nobleman under whose auspices he conquered a great and rich kingdom, and relieved a numerous people from a miserable state of slavery.

¹ “India and Lord Ellenborough.”

This is a startling announcement, it will be confessed: but as the gallant General thus openly throws down the gauntlet in vindication of the policy in question, he must, if he wish to preserve, *sans peur et sans reproche*, his character, whether for literary intrepidity or veracity, be prepared to defend as well as to defy, – to prove as well as to assert.

We do not propose to accompany General Napier in the discursive review which he takes of the state and prospects of India prior to the period at which the events occurred with which the names of Ellenborough and Napier are connected. Scinde is our theme, as it professes to be that of General Napier ; but, unlike him, we shall confine ourselves to the object professed, *viz.* to prove that the iniquitous conquest of Scinde is, in spite of all the special pleading to the contrary, the result of the acts of the government of which Lord Ellenborough was the head, and Sir Charles Napier the instrument, and to manifest briefly the shallowness of the pretext by which it is sought to shift upon others the odium justly attaching to that government, for measures of unexampled aggression, tyranny, and oppression.

At the same time, however, that we decline to enter on the merits of Sir Charles Napier's model government of Cephalonia, of which the public know nothing and for which they care less, and which are so unnecessarily thrust into notice *apropos de bottes*, or to follow the General in his one-sided analysis of the origin, progress, and results, of the Affghanistan campaign, it is impossible to pass *sub silentio* over certain statements and assertions hazarded with incredible recklessness, but which require more than the mere weight of the gallant General's character, high though it may stand, to substantiate satisfactorily.

The first announcement which frightens the reader "out of his propriety" is the following.

"It was at this moment, that for the salvation of India (!) Lord Ellenborough came, to curb, the nepotism of the Directors, to repress the jobbing tribe, to reduce the editors of news papers from a governing to a reporting class, and to raise the spirit of the army, sinking under insult and the domineering influence of grasping civilians, who snatched the soldier's share and calumniated him through a hireling press."

Will it be credited that the foregoing passage, the purport and object of which is to heap every species of aggravating insult on the Court of Directors and the civil service of India, is nothing but empty and frothy declamation, unsupported by one corroborative fact, – unpalliated by one extenuating pretext? The nepotism of the Directors, the oppression and insult offered to the army, the process by which the soldier's share was snatched by the grasping civilians, and the connexion of the civilians with the hireling press, – all are alike assumed, and

asserted with the air of a man who has his pocket filled with damning proof, and is prepared to stake his character on his correctness. Let it then be so, –let the General adduce but one well-authenticated fact to justify these sweeping assertions, –let him condescend for once to prove his charges, as well as to prefer them, –let him show, by descending to particulars, that his character for veracity does not depend on his vagueness, and that his zeal does not so far outrun his prudence as to betray him into statements which he is not prepared to substantiate, –let him, we say, prove one, only one, of the charges here made, and he shall stand justified in the eyes of the public. The alternative is obvious!

Among sundry other statements intended to tell against the “system” in India, we are informed that the sepoy’s musket is of an ancient pattern and unnecessarily clumsy and heavy for that strange economy prevails in India as elsewhere, which spares a pound in the cost of the soldier’s weapon, to be repaid by the loss of the soldier himself, although he never goes into battle for less than a hundred pounds.

Circumlocution with so unscrupulous an opponent would be absurd punctilio: we therefore do not hesitate to say that the gallant General is evidently wholly ignorant on the question regarding which he is so gratuitously enlightening the public.

The sepoy’s musket is not of an “ancient pattern;” and the assertion that the life of the soldier is sacrificed to a desire for economy in the provision of his arms is wholly without foundation. The musket of the sepoy is precisely the same as the musket of the European soldier in India. The supply of muskets is forwarded from this country, and they are delivered to the European and native troops indiscriminately in India. They are manufactured by the best makers, and instead of their being ancient in pattern, the modern percussion musket has been for a long time in course of introduction throughout India, and is daily in process of substitution for the flint locks long in use.

The above are undeniable facts, well known to every military man who has served in India, and we challenge General Napier to disprove them.

The assertion that the sepoy never goes into battle for less than 100£ is equally preposterous. The statement, if true regarding Queen’s soldiers, is notoriously incorrect as applied to the native soldier.

We believe the General has never been in India. It is a pity, since he has no local experience, that he should trust his character for veracity in such unsafe hands as those of informants who would appear to take a pleasure in misleading and exposing him. The display of unjustifiable ignorance, even in what may appear

to be trifles, is calculated, he may rest assured, to damage both his cause and his reputation.

There is one other statement, which, if founded in fact, is still so calculated to mislead, as to require notice.

We are informed, that, "Deeply impressed" with the danger menacing India from within and from without, Sir Charles Napier hastened to offer Lord Ellenborough his opinions upon the military operations, and gave him a general plan of campaign for the second Affghan invasion. What influence this memoir had upon Lord Ellenborough's judgment, or whether it merely coincided with his own previously formed opinions and plans, is known only to himself; but the leading points were in union with the after operations of Nott and Pollock, and with that abatement of the political agency which gave so much offence in India to those who profited by the nuisance.

This attempt to claim for Sir C. Napier some portion of the well-merited laurels which grace the brows of the gallant Pollock, and adorn the grave of the equally gallant and lamented Nott, is, to say the least of it, in bad taste. The degree of "influence which the memoir had upon Lord Ellenborough," may be gathered from a perusal of the pamphlet before referred to, or from the Parliamentary Papers themselves, where it is undeniably shown, that the second invasion of Affghanistan was undertaken in spite of Lord Ellenborough, instead of by his instructions, although it now appears that he was at the time in possession of a detailed "cut and dry" plan of operations from the master hand of the modern "Paulus." We much fear that the desire to elevate the character of Sir C. Napier (which needs no such injudicious efforts) must here have clashed a little with the General's patronage of Lord Ellenborough, who, on this occasion at least, would appear not duly to have appreciated the advantage to be derived from the advice proffered by such an experienced and able Commander.

It is difficult, nay, almost impossible, from such a chaos of verbiage, to reduce the opinions and statements of the writer to a shape admitting of a condensed notice, whether for refutation or denial: but divested of the Minerva Press heroics which encumber every sentence,— of the high-flown encomiums on the velour, professional skill, and private worth of his gallant brother, which, with a sort of personal vanity, "once removed," he reiterates page after page *usque ad nauseam*,— and weeded of the scurrilous personalities which at every turn deface the work and damage the author,—the case which it is sought to establish appears to be this : — *viz.*

That the conquest of Scinde by Lord Ellenborough was a necessary consequence of the Affghanistan campaign under Lord Auckland, — that motives of policy connected with the latter measure induced the formation of treaties between

Lord Auckland's government and the Ameers, for the purpose of promoting the views, and of facilitating the measures, of government, and that similar motives at a later period led to a departure from the provisions of those treaties, to a compulsory adoption by the Ameers of measures repugnant to their feelings and wishes, and to the consequent sacrifice of their interests to our own ends ; and that Lord Auckland being haunted by the hydra-headed bugbear of Russian influence, Russian intrigues, and Russian intentions, for the purpose of counteracting imaginary dangers, existing only in his own disordered fancy, conceived an impracticable and insane project, which eventuated in the Affghan war, and to the ultimate failure of which everything that has subsequently occurred is to be ascribed as its inevitable result. That the invasion of Affghanistan was unjustifiable and immoral in principle, ill-arranged, and worse executed in its details, visionary and delusive in its objects, and abortive and ruinous in its results. That the subsequent policy of Lord Auckland's government in Scinde, grew out of the proceedings in Affghanistan,—was unjust and oppressive, and reflected disgrace on its originators and promoters. That the Ellenborough government had no alternative but to carry out the policy of its predecessor, and that the conduct pursued towards the Ameers, the hostile attitude assumed from the first, the coercive measures adopted, the harsh and exacting treaties forced upon their acceptance, and the ultimate ruin entailed upon them, were the natural and inevitable sequence of former mismanagement and dishonest government.

The above, it will be seen by those who have time to seek the tangible points in the labyrinth of discursive declamation composing the chief portion of General Napier's book, are the broad facts which he is desirous of establishing.

There is no intention in these pages to undertake the vindication of Lord Auckland's acts, further than may be necessary to guard him from a responsibility justly due to his successor; nor is it proposed to advocate his Lordship's opinions, or enter the lists in defence of the policy which dictated the invasion of Affghanistan. The promoters of that policy, whoever they may have been, have lived to see its disastrous results, and no doubt to repent the precipitancy with which it was adopted; and few, We should conceive, are now to be found who would stand up in defence of it, or attempt to advocate its expediency on any rational or equitable grounds. The flood of execration poured upon it and its originators by the General, is therefore hardly necessary for the purposes of his argument, shallow though it be. The Affghanistan policy has been proved, alas! Too fatally proved, to have been founded in lamentable error—it has no defenders—he is therefore fighting with a shadow, and throwing away powder and shot.

But it is no reason that because the government under whose auspices these disastrous measures were undertaken must be held responsible for them, an

unfair, illiberal, and disingenuous attempt to fix upon them the iniquity of subsequent measures, with which they are not chargeable, should be countenanced or even tolerated.

As a set-off against the defects and responsibilities of the Auckland administration, we are palled with eulogiums of the acts of the government of him who came "to save India." In those were to be traced the sound and comprehensive views! The calm judgment! The pure motives! And the wisdom and forethought! characterizing the master-mind, and marking at once the patriot and the statesman! – Qualities developed in measures nobly conceived by his Lordship, and matchlessly executed the renowned warrior who is, we are told, so fortunate as to combine in his single person, the wisdom of Nestor, the velour of Achilles, and the prudence of Ulysses, – the fierceness of the lion, and the meekness of the lamb! – the gifted possessor of the ardor of youth, the vigor of manhood, and the matured judgment of old age !!

In truth, if all we are told is to be credited, Sir Charles Napier is, as Mrs. Malaprop expresses it, "like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once."

What a pity that the well-earned reputation of a gallant soldier should be damaged by the over zeal of his officious defender, and his laurels made to shake on his brow by such an ill-judged attempt to prove too much.

It is curious and edifying to read the laboured exposition of what the Ellenborough champion deems to have been the policy and ulterior views of the Auckland administration in reference to Scinde, and to note the glaring inconsistency with which he holds up that policy and its originators to execration, for the injustice, oppression, and extortion inflicted on the much injured Ameers, and in the same breath proceeds to justify the subsequent ruin, confiscation, and devastation of their country by the government of Lord Ellenborough, on the ground of the political turpitude and remorseless tyranny which characterized them.

It is also curious to follow the course of the uncandid and illogical reasoning intended to establish the untenable positions which he assumes – to mark the easy assurance by which he arrives at unjustifiable conclusions from erroneous premises, and deduces wrong inferences from assumed facts.

It is true that Lord Ellenborough followed up the line of policy commenced by his predecessor, – that on arriving at his government for the salvation of India, he issued a manifesto intended as a warning to future governor-generals, - in which, with consummate arrogance and characteristic bad taste, he animadverts in discourteous language on the acts of that predecessor, – that in the same extraordinary state document he breathes nothing but the spirit of peace, and

with the view of marking his pious horror of the grasping spirit of acquisition manifested by the former government, as well as his conviction of the impolicy of extending our territory (Satan reproving sin!), he declares the Indus to be the “natural boundary” of the British dominions in India. It is also true that the crowning act of Lord Ellenborough’s government was to pass that “natural boundary,” in defiance of the principle so ostentatiously laid down in the above memorable order – memorable for the clap-trap announcements it contained, in which the line of policy enunciated was intended, by the force of contrast, to operate as a condemnation of that of Lord Auckland, and memorable as a record of professions disregarded, intentions unfulfilled, and principles violated. It is quite true that having crossed the “natural boundary,” Lord Ellenborough took forcible possession of the territory of those towards whom the policy of Lord Auckland is declared to have been iniquitous and oppressive, – that the Ameers have been driven with ignominy from their hereditary possessions, their property plundered, their treaties violated, their armies slaughtered, and themselves made prisoners.

All this and much more is true and undeniable, for it is matter of history; but then it is all to be attributed to the nefarious policy which characterized the Auckland administration!

The conquest of Scinde, we are told, (and the expression is deemed so happy, as to be worthy of constant repetition,) is “the tail of the Affghan storm;” it was the inevitable consequence of the invasion of Affghanistan! Lord Auckland’s government, says the historian, acted with duplicity and injustice to the Ameers; but it would have been beneath the dignity of Lord Ellenborough’s government, and highly impolitic, to redress their grievances, or do them justice. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to carry out the iniquitous policy to the full. The Ameers, it is true, had great reason to complain. They had been cajoled and misled, and the British government had broken faith with them in promoting views of their own, through the instrumentality of the arch-diplomatist Colonel Pottinger, which had no ground of justification except expediency.

To accord the character of good faith and forbearance to these negotiations, exclaims the General, in speaking of those conducted by Colonel Pottinger, is impossible. Palliation of their immorality on the score of their necessity is the utmost that can be asked, and that but faintly by the most resolute partisans. Can even that be justly conceded?

How gratifying is this spontaneous outbreak of generous indignation at the sight of so much tyranny and oppression! We cannot doubt that Lord Ellenborough, like this faithful chronicler of the glories of his administration, was ever ready to censure and deplore the iniquities practised by his misguided predecessor ; but, it is alleged that he could of course do nothing to counteract this policy; although

the same feeling of jealous regard for the character of a previous government did not, it appears, prevent his indecently stigmatizing the acts of that government ere he was himself well seated in the saddle of authority. What! again exclaims the General with another burst of fervid eloquence, what though Lord Auckland's policy had been unjust and wicked and foolish towards these nations, – was Lord Ellenborough in the very crisis of evil and danger nicely to weigh the oppressions of his predecessors, and setting aside all the combinations flowing from that predecessor's diplomacy, and all the mischief springing from his unwise military enterprises, - was he who had undertaken to save the Indian empire to bend before victorious Barbarians, – to deprecate their wrath, to cheer them in their dreadful career by acknowledging their anger to be legitimate?

Thus, when the object is to condemn the policy and blacken the character of Lord Auckland, we are emphatically reminded that not even considerations of expediency can justify the adoption of immoral or dishonest measures; and we should hail with becoming satisfaction this undeniable and commendable doctrine, whatever be the motive with which it is propounded: but, alas! A few pages on we find, as has been shown, the somewhat contradictory position boldly assumed, that motives of expediency fully justify the adoption, ratification, and even more extended development of the same immoral and dishonest plans. One government is accused of compassing the downfall of the Ameers, in defiance of national faith and honour, from motives of mere expediency, and the succeeding government, though fully alive to the iniquities of its predecessor, is compelled, from motives of expediency, to complete the nefarious work of destruction!

The word “expediency,” it is well known, has ever been made by all governments the pretext for acts admitting of neither excuse nor defence; it has from time immemorial been the parent of every species of abuse and injustice, – a protecting shield held up by the dishonest minister to conceal his motives and shelter his measures, guarding the one from exposure, and the other from defeat. See its effect in the instance under review, where we find the doctrine laid down that the national honour, dignity, and good faith, could not be maintained by the performance of an act of justice, lest the motive should be suspected; but that a course of policy stigmatized as dishonorable in the highest degree is to be upheld, and the principle of that policy carried out to an extent never contemplated by its originators, lest by its reversal the national dignity and character for unity of purpose should be impaired.

The shallowness and sophistry of this species of argument hardly require exposure. It is unworthy of Lord Ellenborough's cause, bad as that cause is proved to be by its employment: it is still more unworthy of the knowledge, experience, and admitted talent, of the advocate, and is only another striking proof how far his zeal oversteps his discretion.

The public at large, and in particular that portion of it whose good opinion is of any value to Lord Ellenborough, as a statesman, or to General Napier, as a historian and a man of sense, will not be hoodwinked by such an awkward attempt to conceal the real motives of the conquest and annexation of Scinde, and to trace to a noble desire jealously to guard the councils of the nation from the suspicion of vacillation or pusillanimity, measures but too evidently ascribable to the combined influence on those who are responsible, of a yearning for territorial acquisition with a view to ulterior objects on the one part, and thirst for military glory on the other.

On what principle of honesty or equity can a line of policy, declared to be wrong and theoretically condemned by Lord Ellenborough, be subsequently promoted and adopted by him? Admitting for the sake of argument, that the Ameers of Scinde had evinced a factious and unsafe spirit, that they gave indications of a desire to evade the performance of their engagements, and even manifested symptoms of positive disaffection and treachery, does such a state of things justify Lord Ellenborough in disregarding the avowed principles of his government, and, except for the temporary object of compelling the Ameers to submit to such terms as in honour and honesty we had a right to impose, in passing the national boundary within which we have heard it announced ex cathedra that the interests and security of our Indian possessions required that we should be strictly confined. Or setting aside the prudence or imprudence of a departure from the line marked out by nature as the limit of our territories, did the conduct proved, or what is still more, did the conduct charged against the Ameers justify the sweeping and devastating operations against them, by which they have been ruined, and their country as a nation annihilated!

We conscientiously and emphatically answer, No! And appeal to documents laid before the Parliament, and the public, as a triumphant corroboration of the assertion.

The Ameers undoubtedly evinced, in the first instance, mistrust of the intentions of Lord Auckland's government and of its sincerity, and a restlessness under measures adopted for the sole purpose of turning them to our own advantage. Be it not, however, forgotten that the immorality and political dishonesty of those measures are loudly proclaimed, for his own objects, by him whose hand has since crushed the Ameers. They gave symptoms undoubtedly significant of a desire to resist the oppression and exaction of a foreign power. But was there no alternative for us—*no juste milieu* between dishonorable concession on the one hand, and greedy and criminal aggression, ending in their destruction, on the other? Were there no means by which the dignity of Great Britain could be maintained, without entailing ruin and confiscation on the Ameers? Might not terms sufficient to protect our interests and to ensure the due observance of all

existing treaties have been imposed, even at the point of the sword, without that sword being stained in a doubtful, not to say unrighteous cause? Or if the weakness, or folly, or treachery of the Ameers rendered a recourse to arms unavoidable for their chastisement, were not mercy and moderation compatible with victory? Could we not show our power, without proving our thirst for plunder. Most assuredly such a course, considering how far from being justifiable and unimpeachable the whole of our Scindian policy had been, would have been the proper one. Supposing the full amount of turpitude alleged against the Ameers to have really characterized their conduct, and to have been clearly proved, we should still, even in the view taken by Lord Ellenborough himself of their previously existing and admitted grounds of grievance, have not been justified in our proceedings with regard to them. But when it is borne in mind that the truth or falsehood of the charges, on which they were tried, found guilty, and executed with such indecent haste, is matter of disputed certainty, – nay more, that much of the evidence received against them rests on proof so defective that all who read the papers with the view of judging for themselves cannot fail to pause and ponder on the awful responsibility entailed on those by whom they were condemned, – then it may fairly be assumed that neither sound policy nor public virtue guided the councils in which such measures of bloodshed and spoliation originated.

Had the more temperate and conciliatory line of policy been followed towards the Ameers by the government, and the military operations been conducted with the view to their correction, rather than to their destruction, – justified as such a course would have been by the admitted fact of their having just ground for complaint against the Auckland government, – the reputation of Lord Ellenborough would have escaped the greatest stain attaching to it throughout the short, eventful, and sanguinary period, during which he held the reins of government, in the course of which, by a curious counteraction of the most praiseworthy intentions, the man who came for the “salvation of India,” and for the avowed purpose of “retrieving its finances,” was the means of culpably squandering the resources in the prosecution of his warlike designs, and of shedding oceans of blood, and causing endless misery by his policy.

He would further have been spared the inconsistent act of annexing “for ever” to the British dominions, a large, as yet unproductive, and unhealthy tract of country, beyond the limits which nature and his Lordship’s wisdom had previously assigned to our territories and to our grasping propensities, – a country offering no advantages as a boundary, compared with the “Indus,” and the retention of which cannot fail eventually to embroil us with the Lahore government, and probably to lead ultimately to the necessity, for our own defence and preservation, of adding still further to our already overgrown possessions by the conquest and annexation of the country of the Sikhs.

We should also have been spared the misery of witnessing the ravages of sickness and death in the ranks of the gallant army, which we are obliged to maintain there, in order to “hold our own;” – sickness and death the result of the pestilential character of the climate, which has rendered Scinde, as yet, little less than a widespread burying-ground for the flower of the Anglo-Indian army.

All these results would have been avoided: but then Sir Charles Napier would have been deprived of the opportunity of making his *coup d'essai* in an independent command, and of showing that with no experience as a commander-in-chief he could at sixty-three win a battle in a style to “ rival the wonders of Poitiers and Agincourt

It has already been said that the object of these pages is not to enter into the merits or expediency of the policy of Lord Auckland’s government. Such policy, as regards Scinde, may have been unjustifiable; and the responsibility justly attaching to it must be borne by that government; but the use of the *to quoque* argument by Lord Ellenborough’s defenders cannot be tolerated, or the principle for one moment conceded, that a government is bound by the acts of its predecessors, or that any consideration can justify the promotion, continuation, or even tacit sanction of measures bad in themselves, or acts of glaring tyranny and oppression.

The danger of such a doctrine was never more strikingly developed than in the case of the Ameers of Scinde.

We shall not attempt to enter into an elaborate detail of the case, or to dissect the voluminous papers which have been laid before the public; it would be travelling out of the record to do so. We consider that the truth of our position, – the only one which we profess to establish, – may be satisfactorily shown out of the mouth of General Napier himself, viz. that Lord Ellenborough’s government is answerable, and is alone answerable, for whatever odium may attach to the conquest of Scinde and its annexation to the British dominions, and that no degree of turpitude alleged or proved against Lord Auckland’s government could, by any possibility, justify the adoption towards the Ameers of measures of coercion not imperatively called for by their own acts, – that the necessity for firmly adhering to the policy of Lord Auckland’s government, and for appearing to sustain and enforce the equity of previous treaties and negotiations, could only apply in a case in which a conviction existed, that such treaties and negotiations were the result of a sound and enlightened policy, – and that Lord Ellenborough, being, as he professes to have been, strongly impressed on his arrival in India with the conviction that the course adopted towards the Ameers had been characterized by bad faith and an extortionate spirit, it was his duty, by a temperate and conciliatory course towards those whom he considered to have been outraged and oppressed, and by such concession as might have been

consistent with the national honour, to seek to remedy the bad effects of the system he so much deplored, rather than to aggravate, as it is clearly proved he did, the bad feeling subsisting in the minds of the Ameers, by adding extortion to extortion, and seeking to impose, at the point of the sword, treaties far more onerous and humiliating than those imposed on them by his predecessor, and which had been characterized by him in terms which, if true, would have justified any degree of resistance on the part of the Ameers.

A few words will dispose of the case prior to the arrival in India of Lord Ellenborough, with whose proceedings we have alone to do.

The views entertained by the previous government in reference to Affghanistan, rendered, or were considered by them to render it necessary that certain engagements should be entered into with the Ameers of Scinde. The conduct of these arrangements was entrusted to Colonel Pottinger, a name *prima facie* vouching for the integrity of purpose, as it undoubtedly did for the diplomatic skill which would in his hands characterize the negotiation.

The result was the ratification of a treaty in 1838 between the British Government and the principal Ameers, offensive and defensive, by which their territories were placed under British protection; their independence and absolute authority in their own dominions acknowledged; and themselves bound to contribute towards the cost of maintaining a British Subsidiary Force in their territories. A British Resident was to be appointed; negotiations with foreign states, unless with the sanction of the Indian government, were prohibited, and an auxiliary force was to be provided, when required for defence, besides other minor stipulations – the whole being declared binding on all succeeding Governors-General of India, and upon the Ameers and their heirs for ever.

We have seen the terms of generous indignation in which General Napier has characterized the negotiations leading to this treaty. We are not its defenders: it may or it may not have been a necessary preliminary to the contemplated operations in Affghanistan, and an integral part of the policy in which they originated. We are not the defenders of that policy, as we have already shown: both are questions which, whatever reference they may, have to the general subject with which the Affghanistan and Scindian policy of Lord Auckland's government is mixed up, have no bearing on the present discussion as raised by General Napier, namely, whether Lord Auckland's government, or Lord Ellenborough's, is answerable for the subsequent destruction of the Ameers, and the spoliation of their country.

To this point must the gallant General be kept – no withdrawal no evasion. It is his position: to confute it is our object.

To the careful and laborious reader who will take the trouble to sift the published parliamentary papers within every one's reach, it is only necessary to point out that their perusal will amply repay the labour, and afford a mass of conclusive and unanswerable evidence of the motives and objects by which Lord Ellenborough was guided, and of the spirit which actuated the gallant Commander under his orders, whose injudicious relative is so eager that he should be considered as a *particeps criminis*, and share the odium with his noble master.

To the general reader, the recent admirable and well reasoned pamphlet², to which allusion has before been made, will afford a concise epitome of the official papers in question; and the quotations and extracts so appositely introduced from documents speaking the sentiments of both Lord Ellenborough and Sir C. Napier, will to any reasoning mind offer abundant and indisputable evidence of the grasping spirit of acquisition and aggression in which the conquest of Scinde had its origin.

It would be impertinent and presuming to attempt to reiterate the well established proofs adduced in the work in question, and moreover foreign to our plan, as it is with the statements of General Napier that we have to deal, and with the facts as they appear, or are made to appear, in his supposed vindication of other parties.

The advent to power of Lord Ellenborough in 1842 is thus characteristically described by General Napier, and is here transcribed as a fair illustration of a style so admirably calculated to startle by its assumed enthusiasm and to take the careless reader by storm, from the species of slap-clash assertion in which the author deals so largely. It will be seen that the real motives of the respective governments of both Lord Auckland and Lord Ellenborough are at once laid bare with a degree of impartiality which cannot fail to carry conviction: –

Lord Ellenborough saw clearly and struck boldly. But how widely different was his mode from that of Lord Auckland! As widely different as their achievements. Look at Scinde! There the one invariably covered rapacity with professions of friendship, a velvet glove on an iron hand. With Lord Ellenborough the tongue spake no deceit and the hand was bared at once in all its sinewy strength, a warning to keep men from provoking its deadly stroke. Let the world compare Colonel Pottinger's instructions from Lord Auckland with the following from Lord Ellenborough to Major Outram; remembering always that the former had no international right of meddling with the Ameers, whereas the latter stood on treaties acknowledged and acted on for three years: that the first was instigated

² "India and Lord Ellenborough."

by rapacity ministering to an insane aggressive policy; the second stimulated by the lofty ambition of saving India from ruin.

Notwithstanding the deep sense entertained by Lord Ellenborough of the iniquity of the conduct of the previous government towards the Ameers, it will be seen that the line of policy adopted towards them from the first was to assume their guilt in a manner most unjustifiable and uncalled-for. A striking illustration of this fact is to be found in the letter to Colonel Outram referred to in the preceding extract, in which Lord Ellenborough says, that he is led to think Colonel Outram may have seen reason to doubt the fidelity of one or more of the Ameers of Scinde, and forwards letters addressed to each of them couched in the most threatening and intimidating language, warning them of the fatal consequences attending the contingent, and as yet unknown, acts of treachery so hypothetically alluded to above.

The communication in question is termed by Lord Ellenborough's counsel a "frank, resolute declaration, which was the guide of his conduct in commencing the Scindian war." We doubt much whether it will be generally considered such as became the Governor-General to address to parties having, as he professed to think, just ground of complaint against the British government, — who had committed as yet no ostensible act calling for interference on our part, — and whose conjectural offence consisted in a probable or possible want of fidelity to treaties deemed by his Lordship to have been unjustifiable; and which are described by General Napier as in the highest degree "immoral," and as an impudent attempt to steal away their country.

It will be observed, and it is a point well worthy of remark, that the grounds on which Lord Ellenborough was "led to think" that Colonel Outram might see reason to doubt one or more of the Ameers, do not transpire. If his Lordship had any real or valid ground for his suspicions, why such circumlocution? — if he had not, and was only endeavoring to pave the way for the suspicions which he was desirous of entertaining of the fidelity of the Ameers, what language can adequately characterize such an unstatesmanlike and disingenuous mode of proceeding?

This view of the case is not a little strengthened by the fact that Colonel Outram, the political agent, withheld the warning letters to the Ameers. Had there been any very strong grounds for suspecting them, there can be no doubt that this intelligent officer would not have taken such a step; and yet the suspicion that from the very first his Lordship had conceived the intention of drawing the sword on Scinde, and of carrying out the views he subsequently realized, forces itself at every page upon the mind of the reader of the documents relied on for his justification.

Unfortunately, the real grievances and just causes for discontent possessed by the Ameers rendered it but too likely that dissatisfaction, and even disaffection, would spring up amongst them; and strong grounds were subsequently found to exist for accusing them of infractions of the articles of the treaties entered into by Lord Auckland, and even of hostile intentions in reference to the British authority.

Let us, however, hear the terms in which General Napier speaks of these symptoms of disaffection on their part: —

Though the confederacy and its menacing was only an ebullition, it was only one of many springing from a fixed resolution to throw off the yoke of Lord Auckland — and such ebullitions became more frequent and more violent as the state of affairs in Affghanistan or other places became more or less favorable for the British. *Can any man blame the Ameers justly for this resolution, having retrospect to the aggressive, unfair policy which imposed the treaties? “Assuredly not “*

Strange language this, for the intrepid defender, *per fas aut nefas*, of the men by whom these very Ameers have been ignominiously driven from their possessions, and sacrificed on the pretext of punishing them for their nonadherence to these nefarious treaties.

But the General, unfortunately for his own consistency, is on the horns of a dilemma.

He has two points to establish, — the iniquity of Lord Auckland’s government, and the integrity of Lord Ellenborough’s.

If he were to deny the justice of the Ameers’ complaints, and consider that they were fairly bound to maintain the treaties entered into with Lord Auckland, he would be doing away with their alleged grievance, which is such a godsend as a handle for vituperating his Lordship ; while, if he admits the grounds of their dissatisfaction, and considers that the treatment they had received affords a palliation for their offence, he is taking the ground from under Lord Ellenborough’s feet, and ipso facto condemning the policy which could visit with such signal vengeance political offences in defence of which such extenuating circumstances can be stated. Fortunately for our side of the question, he has chosen the latter alternative, and no more striking proof of the weakness of the cause can be given than such a fact.

Lord Ellenborough found that Colonel Outram’s views in reference to Scinde were of a less warlike character than was required — that that gallant and distinguished functionary was not made of very malleable material, and that it would be impossible for him to prosecute any line of policy in opposition to the

feelings and opinions of a gentleman whose long and intimate association with the country so well qualified him as an arbiter in a case in which his Lordship knew nothing. He therefore dismissed him from the post he had filled with so much credit to himself, of Political Agent. He had offended Lord Ellenborough, says the historian, by pertinaciously urging upon him, contrary to prudence and reason, his own views and opinions; it was offensive, and he was dismissed. Sir Charles Napier, a better man for war or policy, and of a surer judgment in what constitutes greatness, was then desired to take the entire charge of Scinde and its affairs.

Of the above statement, as far as regards Colonel Outram, there may be some difference of opinion; but of the truth and good taste of the disinterested testimony borne to the merits of the "Admirable Crichton" under whose talented auspices the Ameers have been so fortunate as to be sacrificed, there cannot be two opinions.

We are told that Lord Ellenborough threw upon Sir Charles Napier the moral responsibility of any action to which he might be provoked by his report; and, with a degree of unction and solemnity which would be most impressive were it not caricature, we are then informed of the awful charge upon the conscience of Sir Charles from his confiding superior. It is matter of very great satisfaction to find that Sir Charles Napier is aware of the responsibility which attaches to him as the adviser of Lord Ellenborough in these grave matters, as it no doubt must be to Lord Ellenborough to find any individual desirous of sharing the discredit so generally attaching to him for the proceedings in question.

The course of events is soon traced from the period of the dismissal of Colonel Outram and the entrance of Sir Charles Napier upon his united duties as Military Commander and Political Agent, for which latter avocations his fitness may fairly be considered as somewhat doubtful, when General Napier is (no doubt inadvertently) betrayed into the admission that he knew nothing of former treaties, – or consequently of the state of existing political relations in the country over which he was called upon to exercise the entire political and military authority. He was, however, known to be a brave and gallant soldier, ever ready for the field – qualities at such a juncture much more acceptable than the higher order of talent and greater discretion of his tried and distinguished predecessor.

It was once said by General Paoli, the great Corsican general, in reference to the talents of Bonaparte, whose god-father he was, that a very little common sense and a great deal of rashness were all that were required to make a successful general. The truth of the axiom is strikingly exemplified in the career of Sir Charles Napier in Scinde, and no doubt was fully appreciated by Lord Ellenborough in selecting him as the promoter of his views.

Sir Charles immediately proceeded to record and address to the Governor-General a long and elaborate statement of his peculiar views in reference to Scinde and the position of affairs in that country.

That the spirit of this document was in every way calculated to promote the feeling of dissatisfaction felt or professed at head-quarters towards the Ameers, may be fairly asserted. It is a document which will be found in the parliamentary papers; but to those who may be unable to see it, it may perhaps suffice, as corroborative testimony as to the tendency of all Sir Charles Napier's proceedings, to quote the words of his brother, who admits, with a degree of naïveté little to be expected from such a quarter, that for a man seeking occasion to war, it furnished ample undeniable justification for drawing the sword. The above is only one of many instances in which the cloven foot is shown, and in which Sir Charles Napier, as if to prove that there is more of the straightforward soldier about him, than of the wily diplomatist, — albeit he was entrusted with high political functions, — is at no pains to conceal the anxiety felt to establish a *casus belli* with the Ameers.

In one letter he states:- It is not for me to consider how we came to occupy Scinde. In another, in reference to the existing state of affairs, he says, such a state of political relations cannot last; the more powerful government will, at no distant period, swallow up the weaker. Would it not be better to come to the result at once? (!) I think it would be better if it can be done honestly. *Sed qucere de hoc*. Again he declares that we only want a pretext to coerce the Ameers.

Surely these sentiments coming from so high an authority, of whom it is said by General Napier, that, "he now became arbiter of peace" and war, and in his hands were life and death "for thousands," need no comment. It is impossible to read them, corroborative as they are of the warlike spirit indicated by the minacious aspect assumed towards the Ameers from the first, without feeling a moral conviction that the desire to pick a quarrel was the *primum mobile* of the whole policy of Lord Ellenborough and Sir Charles Napier.

We are forcibly reminded of the scene in Sheridan's play of "The Rivals" where Sir Lucius O' Trigger, having no legitimate or creditable excuse for a breach of the peace, and like Lord Ellenborough seeking occasion for war, and being, moreover, like Sir Charles Napier, of opinion, that a "fair pretext" was alone required, endeavors to obtain his object in the following ingenious mode : —

Sir Lucius.—With regard to that matter, Captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Capt. Absolute.— Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle disputant; because, Sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir L.— That's no reason; for give me leave to tell you that a man may think an untruth as well as speak one.

Capt. A.— Very true, Sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

Sir L.— Then, Sir, you differ in opinion with me, which comes to the same thing.

We fear that not all the denunciations thundered at the heads of those who presume to question the principle or policy which actuated Sir Charles Napier or the distinguished Nobleman who saved a people from a miserable state of slavery, will protect the government of India from the charge of having sought the excuse for coercing the Ameers, rather than the opportunity of adjusting matters on terms less exacting to them, and of having seized with alacrity the first plausible occasion of visiting them with extreme punishment.

The following extracts of two letters from Major Outram to Sir Charles Napier, which appear in the printed parliamentary papers, are here introduced, as they are most important in establishing our position ; the first as showing the feelings of the Scindians generally towards those who were evincing such a disinterested desire to deliver them from "slavery," and also as indicating the friendly conduct of the Ameers; and the latter as evidencing the feelings with which Major Outram viewed the onward hostile movements of Sir Charles Napier, which we are told were only the result of necessity and a due regard for our own safety.

Extract of a letter from Major Outram to Sir Charles Napier, dated February 13th, 1843: —

"From what I saw yesterday of the spirit of the people, it appears to me that the Ameers are now execrated for their dastardly submission (as they consider it) to what they style robbery. For the first time since I came to Scinde in an official capacity, I was received last night by a dense crowd (on emerging from the fort after leaving the Durbar); shouts expressive of detestation of the British, and a particular cry in which the whole populace joined as in chorus, the meaning of which I could not make out at the time, but which I have since ascertained was an appeal to their saint against the Feringhees. Although the Durbars and streets of the fort were densely crowded, the Ameers' officers kept such a vigilant look out, that no evidence of the popular feeling was permitted; but in passing through the city it could not be restrained; and had we not been guarded by a numerous body of horse, headed by some of the most influential Belooch chiefs, I dare say the mob would have proceeded to violence: as it was, a stone was thrown which struck Wells; but being quite dark in the shade of the gateway, he could not see by whom:

this I was not aware of till we got home, and I have taken no notice of it to the Durbar, as it is quite evident the Government did its utmost to protect us, as was shown by the escort refusing to go back after clearing the city, where heretofore I had always dismissed it, saying that they had strict orders to accompany us the whole way. In fact the Ameers had reason to fear that their Beloochees might attempt mischief, having been engaged the whole day in paying off and dismissing those who had flocked to the city since the night before last, on hearing the continued advance of your troops."

Extract of a letter from the same, dated February 12th, 1843: –

"These fools are in the utmost alarm, in consequence of the continued progress of your troops towards Hydrabad notwithstanding their acceptance of the treaty, which they hoped would have caused you to stop. If you come beyond Halla (if so far) I fear they will be impelled by their fears to assemble their rabble with a view to defend themselves and their families, in the idea that we are determined to destroy them notwithstanding their submission. I do hope, therefore, that you may not consider it necessary to bring the troops any further in this direction, for I fear it may drive the Ameers to act contrary to your orders to disperse their troops (or rather not to assemble them, for they were all dispersed yesterday), and thus compel us to quarrel with them."

The rest is well known. Treaties of the harshest and exacting character, far exceeding in stringency any previous treaty, and entailing the cession of much territory, were forced upon them at the point of the sword. The battles of Meanee and Hydrabad ensued; and however glorious those events may have been as military achievements, the policy of which they were the result will, in spite of all its zealous but ill-judged defenders, long be viewed as in the highest degree derogatory, not to say as disastrous, to the character of our eastern government.

We have now nearly completed our task; but there are still some points in reference to which a few observations appear to be called for.

It is a matter of grave and painful reflection that General Napier should deliberately send forth to the world, with the sanction of his high name and authority, statements which he is not in a position either to prove or to justify.

Far be it from our intention to accuse him of willful and deliberate misrepresentation for the purpose of strengthening his own case and weakening that of those on whom he is animadverting ; but while acquitting him of all intention of giving currency to charges the most atrocious, and misstatements the most incredible, we cannot hold him innocent of most reprehensible indiscretion (to use the mildest term) – indiscretion which might not unreasonably entail upon him consequences little short of what is due to the inventors of the calumnies.

We know not whether General Napier has any imaginary injury to himself on the part of the Court of Directors to avenge, or whether it is merely that, like a good advocate, he has placed himself in the position of his client, and is writing under the influence of the disappointed ambition, baffled vanity, and ill-suppressed mortification, under which Lord Ellenborough suffers in consequence of the manly and independent act of the Court, by which his Lordship's career of mischief has been summarily and finally checked.

It is but too evident, however, that he has lent a willing ear to the foulest calumnies against the Court of Directors at home, and the members of their Civil Service in India, and has placed himself, by his eagerness in retailing and circulating those calumnies, in a most unenviable position; for if he have proof of their correctness, he owed it to himself and to the public, to whose credulity he is appealing, to prove by facts and data that he is not simply throwing such accusations into the scale as idle ballast and make-weights to strengthen his argument; and if he have no proof, nor any corroborative testimony to support his assertions, beyond the idle gossip of a private letter, great indeed is his responsibility, and proportionate should be the measure of public reprobation which conduct so reprehensible would entail. Lord Ellenborough found, says General Napier, the finances embarrassed, the civil and political service infested with men greedy of gain, gorged with insolence, disdainful of work, and intimately connected with the infamous press of India, which they supplied with official secrets, receiving in return shameful and shameless support; for, thus combining, they thought to control the Governor-General, and turn the resources of the state to their sordid profit.

Is it conceivable that such a statement as the foregoing should be risked, recklessly imputing to a Service of talented, honorable, and high minded gentlemen, every species of atrocious turpitude, speculation, breach of official confidence, and combination for the worst and most sordid purposes against the government to which they have sworn fidelity? – and that it should be risked too, without one title of evidence to support it, with a degree of arrogance ill becoming one who is relying on the veracity of others, and is himself, personally, wholly unacquainted with the nature, the character, or the constitution of the Service which he thus assists in vilifying as a class?

It cannot surely be the General's intention to rely for his justification on the private letter from Sir Charles Napier, which is found in the Appendix to the book, and in which these unjustifiable charges are made!

It is deeply to be regretted that Sir Charles Napier should have allowed his mind to receive impressions so derogatory to the character of a highly distinguished branch of the Company's Service; it is still more to be regretted that he should

have committed the indiscretion of putting on record such observations as the following : –

“I see that all sorts of attacks are made upon Lord Ellenborough’s policy in England, as well as here. As regards India, the cause is this. Lord Ellenborough has put an end to a wasteful expenditure of the public money by certain civil servants of the state, who were rioting in the plunder of the Treasury; at least such is the general opinion. These men are all intimate with the editors of newspapers, and many of them engaged with them; they therefore fill the columns of the newspapers with every sort of gross abuse of Lord Ellenborough’s proceedings. But men begin to see through this, and justly to estimate Lord Ellenborough’s excellent government, in despite of these jackalls driven by him from their prey.”

And these are the opinions hazarded by an officer of rank, holding a high and important command under the East India Company, in reference to the highest and most responsible branch of the public service, with whose merits, distinguished services and high character as a class, since the days of Clive and Warren Hastings, he could not fail to be well acquainted. That a Service the very constitution of which may emphatically be said to be a guarantee for its integrity, – a Service which has been the nursery of nearly all the distinguished public servants through whose statesmanship and diplomatic talents India has been raised, to its present pinnacle of civilization and prosperity, – a Service boasting among its brightest ornaments the names of Mountstuart Elphinstone, Bayly, Metcalfe, Edmonstone, Jenkins, Tucker and Prinsep, and others innumerable, whose brilliant and useful public services have reflected honour alike on themselves and their country – that such a Service should find the breath of calumny contaminating its fair fame in the shape of accusations of venality and dishonesty so general as to preclude refutation, is indeed lamentable. But while the Civil Service of India, in its integrity, may defy the “Whisper of a Faction” and rise superior to all the calumnies which malignity, envy, or ignorance may invent or circulate, it surely cannot be allowed that charges so grave should be put forth by one whose position is calculated to give them a fictitious stamp, or that such a stigma should attach to any class of honorable men.

It is the duty of General Napier to come forward boldly with his proof, if he have any, and not to rely on the vagueness of his accusations for his immunity. If he have no proof to offer but the idle statements of another, possibly hazarded in ill-judged reliance on his discretion, he will have much public reprobation to bear for having so lightly ventured assertions so derogatory to an honorable and distinguished body of public servants.

The present is a further striking instance how much cause Sir Charles Napier, like the ex-Governor General, has to regret that the vindication of his character has devolved on one whose intemperate zeal is so calculated to produce the very opposite effect from the one desired. If the grave and sweeping charges against the Civil Service were conveyed under the supposed security of a private letter, and were merely the retail gossip of idle rumors, the offspring of anonymous malevolence (a surmise borne out by the qualifying expression “ at least so is the general opinion, “ and by the slender claims of the extract to literary merit), what must be his feelings in seeing such incidental expressions exposed to the glare of public criticism, and to the universal ban of public condemnation! But, on the other hand, if, indeed, the publication of these slanders is hazarded with his authority and concurrence, without one iota of proof or testimony of any sort to justify the imputations they convey, Sir Charles Napier will find that not even the daring advocacy of his gallant brother will hold him acquitted in the eyes of the world of an act of the most flagrant impropriety – perfectly unjustifiable in reference to those whom he attacks, – and of so glaring a degree of indiscretion, as regards himself, as fully to justify the opinion entertained by many, that his selection by Lord Ellenborough for the duties entrusted to him was one of the many illustrations of that Nobleman’s want of judgment.

The indiscriminate manner in which every one entertaining views or opinions in opposition to Lord Ellenborough’s policy is vituperated in the pages of the work under review, renders the idea of noticing such attacks in detail quite absurd. It is, however, impossible to refrain from drawing attention to one instance, evidencing such bad taste on the part of the author, as to merit the fullest exposure. We refer to the terms in which the long and useful career of Mr. Ross Bell, the Political Agent in Scinde, is described.

About the middle of 1841, died Mr. Ross Bell. He had been Political Agent governing Upper Scinde, and Beloochistan, with unbounded power, but under his sway many insurrections had occurred amongst the tribes of Booghtees and Murrees, occasioned, it is said, by his grinding oppression accompanied with acts of particular and of general treachery, followed by military execution, bloody and desolating, involving whole districts in ruin. He was in constant dispute with the military officers, and he has been described as a man of vigorous talent, resolute, unhesitating, devoid of public morality, unscrupulous, and vindictive; of domineering pride, and such luxurious pomp, that 700 camels, taken from the public service, were required to carry his personal baggage.

That his conduct was neither wise nor just seems a correct inference from the deplorable results of his administration; but Lord Auckland approved of it, and regretted his loss. The story of the camels is certainly an exaggerated statement,

and the general charges have been principally promulgated by the *Bombay Times*, whose word for praise or blame is generally false, and always despicable.

It is worthy of remark that the above assertion regarding the camels is fully explained in a statement which is appended from an officer who was Mr. Ross Bell's assistant, from which it appears that the number specified was neither unusual nor unnecessary under the circumstances in which they were employed; but while the accusation is ostentatiously put forward in the text the *refutation* lies *perdu* in the Appendix!

As regards the remaining serious, and it is to be hoped, libelous charges against the memory of a distinguished public servant who died in the performance of the arduous duties of an important and responsible office, we can only regret that even the grave is not secure from the animosity of the gallant historian, and that he should have lent his name to the promulgation and circulation of statements of the sort, although professing to be alive to the fact that they are derived from a source characterized by himself as generally false, and always despicable.

The living objects of his personalities may be left to their own resources for vindicating their honour or veracity when impugned.

The names of Pottinger and Outram need no champions, and these gallant officers may smile at such impotent attempts to disparage them in public estimation.

As regards the Press of India, the abuse of which offers so fine a field for the display of General Napier's peculiar talent, it may, for aught we know, be all that is profligate, venal, and corrupt; but the ferocity of the excitable General's tirades against newspaper editors and contributors leads to the suspicion that, if he have no old score on his own account to pay off, he is showing his sense of favors conferred on his family by the Indian press. He may however safely be left in their hands: they are well able to defend themselves; and though we doubt the existence of any other man, so powerful in personalities – so eloquent in anathemas – so happy in the enviable facility of stringing together, with matchless fluency and unparalleled intemperance, every species of aggravating and insulting observation – we are still led to believe that the account between the historian and the newspapers will eventually be balanced.

We now take our leave of Major-General Napier and his "History of the Conquest of Scinde."

As regards the British public, we believe that the historian will find that not even the name of Napier will be able to invest with an unmerited popularity, a work conceived in so objectionable a spirit, and executed in so reprehensible a tone. He

should bear in mind that when a case is weak, the judicious advocate will be sparing of his personalities, and guarded in his assertions, lest by indulging in the former, he should excite mistrust of the soundness of the cause which they are intended to serve, and lest by indiscretion in the latter, he should provoke investigation into the authenticity of his facts.

By pouring the “vials of his wrath” on the devoted heads of all those of whose policy he disapproves, and by exhausting in reference to them his vocabulary of vituperation, he has overlooked their claims to the courtesy and consideration which, among gentlemen, are generally conceded to a political adversary who is not a personal enemy ; and we beg him to believe that by the intemperate and undignified course which he has followed, and the over zeal he has displayed, he has damaged the cause of his principal – weakened the claims of his gallant and distinguished brother to the gratitude and admiration of his country and justified his being himself ranked among those bigoted historians who give to their facts the colour of their prejudices, and who have neither eyes to discern, nor candor to acknowledge any merit in a political opponent.

London, January, 1845.

THE END.