HISTORY

OF

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN.

FROM

THE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS AND JOURNALS
OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY OFFICERS EMPLOYED IN AFGHANISTAN
THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF BRITISH CONNEXION
WITH THAT COUNTRY.

BY JOHN WILLIAM KAYE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ERRATA IN VOL. II.

Page 6, note, for "the Envoy's nephew," read "the Envoy's *cousin*."

„ 574, line 19, for "Lockyer and his Dragoons," read "*Lockwood* and his Dragoons."

„ 579, line 5, *dele* "for a moment."

„ 592, line 12, for on "the 20th of July," read "on the 26th of July."

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN.

BOOK V.

[1841—1842.]

CHAPTER I.

[November—1841.]

The Outbreak at Caubul—Approaching Departure of the Envoy—Immediate Causes of the Rebellion—Death of Sir Alexander Burnes—His Character—Spread of the Insurrection—Indecision of the British Authorities.

BRIGHTLY and cheerfully the month of November dawned upon the retiring envoy and his successor. Macnaghten was about to lay down the reins of office, and turn his face, in a day or two, towards Bombay. Burnes, rejoicing in the thought of being "supreme at last," was stretching out his hand to receive the prize he had so long coveted.* The one was as eager to depart as the other to see the departure of his chief; and both

* Burnes, however, though he spoke and wrote confidently of his nomination—not with the title of Envoy and Minister, but that of Resident—had not received any official announcement of his appointment. On the 1st of November, Macnaghten wrote to Major Rawlinson at Candahar: "I have not as yet received a line from Lord Auckland, and fear that my letters have fallen into the hands of the Philistines. We are (much to Sir Alexander's chagrin) still in utter ignorance of the question of the succession.—[*MS. Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*]

were profoundly impressed with the conviction that the great administrative change was about to be effected under an unclouded sky.*

There were others, however, who viewed with different eyes the portents that were gathering around them—others who warned the Envoy and Burnes of the dangers of such a confederacy as had been formed against the British in Afghanistan. Among these was Mohun Lal. Before the arrival of Captain Macgregor from the Zoormut country, he had been deputed to accompany General Sales's camp, and on his return to Caubul, he had laid the result of his observations, whilst on that expedition, before Sir Alexander Burnes. Entering fully upon the nature and extent of the confederacy, the Moonshee emphatically declared his opinion that it would be dangerous to disregard such threatening indications of a coming storm, and that if the conspiracy were not crushed in its infancy, it would become too strong to be easily suppressed. Burnes replied that the day had not arrived for his interference—that he could not meddle with the arrangements of the envoy; but that Macnaghten would shortly turn his back upon Caubul, and that measures should then be taken to conciliate the Ghilzyes and Kohistanees, by raising their allowances again to the point from which they had been

* In the letter above quoted (November 1, 1841), Macnaghten says: "Macgregor does not know whether or not the chiefs are at the bottom of the business. He suspects they are, but I think not, and I trust that in a day or two all will be right again." And in another letter addressed, on the same day, to Captain Macgregor himself, he says, "I trust that the business last reported to you was the expiring effort of the rebels, and that if the chiefs are really innocent, the party will have dispersed, and thannahs have been re-established." He, however, adds in the former letter: "But these are ticklish times, and the aspect of affairs in Tugao and Nijrao is threatening. . . . . I don't know when I can get away from Caubul, for I am very unwilling to leave affairs in an unsettled state."—[*MS. Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*] He had intended, as he wrote on the 27th of the preceding month, to leave Caubul on the 1st of November; but to retain charge of his office until he reached Ferozepore.—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

reduced. On the 1st of November, Mohun Lal again pressed the subject of the hostile confederacy upon the expectant minister. Burnes stood up from his chair, and said, with a sigh, that the time had come for the British to leave the country;* but, on the same evening, he congratulated Sir William Macnaghten on his approaching departure at a period of such profound tranquillity.†

On that very evening the hostile chiefs met and determined, in conclave, upon the measures to be taken for the overthrow of the British power in Afghanistan. To rouse the people into action by a skilful use of the king's name, seemed to be the safest course of procedure. But doubts arose as to whether it were wiser to enlist the loyal sympathies of his subjects, or to excite their indig-

* I must give Mohun Lal's own words, in spite of their eccentric phraseology: "On the 1st of November," he writes, "I saw Sir Alexander Burnes, and told him that the confederacy has been grown very high, and we should fear the consequence. He stood up from his chair, sighed, and said he knows nothing but the time has arrived that we should leave this country."—[*Letter of Mohun Lal to J. R. Colvin, Esq., January* 9, 1842: *MS. Records.*] In a letter to another correspondent, Mohun Lal makes a similar statement; and adds that, upon the same night, Taj Mahomed called upon Burnes, to no purpose, with a like warning: "On the 1st of November I saw him at evening, and informed him, according to the conversation of Mahomed Meerza Khan, our great enemy, that the chiefs are contriving plans to stand against us, and therefore it will not be safe to remain without a sufficient guard in the city. He replied, that if he were to ask the Envoy to send him a strong guard, it will show that he was fearing; and at the same (time) he made an astonishing speech, by saying that the time is not far when we must leave this country. Taj Mahomed, son of Gholam Mahomed Khan, the Douranee chief, came at night to him, and informed what the chiefs intended to do, but he turned him out under the pretended aspect that we do not care for such things. Our old friend, Naib Sheriff, came and asked him to allow his son, with 100 men, to remain day and night in his place till the Ghilzye affair is settled—but he did not agree."—[*Letter of Mohun Lal to Dr. James Burnes: MS. Correspondence.*]

† This is stated on the authority of Sir William Macnaghten: "I may be considered culpable," he said, in an unfinished memorandum, found after his death, "for not having foreseen the coming storm; to this I can only reply that others, who had much better opportunities of watching the feelings of the people, had no suspicion of what was coming. The late Sir A. Burnes was with me the evening before the insurrection occurred, and it is a singular fact that he should have congratulated me on my approaching departure at a season of such profound tranquillity." — [*Unpublished Papers of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*]

nation against him. It might be announced, on the one hand, that the King had given orders for the destruction of the infidels; or a report might be spread that he had declared his intention of seizing the principal chiefs, and sending them prisoners to London.* It would seem that the rebels did both. Abdoollah Khan, Achekzye, declared the latter, in a letter to the principal Sirdars, and the former was accomplished by forging the King's seal to a document, ordering the destruction of the Feringhees, or rather, forging the document to the seal.† Men of different tribes and conflicting interests had made common cause against the Feringhees. Barukzye, Populzye, Achekzye, and Ghilzye chiefs were all banded together. Why they should have fixed upon that particular 2nd of November for the first open demonstration at Caubul it is not easy to conjecture. To have waited a few days would have been to have waited for the departure of the Envoy, of the General, and of a considerable body of troops from Afghanistan.‡ The suppo-

* "The immediate cause of the outbreak," wrote Macnaghten, in the memorandum quoted in the preceding note, "was a seditious letter from Abdoollah Khan, Achekzye, to several chiefs of the greatest influence in Caubul, assuring them that it was the intention of his Majesty to seize and send them to London. The plot was in the first instance confined to but a few individuals; but success having attended the first efforts of the conspirators, the infection rapidly spread over all parts of the country."

† "The principal rebels," wrote Sir William Macnaghten, in a letter to Lord Auckland, of which only a fragment has been recovered, "met, on the night before, and [relying] on the inflammable disposition of the people of Caubul, they first gave out that it was the order of his Majesty to put all infidels to death, and this, of course, gained them a great accession of strength. But his Majesty has behaved throughout with the most marked fidelity, judgment, and prudence. By forged orders from him for our destruction, by the well-known process of washing out the contents of a genuinely sealed paper, and substituting their own wicked inventions. * * * *" (*Sentence left imperfect.*)—[*Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*]

‡ "It is difficult to account," writes Brigadier Shelton, "for their having broken out so soon, knowing that the Envoy, General, and all the troops, except my brigade, were to march in three or four days."—[*MS. Records.*] Macnaghten says: "Those who were foremost in the rebellion were, up to a day or two before, the loudest in their professions of friendship, and most constant in their visits at my house. It will be seen from the opinions I have recorded from

sition, indeed, is, that however widely spread the disaffection, and however extensive the confederacy, the first outbreak was not the result of any general organisation, but was the movement only of a section of the national party. It was too insignificant in itself, and there was too little evidence of design in it, to have sprung out of any matured plan of action on the part of a powerful confederacy. What that confederacy was may be gathered from Macnaghten's admission, that when, early in December, he met the Afghan leaders at a conference, he saw assembled before him the heads of nearly all the chief tribes in the country.*

The meeting on the night of the 1st of November was held at the house of Sydat Khan, Alekozye. Foremost among the chiefs there assembled was Abdoollah Khan. By nature proud, cruel, and vindictive, this man was smarting under a sense of injuries inflicted upon him by the restored Suddozye Government, and of insults received from one of Shah Soojah's British allies. On the restoration of the King, Abdoollah Khan had been dispossessed of the chiefship of his tribe, and had ever since been retained about the Court, rather as a hostage than as a recognised officer of the government. Ever ready to promote disaffection and encourage revolt, he had seen with delight the rising of the Ghilzyes, and during their occupation of the passes had been eagerly intriguing with the chiefs. Aware of Abdoollah Khan's designs, Burnes sent him an angry message—called him

the earliest period of my arrival in this country, that I considered a rebellion a probable event at any time, and that much disaffection prevailed among the troops; but I had no more reason to expect the outbreak at the particular period of its occurrence than at any other."

* At the Envoy's express requisition all the principal Douranee chiefs had been summoned by the Shah to Caubul, the object being to destroy their power by removing them from all immediate connexion with their tribes. At Candahar they could at any time create disturbance. At Caubul it was thought they would be harmless.

a dog—and threatened to recommend Shah Soojah to deprive the rebel of his ears. When the chiefs met together on the night of the 1st of November, this indignity was rankling in the breast of the Khan. The immediate course to be pursued came under discussion, and he at once proposed that the first overt act of violence on the morrow should be an attack on the house of the man who had so insulted him. The proposal was accepted by the assembled chiefs; but so little did they anticipate more than a burst of success at the outset, that not one of them ventured personally to take part in a movement which they believed would be promptly avenged.

Day had scarcely dawned on the 2nd of November, when a rumour reached the cantonments, and was at once conveyed to the Mission-house, that there was a commotion in the city.* Macnaghten heard the intelligence with composure. There was nothing in it, he thought, to startle or to dismay a man with sound nerves and a clear understanding. Presently a note was brought him from Burnes. It stated that there was great excitement in the city, especially in the neighbourhood of his residence; but it spoke slightingly of the disturbance, and said that it would speedily be suppressed. Assistance, however, was sought. Burnes wanted military support; and Macnaghten, still little alarmed by the tidings that had reached him, hurried to the quarters of the General. It was thought to be only a slight commotion. And so it was—at the outset. But before any assistance was sent

* John Conolly, Macnaghten's ~~nephew~~ Cousin, who was to have accompanied him to Bombay, was giving directions about the packing of some of the Envoy's chattels, when an Afghan rushed wildly in, and announced that there was an insurrection in the city. Conolly went out immediately, heard the firing in the city, and hastened to convey the intelligence to Macnaghten. He afterwards accompanied the Envoy to General Elphinstone's quarters.—[*Statement of Emaum-oollah-Khan—a chuprassie in the service of Lieutenant John Conolly: MS. Records.*]

to Burnes, he had been cut to pieces by an infuriated mob.

The houses of Sir Alexander Burnes and of Captain Johnson, the paymaster of the Shah's troops, were contiguous to each other in the city. On the preceding night, Captain Johnson had slept in cantonments. The expectant Resident was at home. Beneath his roof was his brother, Lieutenant Charles Burnes; and Lieutenant William Broadfoot, an officer of rare merit, who had been selected to fill the office of military secretary to the new minister, and had just come in from Charekur to enter upon his new duties. It was now the anniversary of the day on which his brother had been slain by Dost Mahomed's troopers, in the disastrous affair of Purwundurrah; and it must have been with some melancholy recollections of the past, and some dismal forebodings of the future, that he now looked down from the upper gallery of Burnes's house, upon the angry crowd that was gathering beneath it.

Before daylight on that disastrous morning a friendly Afghan sought admittance to Burnes's house, eager to warn him of the danger with which he was encompassed. A plot had been hatched on the preceding night; and one of its first objects was said to be the assassination of the new Resident. But Burnes had nothing but incredulity to return to such friendly warnings. The man went. The insurgents were gathering. Then came Oosman Khan, the Wuzeer, crossing Burnes's threshold, with the same ominous story on his lips.* It was no longer per-

* "Before daylight a well-wisher of Burnes came to report to him that a plan had been hatched during the night, which had for its chief object his murder. Unfortunately, Sir Alexander could not be convinced that the man was telling the truth, and paid no heed to what he said. Shortly after, the Wuzeer, Oosman Khan, arrived (by this time the mob was assembling). The Wuzeer urged him to leave his house, and proceed to cantonments. Sir Alexander scorned the idea of

mitted to the English officer to wrap himself up in an impenetrable cloak of scepticism. Already was there a stir in the streets. Already was an excited populace assembling beneath his windows. Earnestly the Afghan minister spoke of the danger, and implored Burnes to leave his house—to accompany him to the Balla Hissar, or to seek safety in cantonments. The Englishman, deaf to these appeals, confident that he could quell the tumult,

quitting his house, as he had every hope of quelling the disturbance; and let the worst come to the worst he felt too well assured that neither the Envoy nor General would permit him to be sacrificed whilst in the performance of his public duty, so long as there were 6000 men within two miles of him."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal: MS. Records.*] "The King's minister went to Burnes early in the morning of the 2nd, and warned him of what was about to happen—of the danger of remaining in his house—and requested him to accompany him to the Balla Hissar; but he was deaf to all entreaties, incredulous, and persevered in disbelief that any outbreak was intended; yet I am told he wrote into cantonments for a military force to protect him."—[*Letter of Brigadier Shelton: MS. Records.*] The native friend said by Captain Johnson to have warned Burnes early in the morning of the 2nd of November that his life was in danger, was Taj Mahomed, who, as stated in a previous note, on the authority of Mohun Lal (and the same story is told by Lieutenant Eyre and Lady Sale, in their journals), visited Burnes on the preceding night. Bowh Singh, Burnes's chuprassie, the only surviving witness of what passed in that officer's house upon the fatal morning, says that his master did not wake before the arrival of the Wuzeer, and that the man (Wullee Mahomed by name), who had called to warn Burnes of his danger, was not admitted, nor was his message ever delivered. "On the day of the murder," says this witness, "as early as three o'clock in the morning, a Cossid (Wullee Mahomed) came to me. I was on duty outside; he said, 'Go, and inform your master immediately that there is a tumult in the city, and that the merchants are removing their goods and valuables from the shops.' I knew what my master had said on the subject the day before, so I did not like awakening him, but put on my chuprass, and went to the Char Chouk. Here I met the Wuzeer, Nizam-ood-Dowlah, going towards my master's house. I immediately turned with him, and on my arrival awoke my master, who dressed quickly, and went to the Wuzeer, and talked to him some time." As this man speaks of what he saw, and what he did on the morning of the 2nd of November, I conceive that his evidence is the best that is now obtainable. He states that "Sir Alexander Burnes was duly informed by his Afghan servants, the day previous to his murder, that there was a stir in the city, and that if he remained in it his life would be in danger; they told him he had better go to the cantonments; this he declined doing, giving as his reason that the Afghans never received any injury from him, but, on the contrary, he had done much for them, and that he was quite sure they would never injure him."

and, scorning the idea of quitting his post, rejected the friendly counsel of the Wuzeer, and remained to face the fury of the mob.

But even to Alexander Burnes, incredulous of imminent danger as he was, it seemed necessary to do something. He wrote to the Envoy, calling for support. And he sent messengers to Abdoollah Khan. Two chuprassies were despatched to the Achekzye chief, assuring him that if he would restrain the populace from violence, every effort would be made to adjust the grievances complained of by the people and the chiefs. One only of the messengers returned. He brought back nothing but wounds. The message had cost the other his life.

In the mean while, from a gallery in the upper part of his house, Burnes was haranguing the mob. Beside him were his brother and his friend. The crowd before his house increased in number and in fury. Some were thirsting for blood; others were greedy only for plunder. He might as well have addressed himself to a herd of savage beasts. Angry voices were lifted up in reply, clamouring for the lives of the English officers. And too surely did they gain the object of their desires. Broadfoot, who sold his life dearly, was the first to fall. A ball struck him on the chest; and the dogs of the city devoured his remains.

It was obvious now that nothing was to be done by expostulation—nothing by forbearance. The violence of the mob was increasing. That which at first had been an insignificant crowd had now become a great multitude. The treasury of the Shah's paymaster was before them; and hundreds who had no wrongs to redress and no political animosity to vent, rushed to the spot hungering after the spoil which lay so temptingly at hand. The streets were waving with a sea of

heads; and the opposite houses were alive with people. It was no longer possible to look unappalled upon that fearful assemblage. A party of the insurgents had set fire to Burnes's stables;* had forced their way into his garden; and were calling to him to come down. His heart now sank within him. He saw clearly the danger that beset him—saw that the looked-for aid from cantonment had failed him in the hour of his need. Nothing now was left to him, but to appeal to the avarice of his assailants. He offered them large sums of money, if they would only spare his own and his brother's life. Their answer was a repetition of the summons to "come down to the garden." Charles Burnes and a party of chuprassies were, at this time, firing on the mob. A Mussulman Cashmerian, who had entered the house, swore by the Koran that if they would cease firing upon the insurgents, he would convey Burnes and his brother through the garden in safety to the Kuzzilbash Fort. Disguising himself in some articles of native attire, Burnes accompanied the man to the door. He had stepped but a few paces into the garden, when his conductor called out with a loud voice, "This is Sekunder Burnes!"† The infuriated mob fell upon him with frantic energy. A frenzied moollah dealt the first murderous blow; and in a minute the work was complete. The brothers were cut to pieces by the Afghan knives.‡ Naib Sheriff, true to the last, buried their mutilated remains.

So fell Alexander Burnes. In the vigour of his years

* Hyder Khan, who had been cutwal of the city, and had been removed through Burnes's instrumentality, is said to have brought fuel for the purpose from some contiguous *hummams* or baths.

† *Statement of Bowh Singh*, a chuprassie in Burnes's service.

‡ This is Bowh Singh's statement. He says: "His brother, Captain Burnes, went out with him, and was killed dead before Sir Alexander." Mohun Lal says that Charles Burnes was killed before his brother went down to the garden.

—in the pride of life—within a few feet of the goal which he had long held so steadily in view. It has been said that he predicted the coming storm; and by others again that he refused to see it.* He may have warned others; but he rejected all warning himself. It was only in keeping with the character of the man that he should have been subject to such fluctuations of feeling and opinion. Sometimes sanguine—sometimes desponding—sometimes confident—sometimes credulous—he gave to fleeting impressions all the importance and seeming permanency of settled convictions, and imbued surrounding objects with the colours of his own varying mind. At one time, he could discern with intuitive sagacity the hidden dangers besetting our position in Afghanistan, and illustrate his views with an impressive earnestness which caused him to be regarded by his official superior as a wildly speculative alarmist. At another, when destruction was impending over his head—when the weapon was sharpened to immolate him—he saw nothing but security and peace; and turned away from the warnings of those who would have saved him, with an incredulous smile upon his lips. This instability was a grievous fault; and grievously he answered it. But though unstable, he was not insincere. If he deceived others, he first of all deceived himself. If he gave utterance to conflicting opinions, they were all *his* opi-

* Lieutenant Mackenzie, late of the 41st Regiment, who has illustrated the melancholy history of our Caubul disasters in a poem of twelve cantos, says, in a note, "I am enabled to state positively, on the authority of a letter from Sir Alexander Burnes himself (one of the last he ever wrote, and addressed to an officer of high rank, and one of his most intimate friends) that poor Burnes had long foreseen the crisis which had arrived; for, in the letter alluded to, he states his conviction in the most solemn terms that he was a marked man and would inevitably be the first victim—but nevertheless he would never flinch from doing what he conceived to be his duty, although all his warnings had been disregarded." Yet on the day before his death, as has been shown in a preceding note, he said that he felt no apprehensions of danger, as he had always been a friend to the Afghans.

nions at the time of their birth. He was a man of an eager, impulsive temperament; the slightest vicissitudes of the political atmosphere readily affected his mercurial nature; and he did not always think before he spoke. Hence it is that such varying opinions have been attributed to him—all perhaps with equal truth. A passing cloud, or a transient gleam of sunshine, and Afghanistan was either in the throes of a deadly convulsion, or lapped in heavenly repose.

It was the hard fate of Alexander Burnes to be over-rated at the outset and under-rated at the close of his career. It may be doubted whether justice has yet been rendered him—whether, on the one hand, what was innately and intrinsically good in him has been amply recognised, and whether, on the other, the accidental circumstances of his position have been sufficiently taken into account. From the very commencement of the Afghan expedition Burnes was placed in a situation calculated neither to develop the better nor to correct the worse part of his character. In his own words, indeed, he was in "the most nondescript of situations." He had little or no power. He had no supreme and independent control of affairs; nor had he, like other political assistants, any detached employment of a subordinate character; but was an anomalous appendage to the British mission, looking out for the chance of succession to the upper seat. In such a position he felt uneasy and unsettled; he lived rather in the future than in the present; and chafed under the reflection that whilst, in all that related to the management of public affairs, he was an absolute cypher at the Afghan Court, much of the odium of unpopular acts descended upon him; and that much of the discredit of failure would attach to him if the measures, which he was in nowise permitted to shape, were not crowned

with success. There is reason to think that if fairer scope had been allowed for the display of his abilities, and a larger amount of responsibility had descended upon him, he would have shone with a brighter and a steadier light, and left behind him a more honourable name. His talents were great; his energies were great. What he lacked was stability of character. Power and responsibility would have steadied him. He would have walked with a firmer step and in a straighter course under a heavier burden of political duties. As it was, all the environments of his life at Caubul were too surely calculated to unhinge and unbalance even a more steadfast mind. It is right that all these things should be taken into account. It is right, too, that it should never be forgotten by those who would form a correct estimate of the character and career of Alexander Burnes, that both have been misrepresented in those collections of state papers, which are supposed to furnish the best materials of history, but which are often in reality only one-sided compilations of garbled documents—counterfeits which the ministerial stamp forces into currency, defrauding a present generation, and handing down to posterity a chain of dangerous lies.

Burnes and his companions fell. There was a great plunder of property; the treasury of Captain Johnson, the Shah's paymaster, was sacked;* the noise in the city was growing louder and louder, and the multitude swelling in numbers, and waxing more terrible in ex-

* "The insurgents," says Captain Johnson, "gained possession of my treasury by undermining the wall, and of my house by setting fire to the gateway. They murdered the whole of the guard (one subadar and twenty-eight sepoys, besides non-commissioned officers); all my servants (male, female, and children); plundered my treasure to the amount of one lakh and seventy thousand rupees (17,000*l.*); burnt all my office records for the past three years, which comprise unadjusted accounts to nearly one million sterling, and possessed themselves of all my private property, amounting to upwards of ten thousand rupees."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal: MS. Records.*]

citement and wrath. But still no measures were taken to quell the riot or chastise the rioters; no troops were poured into the city; no British officer led his battalions to the charge, or opened upon the enemy with a shower of unanswerable grape. The escort, at Burnes's house, held for some time in painful inactivity by his misplaced forbearance, had fought with a desperate energy, which, in the end, cost them their lives; and the guard at the pay-office, with scarcely less constancy and courage, had protected their charge until overwhelmed by the rush of their assailants, and slaughtered almost to a man. What could these little bands of loyal men do against the surging multitude that flooded the streets? Emboldened by impunity, the licentious crowd pushed on to new deeds of murder and rapine; and soon the whole city was in a roar of wild tumultuous excitement. Shops were gutted; houses were burned; men, women, and children, in the residences of our officers, mixed up in indiscriminate slaughter;—and all this with six thousand British troops within half an hour's march of the rebellious city.

From the Balla Hissar the King looked down upon the disturbed city beneath him. But even from that commanding position little could be seen of what was going on below in the narrow winding streets, which scarcely presented more than an expanse of flat housetops to the gazers from above. A report had been industriously propagated that the insurgent movement had been favoured, if not directed, by the monarch himself; but his conduct at this moment was not such as to give colour to the suspicion, which soon began to shape itself in the minds of his British supporters, and which has not even now been dislodged.* He was agitated, panic-

* I shall not stop here to examine the question of the fidelity or infidelity of Shah Soojah; but in a subsequent portion of the narrative it will be fully investigated.

struck, but not paralysed. The only movement made, on that ill-omened November morning, to crush the insurrection at its birth, was made by the King himself. He sent out a regiment of Hindostanee troops—that regiment which was still commanded by the Indo-Briton adventurer Campbell, who had rendered Shah Soojah good service in his attempt to expel the Barukzye Sirdars.* Futteh Jung and the Wuzeer went with them. They moved down with some spirit upon the city; but shaped their course with such little wisdom that they were soon in disastrous flight. They should have moved along the base of the hill to the outer extremity of the short thoroughfare in which Burnes's house was situated. But instead of this they attempted to make their way through the heart of the city, and were soon entangled with their guns in its narrow, intricate streets. Thus embarrassed, they were at the mercy of the enemy. They lost, it was said, two hundred of their number,† were compelled to abandon their guns, and were soon to be seen hurrying back, a disorderly rabble, to the shelter of the Balla Hissar.

In the mean while, Brigadier Shelton, with a body of infantry and artillery, had made his way to the Balla Hissar, and arrived in time to cover the retreat of Campbell's regiment, and to save the guns from the grasp of the enemy. "Soon after my arrival," says the Brigadier in his narrative of these proceedings, "wounded men were coming in from the city. I was then informed that they belonged to the King's Hindostanee Pultun, which his Majesty had sent into the city with two six-

* In 1834.—[*See Book I., Chapter VII.*]

† This, however, in all probability is a very exaggerated statement. There were, probably, not more than two or three hundred people in the Caubul bazaars opposing the march of the regiment. Eye-witnesses affirm that the latter fought with little gallantry on this occasion. It is said, too, that Futteh Jung, instead of encouraging the Hindostanees, encouraged the insurgents.

pounders. I despatched the light company of the 54th N.I. to the gate of the Balla Hissar leading into the town, and soon after the remainder of the King's Pultun and the two guns were driven in. The latter they were obliged to abandon, fortunately sufficiently under the wall to enable me to prevent the enemy from getting possession; but too near the houses for me to bring them in. I disposed a covering party accordingly, but on the enemy's opening his fire, the Shah's men rushed back into the gateway, and thus abandoned the enterprise." "I mention this," adds the Brigadier, "because it was said his Majesty was implicated in exciting the rebellion—for in such case he never would have made so noble an effort, and the only one that was made to strike at the root."*

On that day nothing else was done. Deserted by his personal attendants, in the hour of danger Shah Soojah seems to have sunk into a pitiable state of dejection and alarm. The defeat of his Hindostanees had given a deeper shade to his despondency; he was incapable of acting for himself or of offering counsel to others, and all who sought his presence were struck by the anxious expression of his countenance and the feeble petulance of his manner. Nothing effective had been done, and nothing more was to be done at all on that memorable day—General Elphinstone had been talking about to-morrow, when he should have been acting to-day. And so the evening of the 2nd of November fell upon an irritable people, established and fortified in resistance by the indecision of the authorities, against whom they had erected themselves, and the inactivity of the army by which they might have been crushed.

It is the common opinion of all competent authorities that a prompt and vigorous movement, on the morning of

* *Statement of Brigadier Shelton: MS. Records.*

the 2nd of November, would have strangled the insurrection at its birth. The Afghans freely admitted this. A Populzye chief who was present at the meeting at Sydat Khan's house on the night of the 1st of November, told Major Rawlinson that not one of the chiefs, who then leagued themselves together, ventured to stir from his house until the afternoon of the following day. They expected that the first onset—the attack on the houses of Burnes and Johnson—would be successful; but they were under an equally strong conviction that the violence would be promptly avenged by the troops from cantonments, and they therefore refrained from committing themselves by taking any personal part in the *émeute*. It seems to have been the impression of the majority that such an outbreak at the capital would operate as a warning that the British in Afghanistan would hardly neglect, and that we should be glad, therefore, to withdraw our forces in the spring and leave the Douranees to their own devices.* "Not only I, but several other officers," says Captain Johnson, "have spoken to Afghans on the subject; there has never been one dissenting voice, that had a small party gone into the town prior to the plunder of my treasury and the murder of Burnes, the insurrection would have been instantly quashed. This was also the opinion of Captain Trevor, at that time living in the town."† Captain Mackenzie has given an equally emphatic opinion to the same effect. "During our expedition into Kohistan, under General MacCaskill," he writes, "I accompanied it, having been placed by General Pollock in charge of Shah-Zadah Shapoor and the Kuzzilbash camp. In my frequent communications with Khan Shereen Khan, some of the late leaders, and other chiefs of the Kuzzilbash faction, all the circumstances of the late insurrec-

* *Private Correspondence.* † *Journal of Captain Johnson: MS.*

tion were over and over again recapitulated, one and all declaring positively that the slightest exhibition of energy on our part, in the first instance, more especially in reinforcing my post and that of Trevor, would at once have decided the Kuzzilbashes, and all over whom they possessed any influence, in our favour. Khan Shereen Khan also confirmed the idea that an offensive movement on the opposite side of the town by Brigadier Shelton, had it been made in the early part of the fatal 2nd of November, would at once have crushed the insurrection."* Mohun Lal says, that in the first instance no more than thirty men were sent to surround Sir Alexander Burnes's house, and that the rest were drawn thither subsequently by the hope of plunder.† Captain Johnson says, " The mob at the first outbreak did not exceed 100 men. They however speedily increased; the plunder of my treasury, my private property and that of Sir Alexander, and seeing that no steps were taken to save either the one or the other, nor even what was of more considerable value to us at that time, the life of Sir Alexander Burnes, was too great a temptation to the inhabitants of Caubul, and when 300 men would have been sufficient in the morning to have quelled the disturbance, 3000 would not have been adequate in the afternoon."‡

* Letter from Captain Colin Mackenzie to Lieutenant Eyre.—[*Eyre's Journal.*]

† *Letter of Mohun Lal to Mr. Colvin, Private Secretary to the Governor-General: MS.*

‡ *Captain Johnson's Journal.*—Eyre says that the commencement of the insurrection was "an attack by certainly not 300 men on the dwellings of Sir Alexander Burnes and Captain Johnson." The precise number of the rioters, at the commencement of the outbreak, is of little consequence. All are agreed in opinion as to the insignificance of the movement, and the facility with which it might have been suppressed. It seems probable that, as Mohun Lal says, there were only some thirty men there by previous concert, but that the number was swelled by accidental rioters, moved by the greed of plunder. To the evidence already adduced in the text, may be added that of Lalla Gungadeen, a hospital gomastah (or steward) attached to Captain Johnson's establishment, who says, "For three or four days, it was the general belief that there was no formidable foe to

The question, then—and it is one of the gravest that can be asked in the entire course of this historical inquiry—is, how came it that an insurrectionary movement, which might have been crushed at the outset by a handful of men, was suffered to grow into a great revolution? It is a question not to be answered hastily—not to be answered at all without the citation of all available evidence. It is fortunate that, at least, the facts of the case are to be ascertained with sufficient distinctness. It is certain that, on the first receipt of authentic intelligence of the outbreak in the city, Macnaghten repaired to Elphinstone's quarters to seek military aid. Shelton, in his narrative, says, that much valuable time was lost at the outset. "The Envoy," he writes, "must have had notice by 7 A.M., so that much valuable time was, I fear, lost by remaining quietly at home, receiving reports, instead of acting promptly and with decision."* But the imputation is not warranted by the real facts of the case. "On the morning of the 2nd of November"—such is the evidence of the Envoy himself—"I was informed that the town of Caubul was in a state of commotion; and shortly afterwards I received a note from Lieutenant-Colonel Sir A. Burnes, to the effect that his house was besieged, and begging for assistance. I immediately went to General Elphinstone."† General Elphinstone himself says: "On the 2nd of November, at half-past 7 A.M., I was told by Colonel Oliver that the city was in a great ferment, and shortly after the Envoy came and told me that it was in a state of insurrection, but that he did not think

contend against—perhaps merely a small body, similar to a gang of *decoits*. If at this time an attack had been made upon the city, it would have been well. One 'pultun' would have been enough. The people were in great terror, and said every moment, 'They are coming—they are coming.'"—[*MS. Records.*]

* *Private Correspondence of Brigadier Shelton: near Caubul, May 28th.*—[*MS. Records.*]

† *Sir William Macnaghten's Report to the Secretary of Government. Left unfinished at his death.*—[*MS. Records.*]

much of it, and that it would shortly subside."* Captain Johnson, too, writes that, on receiving in cantonments intelligence of the outbreak, he went to report what he had heard to Captain Lawrence, military secretary to the Envoy. "The latter," he adds, "had just received a note from Burnes on the subject, and was on the way to the General's." Thus it is established that Macnaghten lost no time in seeking the advice and assistance of the military commander.

Let us next see what was the result of the visit to the General. "I suggested," says Macnaghten, "that Brigadier Shelton's force should proceed to the Balla Hissar, thence to operate as might seem expedient; that the remaining troops should be concentrated in the cantonments, and placed in a state of defence, and assistance, if possible, sent to Sir A. Burnes. Before Brigadier Shelton could reach the Balla Hissar, the town had attained such a state of ferment that it was deemed impracticable to penetrate to Sir A. Burnes's residence, which was in the centre of the city."

General Elphinstone's report is meagre and unsatisfactory, and does not even allude to any supposed expediency of supporting Sir Alexander Burnes:—"It was proposed," he says, "that Brigadier Shelton, with two regiments and guns, should proceed to the Balla Hissar; and the Envoy sent his military secretary, Captain Lawrence, to intimate his wishes, and obtain the King's sanction to this measure, the Balla Hissar being considered a commanding position, and the fittest route to enter the city. . . . . The troops, horse artillery (four guns), with a company of the 44th Foot, the Shah's 6th Infantry, and a wing of the 54th N.I., moved under Brigadier Shelton, about twelve o'clock, into the Balla Hissar; the rest of the troops were concentrated

* *Report of Major-General Elphinstone.*

in cantonments, which arrangements occupied the rest of the day."

Brigadier Shelton's report is much more explicit and intelligible. It throws a flood of light on some of the dark places:—"On the morning of the 2nd November," says the Brigadier, "I passed under the city wall about seven o'clock, when the cavalry grass-cutters, who were in the habit of going through the town for their grass, told me that the city gate was shut, and that they could not get in. All was quiet at this time; and I rode home, thinking some robbery might have taken place, and that the gate might have been shut to prevent the escape of the thieves. About eight or nine o'clock various reports were in circulation, and between nine and ten I got a note from General Elphinstone, reporting a disturbance in the city, and desiring me to prepare to march into the Balla Hissar, with three companies 54th N.I., the Shah's 6th Infantry, and four guns, all I had in camp (the remainder of my brigade having been called into cantonments). I soon after got another, telling me not to go, as the King objected to it. I replied to this note, that if there was an insurrection in the city it was not a moment for indecision, and recommended him at once to decide upon what measures he would adopt. The answer to this was, to march immediately into the Balla Hissar, where I would receive further instructions from the Envoy's military secretary, whom I should find there. Just as I was marching off, a note came from the latter person to halt for further orders. I then sent in the engineer officer to see the cause; but he was cut down by an Afghan, in dismounting from his horse, just outside the square, where his Majesty was sitting. Soon after this the secretary himself came with orders to proceed. I then marched in, when the King asked me, as

well as I could understand, who sent me, and what I came there for."* He was not, indeed, allowed to operate upon the disturbed city. All that, circumstanced as he was, Shelton could do, was to cover the retreat of the Shah's Hindostanees, who had been sent out, as we have seen, against the insurgents, and been disastrously beaten.

It is obvious, therefore, that Brigadier Shelton must be acquitted of all blame. He recommended, on the morning of the 2nd of November, prompt and decisive measures, but he was not empowered to carry them into effect. The responsibility rests with the Envoy and the General, and must be equally shared between them. It does not appear that either recognised the necessity of a prompt attack upon the disturbed quarter of the city. The Envoy, always considerate and humane—sometimes to a point of weakness—desired to spare the inhabitants of Caubul those dreadful scenes of plunder and violence which ever follow the incursion of a body of retributive troops into an offending city. But such tender mercies are often cruel. In such cases the most vigorous measures are commonly the most humane. It is hard to say how much human life would have been saved if, early on the 2nd of November, a few companies of infantry, and a couple of guns, had been despatched to that portion of the city where Sir Alexander Burnes and his companions were standing at bay before a contemptible rabble, which would have melted away at the approach of a handful of regular troops.

Burnes did not believe the outbreak to be a formi-

* *Letter of Brigadier Shelton, May 28, 1842: MS. Records.*—The engineer officer sent by Shelton to the Balla Hissar was Lieutenant Sturt, who had been despatched to the Brigadier's camp, at Seeah Sungh, with instructions from General Elphinstone, and arrived there about nine o'clock. So Lady Sale. Brigadier Shelton's report confirms the accuracy of that portion of Lady Sale's narrative—based, it is to be presumed, upon the information of Lieutenant Sturt.

dable one—Macnaghten did not believe it to be a formidable one—and Elphinstone was entirely swayed by the opinions of his political associates. Hence came the indecision and inactivity, which were attended with such disastrous results. Burnes and Macnaghten were right up to a certain point; but all beyond was lamentably wrong. The outbreak was not formidable in itself; but it was certain, in such "ticklish times,"* very soon to become formidable. There are seasons when slight indications of unrest, such as might commonly be disregarded, assume a portentous and alarming aspect, and demand all the vigilance and energy of the custodians of the public safety. Such a season had now arrived; the minds of the people were in a feverish, inflammable state, and it required very little to bring on a dangerous paroxysm of irrepressible violence and disorder. Macnaghten was unwilling to believe that the chiefs were connected with those October disturbances which had blocked up the passes between Caubul and Jellalabad, and thought that the Ghiljee rising was of a local, accidental character, with which the Caubulees had no connexion, and in which they took no interest; but Brigadier Shelton has declared his conviction that the majority of the insurgents who took possession of the passes were sent out from the city, and that many of them passed through his camp at Seeah Sungh.†

Be this as it may, it is very certain that even an incidental outbreak in the city of Caubul ought not, at such a season, to have been regarded as a matter of light concern. But an attack upon the residence of a high political functionary could, in nowise, be looked upon as an incidental outrage, proceeding neither from political

* See the expression of the Envoy, in a letter quoted at the commencement of the chapter.

† *Letter from Brigadier Shelton, May* 28, 1842.—[*MS. Records.*]

causes, nor conducing to political results. It was an emergency, indeed, that called for promptitude of action, unrestrained either by shortsighted considerations of humanity or feelings of official delicacy and reserve. Too anxious to conciliate the wishes of the King, the Envoy forbore from all aggressive measures until his Majesty had been consulted; and when he learnt that Campbell's regiment had been sent out against the insurgents, he believed that the insurrection would be speedily put down. But in such a crisis the British minister might have acted, without any breach of official rectitude, on his own independent judgment, and taken upon himself to decide at once what was best, not only for the King, whom English money and English arms were supporting on his throne, but for what was of infinitely more importance, the honour of the British nation.

It is not difficult to understand these restraining influences; but when all due allowance is made for them, it must still be admitted that at such a time, and under such circumstances, nothing short of a prompt movement upon the disturbed quarter of the city should have been counselled by the Envoy and ordered by the General. There is nothing, indeed, but the impracticability of the movement that can be urged in extenuation of its neglect. The Envoy has declared that, by the time Brigadier Shelton had reached the Balla Hissar, it was impracticable for a body of troops to penetrate to the neighbourhood of Burnes's house. But what was impracticable then was not impracticable some time before; and Shelton would have reached the Balla Hissar much sooner, but for the respect shown to the wishes of the King, the delay in ascertaining those wishes, and the vacillating orders which his Majesty thought fit to issue on this momentous occasion. The attack on the city should have been made some hours earlier in the

day. The movement may have been impracticable after the hour when Shelton reached the Balla Hissar; but why was it not made *before?* The only point to be decided by the Envoy and the General was, what body of troops—whether from Shelton's camp or cantonments—could be most expeditiously despatched to the disturbed quarter of the town, and most effectually suppress the disturbance? But instead of directing all his thoughts to this one great object, the Envoy thought about the wishes of the Shah and the comforts of the people; whilst the General, too glad to be saved the trouble of thinking at all, readily adopted Macnaghten's opinions, and believed that the fires which had broken out in the city might be left to die out by themselves.

Still it must be remembered, on the other hand, that wise after the event, we are passing sentence on the conduct of men who had not then the full information which lights us to a more correct decision; and that if they had dragooned down the insurrection at the outset, destroying innocent life and valuable property, they would certainly, by one party at least, have been impeached as incapable and dangerous alarmists. It would not improbably have been said, that they had by a precipitancy, as mischievous as it was uncalled for, turned friends into enemies, confidence into mistrust, repose into irritation, and sown broad-cast the seeds of future rebellion over the whole length and breadth of the land.

CHAPTER II.

[November, 1841.]

Progress of the Insurrection—Attempted Movement on the City—Attack on Mahomed Sheriff's Fort—Loss of the Commissariat Fort—Captain Mackenzie's Defence—Capture of Mahomed Sheriff's Fort—Attempts to corrupt the Enemy.

On this disastrous 2nd of November, the British authorities in the Caubul cantonments, instead of acting to-day, had been talking about doing something to-morrow. That something was a conjoint movement from the cantonments and the Balla Hissar on the Lahore gate of the city. The opinions of General Elphinstone on this subject are on record. On the 2nd of November he wrote to the Envoy:*

My dear Sir William,

Since you left me, I have been considering what can be done to-morrow. Our dilemma is a difficult one. Shelton, if reinforced to-morrow, might, no doubt, force in two columns on his way towards the Lahore gate, and we might from hence force that gate and meet them. But if this were accomplished, what shall we gain? It can be done, but not without very great loss, as our people will be exposed to the fire from the houses the whole way. Where is the point you said they were to fortify near Burnes's house? If they could assemble there, that would be a point of attack; but to march into the town, it seems, we should only have

* This letter is without date, but there can be no doubt of its having been written on the 2nd of November.

to come back again; and as to setting the city on fire, I fear, from its construction, that is almost impossible. We must see what the morning brings, and then think what can be done. The occupation of all the houses near the gates might give us a command of the town, but we have not means for extended operations. If we could depend on the Kuzzilbashes, we might easily reduce the city.

Yours, truly,

W. K. ELPHINSTONE.*

The movement, however, was fixed for "to-morrow." That morrow was one of early bustle and activity throughout the British cantonment. Before day had broken, the drums beat to arms. Intelligence had come in that a large body of men were marching over the Seeah Sungh hills. They were believed to be enemies, but they proved to be friends. The 37th Regiment of Native Infantry had been called in from Koord-Caubul on the preceding day; and it had made good its march, in the face of no feeble opposition, bringing in its baggage and its sick in an orderly manner, very creditable to the commanding officer.† Two guns of the mountain-train accompanied the regiment. Any addition to the cantonment force was valuable at such a time; and the 37th Regiment was regarded as one of the best in the service. Still, although when our resources were thus increased, a movement was made upon the city, so small a force was sent out that it was compelled to retreat.

The movement, such as it was—the first attempted by the British force—was made three hours after noon. The enemy had by this time increased mightily in numbers. Thousands, long ripe for revolt, were now ready to declare themselves on the side of the national party. All the surrounding villages poured in their tributaries,‡ and swelled the great tide of insurrection. At noon, on the preceding

* *Unpublished Correspondence of General Elphinstone.*

† Major Griffiths.

‡ "As soon," says Mohun Lal, in a letter to Mr. Colvin, "as the murder of Sir Alexander (whose name

day, the road between the cantonments and the city had been scarcely passable;* and now all this intervening ground was alive with an angry enemy. In the face of a hostile multitude, it was little likely that a weak detachment could penetrate into the city. The party sent out on this hazardous service, under Major Swayne, consisted of one company of H. M.'s 44th Regiment, two companies of the 5th Native Infantry, and two Horse Artillery guns. The whole affair was a failure. The only fortunate circumstance was that this feeble detachment retired in good time. Owing to some misconception of orders, no party had been detached to co-operate with them from the Balla-Hissar;† and if they had forced their way to the Lahore gate of the city, the whole detachment would have been cut to pieces. As it was, the party was fired upon from the Kohistan gate, near which it ought not to have gone;‡ and it was soon only too obvious that a further advance, in the face of such an enemy, would be a profitless sacrifice of life. Major Swayne brought back his detachment, and so ended the first attempt to operate upon the city.

It is hard to say why a stronger force, with a fair allowance of cavalry, was not sent out in the first instance; or why, on the return of Swayne's weak detachment, it was not reinforced and sent out against the enemy.

was awfully respected), and the pillage of treasure was known in the adjacent villages, it brought next day thousands of men under the standard of the rebels."—[*MS. Records.*]

* "So great had become the excitement, that, by noon, the road between the cantonments and the city was hardly passable."—[*Unfinished Report of Sir W. H. Macnaghten: MS. Records.*]

† *Captain Johnson's Journal: MS.* The writer says: "They had fortunately not proceeded far before they were driven back by the enemy. Had they gone as directed, they would, in the opinion of almost all, have been cut to pieces, as the whole road was taken possession of by the enemy, and, by some misconception of the order sent to the Balla Hissar, no party had been detached to co-operate with them."

‡ It would seem that the party, instead of taking the shortest and safest route to the Lahore gate, took the longest and the most dangerous.

There was daylight enough left to do good execution with an adequate force, adequately commanded. But the evening of this day, like that of the preceding one, closed in upon an inactive and dispirited British force, and an undisciplined enemy emboldened by impunity and flushed with success.

The aspect of affairs now became more threatening. Before noon, on the preceding day, the Envoy and his family had vacated the Residency, and sought a more secure asylum within the walls of the cantonment. Now preparations were being made to place those cantonments in a state of defence. This was no easy matter. The works were of "frightful extent;" and demanded a much larger body of troops, and greater number of guns, than were at the disposal of the General, to defend them even against the "contemptible enemy" that was now collecting around them. It was not long after the commencement of the outbreak, before Lieutenant Eyre, the ordnance commissariat officer, had placed every available gun in position. But the want of artillery in this conjuncture was soon lamentably apparent. There had, at no time, been a sufficiency of this important arm; but one portion of the miserable allowance was now with Sale's force, another in the Balla Hissar, and the wretched remnant was in cantonments.

It was impossible now any longer to close one's eyes against the real state of affairs. They were growing rapidly worse and worse. The Envoy sate down to his desk and wrote importunate letters to Captain Macgregor, urging him to bring back Sir Robert Sale's force to Caubul. At the same time he wrote to Candahar, to arrest the march of the troops that were about to return to India, and to despatch them with all speed to his relief. Nothing came of these mandates but disappoint-

ment. It would have been better if the Caubul force had trusted wholly to itself.

The next day was one of more appalling disaster. It brought to light a new evil that threatened destruction to the beleaguered force. The commissariat fort—the magazine in which all the stores, on which our troops depended for subsistence, were garnered up—was outside the cantonment walls. It was situated about 400 ~~miles~~ yds from the south-west bastion of the cantonment. On the preceding day, the detachment in charge of the fort had been raised to a subaltern's guard of eighty men. It was now threatened by the enemy. Another fort, still nearer cantonments, known as Mahomed Sheriff's Fort, was already in possession of a hostile garrison;* and the King's gardens, between which and the cantonments this fort was situated, were swarming with the insurgents. The communications between the British cantonments and the commissariat fort were thus intercepted by the enemy; and the position of the slender guard posted for the defence of the latter was therefore one of imminent peril. The enemy laid siege to the fort; and began to mine beneath the walls. Surrounded as he was by a far superior force, and seeing no possibility of repelling the assaults of the enemy, Lieutenant Warren, who commanded the guard, officially reported the danger of his position; and set forth that, unless reinforced, he should be obliged to abandon his post. The letter was conveyed to the General, who ordered out two companies of the 44th Regiment, under Captains Swayne and Robinson, to reinforce the party at the commissariat fort, or enable them to *evacuate* it in safety.† They had not proceeded far, when the enemy,

* General Elphinstone had, on the preceding day, expressed his desire to see this fort garrisoned by our own troops; but Sir William Macnaghten declared that it would not be politic to do so.

† General Elphinstone speaks of this party as a reinforcement. He says,

posted in Mahomed Sheriff's Fort opened upon them with deadly execution. The galling fire of the concealed marksmen checked their progress. Captains Swayne and Robinson were shot dead. Other officers were wounded. There seemed to be no chance of success. To move onward would only have been to expose the detachment to certain destruction. The officer upon whom the command of the party had devolved, determined, therefore, to abandon an enterprise from which nothing but further disaster could arise. He brought back his party to cantonments; and so another failure was added to the list.

Another was soon to be recorded against us. In the course of the afternoon, the General determined to try the effect of sending out a party, consisting mainly of cavalry, to enable Lieutenant Warren to evacuate the commissariat fort. But this party suffered more severely than the preceding one. From the loopholes of Mahomed Sheriff's Fort—from every tree in the Shah's garden—from whatever cover of wood or masonry was to be found—the Afghan marksmen poured, with unerring aim, their deadly fire upon our advancing troops. The unseen enemy was too strong for our slight detachment. The troopers of the 5th Cavalry fell in numbers beneath the fire of the Afghan matchlocks. The forward movement was checked. The party retreated; and again the enemy gathered new courage from the contemplation of our reverses.

In the mean while, it had become known to the commissariat officers that the General contemplated the abandonment of the fort, in which not only our grain, but

"On the 4th instant another attempt to throw in reinforcements failed. The troops employed suffered considerably, particularly the 5th Cavalry." Two different attempts are here mixed up together. Captain Johnson says, that the first was an attempt to reinforce Lieutenant Warren; but that the second, on which the 5th Cavalry were employed, was an attempt to bring off the commissariat guard. Lieutenant Eyre and Lady Sale speak of *both* movements in the light of efforts made to enable Lieutenant Warren to abandon his position. It is certain that the second was.

our hospital stores, our spirits, wine, beer, &c., were garnered. Dismayed at the thought of a sacrifice that must entail destruction on the entire force, Captain Boyd, the chief commissariat officer, hastened to General Elphinstone's quarters, and entreated him not to withdraw Lieutenant Warren from the fort, but to reinforce him with all possible despatch. The General, ever ready to listen to advice, and sometimes to take it, heard all that was advanced by the commissariat officer, readily assented to its truth, and promised to send out a reinforcement to the fort. But no reinforcement was sent. Night was closing in upon the cantonment, and Captain Boyd, to his bitter disappointment, perceived that no preparations were making for the promised movement towards the fort. Asking Captain Johnson to accompany him, he again proceeded to the General's quarters, where the two officers, in emphatic language, pointed out the terrible results of the sacrifice of our supplies. Again the General listened —again he assented—and again he would have promised all that was required; but other officers were present, who put forth other opinions; talked of the danger of the movement; urged that it would be necessary, in the first instance, to capture Mahomed's Sheriff's Fort; and so the General wavered. But at this juncture, another letter from Lieutenant Warren was brought in. It represented that his position had become more insecure; that the enemy were mining under the walls, and the Sepoys escaping over them; and that if reinforcements were not speedily sent, he should be compelled to abandon his position.

This brought the General round again to the opinion that reinforcements ought to be sent; he promised that, at two A.M., a detachment should be under arms to take possession of Mahomed Sheriff's Fort, and to strengthen Warren's position; and the requisite orders were accordingly issued. But later counsels prevailed.

The march of the detachment was postponed to the following morning; and, before it moved, Lieutenant Warren and his party had abandoned the fort and returned to cantonments, leaving all our supplies in the hands of the enemy, and inspiring them with fresh confidence and courage. The little garrison had escaped by working a hole from the interior of the fort underneath the walls, by the aid of tools which had been sent them for a different purpose on the preceding night.*

Nor was this our only loss. The commissariat fort, in which the supplies for Shah Soojah's force were stored, was on the outskirts of the city. In 1840, when a general rising was deemed no unlikely occurrence, Captain Johnson laid in a supply of 17,000 maunds of ottah for Shah Soojah's force, and had erected godowns for their reception within the Balla Hissar, where early in 1841 the grain was all laid up in store. The King, however, subsequently exercised the royal privilege of changing his mind. The godowns were inconveniently situated; and Captain Johnson was ordered to remove the grain from the citadel, and, having no better place for its reception, to convert his camel-sheds, on the outskirts of the city, into a godown fort.† In this fort, on the 2nd of Novem-

* "Early on the morning of the 5th, the commissariat fort was abandoned by its garrison, the enemy having attempted to fire the gate and escalade. The garrison came out by a hole made from the interior—tools having been sent overnight, with a view to the introduction of reinforcements and the withdrawal of supplies from the store."—[*Report of General Elphinstone.*]

† "In September, 1840, when we were in expectation of a general rising throughout the country, I laid in for the Shah's force 17,000 maunds of ottah. I got permission from the King to erect godowns in the Balla Hissar, where it was all stored in May, 1841. One of Sir William Macnaghten's first acts, after arrival from Jellalabad, was a most peremptory order to me to take the whole of my godown out of the Balla Hissar. On my stating that I had no other place in which to store so large a quantity, I was told that the grain was on no consideration to remain in the citadel, as the King was averse to it. There being no other place to store it, I was ordered to convert my camel-sheds, on the outskirts of the city, into godowns."—[*Captain Johnson's MS. Journal.*]

ber, there were about 8000 maunds of ottah. Captain Mackenzie, an officer of high character, greatly and deservedly esteemed by the Envoy and all the officers of the force, was at this time in charge of the fort. On the morning of the 2nd of November it was attacked by the armed population of Deh-Afghan. Throughout the whole of that day Mackenzie held his post with unwearying constancy and unshaken courage. Everything was against the little garrison. Water was scarce; ammunition was scarce. They were encumbered with baggage, and overwhelmed with women and children. Reinforcements were written for, and looked for in vain. Captain Trevor, who occupied, with his family, a neighbouring fort, despatched repeated letters to cantonments, importuning the Envoy to reinforce these isolated posts. But in vain they turned their straining eyes towards the cantonment, "looking for the glittering bayonets through the trees."* Not a company came to their relief. Instead of assistance they received nothing but melancholy tidings of disaster. A demonstration from the cantonment would have saved them. The Kuzzilbashes were ready to declare themselves on the side of the British. Khan Shereen Khan was, indeed, at Trevor's house. But when the chiefs saw that not an effort was made by the British commanders to vindicate our authority, or to save the lives of our officers, they prudently held aloof and refused to link themselves with a declining cause.

On the 3rd of November, "about the middle of the day," the enemy got possession of Trevor's house; and it soon became certain that Mackenzie, with all his gallantry and all his laborious zeal—working day and night without food and without rest—conducting the defence with as much judgment as spirit—could not much longer

* Captain Mackenzie's narrative, in *Eyre's Journal;* a very interesting and well-written report of one of the most honourable incidents of the war.

hold his post. His men were wearied out—his ammunition was exhausted—his wounded were dying for want of medical aid. He had defended his position throughout two days of toil, suffering, and danger; and no aid had come from cantonments—none was likely to come. So yielding at last to the importunity of others, he moved out of the fort, and fought his way, by night, to cantonments. It was a difficult and hazardous march; and, almost by a miracle, Mackenzie escaped to recount the incidents of those memorable days.

The abandonment of our commissariat stores not only threatened the British force with instant starvation, but made such a lamentable exposure of our imbecility, that all who had before held aloof, thinking that the British nation would arise and crush the insurgents, now gathered heart and openly declared themselves. The doubtful were assured;—the wavering were established. There was a British army, looking over the walls of their cantonment at an ill-armed enemy—almost a rabble—gutting their commissariat fort. There were the spoliators, within four hundred yards of our position, carrying off our supplies, as busily as a swarm of ants. "The godown fort," wrote Captain Johnson in his journal, "was this day something similar to a large ants' nest. Ere noon, thousands and thousands had assembled from far and wide, to participate in the booty of the English dogs, each man taking away with him as much as he could carry—and to this we were all eye-witnesses." The troops in cantonments were indignant at the imbecility of their leaders, who had suffered them to be so ignominiously stripped of the very means of subsistence; and clamoured to be led out against the enemy, who were parading their spoils under the very walls of the cantonment. The feeling was not one to be checked. Lieutenant Eyre went to the quarters of the General, urged

him to send out a party for the capture of Mahomed Sheriff's Fort, and volunteered to keep the road clear for the advance of the storming party. After some deliberation the General assented, and wrote to the Envoy on the subject:

November 5, 1841. 5 A.M.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

After due consideration, we have determined on attacking the fort this morning, with fifty men of the 44th, and 200 Native Infantry. We will first try to breach the place, and shell it as well as we can. From information I have received respecting the interior of the fort, which I think is to be relied on, it seems the centre, like our old bazaar, is filled with buildings; therefore, if we succeed in blowing open the gate, we should only be exposed to a destructive fire from the buildings, which, from the state of preparation they evince, would no doubt be occupied in force, supported from the garden. Carrying powder-bags up under fire would have a chance of failure. Our men have been all night in the works, are tired, and ill fed; but we must hope for the best, and securing our commissariat fort with the stores.

It behoves us to look to the consequences of failure: in this case I know not how we are to subsist, or, from want of provisions, to retreat. You should, therefore, consider what chance there is of making terms, if we are driven to this extremity.

Shelton must then be withdrawn, as we shall not be able to supply him.

Yours, sincerely,

W. K. E.*

Already had the General begun to think and to write of "making terms" with the enemy. It will be seen that he anticipated failure; and what but failure was likely to result from an expedition undertaken under such auspices? The party was sent out under Major Swayne. It seems to have stood still, when it ought to have rushed forward. The opportunity was lost; and the General, who was watching the movement from the gateway, ordered the detachment to be withdrawn. The Sepoys of the 37th

* *Unpublished Correspondence of General Elphinstone.*

regiment, who had been eager to advance to the capture of the fort, were enraged and disappointed at being held back; and the enemy, more confident and presumptuous than before, exulted in a new triumph.

Whilst affairs were in this distressing and dispiriting state at Caubul, our outposts were exposed to imminent danger; and it was soon only too plain that the insurrection was not confined to the neighbourhood of the capital. At Kardurrah, Lieutenant Maule, of the Bengal Artillery, commanding the Kohistanee regiment, with his adjutant and sergeant-major had been cut to pieces, at the outset of the insurrection, by the men of his own corps; and now intelligence came in that the Goorkha regiment, posted at Charekur in the Kohistan, where Major Pottinger was Resident, was threatened with annihilation. Captain Codrington, the commandant, and other officers had been killed; and as water was failing the garrison, there was little chance of its holding out. The Envoy communicated these sad tidings to the General, who wrote in reply:

My dear Sir William,

This is most distressing. Can nothing be done by the promise of a large reward—a lakh of rupees for instance, if necessary, to any of the Kohistan chiefs, to bring them off, though I fear the three days have expired; but, perhaps, I am proposing what is impossible.

Yours,

W. K. E.

This was written on the 6th of November. That day witnessed our first success. A party, under Major Griffiths, of the 37th Native Infantry, was sent out against Mahomed Sheriff's Fort. A practicable breach was effected, and the storming party entered with an irresistible impetuosity, worthy of British troops. Ensign

Raban, of the 44th Regiment, was shot dead on the crest of the breach. The garrison escaped to the hills, where a party of Anderson's horse dashed at them in gallant style, and drove them from their position. The rest of the day was spent in dubious skirmishing. All arms were employed in a wild desultory manner. Artillery, cavalry, and infantry did good independent service; but they did not support each other. Nothing great was designed or attempted. A general action might have been brought on; and, properly commanded at that time, the British troops, who were then eager to meet the enemy, might have beaten five times their numbers in the field. But General Elphinstone, long before this, had ceased to think of beating the enemy. Everything seemed possible to him but that.

We had lost our commissariat forts; but, happily, we had not lost our commissariat officers. As soon as it was perceived that our stores were in jeopardy, Captain Boyd and Captain Johnson had begun to exert themselves, with an energy as praiseworthy as it was rare in that conjuncture, to collect supplies from the surrounding villages. They were more successful than under such circumstances could have been anticipated. The villagers sold the grain, which they had laid up for their own winter supplies, at no very exorbitant rates, and the horrors of immediate starvation were averted from the beleaguered force.* The troops were put upon half-rations. The ordinary food of the native troops—the *ottah*, or ground wheat—was wanting, for the water-mills in the villages had been destroyed; but the unbroken grain was served out to them in its stead.†

* "For the last four days," wrote Captain Johnson, in his journal, on the 8th of November, "I have been busily purchasing grain from Deh Meru; I have established a reasonable rate; and the villagers sell willingly from the stores which they had laid up for themselves for winter."—[*MS. Records.*]

† *Captain Johnson's MS. Journal.*

A new danger was now to be discovered. The force had been threatened with starvation; but now supplies were coming in from the surrounding villages. It would have been impossible to hold out without provisions. It would be equally impossible to hold out without ammunition. As soon as the one danger was averted, the General began to look about for the approach of the other. On the 6th of November, he again wrote to Sir William Macnaghten, suggesting the expediency of making terms, with the least possible delay:—"We have temporarily," he said, "and I hope permanently, got over the difficulty of provisions. Our next consideration is ammunition; a very serious and indeed awful one. We have expended a great quantity; therefore it becomes worthy of thought on your part, how desirable it is that our operations should not be protracted, by anything in treating that might tend to a continuance of the present state of things. Do not suppose from this I wish to recommend or am advocating humiliating terms, or such as would reflect disgrace on us; but this fact of ammunition must not be lost sight of." And in a postscript to this letter are these melancholy words:—"Our case is not yet desperate; I do not mean to impress that; but it must be borne in mind that it goes very fast."* The Envoy needed no better proof than this that our case, if not desperate, was "going very fast." There was an abundant supply of ammunition in store. But what hope was there, so long as the troops were thus commanded? There was no hope from our arms; but something might be done by our money. If the enemy could not be beaten off, he might be bought off. The Envoy, therefore, began to appeal to the cupidity of the chiefs.

The agent whom he employed was Mohun Lal. On the first outbreak in the city, the Moonshee had narrowly

* *Unpublished Correspondence of General Elphinstone.*

escaped destruction by taking refuge under the skirts of Mahomed Zemaun Khan.* Since that time he had resided in Caubul, under the protection of the Kuzzilbash chief Khan Shereen Khan, and had kept up a correspondence with Sir William Macnaghten, doing the Envoy's bidding, as he said, at the risk of his life. His first experiment was made upon the corruptibility of the Ghilzyes. At the request of the Envoy, Mohun Lal opened negotiations with the chiefs of the tribe, offering them two lakhs of rupees, with an immediate advance of a quarter of the amount; but before the contract was completed, the Envoy, doubtful, perhaps, of the sincerity of the chiefs, receded from the negotiation. The Ghilzyes were mortally offended; but the Envoy had another game in hand. On the 7th of November he wrote to Mohun Lal:

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your three letters, and am very glad that you are doing such excellent service. Enclosed are two letters for Khan Shereen Khan and Mahomed Kumye. You may assure them both, that if they perform the service which they have undertaken, the former shall receive one lakh, and the latter 50,000 rupees, besides getting the present, and everything else they require. You may assure them that, whatever bluster the rebels may make, they will be beaten in the end. I hope that you will encourage Mohamed Yar Khan, the rival of Ameen-oollah; assure him that he shall receive the chiefship, and all the assistance necessary to enable him to support it. You may give promises in my name to the extent of 500,000 rupees (five lakhs).

Yours, faithfully,
W. H. M.†

Intelligence had by this time reached Caubul, to the

* Mohun Lal says: "I had a very narrow escape, and was saved by taking a shelter under the garment of Mahomed Zemaun Khan in the street. Everything in my house (which I had saved in the course of my twelve years' service) was plundered, besides the murder of several servants belonging to Sir Alexander and myself.—[*Letter to Mr. Colvin: MS.*]

† *Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*

effect that Mahomed Akbar Khan, the second son of Dost Mahomed, was coming in from Toorkistan, and had already advanced as far as Bameean. Mohun Lal suggested the expediency of despatching an emissary to meet him on the way, and offer the Sirdar a handsome allowance to league himself with our party. To this the Envoy replied:

November 8, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your letters of this date, and fully approve of your having raised 30,000 rupees for distribution amongst those disposed to assist our cause. But I would not advance more than 50,000 rupees before some service is actually rendered; and do not place any reliance on the story about Gundamuck. They are too strong to be resisted by any force that the rebels could bring against them. Mahomed Akbar's arrival at Bameean is likely enough; there can be little use, I fear, in offering him a separate remittance, if the rebels have made overtures to him already.

Yours,

W. H. M.

Tell Khan Shereen Khan, with my best compliments, that he will not be disappointed if he does us quick and good service.*

But all this money was spent to very little purpose. There were too many hungry appetites to appease—too many conflicting interests to reconcile; it was altogether, by this time, too mighty a movement to be put down by a display of the money-bags. The jingling of the coin could not drown the voice of an outraged and incensed people.

I wish that I had nothing more to say of the efforts made, out of the fair field of open battle, to destroy the power of the insurgent chiefs. There is a darker page of history yet to be written. This Mohun Lal had other work entrusted to him than that spoken of in these letters. He was not directed merely to appeal to the cupidity of the chiefs, by offering them large sums of money

* *Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*

to exert their influence in our favour. He was directed, also, to offer rewards for the heads of the principal insurgents. As early as the 5th of November, Lieutenant John Conolly, who was in attendance upon Shah Soojah, in the Ballar Hissar, wrote thus to Mohun Lal:

Tell the Kuzzilbash chiefs, Sherin Khan, Naib Sheriff, in fact, all the chiefs of Sheeah persuasion, to join against the rebels. You can promise one lakh of rupees to Khan Shereen on the condition of his killing and seizing the rebels and arming all the Sheeahs, and immediately attacking all rebels. This is the time for the Sheeahs to do good service. Explain to them that if the Soonees once get the upper hand in the town, they will immediately attack and plunder their part of the town; hold out promises of reward and money; write to me very frequently. Tell the chiefs who are well disposed to send respectable agents to the Envoy. Try and spread "nifak" among the rebels. In everything that you do consult me, and write very often. Meer Hyder Purja-Bashi has been sent to Khan Shereen, and will see you.

And in a postscript to this letter appeared the ominous words: "I promise 10,000 rupees for the head of each of the principal rebel chiefs.*

Mohun Lal received this letter, and being ready for any kind of service not in the field, began to cast about in his mind the best means of accomplishing the object spoken of in Conolly's postscript, with the least danger to himself and the greatest benefit to his employers. It was necessary, however, to tread cautiously in so delicate a matter. The Moonshee was not yet assured of the temper of the Kuzzilbash chief; and the game might be played away by one precipitate move. So he resolved to keep the offer of the head-money in abeyance for a few days, and to watch the course of events.

* I set these things down here, because they belong, in chronological order, to this chapter. The discussion of them is reserved for another. The letter, of which I have no copy, appears, in a remarkable article, on the "Outbreak in Caubul and its Causes," published in the *Calcutta Review*. I wish I could say that I had any doubt of its authenticity.

CHAPTER III.

[November, 1841.]

Progress of the Insurrection—General Elphinstone—His Infirmities—Recall of Brigadier Shelton to Cantonments—Capture of the Ricka-bashee Fort—Intrigues with the Afghan Chiefs—The Envoy's Correspondence with Mohun Lal.

THE insurrection had now been raging for a week. The enemy had increased in numbers and in daring. The troops in the British cantonments were dispirited and disheartened. The General had begun to talk and to write about negotiation. The Envoy was attempting to buy off the enemy. Nothing had yet been done to avert the disastrous and disgraceful catastrophe which now threatened to crown our misfortunes. It was plain that something must be done. Any change would be a change for the better.

The officers who served under General Elphinstone throughout this unhappy crisis have invariably spoken of him with tenderness and respect. He was an honourable gentleman—a kind-hearted man—and he had once been a good soldier. His personal courage has never been questioned. Regardless of danger, and patient under trial, he exposed himself without reserve, and bore his sufferings without complaining. But disease had broken down his physical strength, and enfeebled his un-

derstanding. He had almost lost the use of his limbs. He could not walk; he could hardly ride. The gout had crippled him in a manner that it was painful to contemplate. You could not see him engaged in the most ordinary concerns of peaceful life without an emotion of lively compassion. He was fit only for the invalid establishment on the day of his arrival in India. It was a mockery to talk of his commanding a division of the army in the quietest district of Hindostan. But he was selected by Lord Auckland, against the advice of the Commander-in-Chief, and the remonstrances of the Agra governor, to assume the command of that division of the army which of all others was most likely to be actively employed, and which demanded, therefore, the greatest amount of energy and activity in its commander. Among the general officers of the Indian army were many able and energetic men, with active limbs and clear understandings. There was one—a cripple, whose mental vigour much suffering had enfeebled; and *he* was selected by the Governor-General to command the army in Afghanistan.

Ever since his arrival at the head-quarters at Caubul he had been, in his own words, "unlucky in the state of his health." From the beginning of May to the beginning of October he had been suffering, with little intermission, from fever and rheumatic gout. Sometimes he had been confined wholly to his couch; at others he was enabled to go abroad in a palanquin. During one or two brief intervals he had sufficiently recovered his strength to trust himself on the back of a horse. He was in the enjoyment of one of these intervals—but expecting every day to relinquish a burden which he was so ill able to bear*—when, on the 2nd of November, whilst inspecting the Guards, he "had

* He had sent in a medical certificate some time before, and received permission to return to Hindostan. He was to have accompanied the Envoy.

a very severe fall—the horse falling upon him,"* and he was compelled to return to his quarters. From that time, though he never spared himself, it was painfully obvious that the Caubul army was without a chief. The General was perplexed—bewildered. He was utterly without resources of his own. A crisis had come upon him, demanding all the energies of a robust constitution and a vigorous understanding; and it had found him with a frame almost paralysed by disease, and a mind quite clouded by suffering. He had little knowledge of the political condition of Afghanistan; of the feelings of the people; of the language they spoke, or the country they inhabited. He was compelled, therefore, to rely upon the information of others, and to seek the advice of those with whom he was associated. So circumstanced, the ablest and most confident general would have been guided by the counsels of the British Envoy. But General Elphinstone was guided by every man's counsels—generally by the last speaker's—by captains and subalterns, by any one who had a plan to propose or any kind of advice to offer. He was, therefore, in a constant state of oscillation; now inclining to one opinion, now to another; now determining upon a course of action, now abandoning it; the resolutions of one hour giving way before the doubts of its successor, until, in the midst of these vacillations, the time to strike passed away for ever, and the loss was not to be retrieved.

In such a conjuncture, there could have been no greater calamity than the feeble indecision of the military commander. Promptitude of action was the one thing demanded by the exigencies of the occasion; but instead of promptitude of action, there was nothing but hesitation and incertitude—long delays and small doings, worse than

* *Memorandum found among the effects of the late Major-General Elphinstone, C.B., in his own handwriting.*

nothing—paltry demonstrations, looking as though they were expressly designed as revelations either of lamentable weakness or folly more lamentable still. To the Envoy all this was miserably apparent. It was apparent to the whole garrison. It was not possible altogether to supersede the General. He was willing, with all his incompetency, to serve his country, and there was no authority in Afghanistan to remove him from his command. But something, it was thought, might be done by associating with him, in the command of the cantonment force, an officer of a more robust frame and more energetic character. Brigadier Shelton was known to be an active and a gallant soldier. Macnaghten counselled his recall from the Balla Hissar, and the General believing, or perhaps only hoping, that he would find a willing coadjutor in the Brigadier, despatched a note to him with instructions to come into cantonments.

Taking with him only a regiment of the Shah's troops and a single gun, the Brigadier quitted the Balla Hissar on the morning of the 9th of November, and made his way, without any interruption, to the cantonment, in broad daylight. The garrison welcomed him with cordiality. He came amongst them almost as a deliverer. Great things were expected from him. He was beloved neither by officers nor by men; but he was held to possess some sturdy qualities, and never to shrink from fighting. Little or nothing was known of his aptitude as a leader. He had seldom or never been placed in a position of responsible command. But the time for weighing nice questions of generalship had long ago passed away. The garrison were content to look for a commander to lead them against the enemy, with sufficient promptitude and in sufficient numbers to protect them against the certainty of failure. But a week of almost unbroken disaster had dispirited and enfeebled them. Everything that he saw and heard

was of a nature to discourage the Brigadier. Anxious faces were around him, and desponding words saluted his ears. He went round the cantonments, and saw at once how large a force it required to defend such extensive works, and how small a body of troops could be spared for external operations. Everything, indeed, was against him. He had not been sent for until a series of disasters had crippled our means of defence—emboldened the enemy, disheartened the garrison, and brought the grim shadow of starvation close to the cantonment walls.*

But there was another evil soon to become only too painfully apparent. Brigadier Shelton had been sent for to co-operate with the General; but it was manifest that there was never likely to be any co-operation between them. Each has left upon record his opinion of the conduct of the other. The General says that the Brigadier was contumacious and insubordinate. The Brigadier says that he was thwarted in all his efforts to do good service —that he could not even place a gun in position without being reminded by the General that he had no independent command. Upon whomsoever the greater amount of blame may rest, the result was sufficiently deplorable.

* "About four o'clock on the morning of the 9th," says Brigadier Shelton, "I got a note from Elphinstone calling me into cantonments, desiring me to take the Shah's 6th Infantry, and a 6-pounder gun with me. I left the Balla Hissar between six and seven, and marched in broad daylight without the enemy attempting to dispute my passage. I was all prepared for opposition had any been made. I was cordially received, but could read anxiety in every countenance, and they had then only three days' provisions. I was sorry to find desponding conversations and remarks too generally indulged, and was more grieved to find the troops were dispirited. Never having been much in cantonments, I went round and found them of frightful extent—the two sides of the oblong, including the two mission compounds, about 1400 yards each, the two ends each 500, with a rampart and ditch an Afghan could run over with the facility of a cat, with many other serious defects. The misfortune of this was that so many troops were necessary for the actual defence of the works, that only a few could be spared for external operations. I was put in orders to command cantonments, and consequently, in course of my inspections, gave such orders and instructions as appeared to me necessary. This, however, Elphinstone soon corrected, by reminding me that he commanded, not I."—[*Statement of Brigadier Shelton: MS. Records.*]

The military chiefs never acted in concert.* Shelton was a man of a hard uncompromising nature, and it is probable that he had little toleration for the indecision of the General, and was little inclined to regard with tenderness and compassion the infirmities of the poor old chief. He did what he was commanded to do, if not with much military skill, at all events with an unflinching gallantry, to which the General himself bore willing testimony.† But from the absence of a right understanding between them a fatality attended almost every enterprise. Hesitation and delay at the outset—then vacillation and contradiction—resolutions taken and then abandoned—orders issued and then countermanded—so irritated the Brigadier, that his temper, never of a very genial cast, was generally in a somewhat tempestuous state before he took the field at the head of his men. How far we may rightly attribute to this the want of success which attended the Brigadier's operations can only now be conjectured; but it is very certain that in all of them the daring

* "On the 9th," says General Elphinstone, in the memorandum which I have before quoted, "not finding myself equal to the duties, particularly at night, when I could not go about on horseback, I recalled Brigadier Shelton from the Balla Hissar, but I regret to be obliged to disclose that I did not receive from him that cordial co-operation and advice I had a right to expect; on the contrary, his manner was most contumacious; from the day of his arrival he never gave me information or advice, but invariably found fault with all that was done, and canvassed and condemned all orders before officers, frequently preventing and delaying carrying them into effect. This and many other instances of want of assistance I can corroborate by the evidence of several officers still living. Had I been so fortunate as to have had Sir Robert Sale, than whom I never met any officer more disposed to do everything for the public service [ ]. I wish I could say the same of Brigadier Shelton,—he appeared to be actuated by an ill feeling towards me. I did everything in my power to remain on terms with him. I was unlucky also in not understanding the state of things, and being wholly dependent on the Envoy and others for information.—[*MS. Records.*]

† In a public letter to the Secretary to Government written by General Elphinstone from Badeeabad, on February 23rd, 1842, he says: "I beg to be allowed to express my sense of the gallant manner in which the various detachments sent out were led by Brigadier Shelton, and of the invariably noble conduct of the officers on these occasions." I am not aware whether this letter has been published. I have never seen it in print.

of the soldier was more conspicuous than the judgment of the commander.

In the mean while the Envoy was anxiously looking for the return of Sale's brigade from Gundamuck. Shortly after the arrival of Brigadier Shelton in cantonments, he despatched another letter to Captain Macgregor, urging him to send back the troops to the relief of our beleaguered position. Only a fragment of this letter has been preserved; but it sufficiently indicates the Envoy's opinion of the melancholy, almost desperate state to which our affairs had even then attained:

Caubul, November 9th, 1841.

MY DEAR MACGREGOR,

I have written to you several letters, urging you in the strongest manner to come up with Sale's brigade to our relief, but I fear you may not have received them. Our situation is rather a desperate one unless you arrive, because we can neither retreat in any direction, nor leave the cantonments to go into the Balla Hissar; but if we had your force we should be able to take the city, and thus preserve both the cantonment and Balla Hissar. The enemy is a contemptible one.*

From the return of Sale's brigade alone did the Envoy look for any permanent change in the condition of affairs at Caubul. But from that quarter no assistance could come. The force was moving in another direction.

But whatever might be the chance of permanent improvement in the condition of affairs, it was still necessary to do something for the moment. On the morning of the 10th of November, the enemy mustered in great numbers—horse and foot—on the heights commanding the cantonment, sending up shouts of insolent defiance

* *MS. Records.* On the 10th of November, Captain Macgregor received the first official intelligence of the outbreak, in a letter from Sir William Macnaghten, urging him to bring back the brigade to Caubul.—[*Captain Macgregor's Narrative: MS. Records.*] This was, of course, a previous letter, —copy of which is not given in the collection forwarded to government.

and firing *feux de joie.* There were some small forts on the plain below, perilously near our cantonment walls, and in these the enemy presently posted themselves and grievously harassed our soldiers on the works. One of these, known as the Ricka-bashee Fort, situated near the north-east angle of the cantonment, was within musket-shot of our walls. It was easy to pour in thence a galling fire upon the troops manning our works; and the artillery-men at the guns were shot down by the deadly aim of the Afghan marksmen, concealed in the ruins of some adjacent houses. This was not to be endured. It is hard to believe that, whilst his men were being shot down before his eyes by hidden marksmen, the military chief could have needed much prompting to send out a party for the capture of the fort that so commanded our position. But it was only on the urgent representation of the Envoy that an expedition against the Ricka-bashee Fort was undertaken at last. There was a fine manly spirit—there were some good, true soldierly qualities, in Macnaghten; and he told the military commander that he did not shrink from responsibility—that, in such a case as this, he would take it all upon himself, but that at any risk the fort must be carried. Reluctantly the General consented; and a force under Brigadier Shelton, consisting of about two thousand men of all arms, was ordered to hold itself in readiness.* The force assembled about the hour of noon. The Brigadier was making his dispositions for the attack, when it again occurred to the General that the expedition was a dangerous one (as though war were not always dangerous), and that it would be more prudent to abandon it. The aide-de-camp at his elbow asked him why, if such were his opinions, he did

* Two horse-artillery guns, one mountain-train gun, Walker's Horse, her Majesty's 44th Foot, under Colonel Mackrell; the 37th Native Infantry, under Major Griffiths; the 6th Regiment of Shah's Force, under Captain Hopkins.—[*Eyre's Journal.*]

not countermand it at once. And so the expedition was countermanded; and the Brigadier returned "disgusted with such vacillation."*

The troops were brought back within the cantonment walls; and the Brigadier, overflowing with indignation, laid the case before the Envoy. Macnaghten was as eager as Shelton for the movement; and the scruples of the General were overruled. But time had now been lost. The enemy's position had been strengthened. The spirit of our troops had been damped—their forwardness had been checked. The expedition set out with diminished chances of success; and the result was a dubious victory.

The Ricka-bashee Fort was captured on that 10th of November, but in a disastrous and calamitous manner, which made the victory look more like a defeat. It was determined to blow open the gate with powder-bags, and Captain Bellew, the Assistant Quartermaster-General, gallantly volunteered to undertake the work of destruction. But, by some accident, instead of blowing open the main gate, he blew open a small wicket. Two companies of European and four companies of Native troops† had been told off to form the storming party; and Colonel Mackrell, of the 44th, was ordered to command it. The men, gallantly commanded, advanced with spirit to the attack; but they could with difficulty make their way through the narrow aperture, and the enemy, as they struggled forward, poured upon them a hot and destructive fire. Colonel Mackrell and Lieu-

* "I was occupied," says Brigadier Shelton, "in telling off the force about 10 A.M., when I heard Elphinstone say to his aide-de-camp, 'I think we had better give it up.' The latter replied, 'Then why not countermand it at once,'—which was done, and I returned, as you may conceive, disgusted with such vacillation. About two hours after he again consented to attack it." — [*Statement of Brigadier Shelton: MS. Records.*] Eyre says that the force assembled, not at 10, but at 12 A.M.; and as Brigadier Shelton's statement was written from memory, it is less likely to be correct in such small matters as these. The point is of little consequence.

† H.M.'s 44th, the 37th N.I., and Shah Soojah's 6th Infantry.

tenant Bird* forced their way, with a few soldiers, into the fort. Captain Westmacott was shot down outside the aperture, and Captain Macrae sabred in the entrance.† The few who made good their way into the interior of the fort struck a panic into the garrison, who, believing that the whole party were following them, fled in dismay out of the opposite gate. But the storming party, unhappily at this time, were checked by a charge of Afghan horse. The cry of "Cavalry"‡ seems to have paralysed the British musketeers, who wavered, turned, and were soon in disastrous flight—Europeans and Sepoys together. In vain their officers endeavoured to urge them on to the attack—in vain they pleaded the desperate condition of those who had already entered, if they were not speedily supported. One man—a private of the 44th, named Stewart—alone volunteered to follow them. It was not easy to rally the fugitives. Confusion and dismay had seized them, and for some time they were deaf to every appeal. But they were commanded by one who at least was a brave soldier. Brigadier Shelton was a man of iron nerves and dauntless courage. Where the fire was the hottest he stood unshaken by the danger that assailed him, and shamed the disordered crowd of men, no longer soldiers. The example of the one-armed veteran did more than his exhortations. The broken bands rallied, re-formed, and advanced to the attack. But again they gave way to the Afghan horse; and again Shelton's expostulations and example brought the waverers back to their duty. The heavy guns from the cantonments were by this time playing upon the Afghan cavalry; the impetuosity of the enemy was

* Of the Shah's 6th Infantry.

† *Eyre's Journal.*

‡ "A cry," says Lieutenant Eyre, "which too often during our operations paralysed the arms of those whose muskets and bayonets we have been accustomed to consider more than a match for a desultory charge of irregular horsemen."

thus restrained, and Shelton led up his men to the capture of the fort.

In the mean while, the few brave men who had made good their entrance through the wicket were beset by the deadliest peril. Many of the garrison, discovering how small was the real number of their assailants, had returned with new courage to the fort. The devoted Englishmen had endeavoured to secure themselves by shutting the gate through which the garrison had escaped, and securing the chain with a bayonet. But the enemy had removed this slender obstacle, and rushed in upon the little storming party. Colonel Mackrell was found fearfully wounded and disfigured, and was carried into cantonments to die. Lieutenant Bird, with two Sepoys of the 37th N.I., sought refuge in a stable, which they barricaded and defended with a resolution that deserved and secured a crown of success. When the fort was carried by the British troops they were found, with exhausted ammunition, but alive and uninjured. Thirty of the enemy had been shot down by the gallant three.

On the fall of the Ricka-bashee Fort some small adjacent forts were abandoned by the enemy, and a quantity of grain fell into our hands, only to be lost again for want of proper measures to secure it. Before the day closed, Shelton had threatened the enemy, who had collected in some force on the Seeah Sungh hills. The Horse Artillery guns opened with good effect, and the enemy retired towards the city; but no attempt seems to have been made, on our part, to bring on a general action. On this 10th of November, for the first time, any considerable body of troops was brought into the field. The opportunity of making a decided impression was a good one; but it was not turned to good account. The whole affair was mismanaged. The spirit of the troops was damped at the outset by the vacillation of

the General. A grievous error was committed in attempting, for want of information to be easily obtained, an entrance at the wrong point, into the Ricka-bashee Fort. Then the force sent out under Brigadier Shelton was lamentably weak in the mounted branch, although there was no want of cavalry in cantonments. Had the infantry been supported by a stronger body of horse, they would have had more confidence in themselves, and suffered less severely in the action. A strong reserve, too, should have been held in readiness for employment in the event of the party meeting with any check, or requiring any support. As it was, when the Afghan horse attacked our columns and threw them into confusion, there was nothing to give them any confidence but the gallantry of their leaders.

The result, however, of the capture of the forts, though the achievement was clouded by a melancholy loss of life, was more satisfactory than would be supposed from such a recital of the errors that attended it. The Envoy, indeed, subsequently declared that it averted the necessity of a disastrous retreat.* We had got possession of some positions contiguous to the cantonment, the occupation of which by the enemy had grievously distressed our force. For two or three days after the capture the Afghans did little to annoy us. The Commissariat officers took advantage of the opportunity to add to their available supplies;† and whilst they were en-

* "We had only four or five days' supplies for the cantonment. The Balla Hissar as well as the cantonment was in a state of siege. We could not hope for provisions from thence, nor would the place have afforded us either food or shelter, and, in the opinion of the military authorities, to return thither would have been attended with ruin. A disastrous retreat seemed the only alternative, but this necessity was averted by the attack, on the 10th ult., of a neighbouring fort, which had intermediately furnished us with a scanty supply of provisions, but which subsequently espoused the cause of the rebels."—[*Unfinished Report of Sir W. H. Macnaghten. MS. Records.*]

† "*November* 11*th.* — About six hundred maunds of wheat, found in one of the forts yesterday, captured and brought into cantonments. *November* 12*th.*—Busily employed pur-

deavouring to buy grain, the Envoy was doing his best to buy the enemy. The negotiations with the Ghilzyes, which had been broken off, were resumed; and every possible effort was made to win over the chiefs to our cause, or to sow dissension among them. In all these operations he employed the agency of Mohun Lal. The hasty letters written to this individual best unfold the nature of these transactions. On the 11th of November he thus addressed the Moonshee: "You will observe from the enclosed letters that I have confirmed the promises made by you to the Ghilzye rebels; though had you known of our successes yesterday, the terms might have been more favorable for us. Humza Khan should come to me as soon as possible, and I will then talk to him about the case of Gool Mahomed. The money could not be paid until the conditions of the agreement are fulfilled, and we are perfectly certain of the fidelity of Humza and the chiefs. The chiefs should go at once and pay their respects to his Majesty. You should encourage the rival of Ameen-oollah Khan by all possible means. That scoundrel and Abdoollah Khan should be executed, if we could catch them."*

And again, writing two days afterwards, he said: "I have received your letter of this morning's date, and highly approve of all you have done. Let Golam Hussan and Abdool-Ruheem Khan undertake to come to the Zoolfikar Fort this morning, and Captain Trevor will be ready there to receive them. Captain Trevor will be in that fort, night and day, for some time, to receive overtures from any person; and parties coming in should send a single messenger before them. Khan Shereen Khan is quite right not to leave the

chasing provisions. The fight of the 10th had a good effect in giving the villagers some confidence in bringing their stores for sale."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal. MS. Records.*]

* *Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*

Chundawul for a day or two. Tell Naib Sheriff he may safely go security to the Ghilzyes for the payment of the money. When I see Humza Khan I will talk to him about the best plan for the Ghilzye chiefs to wait on his Majesty. You are aware that I would give a reward of 10,000 rupees for the apprehension of Ameen-oollah Khan and such of the Douranee rebel chiefs. If you could see some of the officers of the Hazirbash corps that is just come in with Mahomed Azeem Khan, and give them encouragement, it would be very desirable."*

If there had been any hope of rescuing our force from destruction by honest fighting in the field, the Envoy would not have resorted to such shifts as are indicated in these letters. But he had unhappily discovered that the military commanders had abandoned all hope of beating the enemy, and were thinking of making their way out of the thicket of danger that encompassed them by a path less honourable and less secure. Anxious above all things to escape the disgrace of an open capitulation, which would have humiliated us in the eyes of all the nations of the East, the Envoy exerted all his diplomatic skill to create disunion among our principal enemies—to buy off those whose cupidity was stronger than their hatred—and to offer a reward for the seizure of others.

All this was at least within the range of orthodox diplomacy. But in the mean while that other, darker agency, of which I reluctantly spoke at the close of my last chapter, was being brought into operation. On the 11th of November, John Conolly again wrote to Mohun Lal: "Why do you not write? What has become of Meer Hyder? Is he doing anything with Khan Shereen?

* *Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*

You never told me whether you had written to Naib Humza. What do the rebels propose doing now? Have you not made any arrangements about the bodies of the murdered officers? Offer 2000 rupees to any one who will take them to cantonments, or 1000 to any one who will bury them. Has not Sir Alexander's body been found? Give my salaam to the Naib. If Khan Shereen is not inclined to do service, try other Kuzzilbash chiefs independently. Exert yourself. Write to me often, for the news of Kossids is not to be depended on. There is a man called Hadjee Ali, who might be induced by a bribe to try and bring in the heads of one or two of the *Mufsids*. Endeavour to let him know that 10,000 rupees will be given for each head, or even 15,000 rupees. I have sent to him two or three times."

Mohun Lal, having by this time disencumbered himself of some of his misgivings on the score of his own personal safety, seems to have set about the work entrusted to him with a zeal that must have satisfied his employers. Hadjee Ali, and another man named Aga Mahomed Soudah, were the agents to whom he first offered the price of the blood of their unhappy countrymen. But the Moonshee, perplexed by doubts rather than burdened with scruples, did not see very clearly at first how the chiefs were to be taken off; so he wrote to the Envoy that "he could not find out by Lieutenant Conolly's notes how the rebels are to be assassinated, but the men now employed promise to go into their houses and cut off their heads when they may be without attendants."*

The victims said to have been first marked for the assassin's knife were Abdoollah Khan and Meer Musjedee.

* *Correspondence of Mohun Lal*, quoted in the *Calcutta Review*.

They were known to have been the movers of the attack on Burnes's house; and were regarded, therefore, as the murderers of the officers who were massacred there on the morning of the outbreak. They were known, too, as the boldest and most unscrupulous of the insurgent chiefs. It seemed, therefore, an act alike of retribution and expediency to strike them down in the full flush of success—in the hey-day of their sanguinary career. There is no need in this chapter to endeavour to penetrate the mist of painful obscurity that envelopes the disappearance of the two chiefs. It will be time to discuss the subject when I come to record their deaths.

CHAPTER IV.

[November—1841.]

Action on the Beh-meru Hills—The last of our Successes—Looked-for Advent of Sale's Brigade—Arrival of Pottinger and Haughton—The Siege of Charekur—Destruction of the Goorkha Regiment—Withdrawal of Sale to Jellalabad—Question of Concentration in the Balla Hissar.

On the 13th of November the enemy occupied, in great strength, the Beh-meru hills. They had planted two guns in a commanding position, and were cannonading the British cantonment. It was at once apparent to the Envoy that to leave them unmolested to fire into our works would be miserably to confess our own weakness, and to encourage the enemy in the continuance of a course of aggression which might end in the loss of our post. But it was difficult to persuade the military authorities to send out a force to dislodge them. Captain Lawrence was despatched, in the first instance, to the General; but the message he bore was coldly received, and he returned discouraged to the Envoy, with a recommendation that he should prefer his request in person. Macnaghten went. But the military chiefs were in no mood to listen to his counsel. The pliant General would soon have yielded; but the more dogmatic and self-confident Brigadier was ready with a host of objections, and a

great array of difficulties, to overwhelm the arguments of the Envoy. Macnaghten, however, was peremptory. The guns, he said, must be taken at all risks, and at once, or the loss of cantonments to-morrow might be the result of our supineness to-day. There was again a talk of responsibility. The Envoy took the responsibility on himself, and a strong detachment, with two guns, under Brigadier Shelton,* was ordered out for service. But much time had been lost in these idle discussions. It was nearly four o'clock before the troops were ready to take the field. They moved out in three columns, and taking different directions, pushed forward with a spirit and a rapidity worthy of British troops, to the foot of the hill. One, the most serviceable of the two guns that had been sent out under Lieutenant Eyre, unfortunately stuck fast, for some time, in a canal. But the advanced body of the infantry, under the General's aide-de-camp, Major Thain, were eager to move forward before the guns, thus delayed, could be brought to bear upon the enemy's position. Only one round of grape had been fired when they closed with the enemy. It would have been well had the insurgents been compelled to listen more to that argument which takes no denial; for the musketry fire of our detachment, though poured in at a distance of only ten yards, scarcely took effect upon the insurgents. The men took no aim—fired wildly—anywhere but in the right direction. Emboldened by impunity, the Afghan cavalry charged down upon the British bayonets with irresistible force. No dispositions were

* It consisted of two squadrons of the 5th Light Cavalry, under Colonel Chambers; one squadron of Shah Soojah's 2nd Irregular Horse, under Lieutenant Le Geyt; one troop of Skinner's Horse, under Lieutenant Walker; the Body Guard; six companies of her Majesty's 44th, under Major Scott; six companies of the 37th Native Infantry, under Major Griffiths; four companies of the Shah's 6th Infantry, under Captain Hopkins; one horse artillery and one mountain-train gun, under Lieutenant Eyre, escorted by a company of the Shah's 6th Regiment, under Captain Marshall.

made to receive them. For a while all was panic and confusion. Friend and foe were mixed up together, as the column gave way, and the horsemen charged through and through our ranks until the rout was complete.* It was only a temporary check. The British troops retreated down the slope; but rallied, re-formed behind the reserve at the foot of the hill, and, under cover of the guns which Eyre was now working with good effect, advanced again to the attack. Anderson's Horse now came into action, and making a gallant charge, drove the enemy up the ascent. The infantry followed, and carried the height, whilst the enemy, escaping along the ridge, abandoned their guns to the victors.

Night was now closing in upon the scene. The detachment had been sent out to capture the enemy's guns. The guns were in our possession; but it would have been the mere shadow of a victory if they had not been carried off. The Envoy, who had watched the struggle with painful anxiety, despatched a message of earnest entreaty that no effort should be spared "to complete the triumph of the day,"† by bringing both the guns into cantonments. One of the deserted guns was easily removed by a party of the Shah's 6th Infantry; but some Afghan marksmen were pouring in so warm a fire upon the other and larger piece, that the British soldier—all his character reversed—seeing the danger and not the honour of the exploit, shrunk from the perilous service, and refused to advance for the capture of the gun.‡ It was

* "My very heart," said Lady Sale, "felt as if it leapt to my teeth when I saw the Afghans ride clean through them. The onset was fearful. They looked like a great cluster of bees, but we beat them and drove them up again."

† *Eyre's Journal.*

‡ "Major Scott, of her Majesty's 44th, repeatedly called on his men to descend with him to drag the six-pounder away, but, strange to say, his frequent appeals to their soldierly feelings were made in vain; with a few gallant exceptions, they remained immoveable, nor could the Sepoys be induced to lead the way where their European brethren so obstinately hung back."—[*Eyre's Journal.*]

nearly dark. The further detention of the force would have been attended with serious risk. Eyre, therefore, spiked the gun, which it seemed impossible to carry off, and then secured the capture of the other. The six-pounder was rolled down the hill; the four-pounder was carried into cantonments.

It was eight o'clock before Shelton's force returned to cantonments. The enemy intercepted their movements, and threatened the cantonment, but the attack was repulsed by a few rounds of grape, and a brisk fire from Mackenzie's jezailchees. Many, on both sides, had fallen during the action of the afternoon. Major Thain and Captain Paton were severely wounded. All night, from the hill-side, came loud lamentations—the wailings of the relatives of the Afghans who had fallen in the fight. Lights were flitting about in every direction; for they were burying the dead. On the following day they were busy with the same melancholy work.

This affair of the 13th of November was set down as a success; and it was wise to make the most of it. It was the last success even of a doubtful and equivocal character which the unhappy force was destined to achieve. "Henceforward," wrote one who has chronicled with no common fidelity the events of these miserable months,* "it becomes my weary task to relate a catalogue of errors, disasters, and difficulties, which, following close upon each other, disgusted our officers, disheartened our soldiers, and finally sunk us all into irretrievable ruin, as though Heaven itself, by a combination of evil circumstances, for its own inscrutable purposes, had planned our downfal."

For some days the enemy remained comparatively inactive. Occasional threatenings kept the garrison on the alert; but little was done to change the posture of

* *Lieutenant Eyre.*

affairs. The Envoy, still looking for the return of Sale's brigade, continued to write urgent letters to Captain Macgregor. On the 12th, he had written:

Caubul, November 12th, 1841.

MY DEAR MACGREGOR,

Ibraham Khan has just come in with your note No. 8. I have written to you four times, requesting that you would come up with Sale's brigade as soon as possible. We are still in a very bad way, though not quite so badly off as we were four days ago. Our force is so small that we cannot act on the offensive, and we have not above a fortnight's supplies. We have lost a great many officers. I fear the Ghoorka regiment is annihilated; and as we are in a state of siege, we can learn nothing of what is going on in other parts of the country. Khoda Buksh, Mohamed Shah, and some other Ghilzyes are here, and we thrashed them yesterday. I am trying, through Humza, to enter into some arrangements with the *Mufsids*. As the Ghilzyes are occupied here, I should think you would not meet with much opposition, except, perhaps, in the Khoord Caubul Pass.

W. H. MACNAGHTEN.

Again, on the 14th, he wrote—and it is plain from this letter that he thought the action of the preceding day had in nowise improved their condition:

November 14th, 1841.

MY DEAR MACGREGOR,

I have just received your note of the 10th. Dozens of letters have been written from this, urging your immediate return with Sale's brigade to Caubul; and if you have not started by the time you receive this, I earnestly beg that you will do so immediately. Our situation is a very precarious one; but with your assistance we should all do well, and you must render it to us if you have any regard for our lives or for the honour of our country. We may be said to be in a state of siege; and had we not made two desperate sallies, we should ere now have been annihilated. We have provisions for only ten days; but when you arrive we shall be able to command the resources of the country. In our

action of yesterday Thain and Paton were wounded, the latter so severely that his arm has been amputated. I have still some hope of the Charekur detachment, but a faint one. I have no news from Ghuzni or Candahar. In the interior of the country they seem to be as *jaghee* as at the capital. Mehtur Moosa joined the rebels yesterday. We have been unmolested to-day, but it may be only the lull before the storm. Humza Khan has promised to call on me this evening. I have no idea that he will do so. I intend to make much of him. I have written to you several letters of late, so shall say no more for the present. The Ghilzye force being here, I should conceive you will experience no opposition on the road.

W. H. MACNAGHTEN.

The hopes expressed for the safety of the Charekur detachment were dissipated on the following day. On the 15th of November, Major Pottinger and Lieutenant Haughton came in wounded from Charekur, and reported that the Goorkha regiment had been cut to pieces. They had held out for some time with noble resolution —but their position was untenable for want of water— the horrors of unappeasable thirst had overcome them —they had been compelled to abandon their post—had attempted to make good their retreat to Caubul—and had perished by the way.

The story which Pottinger told must be briefly related. Before the end of October the Kohistanees and Nijrowees were in open revolt; and on the 1st of November, Meer Musjedee, with a strong insurgent force, moved across the plain of the Barakab and took up a position at Akserai, completely cutting off the communication between Charekur and Caubul.* Pottinger and Codrington now took counsel together. The former,

* "This step they ventured on in consequence of our want of cavalry, which prevented us from having patrols, and encouraged them to march above forty miles across a level plain, in no place twenty miles from our own post, and in some parts of the latter half approaching within eight miles."—[*Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report: MS. Records.*]

as Political Agent on the Toorkistan frontier, resided in the castle of Lughmanee, about two miles distant from Charekur, where the Goorkha regiment was planted in some fortified barracks, the defences of which were still in course of construction. Codrington, who commanded the regiment, was, at the dawn of November, with Pottinger in the Lughmanee castle. Their position was one of great difficulty. They sent out reconnoitring parties to obtain intelligence of the precise position of the enemy; but, encumbered as they were with women and children, and almost wholly without carriage, it seemed impossible that the Goorkha regiment could be moved out of Charekur. Pottinger wrote to the Envoy for troops, called upon all the friendly chiefs to aid him, and began to strengthen his position. But it was soon apparent that no help could come from Caubul, and that the friends on whom he relied were, in fact, disguised enemies. Many Kohistanee and Nijrowee chiefs visited him on the two first days of November. Loud in their expressions of friendship, they declared their willingness to co-operate with him for the suppression of the insurrection; but when he called upon them to attack the castles of the chiefs who had gone out to join the army of Meer Musjedee, it at once became apparent that they lied. The suspicions of Pottinger were aroused. The "friends" around him were assembling in such numbers as to form an army of their own; and Pottinger, determined as he was to betray neither suspicion nor alarm, could not help feeling that a sudden attack was by no means an improbable event to proceed out of all these armed gatherings.

On the morning of the 3rd, the numbers of armed men around the Residency had increased. The reconnoitring parties had not returned. The chiefs were asking for presents, but refusing to do the service required of them.

Everything seemed enveloped in an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion; and Pottinger, as he received the chiefs, who came pressing in with offers of friendship, could not help feeling that a struggle was at hand.

Before noon, he received several of the more powerful chiefs at the Residency, and at noon went out to meet the petty Sirdars, who were clustering in the garden around his house. With characteristic Afghan cupidity, they assailed him with questions respecting the amount of the rewards that would be paid for their services. Pottinger entered into some explanations, which the foremost of the party seemed disposed to consider satisfactory; but, expressing some doubts as to whether their clansmen would be satisfied, they requested that the nature of the overtures might be made known to those who were removed from the circle around the British Agent. Lieutenant Rattray, the Political Assistant, had just joined Pottinger in the garden. He was now requested to explain the matter to the rest, who were standing a little way apart. Accompanied by the principal chiefs, Rattray proceeded to the place where they were assembled, and, after some conversation, they quitted the garden, and repaired to "an adjoining stubble-field, where several parties of armed men were standing."

It was not long before Rattray became aware that treachery was brewing. He turned to leave the field, and was immediately shot down. Pottinger was still sitting in conversation with some of the chiefs, when a man attached to the Hazerbash regiment ran up, and by hints, rather than by intelligible words, apprised him of the danger that surrounded him. The sound of firing confirmed the ominous intelligence. The chiefs rose and fled. Pottinger escaped into the castle, and from the *terre-pleine* of the rampart looked down, and saw Rattray lying badly wounded on the ground, and "the recent

tenderers of service making off in all directions with the plunder of the Hazerbash camp."*

Rattray was soon despatched. A party of the enemy, crossing the plain and seeing the wounded officer at their mercy, fired their pieces into his head and body. They then invested Pottinger's position, firing upon him from the shelter of the numerous water-courses and walls. But assistance was now at hand. Lieutenant Haughton, the adjutant of the Goorkha corps, was moving down from Charekur. As soon as he appeared in the vicinity of the garden, Captain Codrington made a sortie, and united himself with the relieving force. The enemy were driven out of the garden with severe loss. Evening was by this time closing in. The enemy had got possession of the Charekur road, and before any measures of future defence could be concerted between the two officers, Codrington was obliged, after leaving some details with Pottinger, to move off his Goorkhas to his own fortified barracks. On the following day, with four companies of Goorkhas, and a six-pounder gun, Codrington moved down from Charekur, to relieve Pottinger's guard, and to supply his little garrison with ammunition. Owing mainly, however, to the impetuosity of a company of young soldiers,† the column met with a check, and

* *Major Pottinger's Badeeabad Report.*

† "When the party got in motion the enemy retreated on all sides. One very large body, however, remained in a position on the mountain side, threatening the flank of the column. Ensign Salisbury was detached with a company to remove this. The enemy retreated as they advanced, and the Goorkhas being young soldiers, having once got heated, followed with great eagerness, despite the frequently-sounded recall; and on their finally stopping, the enemy perceived they were too far separated from the main body, and followed them up with a boldness which obliged Mr. Salisbury to make frequent halts. In consequence, Mr. Haughton was obliged to halt the convoy, and detach the greater part of his men, to extricate the compromised company. This halt encouraged the other parties of the enemy, who had retired, and they closed in from all sides in most formidable array (apparently not less than 4000 men). Mr. Haughton, however, maintained his ground till joined by Mr. Salisbury, when, seeing the hopelessness of making good his way, he retreated and gained the

was compelled to fall back on Charekur. Ensign Salisbury was mortally wounded, and many men of the Goorkha regiment fell on the retreat.

Seeing little prospect now of being relieved, and finding his ammunition reduced to a few rounds in the pouches of his men, Pottinger determined, after nightfall, to attempt a retreat on Charekur. Disguising his intentions by collecting grain during the day, as for a protracted defence, he eluded the vigilance of the enemy, and disencumbering himself of his Afghan followers, and all whose fidelity there was any reason to suspect, he mustered the Hindostanees outside the postern, upon the pretext of making a sortie upon the enemy, and then marched for the barracks. Avoiding the main road, and skirting the edge of the mountain, the little party, under cover of the night, made good its retreat, and united itself with the main body of the Goorkha regiment at Charekur.*

On the morning of the 5th of November the enemy assembled, in large bodies, around the fortified barracks; and, after attacking the outposts, closely invested the place. Codrington commanded the regiment. Pottinger,

barracks in safety. A great number of men fell in the retreat, as they were obliged frequently to halt, formed in close order to resist the enemy's cavalry, which, being closely on them, was only kept in check by the gallantry of Mr. Haughton, who, with a few men and the gun, remained in the rear, and covered the retreat of the disheartened party. Mr. Salisbury was mortally wounded, and the trail of the field-gun gave way at the elevating-screw just as they reached support."—[*Pottinger's Report: MS. Records.*]

* "In the castle of Lughmanee," writes Pottinger, in his official report, "we abandoned the hostages from the Kohistan chiefs, two boxes of treasure, containing 10,000 rupees, and about sixty Afghan firelocks (confiscated from the deserters of the Kohistan corps), all my office records, Mr. Rattray's, Dr. Grant's, and my own personal property, and a very large number of horses belonging to ourselves and the horsemen who had not deserted. The Heratees and seven or eight Peshawerees were the only Afghans who adhered to me. All the Cauboolees deserted, and one principal cause of so immediate a termination to my defence may be traced to the reduction of a portion of my escort, which had so disgusted the men who remained, that they deserted as soon as Mr. Rattray was killed."—[*MS. Records.*]

divesting himself of his political character, became the artillery officer again, and took charge of the guns. Moving out with a field-piece to support the skirmishers, he was wounded by a musket-shot in the leg. But there was too much work in hand for one of his temper to think much of such an accident as this. The enemy were pressing fiercely on. Codrington and his Goorkhas were confined to the barracks and a few mud huts in their immediate neighbourhood. They stood their ground manfully and well. But the hostile multitude poured like a torrent upon the little band of devoted men.* The Goorkhas were driven from the huts. They saw their gallant commander fall mortally wounded; but they returned undaunted to the attack. Haughton, the adjutant, was now at their head. He led the men gallantly to the charge, and drove back the enemy beyond the gardens they had occupied in the morning. Again and again the Afghans returned to the attack. But the little body of Goorkhas, with heroic courage, held their ground till night put an end to the conflict.

At a distance of some three hundred yards from the barracks there was a castle, the towers of which so effectually commanded them, that it was necessary to occupy the post with a garrison of fifty men. But it was not very easy to retain it. The enemy increased greatly in numbers on the 6th; and, in spite of the successful sorties of the Goorkhas, drove back their outposts, and confined them within the narrow limits of their barracks. On the following day, the castle garrison, betrayed by the regimental Moonshee, were in-

* Havildar Mootee Ram, of the Goorkha regiment, who gave a detailed account of the defence of Charekur, described this attack on their position by saying, "there were whole *beegahs* (acres) of gleaming swords moving towards us."

duced to surrender. The enemy took possession of the place, and from its commanding towers poured in a galling fire on the Goorkhas in the barracks. The position of the little garrison was now becoming more and more critical. Cut off by the enemy, water had become lamentably scarce. They had lost half their officers and a large number of their comrades. The enemy had increased in number and in fury, and completely commanded their position. To shut themselves up in their barracks was to die of thirst; to attempt to fight their way out was to be cut to pieces.

On the 8th, the enemy offered them terms. The condition was, that they should become Mahomedans. "We came to this country," said Pottinger, in reply, "to aid a Mahomedan sovereign in the recovery of his rights. We are therefore within the pale of Islam, and exempt from coercion on the score of religion." To this they replied, that the King himself had ordered the attack; and asked if Pottinger would surrender on receiving his Majesty's orders. "I can do nothing," said Pottinger, "without a written order from the King." And with this the negotiations ended.

But there was an enemy more terrible than these infuriated crowds of Kohistanees and Nijrowees. The garrison were suffering agonies of thirst.* On the 10th, the last pool of water was drawn; and half a wine-glass of the precious fluid served out to each fighting man.

* "Some sheep were given to us by the officers; we found relief from sucking the raw flesh, and some of the men placed the contents of the stomach of the sheep in cloths, and, wringing them very hard, obtained some moisture to assuage their raging thirst. The sick and wounded now increased to a frightful amount, and were continually screaming for water in piercing accents. Our muskets were so foul from incessant use, that the balls were forced down with difficulty, although separated from the paper of the cartridge which usually wraps them round. The lips of the men became swollen and bloody, and their tongues clave to their palates." —[*Evidence of Mootee Ram, Havildar.*]

On the 11th there was not sufficient to serve out to the whole party. At night they stole out with their *lotahs* concealed under their clothes, lest the shining metal should betray them, to snatch a few drops of water from a neighbouring spring. But the enemy discovered the practice, and shot down the wretched men. Parties were then sent out to cover the water-carriers; but the soldiers, mad with the tortures of thirst, quitted their ranks, and could not be restrained from rushing forward in search of the liquid life for which they had so long been languishing. Every new effort to obtain water, however well devised, failed from the same cause. The parties, which moved out as disciplined soldiers, soon, in the madness of their sufferings, became a disorderly rabble—soon were at the mercy of the enemy, who shot them down, in their helplessness, like sheep.

All hope was now at an end. The garrison were reduced to a party of two hundred fighting men. They had but thirty rounds of ammunition for each musket in store. The wretched Goorkhas were literally perishing with intolerable thirst. Pottinger and Haughton took counsel together; and determined to make a desperate effort to save the remnant of their little force by a rapid unencumbered march to Caubul. Accordingly, on the evening of the 13th of November, the Goorkhas evacuated Charekur. Pottinger led the advance. Haughton had, on the afternoon of that day, been disabled by a sabre-cut from a jemadar of artillery, whilst apprehending a party of deserters; and was now scarcely able to sit his horse. Mr. Grant, a medical officer—not the first medical officer who has played the part of the true soldier in battle, and justified the claims of his profession to the soldier's honours and rewards—having spiked all the guns with his own hands, led out the main body; whilst Ensign Rose brought up the rear. The order of march was soon lost. The little force became

a disorderly rabble, struggling on with the one object of allaying at the first pool of water the torments of unendurable thirst. It was impossible to keep them together—impossible to lead them in safety to the capital. Pottinger and Haughton were exhausted by the pain of their wounds. They could render no service to their men; and would have perished had they remained behind. So they determined on pushing on to Caubul. A single Sepoy of the Goorkha corps, who plodded on with weary feet beside the horsemen, Pottinger's English writer, and the regimental *bunyah*, were their only companions. The route was unknown to them, and they had no guide; but they struggled on through many difficulties and much danger, and at last reached the neighbourhood of Caubul. Here the peril thickened around them. Descending into the Caubul plain behind the lake, and intending to cross the cultivated ground to cantonments, at the back of the Shah's garden, at Killa Bolundee, they missed the turning, and soon found themselves in the midst of the enemy's sentinels. Fearing to attract attention by turning back, they then made for Deh-Afghan, but finding the place occupied by the enemy, and being closely challenged by the sentries, they were compelled to pass into the city. Pursuing the lanes and bazaars along the river bank, and narrowly escaping death from a volley fired upon them by one of the enemy's picquets, they made their way at last to cantonments. The regiment in the mean while had perished. Rose and Grant were slain by the enemy,*

* Major Pottinger does not mention in his report when and how these officers fell. Lieutenant Melville, in his narrative, says: "From all that can be gathered from the reports brought in, it appears that the devoted corps had struggled on to Kardurrah, gallantly headed by Ensign Rose and Dr. Grant, where it was cut to pieces. The former officer fell, having first killed four of the enemy with his own hand; and the latter, although he contrived to escape from the murderous hands at Kardurrah, yet just as he had arrived in the sight of the haven of his hopes, within three miles of cantonments, was massacred by some wood-cutters."

and scarcely a man escaped to tell how his comrades had been miserably destroyed.*

The intelligence brought in by Pottinger from the Kohistan was not of a nature to rouse the drooping spirits of the Envoy. Charekur had been lost; the Goorkha regiment annihilated; and there were now large bodies of Kohistanees and Nijrowees, having done their bloody work at home, ready to join the insurgents at the capital. He had been looking, too, with eager anxiety, for the return of Sale's brigade from Gandamuck, and now he learnt, to his bitter disappointment, that it had marched for Jellalabad. Still he did not despair of being able to recall it. On the 17th of November he again wrote to Captain Macgregor:†

Caubul, November 17th, 1841.

MY DEAR MACGREGOR,

I have written to you daily, pointing out our precarious state, and urging you to return here, with Sale's brigade, with all possible expedition. General Elphinstone has done the same, and we now learn, to our dismay, that you have proceeded to Jellalabad. Our situation is a desperate one if you do not immediately return to our relief, and I beg that you will do so without a moment's delay. We have now been besieged for fourteen days, and without your assistance are utterly unable to carry on any offensive operations. You may easily make Caubul in eight marches, and, as the Ghilzyes are here, you would not have many enemies to contend with.

W. H. MACNAGHTEN.

In the course of the night he received a letter from Macgregor, which satisfied him that there was no longer any hope of receiving aid from Sale's brigade. He had begun to think by this time of the provisions of the

* This account of the defence of Charekur and the destruction of the Goorkha corps, is taken from Major Pottinger's Badeeabad report (MS.). Eyre seems to have had access to it.

† *Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten: MS. Records.*

tripartite treaty, and to look for aid from the Sikhs. On the following morning he again wrote:*

Caubul, November 18th, 1841.

MY DEAR MACGREGOR,

I have received your letter of the 13th instant. The Cossid gave us an account of your action on the 14th instant; which, if he speaks truth, must have been a very successful one. We are *in statu quo*. Our chief want is supplies. I perceive now that you could not well have joined us. I hope you have written to Mackeson, asking him for aid from the Sikhs under the treaty. If there is any difficulty about the Sikhs getting through the pass, Mackeson should offer a bribe to the Khyberees of a lakh of rupees, or more, to send them safe passage. These are not times to stick at trifles. The Goorkha regiment has been annihilated, but Pottinger and Haughton are here; the latter has lost his hand. I believe I told you that Paton lost his arm in the action we had near the cantonment the other day. It is raining here, and the weather is very cold; but I am not sure that this is not as bad for the enemy as for ourselves. I do not hear anything from Ghuzni or Candahar, but I should not wonder if they were in the same mess as ourselves. We must look for support chiefly from Peshawur. Write to Mackeson continually, and tell him to urge government to send as many troops into the country as speedily as possible. John Conolly is in the Balla Hissar with his Majesty, who, as you may imagine, is in a sad taking about all the Fussad.. I am making no progress in my negotiations with the rebels.

W. H. MACNAGHTEN.

I have received yours of the 15th.

The abandonment of all hope of assistance from Sale's

* *Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten: MS. Records.* A version of this letter is given in the published papers; but there are some curious errors in the official text, which illustrate, in a very forcible manner, the value of these public documents as guides to historical truth. The private letter, in spite of its very unofficial style, is turned into an official one, commencing, "Sir."—The words, "the weather is very cold," are printed "the *water* is very cold;" and instead of "We must look for support chiefly from Peshawur," Macnaghten is made to say, "We must look for *supplies* chiefly from Peshawur." The evils of such carelessness as this have received a remarkable illustration in Major Hough's *Review of the Military Operations at Caubul*, in which are some pages of remark on the subject of *Supplies from Peshawur*, based upon this identical passage in the mis-copied or mis-printed letter.

brigade had now given a new complexion to the aspect of affairs. The military authorities, who had been long ripe for capitulation, now pressed the Envoy sorely with their "distressful accounts of the state of the troops and cattle from want of provisions," and of the "hopelessness of further resistance."* But Macnaghten, though he saw the necessity of weighing well the dangers that beset the force, and the means of extricating it from its perilous position, was not a man to grasp at the degradation of surrender whilst yet there was a hope of rescuing it by any more honourable course. The time had come, however, for him to declare fully his sentiments to the military commander; so, on the 18th of November, he addressed to him a letter, in which the whole question is thus reviewed:†

Caubul, 18th Nov., 1841.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

The intelligence received last night from Captain Macgregor makes it necessary that we should now take our future proceedings into consideration. We have scarcely a hope of reinforcement from Sale's brigade. I would recommend we hold on here as long as possible, and throughout the whole winter, if we can subsist the troops by any means, by making the Mahomedans and Christians live chiefly on flesh and other contrivances. Here we have the essentials of wood and water in abundance, and I believe our position is impregnable.

A retreat in the direction of Jellalabad would be most disastrous, and should be avoided, except in the last extremity; we shall be better able to see, eight or ten days hence, whether that extremity must be resorted to. In that case, we should have to sacrifice the valuable property of government; we should have to sacrifice his Majesty, who would not come away without his family; and were we to make good our retreat to Jellalabad, we should find no shelter for our troops (the cantonments being destroyed), and perhaps no provisions. I fear, too, that in such a retreat very few of our camp followers would survive. I have frequently

* *Macnaghten's Unfinished Report to Government: MS. Records.*

† The substance of this letter is given very correctly in Eyre's journal.

thought of negotiation, or rather capitulation, for such it would be, but in the present unsettled state of affairs there is no authority possessing sufficient weight to protect us all through the country; besides, we should hardly be justified, even for the security of our persons and property, to abandon even one position in the country. Another alternative would be for us to retire to the Balla Hissar; but this, I also fear, would be a disastrous retreat, and we should have to sacrifice a vast deal of property. We probably should not suceed in getting in our heavy guns, and they would be turned with effect by the enemy against the citadel. We should have neither food, nor firewood to cook it; for these essentials we should be dependent upon sortées into the city, in which, if we were beaten, we should of course be ruined.

Upon the whole, I think it best to hold on where we are as long as possible, in the hope that something may turn up in our favour. It is possible that we may receive reinforcements from Candahar. Now that the cold weather is coming on, the enemy will disperse to their houses very soon, and there will only be left the rebel chiefs and their immediate followers. We should not, therefore, be molested during the winter: and though circumstances make it likely that we should be attacked soon if we are to be attacked at all, a victory on our side might change the whole aspect of affairs.

I was disposed to recommend that a decisive blow should be struck somewhere to retrieve our fortunes, and that Mahomed Khan's fort should be captured. But I have since had reason to believe no solid advantage, such as commanding the road to the Balla Hissar, would result therefrom; that possibly we might not be able to hold it; and, in short, that the benefit of the measure would not counterbalance the risk attending it.

In eight or ten days more, we shall be better able to judge whether there is any chance of an improvement in our position, and, if not, it will remain for the military authorities to decide whether it would be more prudent to attempt a retreat to Jellalabad, or to retire into the Balla Hissar. If we could only bring in sufficient provisions for the winter, I would on no account leave the cantonment. Yours, &c. &c.,

W. H. MACNAGHTEN.

Many and anxious, by this time, had been the discussions relative to the abandonment of the cantonment, and

the concentration of the British troops in the Balla Hissar. The measure had been recommended by the engineer, Sturt, and others, very soon after the first outbreak of the insurrection. The Envoy had favoured it at an earlier, as he did at a later, period of the siege; but he seems at this time to have been more than usually alive to the difficulties of the movement. The General had scarcely any opinion at all on the subject. But the Brigadier was resolutely opposed to it. His arguments were not very overwhelming—but they were overwhelmingly advanced; and he seems for some time to have borne down the better reason of all who supported the measure. No one in the whole force was more profoundly impressed with a conviction of the disadvantages of the cantonment as a military position than Brigadier Shelton himself. He has left on record, in emphatic language, his opinions upon this point; but he could see in the extreme insecurity of the cantonment an argument only for a discreditable retreat. He could not see that if the extent of the cantonment-works were such as to render their defence difficult, and external operations on a large scale impossible, there was in this circumstance abundant reason for the removal of the force to a position cursed with none of these annihilating evils.

In the Balla Hissar the troops would have been free from molestation. They would not, as in cantonments, have been harassed and dispirited by the necessity of manning works exposed at every point to the attacks of the enemy. They could have sallied out from such a position in large bodies—have attacked the city and the neighbouring forts—have obtained supplies from the surrounding country—and held their own till the coming spring. But against all this it was alleged that the removal of the force from the cantonment to the Balla Hissar would be a hazardous operation—that it could not be accomplished without great loss, including, in all

probability, the entire sacrifice of the sick and wounded. That the movement would not have been free from danger is true. What movement could be free from danger, at such a time?—what warlike operations ever are free from danger? But that it would have necessarily involved the total sacrifice of the sick and wounded, is only to be assumed upon the hypothesis, that the curse which had so long brooded over us would still have worked for our own undoing, and that, therefore, no precautions would have been taken to protect them.*

Other arguments against the movement were also adduced. It was said that there was a scarcity of firewood in the Balla Hissar; and that there was no forage for the horses. But to this it was replied that there was a sufficiency of wood for purposes of cooking, that more might be obtained by sallies into the city, and that the improved shelter and increased comforts of the troops in the Balla Hissar would, under the most unfavorable circumstances, compensate for the want of firing. With regard to the forage, it was replied, that, if the horses could not be fed, they might be shot; and that there was little need for the employment of cavalry in such a position as the Balla Hissar.

One other argument, brought forward perhaps to give respectability to the whole, was urged by Shelton and his supporters. It was said that the abandonment of cantonments would have been an acknowledgment of defeat, and a triumph to our enemies. It is enough to say of this, that it was urged by men who were clamorous for an abandonment, not of one position, but of all our positions in

* Eyre says, that "though to carry the sick would be *difficult*, it still was not *impossible*; for so short a distance two or even three men could be conveyed in one *doolie:* some might manage to walk, and the rest could be mounted on yaboos, or camels, at the top of their loads." He says, too, that "if we had occupied the Seeah Sungh hills with a strong party, placing guns there to sweep the plains on the cantonment side, the enemy could have done little to impede our march without risking a battle with our whole force in fair field, to which they were generally averse, but which would, perhaps, have been the *best* mode for *us* of deciding the struggle."

Afghanistan, and a precipitate retreat from the country. In the one case there might have been a partial triumph; in the other there must have been a complete one.

And so, owing mainly to the pertinacity of Brigadier Shelton, the only measure which could have saved the British force from destruction, and the British name from degradation, was rejected in this conjuncture. The troops remained in cantonments, threatened by the enemy and disheartened by the ominous gloom of their own officers, only to sustain another and more crushing defeat; and then to sink into a state of utter inactivity and prostration, whilst the leaders of the enemy were being brought over to consent to terms of capitulation, humbling indeed to the pride of the proudest and most successful nation of the world.*

* Some interesting particulars of the deaths of Lieutenant Rattray and Captain Codrington are given in a narrative of the events at Charekur, supplied by Major Pottinger's Moonshee. It appears that some chiefs had warned the former officer that if he left the fort he would be killed by the people outside; but that Rattray had replied, "They have eaten our salt, and could not be guilty of such an act." The Moonshee then goes on to say: "When Mr. Rattray came near them, all the chiefs paid their respects to him, saying, 'Inshallah! we shall go to-morrow and fight with Meer Musjedee.' Mr. R. said, 'Very good! If you will go, I shall give your people presents on their return; and to-morrow they shall receive five rupees each for their expenses, and I will also go with my sowars.' Mr. R. then turned to go back to the fort; but Jubbar Khan asked him to look at his men, to which he agreed, and turned back again. When he had taken about six or seven steps, one of the Kohistanees called him by name, and ran at him, firing his gun at Mr. R., who turned and ran towards the fort. I, the Meerza, and the Chuprassie, all ran towards the fort. When I had nearly reached it I looked back, and saw Mr. R. lying down on the plain. I ran again towards him, and when near him, he called me and told me to take hold of him and help him into the fort. Directly I took hold of his hand about fifty Kohistanees fired, and Mr. R. received a ball in his forehead. I then ran back and got into the fort, where I found Major Pottinger looking towards the Kohistanees, and firing at them." The touching circumstances of Captain Codrington's death are thus related:—"When Captain Codrington saw that Major Pottinger was wounded, he went out to the two companies; but was very severely wounded by a shot in the back. All his Sepoys began to cry for him. . . . . Captain Codrington was able to walk into cantonments; but fell down before he reached his house, and asked for water. We carried him and laid him on the same bed as Major Pottinger, whom he asked for pen, ink, and paper, and wrote a letter to his wife, whose picture he also gave to Major Pottinger. He lingered on until the night of the 7th, when he died. We buried him and Lieutenant Salisbury in one grave."—[*MS. Records.*]

CHAPTER V.

[November, 1841.]

Progress of the Insurrection—State of Affairs in the Balla Hissar—Shah Soojah—The Action of the 23rd of November—Defeat of the British Troops—Negotiations with the Enemy.

WHILST the feebleness of the military commanders in cantonments had been playing away stake after stake, until every hope of redemption was past, the King, shut up in the Balla Hissar, had been watching the progress of events with the profoundest anxiety and alarm. His bearing was that of a man heartless and hopeless under a pressure of unanticipated misfortunes; but prostrate and imbecile as he was in this conjuncture, he could see plainly enough the prostration and imbecility of the British chiefs. When the commissariat fort fell into the hands of the insurgents, the great calamity rose up suddenly before the inmates of the Balla Hissar. From the summit of the palace the enemy might be seen throwing the plunder over the walls of the fort, to be carried off by their companions below. There was a general rush upwards to this commanding position to witness the humiliating sight. The King beheld it with deep emotion, and, painfully agitated, turned to the Wuzeer and said, "Surely the English are mad."*

* *Lieutenant Melville's Narrative.*

Dejected as he was before, this crowning calamity sunk him into a state of still deeper dejection. Every report of the designs of the enemy, however incredible, filled him with new terror. It was said that the insurgents were running a mine from the Shor Bazaar under the very walls of the palace. Dreading an immediate explosion, he quitted his apartments, and took up his residence at the gate of the Harem, where, seated at a window commanding an extensive view of the cantonments and the surrounding country, he traced, through a telescope, the progress of the exciting events passing below. Day after day he sate at the same window, looking down, from morning to evening prayer, upon a scene which seldom yielded aught to comfort or reassure him. Shah Soojah had never been a courageous man; but he had always been a very proud one. That now, enfeebled and desponding, he should have clung to any support, turned anywhere for assistance, was not strange; but when they saw the pompous and arrogant monarch now so humbled and obsequious, laying aside all the environments of royalty, to which before he had clung with such pitiful tenacity, the English officers about him felt that the shock must have been great indeed so to revolutionise his whole nature. He made even the British subalterns sit beside him on chairs; conversed familiarly with them; enquired into their wants, and condescended to supply them. "If," said one who had good opportunities of narrowly watching the behaviour of the King at this time, "he is acting a part, he certainly performs it admirably!"

Other reports soon came in from the city, or started up in the Balla Hissar itself, still more to terrify the King. It was alleged that the Arabs in the fort* were about to

* Lieutenant Melville says they composed a very large portion of the inhabitants; but I believe this to be an error.

rise up in a body, to massacre the troops and to give the place over to the rebels. The King, who never withheld his belief from any story however improbable, seized the chief of the Arab tribe, and ordered that no women or children should be suffered to leave the fort. But women and children of all kinds were now clamouring for egress. Collecting in crowds before the Wuzeer's house, they importuned him, with loud lamentations, to suffer them to depart. The Wuzeer appealed to the King, who, strictly prohibiting the egress of any Arab families, suffered more than seven hundred other women and children to pass out of the fort. The English officers thought, that if all the Arabs and Afghans had been removed from the fort, and all the provisions secured for the use of the fighting men, the whole force might have been saved.*

The stores in the Balla Hissar had been indented upon for the use of the cantonment force,† and the available supplies having been thus reduced, the troops were put upon half-rations. The departure, however, of Brigadier Shelton and his escort had diminished the number of the fighting men, and now, under Major Ewart, they consisted of little more than the 54th N.I., a portion of the Horse Artillery troop under Captain Nicoll, and some details of irregular troops. At the

* Lieutenant Melville says: "Had the more vigorous and energetic measure been taken of turning every native out of the fort, were he Arab or Afghan, the salvation of the whole force might have been the result. Although all sorts of grain and other supplies were hardly procurable in the shops of the bazaar, yet it was known beyond a doubt that the private dwelling-houses, of which latter there were above a thousand in the fort, had each of them a four or six months' supply stored in their granary. But no: this was not his Majesty's game; and the withering hand of feebleness which seemed at this period to guide and govern all our actions, did not even point out the necessity of its being put into execution. There would have been no oppression, no tyranny in so doing, as the price of every grain would have been punctually paid, and the Afghans and Arabs in the fort having friends living in the city would have been received by them with open arms."

† To no great extent, I believe.

points most exposed to attack the components of the little garrison were posted, and, kept always on the alert by reports of some threatened movement of the enemy, were always ready to give them a warm reception.

The affair of the 13th of November struck a gleam of hope into the garrison of the Balla Hissar. It seemed as though new courage had been infused into the cantonment force; and, as though to second the invigorated efforts of their comrades, the artillerymen in the citadel now began to ply their batteries with increased activity. They shelled the city, and attempted to fire it with carcases; but the houses were not of a construction to be easily ignited, and the shelling produced little effect. The residence of Ameen-oollah Khan, in the city, was to be seen from the batteries; and the gunners, knowing the old man to be one of our deadliest enemies, singled it out as a mark, and poured their iron rain upon it. But the chief removed himself and his family to another house; and the only loss was among the horses.

A crisis was now at hand in the fate of the cantonment force. The 23rd of November was one of the most eventful and the most disastrous in the history of the insurrection. On that day a battle was fought, which ended in the disgraceful and calamitous defeat of the British troops. The enemy had been for some time making their appearance on the Beh-meru hill, and had repeatedly descended into the village, whence the British commissariat officers had been drawing supplies of grain.* Irri-

* "The enemy have for some time past daily made their appearance on the Beh-meru hills, and have repeatedly visited the village of Beh-meru, destroyed the houses, and plundered the inhabitants, and have expelled them from their homes on account of their aid to us, in bringing in grain. Two days ago, they surprised some of my people purchasing, wounded three, and seized about fifty maunds of wheat, as also a few of my camels and yaboos. I am daily up long before gunfire, and as soon as there is sufficient light commence purchasing; as it is only early in the morning that the villagers can venture to bring their stores for sale."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal: MS. Records.*]

tated by the assistance which the villagers had rendered us, the insurgents had destroyed the houses, pillaged the inhabitants, and attacked our commissariat people when getting in their supplies. This was not to be endured. Again the Envoy counselled the despatch of a strong force to occupy the Beh-meru hill, and to dislodge the enemy from a position in which they were able to work us such grievous annoyance. Again the Brigadier objected. Urging that the troops were exhausted and dispirited by constant harassing duty on the ramparts, that they had been living upon half-rations of parched wheat, and were therefore physically as well as morally enfeebled, he protested against a movement which he said would have the effect of increasing the number of wounded and sick, without leading to any solid advantage.* But these objections were overruled. On the 22nd a weak detachment had been sent out, under Major Swayne, but it had only added another to our list of failures. It was plain that something more must be done. A council of war was held that evening at the General's quarters, and it was determined, after much earnest discussion, on the special recommendation of the Envoy, that a strong force should be sent out before daybreak on the following morning, to occupy the Beh-meru hills. Shelton recommended that at the same time an attack should be made on the village. It was urged that the enemy would abandon the village as soon as our troops occupied the hill. The Brigadier declared that the occupation of the hill would only make the enemy hold the village with greater pertinacity. Shel-

* "I opposed it," says Shelton, in his own statement, "in the then dispirited state of the troops, harassed, exhausted, and fatigued from constant duty on the ramparts, night and day, and on half-rations of parched wheat, without any apparent ultimate advantage, with the certainty of diminishing our strength, and increasing our wounded, already too numerous to provide cattle for."—[*Statement of Brigadier Shelton: MS. Records.*]

ton's advice, however, was overruled. The force went out before daybreak,* took possession of the hill, and posted themselves on the north-eastern extremity, which overhung the village. With a fatuity only to be accounted for by the belief that the curse of God was upon those unhappy people, they had taken out a single gun. This gun was now placed in a position commanding an enclosure of the village, where the watch-fires gave out their bright tokens that numbers of the enemy were assembled. A shower of grape was presently poured in upon the bivouac. Starting up in confusion, the enemy gave back a fire from their jezails, but, abandoning the open space, sought the shelter of the houses and towers, and there exhausted their ammunition in a vain attempt to respond to our grape and musketry. Day dawned, and it was plain that the enemy were abandoning the village.† A few, however, still remained; and it was determined to carry the village by assault. A storming party was told off, under Major Swayne; but the village was not carried. The detachment seems to have gone down only to be fired at, and, after half an hour of inactivity, was recalled by the Brigadier.

The movement of the British troops, even in the dim twilight of the early morning, had been observed from the city; and soon large bodies of the enemy were moving across the plain. Horsemen and footmen streamed out in thousands to give the Feringhees battle. The

* The force consisted of five companies of her Majesty's 44th, under Captain Leighton; six companies of the 5th N.I., under Lieut.-Colonel Oliver; six companies of the 37th N.I., under Captain Kershaw, of the 13th; a squadron of the 5th Cavalry, under Captain Bott; a squadron of Irregular Horse, under Lieutenant Walker; 100 men of Anderson's Horse; one Horse Artillery gun, under Sergeant Mulhall; 100 Sappers, under Lieutenant Laing, of the 27th N.I.

† Shelton says that the event justified his anticipations. But it appears to me that this is at least doubtful. Our occupation of the hill really did compel the great body of the enemy to evacuate the village. Eyre says that, when it was subsequently attacked, there were certainly not more than forty men left in it.

horsemen stretched across the plain; the footmen covered an opposite hill, and some re-occupied the village.

The fire from the enemy's hill, which was separated from that on which our own troops were posted only by a narrow gorge, soon became hot and galling. Leaving five companies at the extremity of the hill, immediately above the village, Shelton took the remainder of his force, with the one gun, to a position near the brow of the hill, over the gorge, where the enemy were assembling in the greatest numbers. Here he formed his infantry into two squares, and massed his cavalry immediately in their rear. The one gun was nobly worked, and for a time, with terrible effect, told upon the Afghan multitudes, who had only a matchlock fire to give back in return. But thus nobly worked, round after round poured in as quickly as the piece could be loaded, it soon became unserviceable. The vent was so heated by the incessant firing, that the gunners were no longer able to serve it. Ammunition, too, was becoming scarce. What would not those resolute artillerymen have given for another gun? The firing ceased; and the British musketeers were then left to do their work alone. Little could they do, at such a time, against the far-reaching Afghan matchlocks. The enemy poured a destructive fire into our squares, but the muskets of our infantry could not reach the assailants. The two forces were at a distance from each other, which gave all the advantage to the Afghans, who shot down our men with ease, and laughed at the musket-balls, which never reached their position.

The nature of the country was altogether unfavorable to the British troops. Between them and the brow of the hill there was some rising ground, which prevented Shelton from seeing the movements of the enemy on the side of the hill. But from the cantonment could

be seen a party of Afghans crawling from the gorge up the hill-side, and rushing with sudden fury upon our infantry masses. The unexpected attack seems to have struck a panic into the heart of our troops, who turned and fled along the ridge like sheep. Shelton, who ever in the midst of danger stood with iron courage exposed to the thickest fire of the enemy, vainly called upon his men to charge. Not a man brought down his bayonet to the position which the English soldier burns to assume when he sees the enemy before him. The Afghans had planted a standard upon the hill, only some thirty yards from the British squares; and now an officer proclaimed a reward, equal in the eyes of the common Sepoy to a year's pay, to any one who would advance and take it. But not a man responded to the appeal. A great fear was upon them all. The officers stood up like brave men; and hurled stones at the advancing enemy.* But nothing seemed to infuse courage into our panic-struck troops. The enemy, emboldened by success, advanced in larger numbers, and rushed upon our single gun. Our cavalry, called upon to charge, refused to follow their officers. The artillerymen stood to their gun; two of them fell dead beside it; a third was deperately wounded; a fourth, when the enemy rushed upon it, clung to the carriage between the wheels, and miraculously escaped destruction. There, too, fell Lieutenant Laing, than whom there was not a braver soul in the field on that fatal day, waving his sword over the gun, cheering the men who were doing their duty, and calling on the rest to follow their example. But the heroic courage of the officers was thrown away upon the men. The gun was

* The officers who so distinguished themselves were Captain Macintosh and Lieutenant Laing, who were killed; and Captains Mackenzie, Troup, and Leighton.

lost, and our disheartened regiments were in confused and disastrous flight.

All, however, was not then lost. Shelton ordered the halt to be sounded. The flying regiments stopped and re-formed; then turning round, faced the enemy with a shout, and seemed ready to renew the conflict. But the Ghazees now shrunk from the British bayonets. They were few in numbers; and they saw, too, a party of Anderson's Horse coming to the charge. Taking the horses and limber with them, they abandoned the gun, and fled.

In the mean while the enemy's cavalry on the plain had been thrown into confusion by the fall of their leader—Abdoollah Khan, Achetzkye. How he fell, or at what moment, is not precisely known.* It was generally believed that he was wounded by a shot from our gun—but there was a whisper, of doubtful credibility, to the effect that he had been struck down by the jezail of one of his own countrymen, who is said to have claimed a reward for the act. Be the history of his fall what it may, it discouraged and alarmed the Afghan cavalry on the plain. Seeing their leader carried from the field, they fled in confusion towards the city. Ignorant of the cause of their flight, the infantry began to follow them; and the excited lookers-on in cantonments now thought the day was ours. Macnaghten and Elphinstone were standing together on the ramparts watching the enemy as they streamed across the plain. The opportunity seemed a great one. To have sent out of cantonments a body of troops to pursue the flying enemy, and render their confusion complete,

* Eyre says he was struck by a shrapnel shot, before our gun was captured for the first time. Lady Sale places his fall after the capture of the gun. The subject is discussed in a subsequent page.

would have been to have secured a victory. The Envoy urged it upon the General; but the General said it was a wild scheme, and weakly negatived the worthy proposal.

At this moment, when the enemy were in flight, and our gun had been recaptured, Shelton might have brought back his force with credit to cantonments. But the opportunity was lost. The enemy returned to the field, recruited by new hordes whom they met emerging from the city; and soon the swelling multitude poured itself upon our battalions. The General had sent out new supplies of ammunition, with another limber and horses for the gun; and it was soon again in full operation, playing with murderous effect upon the masses of the enemy. But again the British muskets were found no match for the Afghan jezails. There were truer eyes and steadier hands, too, in the ranks of the enemy than in our own; and now with unerring aim the Afghan marksmen mowed down our men like grass. The artillerymen were falling fast at their gun; and Shelton, thinking it insecure, withdrew it to a safer position. Emboldened by this, the enemy continued the attack with increased vigour; and again the British troops began to cower beneath the fire of their assailants.

For now was seen again that spectacle which had before struck terror into our ranks and scattered our fighting men like sheep. A party of the enemy, headed by a band of furious Ghazees, emerged from the gorge, and crawling up the hill suddenly burst upon our wavering battalions. The British troops had been losing heart before this; and now it needed little to extinguish the last remaining spark of courage that warmed them. At this inauspicious moment, Shelton, who had been ever in the thickest of the fire, and who escaped by very miracle the balls which flew about the one-armed veteran, and

struck him five times with no effect,* fell back a few paces to order some more men to the front. Seeing the back of their commander turned towards the enemy, our front-rank men gave way;† and, in a minute, infantry and cavalry were flying precipitately down the slope of the hill. The Afghan horse, seizing the opportunity, dashed upon our retreating force; and presently friend and foe were mixed up in inextricable confusion. The artillerymen alone were true to themselves and their country. Thinking only of the safety of their gun, they dashed down the steep descent and drove into the very midst of the Afghan horsemen.‡ But they could not resist the multitudes that closed around them; and the gun, so nobly served and so nobly protected, fell a second time into the hands of the enemy.

The rout of the British force was complete.§ In one confused mass of infantry and cavalry — of European and native soldiers—they fled to the cantonment walls. Elphinstone, who had watched the conflict from the ramparts, went out, infirm as he was, and strove, with all the energy of which, in his enfeebled state, he was master, to rally the fugitives. But they had lost themselves past recovery; they had forgotten that they were British soldiers. The whole force was now at the mercy of the Afghans. Had they swept on, the cantonments must have fallen before them. The enemy were so

* "I stood by till my own clothes were riddled, having been struck by no less than five balls, none of which did much harm; one spent ball hit me on the head and nearly knocked me down; another made my arm a little stiff."—[*Brigadier Shelton's Narrative: MS. Records.*]

† I find this incident related in only one account of the engagement; but, as that one is Shelton's own, I have not hesitated to adopt the story.

‡ "As before," says Captain Johnson, "the artillerymen were the last to leave; and it was a glorious sight to see these brave men dashing down the steep descent at the most furious rate, in the midst of thousands of the enemy's cavalry, regardless of everything but the safety of their gun."

§ The loss upon our side was severe. Four officers fell—namely, Colonel Oliver, Captains Macintosh and Walker, and Lieutenant Laing. Six others were wounded.

mixed up with our men, that the guns on the ramparts could not open upon them without destroying our retreating corps. But the insurgents made no effort to follow up the advantage they had gained. One of the leading chiefs, Osman Khan, suddenly drew off his men,* and, in a short time, the whole force had withdrawn, with shouts of exultation, to the city.†

"This," says Brigadier Shelton, in his narrative of the events, in which he bore so conspicuous a part, "concluded all exterior operations."‡ Nothing more was to be done by fighting. A general gloom hung over the cantonment. The most sanguine now began to despond. The troops had not only lost all heart—they had lost all discipline. The link which bound them to their officers seemed to be broken. The privations to which they were exposed were great. Cold, hunger, and fatigue

* Lady Sale says: "Osman Khan was heard by our Sepoys to order his men not to fire on those who ran, but to spare them. A chief, probably the same, rode round Kershaw three times when he was compelled to run with his men; he waved his sword over his head, but never attempted to kill him; and Captain Trevor says his life was several times in the power of the enemy, but he was also spared."

† "They seemed," says Lieutenant Melville, "astonished at their own success; and after mutilating in a dreadful manner the many bodies left on the hill, they retired with exulting shouts to the city."

‡ No small quantity of military criticism has been lavished upon this unfortunate action of the 23rd of November. Eyre's criticisms are well known; and their soundness has been acknowledged by almost every subsequent writer. Major Hough, however, says, with reference to Eyre's assertion that Shelton formed his infantry into squares on the Beh-meru hill, that the Brigadier assured him that he formed no squares at all, but only threw back his flanks *en potence*. Captain Evans, of the 44th, also assured him that there were no squares. Every other writer, however, makes a similar assertion relative to the squares on the Beh-meru hill. Of the atrocity of the single gun there is only one opinion. With regard to the general plan of operations, Lady Sale says: "The misfortunes of the day are mainly attributable to Shelton's bad generalship, in taking up so unfavorable a position after his fault in neglecting to surprise the village and occupy, which was the ostensible object of the force going out." But I have shown that it was not Shelton's fault that the village was not surprised. A simultaneous attack on the village and on the hill was the course recommended by the Brigadier; but he was overruled in council. He went into action, feeling certain that the plan mapped out for him was a wrong one—and the battle was not fought the better for the feeling that he had been thwarted and opposed.

pressed upon them; and they had not strength to bear up against such a burden of woe. It was plain that no use could be made in the field of a force so feeble and dispirited. The time for action had passed. And so, when, on the day after this disastrous affair on the Behmeru hill, the enemy began to destroy the bridge which General Elphinstone, a short time before, had thrown over the Caubul River, the military chiefs looked idly on, whilst this outrage was being perpetrated almost within musket-shot of our position.

There were only two courses now open to the doomed force; and the political and military chiefs began again to take counsel together. The question of concentration in the Balla Hissar was first revived and discussed between them. John Conolly, at the instance of the King, wrote urgently to Macnaghten, recommending the measure as the only one that could now secure the safety and the honour of the British troops. But the military authorities had set their faces against it, and the Envoy yielded his assent to their opinions against his own better judgment. After a personal interview, on the morning of the 24th of November, at which the subject had been discussed between them, General Elphinstone addressed the following letter to the Envoy, seeking Macnaghten's opinion and stating his own:

24th Nov., 1841.

My dear Sir William,

With reference to our conversation this morning, I request you will let me know what are your views with respect to moving into the Balla Hissar as proposed to you, admitting the possibility of our holding out there. Our getting into it with our ammunition and numerous sick and wounded, amounting to near 700, would be attended with the greatest difficulty, if not be altogether impossible. The enemy, no doubt, in the greatest force would oppose us, which would oblige us to cover the operation with the

greatest part of our troops, and thereby leave the cantonment without sufficient defence.

I am the more confirmed in my opinion of the difficulty of the operation from the harassed and dispirited state of our troops, now so much reduced in numbers, and failure would tend to our certain destruction. With our means, it would take some days to remove the ammunition and stores, during which the enemy would be collecting a great number around us; our wounded would be increased, with diminished means of conveying them.

Would the Balla Hissar hold us with our followers, even after the sacrifice of our horses and cattle? I am told that water is already selling there at a high price, even with the present small garrison. We have, at least, barely twenty days' supplies, which, even if we could remove, we have little prospect of adding to at the Balla Hissar; a retreat from thence would be worse than from our present position, for, after abandoning our horses and means of transport, our sick, wounded, and stores, would have to be left behind at the mercy of the enemy.

I have conferred with Brigadier Shelton, the second in command, and he concurs with me in the above opinion.

Yours, &c.,

W. K. ELPHINSTONE.*

To this letter the Envoy replied:

MY DEAR GENERAL,

In reply to your note just received, I beg to state my opinion that the move into the Balla Hissar would be attended with the greatest difficulty, and I do not see what advantage could accrue therefrom, although the disadvantages, as pointed out by you, are apparent in the event of our ultimate retreat. As to the mere question of room for our troops and followers, I do not imagine that we should feel much difficulty on that account.

Yours, &c. &c.,

W. H. MACNAGHTEN.†

The question of a movement into the Balla Hissar

* *Correspondence of Gen. Elphinstone: MS. Records.* The substance of this letter is given in Eyre's journal.

† *Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten: MS. Records.*

having been thus disposed of for the present, the Envoy turned his thoughts towards that other course, which had been so long pressed upon him by the military chief. He began to think of negotiating with the enemy. But that he might not, save in the last extremity, enter upon a line of conduct against which the manliness of his nature revolted, he addressed a letter to the General, asking, in specific terms, whether he considered it possible any longer to maintain his position in the country. To this letter Elphinstone replied:

Caubul, 24th Nov., 1841.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date, calling for my opinion as to whether, in a military point of view, it is feasible any longer to maintain our position in this country.

In reply, I beg to state, that after having held our position here for upwards of three weeks in a state of siege, from the want of provisions and forage, the reduced state of our troops, the large number of wounded and sick, the difficulty of defending the extensive and ill-situated cantonment we occupy, the near approach of winter, our communications cut off, no prospect of relief, and the whole country in arms against us, I am of opinion that it is not feasible any longer to maintain our position in this country, and that you ought to avail yourself of the offer to negotiate which has been made to you.

W. K. ELPHINSTONE.*

Upon the receipt of this letter the Envoy ceased to hesitate. The enemy had made pacific overtures to him, and he now believed that it was no longer his duty to refuse to listen to them. So he sent a message to the insurgent chiefs, intimating his willingness to receive a deputation from them, and to discuss the preliminaries of a treaty. The invitation was accepted. On the following day, Sultan Mahomed Khan, Barukzye, and

* *Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten: MS. Records.*

Meerza Ahmed Ali, Kuzzilbash, made their appearance at the bridge. Nothing could have been more unassuming than the ambassadorial cortége. The deputies rode sorry horses, and were attended only by their grooms. Captain Lawrence and Captain Trevor were sent out to meet them. The conference lasted two hours. Sultan Mahomed Khan, whose tone was insolent and uncompromising, demanded terms such as the English officers could not listen to without disgrace. The deputies then asked to see Macnaghten, and the party moved to cantonments. In the guard-room at one of the gateways the Envoy received the Afghan ambassadors. The discussion was long and animated. Sultan Mahomed, still arrogant and offensive, trode down, as with the heel of the conqueror, all the pretensions of his opponents; and declared that, as the Afghans had beaten us in battle, they had a right to dictate terms of capitulation. He demanded that the British should surrender at discretion, giving themselves up with all their arms, ammunition, and treasure, as prisoners of war. Macnaghten was not a man to submit to this dictation. The terms were resolutely rejected. "We shall meet, then," said Sultan Mahomed, "on the field of battle." "At all events," replied Macnaghten, "we shall meet at the day of judgment." And so the conference was brought to an end."

Then the Envoy sent them in writing a statement of the only terms on which he was prepared to treat. "I proposed to them," he wrote, "the only terms which, in my opinion, could be accepted with honour; but the temper of the rebels may best he understood when I mention that they returned me a letter of defiance the next morning, to the effect that unless I consented to surrender our arms and abandon his Majesty to his fate, we must prepare for immediate hostilities. To this I replied, that we preferred death to dishonour, and that

it would remain with a higher power to decide between us."*

Thus ended the first attempt to secure, by negotiation with the enemy, the safety of our discomfited troops. Whilst this movement was in progress a strange sight might have been seen on the ramparts of the British cantonment. Over those low walls, misnamed defences, the European soldiers were conversing with their Afghan enemies. The Afghans, armed to the teeth, came clustering round the cantonments; many of our soldiers went out unarmed amongst them, and were to be seen familiarly shaking hands with those whom a day before they had met on the field of battle. The Afghans were giving vegetables† to the men of the 44th Regiment, and declaring that everything had been amicably settled between the two contending hosts.

* *Unfinished Report of Sir W. H. Macnaghten to the Supreme Government—found in his writing-desk after his death: MS. Records.*

† Principally cabbages. It was apprehended by some that the broad leaves might conceal bottles of spirit, wherewith it was designed to intoxicate the garrison previous to an attack on cantonment; but they proved on examination to be very harmless cabbages after all.

CHAPTER VI.

[November—December: 1841.]

Progress of Negotiation—Arrival of Mahomed Akbar Khan—His Character—Negotiations continued—Deaths of Meer Musjedee and Abdoollah Khan—Revival of Negotiations—The Draft Treaty.

A NEW actor now appeared upon the stage. The advent of Mahomed Akbar Khan had been for some time expected. He had arrived from Toorkistan early in October, and was known to have been hovering about Bameean, and seemingly watching the progress of events in the neighbourhood of the Afghan capital. How far he may have sown the seeds of insurrection among the Ghilzyes is not very clearly known, but it is probable that the influence he exercised at that time was rather of a passive than an active kind. That his presence on the borders of Afghanistan encouraged his countrymen in their career of hostility is not to be doubted; but there is little or no evidence to connect him more palpably with the earlier movements of the insurrectionary war. Whatever may have been his participation in the events of October and November, his appearance at the capital was now hailed by the insurgents with every demonstration of delight. Salutes were fired in honour of his arrival, and the chiefs waited upon him as upon one henceforth to be recognised

as their leader. He was known to be a man of high courage and energy; he had approved himself a good soldier in the field; and he was the favourite son of the old Barukzye ruler, who a year before had been condemned to pine away the remainder of his life a captive in the provinces of Hindostan.

The arrival of the Sirdar was a great event. Both parties looked upon it as one that must exercise a mighty influence over the future destinies of the war. The insurgents, wanting a leader, saw in the son of Dost Mahomed one around whom they could rally, with confidence alike in his sincerity and his courage. He had the wrongs of an injured family to redress. He had a kingdom to regain. He had been an outcast and a fugitive during two years of suffering and danger, because it had pleased the British Government to invade his father's dominions and to expel the *de facto* rulers of the country; and now he saw opening out before him a prospect of recovering the lost supremacy of the Barukzyes, and restoring his exiled father to the Balla Hissar. All the circumstances of his past life and his present position were such as to secure his loyalty to the national cause. His inner qualities, no less than his outer environments, were of a class to rivet his hostility to the British. He was a man of an eager, impetuous nature; susceptible of good and of bad impulses, but seldom otherwise than earnest and impulsive. His education had been neglected; in his youth he had been unrestrained, and now self-control—a virtue rarely exercised by an Afghan—was wholly foreign to the character of the man. He was, indeed, peculiarly demonstrative, and sudden in his demonstrations, passing rapidly from one mood to another—blown about by violent gusts of feeling, bitterly repenting to-day the excesses of yesterday, and rushing into new excesses to-morrow. His was one of those fiery

temperaments—those bold, dashing characters—which, in times of popular commotion, ever place their possessor in the front rank. But in seasons of repose he was one of the most joyous and light-hearted of men; no man loved a joke better; no man laughed more heartily, or seemed to look more cheerfully on the sunny side of life. They, who knew him before the British trode down the Barukzyes, spoke of him as a good-tempered, well-meaning young man, and little thought, when his large dark eyes were glowing with child-like eagerness, to have the full dimensions of his long spear introduced into his portrait; or his solid frame was shaking with laughter at some joke passed upon his uncomely *Meerza*, that he would soon become the chief actor in one of the bloodiest tragedies that has ever disgraced the history of the world.

Whilst the Afghans, with noisy demonstrations of delight, were welcoming the appearance of Akbar Khan, the British were slow to believe that his advent would deepen the embarrassments of their position. Early in November, Mohun Lal had suggested to Macnaghten the expediency of endeavouring to corrupt the Sirdar before his advance upon the capital; but the Envoy had received slightingly the proposal, and no overtures had been made to the son of Dost Mahomed before his arrival at the capital. It was believed that there was sufficient security for his forbearance in the fact that his father and his brothers were prisoners in our hands; and in the game of negotiation, which was now to be carried on, it was calculated that the intervention of the Sirdar would facilitate rather than encumber our arrangements for the honourable evacuation of Afghanistan, and our safe return to the provinces which, in an evil hour, we had been so unhappily tempted to quit.

Akbar Khan appeared at Caubul; but he did not at

once assume the direction of affairs. The Newab Mahomed Zemaun Khan, a cousin of the late Caubul chief, had been proclaimed King by the insurgents. All orders were sent forth in his name; and the "fatiha" was read for him in the mosques. He was a man of a humane and honourable nature, polished manners, and affable address. His nephew, Osman Khan, who is described by the Envoy as "the most moderate and sensible man" of the insurgent party, was now employed to negotiate with the British minister, and several times passed, on this errand, between the cantonment and the city. But the terms still dictated by the enemy were such as Macnaghten could not honourably accept. Day followed day; and nothing effectual was done either in counsel or on the field. The enemy appeared on the hills commanding cantonments and in the village of Beh-meru, now deserted and destroyed; and the guns in the British cantonments were playing all day long upon these points. But such distant interchanges produced no result; and in the mean while our provisions were rapidly dwindling down. Again starvation stared the garrison in the face. With laudable zeal and activity the commissariat officers exerted themselves to obtain grain from the surrounding country; but with equal zeal and activity the enemy were striving to frustrate their efforts. Akbar Khan himself had not been many days at Caubul before he began to see that to defeat our commissariat officers was to overcome our unhappy force. Threatening death to all who might be detected in supplying our troops with any description of food, he soon baffled the best efforts of Boyd and Johnson,* and again brought the question of capitulation to a simple question of supplies.

* "1*st December*, 1841.—For the last six days have been daily up before gun-fire, and at the fort of Khoja Meer Mahomed, in the hope of pro*curing some grain* from them. He is the chief of the Beh-meru district. Notwithstanding my offers of the most handsome rewards to him, I cannot now prevail upon him or his people to give further aid. On going to his

But still sanguine and confident, whilst the clouds were gathering more and more thickly around him, Macnaghten saw the skies brightening over-head, and never doubted that before long the storm would roll itself away. The letters which he wrote at this time present a remarkable contrast to those written by General Elphinstone. Whilst the General was looking around him everywhere for whatever could be made to swell the mountain of difficulty and danger that he kept so steadily before him, the Envoy was constantly arraying in the foreground every circumstance that could in any way contribute towards the chance of ultimate success. Whilst the General was discovering that "our position was becoming more and more critical," the Envoy was perceiving that "our prospects were brightening," and talking about "defying the whole of Afghanistan." On the 28th of November, General Elphinstone wrote thus to Sir William Macnaghten:

November 28, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

I am sorry to hear the persons expected last night did not come to Captain Trevor, and that the Hindoo merchant has

fort this morning (about 700 yards north of cantonments) I found merely two or three people inside, who told me that Mahomed Akbar Khan had yesterday come with a party and destroyed every house in it, and threatened death to the Khoja (who had fled) and his family in the event of his giving us further aid. Reported this to the Envoy, and told Sir William of our having but eight days' supply in store, and that all hopes of procuring more were at an end. I took the liberty of entreating that some decision might be come to as to our ultimate fate; that but *three* days more remained to consider of it; as in the event of our retreat to Jellalabad being determined on, we must carry with us *five* out of the *eight* days' supplies now in the godown. He replied that he was glad I had spoken to him on the subject, as he felt convinced that, although we might possibly continue to go on from hand to mouth for a few days longer, it was impossible we could exist throughout the winter; 'but,' said he, 'let us wait two days longer, as something may turn up.' In the mean time, our cattle have been starving for some time past; not a blade of grass, nor a particle of *bhoosah*, nor grain procurable. The barley in store is served out as provisions to the camp-followers, who get a quarter of a seer (half a pound) for their daily food. Our cattle are subsisted on the twigs, branches, and bark of trees—scarcely an animal fit to carry a load."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal: MS. Records.*]

failed with his promised supply of grain. I also hear that Khoja Meer has gone away. Is this the case? If so, our position is becoming more critical on the score of provisions. What effect do you think the death of Abdoollah Khan, if true, will have on our prospects? I shall send into the Balla Hissar to-morrow morning some things for the men, and ammunition; but our terrible want there is fuel. Major Ewart reports some men there to have died of cold, from which they are suffering much, and how that is to be remedied I don't see, as the trees near could afford, if obtained, but little relief, for I don't recollect many in the neighbourhood of the city, which I hear is supplied with trees (firewood) from Tezeen. In short, between ourselves, I see nothing we can do but by negotiation, if such be offered, and which for the many difficulties we are surrounded with, I hope may be the case. The camp-followers are bringing in wood from the village. There is nothing else to be had, I hear.

Yours,

W. K. E.

Very different from the tone of this desponding letter was the spirit which at this time animated the communications of the Envoy to Mohun Lal. But there are other points besides the sanguine temperament of Macnaghten which these letters serve to illustrate:

November 26, 1841. 4 P.M.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have just now had the pleasure of receiving your notes of yesterday and this morning. Tell our friends that they need be under no alarm; that I should be in a hurry to trust what was arranged by Sultan Mahomed Khan was all nonsense, because I know that he is not a man to keep his word in anything. The intelligence you have sent me is very encouraging, and I hope the *nifac* among the rebels will increase. Meer Musjedee's death will probably cause the dispersion of the rebels who have come from Nijrow. Humza Khan never sent any relatives of the Ghilzye chiefs to me.

Yours,

W. H. M.

Tell everybody that I have no faith in Sultan Mahomed Khan, and that I only wished to try the sincerity of his employers.

November 29. 9 P.M.

MY DEAR SIR,

I enclose you a note from Captain Johnson. We are well off for everything but supplies, and, *Inshalla*, we shall not be badly off for them. If you can get any person to undertake to supply the grain, it should be put down in the ground lately occupied by Mr. Deane's fort. Pray do your utmost to effect this. * * * * The enemy appeared to-day in considerable numbers, but they did nothing, and I am sure they will never venture to attack our cantonment. If we had only provisions, which, with due exertions ought to be obtained, we should be able to defy the whole of Afghanistan for any period. I am very sorry that the deputation from Humza did not make their appearance last night, and I am anxiously expecting accounts from you showing why they did not do so. * * * *

30TH, 9 P.M.—Your messenger has just arrived. I do not like to give 50,000 rupees without some security. Our prospects are, I think, brightening, and if you can assist us in the way of supplies, we have nothing to fear. * * * * I would give any money to Humza and the Ghilzyes if I had any security that they would be our friends, give us supplies, and keep open the communications. W. H. M.

It will be gathered from these letters, that, before the end of November, Abdoollah Khan and Meer Musjedee had both been removed, by death, from the scene of their recent triumphs. General Elphinstone speaks of the death of the former; Sir William Macnaghten of the death of the latter. In the action of the 23rd of November, Abdoollah Khan had been carried wounded from the field of battle; but whether a shrapnel shot from Shelton's one gun, or a ball from an Afghan jezail, struck down the truculent chief, is a point of history which must ever remain, as now, enveloped in obscurity and doubt. The story runs, that one of the men who had been set upon the track of the doomed chiefs, declared that he shot down his victim from behind a wall; and promised that poison should complete the work which

the bullet had but partially effected. Abdoollah Khan died before a week had expired;* and it is said that Abdool Aziz claimed the price of blood. But Mohun Lal did not feel assured that either the traitorous bullet or the poison of the claimant had done the work of death; and the reward was refused on the plea that it had been offered for the heads of the chiefs, and the head of Abdoollah Khan had not been brought to him.

How Meer Musjedee died is not very clearly known.† His disappearance from the scene on which he had acted so conspicuous a part, was sudden and unexpected. A man named Mahomed Oollah swore that he had suffocated the chief in his sleep, and claimed the reward of his service. But the reward, it is said, was refused upon the same plea as was urged in the other case. The assassins, disappointed of their blood-money, were not likely to undertake any future service of the same hazardous kind, or to maintain a very discreet silence about the past. If they were employed upon such service, it is strange that their silence was not secured by a scrupulous fulfilment of the engagement by which their suborners had placed their own credit and safety in their hands. It was a perilous game, indeed, to invite disclosures by exciting the anger and hostility of the agents employed in this miserable work.

There is much obscurity still enveloping all this portion of the history of the war in Afghanistan. It is cer-

* It was generally believed in cantonments that he had died from the effects of his wounds. Lady Sale says: "Abdoollah Khan's death has, it is said, created some confusion in the city. Whilst still living a report was spread of his decease; and, like Alexander, he mounted his horse and showed himself to his followers; but the exertion was too great for him, and he shortly after expired."

† It was believed by the British that he had been poisoned. Lady Sale says: "Meer Musjedee is dead. Some say he has been poisoned; others, that he died in consequence of the wounds received last year in the Kohistan. A number of this chief's followers have gone off with the body to the Kohistan, there to attend his funeral obsequies."

tain that, at the end of November, Meer Musjedee and Abdoollah Khan died under circumstances which have been regarded, and not unreasonably, as suspicious. It is scarcely less certain that Lieutenant John Conolly, the cousin and assistant of the Envoy, instigated Mohun Lal to offer rewards for the heads of certain of the insurgent chiefs, and that Meer Musjedee and Abdoollah Khan were especially marked as the first victims. John Conolly was at this time with Shah Soojah in the Balla Hissar, and Mohun Lal was in the house of the Kuzzilbash chief. The Envoy was in cantonments. To what extent John Conolly acted under Macnaghten's instructions—whether he acted on his own authority, or was directed by Shah Soojah, is not very clearly known. That Conolly was in constant communication with the Envoy we have the authority of the latter for believing. "Throughout the rebellion," he wrote, in his official report, "I was in constant communication with the Shah through my assistant, Lieutenant J. B. Conolly, who was in attendance on his Majesty in the Balla Hissar." It has been questioned, therefore, whether Conolly, being at this time in constant communication with the Envoy, was likely, in a matter of so much responsibility, to have acted without instructions from his chief. But, on the other hand, we have Macnaghten's specific declaration in the following letter that it was never his object to encourage the assassination of the insurgents:

December 1, 1841.

DEAR SIR,

I am sorry to find from your letter of last night that you should have supposed it was ever my object to encourage assassination. The rebels are very wicked men, but we must not take unlawful means to destroy them.

Mohamed Meerza Khan has not yet come near me. When he does, I shall be glad to advance him 5000 rupees out of the

50,000 which is to be given to him for Khidmut (service). . . . I had another overture this morning from Zemaun Khan's party, offering us a safe retreat to Peshawur; and they said that Khan Shereen was with them—the party being Jewan Khan, Jubbar Khan, Oosman Khan, Mahomed Akbar Khan, Ameen-oollah Khan, and Khan Shereen Khan. I suspect, from the insertion of the name of the last mentioned, that the whole thing is a fabrication. Let me know your opinion on this point. I replied to their overture by saying that I would not now do anything without the consent of his Majesty. * * * Yours, &c. &c.,

W. H. M.*

In addition to this written declaration, we have the statement of Captain Skinner, to the effect that, when at a subsequent period the murder of Ameen-oollah was suggested to him by Akbar Khan, the Envoy shrank with abhorrence and disgust from the proposal, "assuring the ambassadors that, as a British functionary, nothing would induce him to pay a price for blood."†

Against the specific written declaration of the Envoy himself that it was never his object to encourage assassination, coupled with the evidence of Captain Skinner, to the effect that he revolted at the very suggestion, there is nothing but bare presumption to be opposed. If presumption is to carry weight with it, in so grave a discussion as this, it may fairly be presumed that a man of a nature so humane, and of instincts so honourable, would not have encouraged or sanctioned the foul trade of secret murder, and peremptorily denied his approval of measures which he had himself originated or supported. But, if he had been utterly destitute both of humanity and truth, it would still be incredible that, having en-

* *Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.* Though the portions omitted are of no great historical importance, I have given the letter entire in the Appendix, that no suspicion might attach to the integrity of the document.

† *Answers of Captain Colin Mackenzie to Questions put by General Pollock: MS. Records.* Captain Skinner was the only British officer who attended Macnaghten at this conference on the 22nd December. Captain Mackenzie says that he had the assurance from Captain Skinner himself.

couraged the assassination of the chiefs, he should have boldly denied it to the very man whom, directly or indirectly, he had employed to hire the assassins.*

On a question so grave and solemn as this, it is to be lamented that the judgment of the historian, after all conflicting evidence has been weighed and sifted, should be merely of an inferential character. The inference is, that whilst not wholly ignorant of the offers of head-money, which John Conolly, living with, and probably acting under the directions of Shah Soojah, was putting forth, through the agency of Mohun Lal, the Envoy neither suggested, nor actively encouraged, these "bloody instructions," on which such severe comments have been passed. It has been seen that he was prepared to offer rewards in the name of the King, for the apprehension of the principal rebels; and in the heat and excitement of active warfare, it is hardly probable that, if these men had been apprehended, their offences would have been subjected to a fair and impartial judicial inquiry. Macnaghten, indeed, stated that he would recommend his Majesty to "execute them." Such passive complicity as this, when all the circumstances by which Macnaghten was environed are fairly estimated, cannot be severely censured. We can only arrive at a just decision, in a case of so unprecedented a character as this, by weighing well all the difficulties which surrounded, all the responsibilities that wieghed upon, and all the temptations that

* The charge of participation in these discreditable transactions is put forth, as already stated, in the *Calcutta Review*. It is, of course, the statement of an anonymous writer. But anonymous writers are not always unknown writers; and the article is supposed to have emanated from one to whom peculiar sources of information were open. The antecedent position of the supposed writer forbids us to question the genuineness of the letters attributed to John Conolly; but there is no evidence before the public, and I have been unable to discover any in the course of my researches, to show that Macnaghten was implicated in the transactions to which those letters refer. On the other hand, there is, as I have shown, such evidence to acquit him of all complicity in these proceedings, as can only be set aside on the presumption that the Envoy was at once the most unscrupulous of liars, and the most egregious of fools.

beset the Envoy. If so surrounded, so weighed upon, so beset, he did not actively interfere to arrest the questionable measures of others, which seemed to offer some means of escape from the perils which hemmed in the British army—an army fearfully sacrificed by the feebleness of the military chiefs—I confess that I cannot see that he yielded more readily to temptation than other men of high honour would have done, begirt with such fiery trial.

But it is a relief to turn aside from the consideration of such a question, even to the record of the imbecility of our military leaders and the sufferings of our unhappy troops. —On the 1st of December there were supplies for eight days' diminished consumption in store. The camp-followers were receiving half a pound of barley a day. The cattle were without provender. It was necessary to keep them from absolute starvation by supplying them with the twigs, the lighter branches, and the bark of trees. Some small quantities of wheat were taken from the troops to feed the cattle used in the guns. In this conjuncture, Elphinstone, who met every difficulty more than half way, and who was not likely, therefore, to be silent at such a time as this, addressed the following letter to the Envoy:

1st December.

My dear Sir William,

We have already arrived, I regret to say, at one of our difficulties. Boosa for the cattle none can be had, and we have been obliged to-day to give the mountain-train yaboos some wheat to keep them alive. I hope, therefore, your negotiation may prosper, as circumstances are becoming extremely critical; little has been done in the way of purchase this morning. I don't wish to croak, but think it right that you should be kept constantly informed of the real state of things.

Yours,

W. K. E.

Sixty-five maunds is all that has been got in to-day; twelve maunds yesterday.

On the same day, Captain Johnson impressed upon the Envoy that there was no time to be lost—that if a retreat on Jellalabad were to be determined upon, it should be determined upon at once, as it would be necessary to take provisions for five days with the retreating force. The Envoy assented to this; but, ever eager to clutch at any hope, however slender, of deferring the dreadful day of surrender, he added, "Let us wait two days longer—something may turn up."

The military authorities continued to press upon the Envoy, with oft-repeated urgent recommendations, for a speedy conclusion of a treaty with the enemy, enabling the British troops in safety to evacuate the country. But still the Envoy clung to the hope that something might be evolved in our favour; and delayed, in spite of their importunities from day to day, the dreadful hour of surrender. On the 5th of December the General wrote the following letter to the Envoy:

5th December.

My dear Sir William,

It becomes my duty to inform you that our stock of provisions is reduced to nine days, on half-rations; it therefore becomes imperative upon us to consider what can be done. We have, for the last few days, been disappointed in our expectation of getting any, and our hopes of success in doing this seem every day less. The objections to retreat on the Balla Hissar I have already stated; our wants there might be the same, with the additional one of fuel, and part of our ordnance for protection. Retreat without terms I think with you almost impossible, and that few would reach Jellalabad. The only alternative (as there now seems little chance of the Ghilzyes renewing the negotiation you were led to expect) is to try if terms can be made in any other quarter, if we do not hear something favorable tomorrow. With provisions we could hold out, but without them I do not see what can be done, or how we are to avert starvation. It is true the responsibility is great, and may fall on us; but are we justified in risking the safety of so many people when we can

no longer do anything? When reduced to the last extremity (where we now are almost), I think honourable terms better for our government than our being destroyed here, which, without food, is inevitable. All this I write in confidence for your own consideration, that you may think what is best to be done, as I have told our real situation.

Yours, truly,

W. K. E.*

On that day Macnaghten sent back only a brief, emphatic reply:

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I have received your note of this morning. I am perfectly aware of the state of our supplies; but as we have nine days' provision, and had only provisions for one or two days when the siege commenced, I conceive that we are better off now than we were a month ago. Whenever we go, we could not carry with us more than two or three days' supplies, and, therefore, it does not seem necessary to come to an immediate decision. But I will speak to you on the subject to-morrow, and will omit no favorable opportunity of negotiating.

W. H. M.†

On the following morning, the Envoy wrote more circumstantially to the General, in reply to the letter, urging him to obtain "honourable terms." He was not in a mood to think of terms at all. His voice was all for a movement into the Balla Hissar:

(Private.) Cantonments, 6th Dec., 1841.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I now proceed to give you my opinion on your note of yesterday. There are three courses which may be said to be open to us. First, a retreat on Jellalabad, without terms. Secondly, a retreat to India, with terms, abandoning our position in this country. And, thirdly, to retire into the Balla Hissar. The first I regard as impracticable; and, if practicable, the adoption

* *Unpublished Correspondence of General Elphinstone.*

† *Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*

of such a measure would cover us with everlasting infamy, as we could not take the King's family along with us, and his Majesty would not stir without them. The second I regard as nearly equally impracticable, from the conflicting interests of the parties with whom we should have to treat. This cause would, I think, render any promised protection ineffectual, and, if this course could be safely adopted, the consequences would be terrific as regards the safety of our Indian Empire and our interests in Europe. The third course seems to me (though certainly attended with risk) to be by far the most safe and honourable which we could adopt. With four or five disposable regiments in the Balla Hissar, it would be strange if we could not obtain fuel and provisions; we should be in a position to overawe the city, and to encourage the Kuzzilbashes and our other well-wishers to come forward to our support; and we should probably find in the Balla Hissar provisions for a fortnight or a month. I would, therefore, lose no time in sending every night, by all possible contrivances, our stores, and sick, and wounded. Should the report of the advance of troops from Candahar prove correct (which we shall, in all probability, hear to-morrow), all our troubles will cease. Should we have reason to believe it unfounded, we can then commence destroying our powder and superfluous stores. In the mean time, I think we have daily proofs that the forces of our enemies are diminishing; and, with the blessing of Providence, some event may arise from their misunderstandings to relieve us from our present perilous position, even without the accession of fresh troops.

Very sincerely yours,
W. H. M.*

Then Macnaghten visited the General, and discussed with him long and earnestly the condition of the garrison and the measures to be taken for its extrication from the perils that beset it. If terms were not to be accepted from the enemy, it was necessary either to obtain provisions by force from some of the surrounding villages, or to march at once into the Balla Hissar. The Envoy suggested that a night attack might be made upon Deh-

* *Unpublished Correspondence of Sir W. H. Macnaghten.*

Hadjee, or a similar enterprise undertaken against Killa Bolundee; but the General had no taste for night attacks or enterprises of any kind. Macnaghten went, and soon after his return home received the following letter:*

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

Since your departure, I have thought over, and given my utmost attention to, every part of the subject of our conversation. The first proposition was a night expedition against the Deh-Hadjee, said to be distant about three coss, part of the road through a narrow gorge, through which I now hear guns could not go; and I am also told that parties (of cavalry) have, for the last five or six days, been seen going in that direction: no doubt for the object of preventing our getting supplies. If we succeeded in taking the fort (if only one), we must hold it (to enable us to remove any quantity of grain with our means) for some time; during which, the enemy, hearing of our attack, would, no doubt, come out against our detachment; and from Captain Johnson's account, it is difficult to find grain. Another difficulty is our want of local knowledge (this may, perhaps, be obtained). These are the objections that present themselves to this plan.

With respect to a like enterprise on Killa Bolundee, that appears, I confess (and I would willingly grasp at anything to enable us to hold out), to be more difficult, from the facility with which a party might be cut off by a sortie from the city. The other alternative is the Balla Hissar; from thence seems the only chance we have of getting supplies; and as you now think our being able to make any terms is impossible, that seems the only one left. Colonel Chambers has been with me, and says his horses would be quite unequal to a forced march to Jellalabad, and that many of those of Anderson's regiment are unserviceable from want of food. Captain Anderson reported, this morning, one-half.

After leaving cantonments, terms, I should suppose, are quite out of the question; our quitting would be, I presume, con-

* There is some obscurity with respect to the date of this letter, but I believe I am right in stating that it was written on the 6th of December. As, however, the Envoy and the General were again in consultation two days afterwards on the same subject of an attack upon the grain villages, it may have been written on the 8th.

sidered as our total defeat; and, until reinforced, as we must sacrifice nearly all our cattle, we would not have the power of moving, for, without the means of transport, we would not go.

The next consideration is, whether our being annihilated here, or entering into honourable terms, would have the worst effect for our government. The responsibility is great for you and I; and (if we do not hear of the force from Candahar to-morrow) it only remains for us to consider whether we shall incur the responsibility, or risk the loss of this force; for, under the most favorable view we can take, the risk is great. Looking practically at the obstacles we have, they are in reality very difficult to surmount.

I submit all this for your consideration, and have sent Major Thain with this to you.

Yours, &c.,

W. K. E.

We must not think of treating, after any attempt either to retreat, or to the Balla Hissar, or if we fail in any attempt. We are now comparatively entire; a loss or failure would increase our destitution, and the terms will, of course, be worse. We could not expect anything else.

The General knew that his troops were not to be trusted. The Envoy knew this equally well; but, more jealous of the honour of his country, more hopeful and more courageous, he was unwilling to fling away a single chance which the wheel of time might throw up in his favour. In that great chapter of accidents, however, to which he so bravely turned, were written down only further disasters and degradations. On the 5th of December, the enemy, in open day, burnt the bridge which the English had thrown over the Caubul River, a quarter of a mile from cantonments. On the day after the calamitous action of the 23rd of November, the insurgents had begun to destroy it, and now they completed the work of destruction. They burnt it exultingly before the faces of our troops, who were lining the ramparts and looking idly on, as though there were no dishonour in endurance. The bridge

was of little use at that season of the year, for the stream was fordable—but it was a burning disgrace to the military authorities, that with 5000 British troops at their command, and with the ramparts of the cantonments bristling with guns, they should have suffered such an insult as this to be flung in their face.

The following day was one also of humiliation. Mahomed Sheriff's fort, which was garrisoned by a party of European and Native troops, was abandoned on the 6th of December. The enemy, a day or two before, had endeavoured to blow open the gate with powder-bags, but had not succeeded in the attempt. They might have spared themselves the trouble of the effort and the discredit of the failure. On the 6th of December, a very small party of the enemy, unperceived by the garrison, contrived to climb up the walls of the fort, from the direction of the King's garden. They had no sooner shown their heads at the window of the room where our men were sitting, than, both Europeans and natives, panic-struck and bewildered, escaped over the opposite wall, and, abandoning their bedding, arms, and ammunition, fled into cantonments.* The fort was soon filled with the enemy. Not an effort was made to recapture it.† The

* The garrison consisted of about 100 men, 40 being Europeans, under the command of Lieutenant Hawtrey, 37th N.I. Lady Sale says: "The Afghans planted their crooked sticks, which served them for scaling ladders; got up one by one; pulled out the mud (with which the window had been blocked up) and got in. A child with a stick might have repulsed them. The Europeans had their belts and accoutrements off, and the Sepoys the same. They all ran away as fast as they could! The 44th say that the 37th ran first, and as they were too weak they went too. Hawtrey says there was not a pin to choose—all cowards alike. After he was deserted by the men, he himself threw six hand grenades before he followed them. . . . . It was the most shameful of all the runaways that occurred."

† Lady Sale says that the 44th wished to wipe out the stain on the name, as did the Sepoys also (the 37th N.I.). Lieutenant Hawtrey's company volunteered to go with him and "take it without the assistance of any other troops." The General sent a message to the engineer officer (Lieutenant Sturt) asking if the fort was practicable and tenable — that is, whether our men could take it and

guns on the ramparts played upon it all day long, and before evening one of the bastions crumbled to pieces under our fire; but the British troops remained inactive in cantonments, submitting patiently to every new insult, as though disgrace, now become habitual, had ceased to be a burden to them.

Another blot was, at the same time, fixed upon the character of the unhappy troops. The 44th Queen's regiment had supplied the details of the guard for the protection of the cantonment bazaar. They were now withdrawn under circumstances little calculated to raise the reputation of the corps; and some companies of the 37th Native Infantry were sent to relieve them. The following letter on this subject, from the General to the Envoy, supplies a painful commentary on the state of the troops at this time:

Dec. 7, 1841.

My dear Sir William,

Three companies of the 37th have been ordered into the bazaar as a guard for it. Shelton wishes a support of the 44th outside. If they have any sense of shame left, they must do better, and their officers *must exert* themselves. S. is disposed to attribute the blame to the Sepoys—from all I hear, I fear unjustly; but this must be inquired into when we have time. I fear the enemy will not to-day give them an opportunity of retrieving their name.

W. K. E.

And now matters were at their worst. To what depths of humiliation our unhappy force had sunk, and with what indignation the Envoy regarded a state of things which he was powerless to avert or to remedy, the following letter, written about this time to Captain Macgregor, painfully declares:

hold it. Sturt's answer is worth recording—"Practicable if the men will fight—tenable if they don't run away."

No date.

MY DEAR MACGREGOR,

I have received your notes of the 30th ultimo and 1st instant, and I am delighted at the good news they contain. I wish I could repay you in the same commodity, but I regret to say that everything in this quarter has been going wrong. Our troops were defeated in the field on the 23rd; our bridge has been burnt under our very noses; and the captured fort opposite the cantonment has been recaptured by the enemy without the slightest effort at resistance on our part. In short, our troops are behaving like a pack of despicable cowards, and there is no spirit or enterprise left amongst us. The military authorities want me to capitulate, but this I am anxious to put off to the last moment. In the mean time, we shall soon have to come to some decision, as we have only three days' provision for our troops, and nothing for our cattle. We are anxiously looking out for reinforcements from Candahar. We have rumours of their approach, but nothing as yet authentic. The rascals certainly contrive to intercept our communications most effectually. Tell Mackeson that I have got his official and private letters of the 20th ultimo, but that I am not in spirits to write, and I have really nothing to communicate in addition to what I have above written. John Conolly is with His Majesty in the Balla Hissar. The Sirkar is in a dreadful funk. The Laird of Pughman is almost the only man of respectability who has stuck by him. I have been striving in vain to sow *nifak* amongst the rebels, and it is perfectly wonderful how they hang together. Congratulate Mackeson for me on the gallant conduct of his namesake. *Inshallu!* his *Khidmut* will be *moojra*. Could you forward the enclosed to Erskine when you have an opportunity?

W. H. MACNAGHTEN.

On the morning of the 8th there were but four days' provision in store. The wretched camp-followers were living upon the carcases of the camels which had been starved to death. The trees in cantonments had been stripped of all their bark and light branches to supply provender to the cattle, and were now all bare and useless. The Commissariat officers, Boyd and Johnson, wrote

a joint letter to the General, stating that, after much fruitless exertion, they had been compelled to adopt the opinion that provisions were no longer obtainable by purchase. But before this letter reached him the General had seen Captain Boyd, and had written to the Envoy declaring his opinion that it would be impossible to hold out longer:

Dec. 8, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

The commissary has just reported to me, that on examination of the grain he has in store, he finds, from the quantity of dirt mixed with it, he has not above four days' supplies left, at most. Under these circumstances, it becomes absolutely necessary for us to come to a decision as to our future measures, as I do not see how we are to hold out, without food for our Sepoys, beyond that time.

Yours truly,

W. K. E.

The letter of the Commissariat officers had not reached the General when the above was written. It ran in the following words:*

SIR,

In conformity with instructions received through you from Major-General Elphinstone, commanding in Afghanistan, we have the honour to report, from personal knowledge of the country to the north or north-east of cantonments, the utter impossibility of obtaining, either by force or otherwise, the smallest quantity of grain or forage of any kind within a distance of from three to four miles; and, further, that within this space the whole of the forts, with the exception perhaps of one or two, have been evacuated by the inhabitants, and more or less destroyed by the enemy.

With respect to that portion of your letter having reference to drawing two or three days' supplies from the Balla Hissar, we beg to bring to the Major-General's notice, that although our troops would, it is true, be subsisted for so many days longer,

* *Unpublished Correspondence.*

the delay of moving from the cantonments must prove destructive to our cattle, and cripple the only means we have of removing either our sick, treasure, or military stores, as the animals are even now in so weakly a state as to have scarcely stamina sufficient to carry a load any distance, and many are utterly incapable of rising with a load from the ground.

J. BOYD, Commissary General (Bengal Troops).
H. JOHNSON, Commissary General (Shah's Troops).

A copy of this letter was forwarded to the Envoy with the General's letter of the 9th of December.

Again Macnaghten and Elphinstone took counsel together, and again they parted to give their opinions the shape of official correspondence. Returned to his quarters, the Envoy wrote the following letter to the General:

8th Dec., 1841.

SIR,

With reference to the conversation I had the honour to hold with you this morning, I have to request that you will be so good as to state, for my information, whether or no I am right in considering it as your opinion that any further attempt to hold out against the enemy would merely have the effect of sacrificing both His Majesty and ourselves, and that the only alternative left is to negotiate for our safe retreat out of the country on the most favorable terms possible. I understood you to say to-day that all our cattle are starving, and that we have not more than three days' provision, half-rations, left for our men, whilst the difficulties of procuring more appear to you to be insurmountable.

It must be remembered that we hear rumours of the approach of reinforcements from Candahar, though nothing in an authentic shape has yet reached us on this subject.

W. H. MACNAGHTEN.

To this letter General Elphinstone sent back an answer, signed also by the three senior officers under his command—Brigadiers Shelton and Anquetil, and Colonel Chambers, who were that morning in council with their chief:

Caubul, 8th Dec., 1841.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date, requesting me to state, for your information, whether or not it be my opinion that any further attempt to hold out against the enemy would merely have the effect of sacrificing both His Majesty and ourselves, and that the only alternative left is to negotiate for our safe retreat out of the country on the most favourable terms possible.

In reply, I beg to state that my opinion is that the present situation of the troops here is such, from the want of provisions and the impracticability of procuring more, that no time ought to be lost in entering into negotiations for a safe retreat from the country.

As regards the troops at Candahar, and the rumours of their approach to our assistance, I should be sorry, in the absence of all authentic information, to risk the sacrifice of the troops here by waiting for their arrival, when we are ignorant even of their having commenced their march, and are reduced to three days' supply of provision for our Sepoys at half-rations, and almost entirely without forage for our horses and cattle.

Our number of sick and wounded in hospital exceeds 600, and our means for their transport is far from adequate, owing to the death by starvation of so many of our camels; from the same cause also we shall be obliged at this inclement season to leave the tents and bedding behind with such a march before us.

As regards the King, I must be excused entering upon that point of your letter, and leave its consideration to your better judgment and knowledge; but I may be allowed to say that it little becomes me, as commanding the British troops in Afghanistan, to regard the necessity of negotiating in any other light than as concerns their honour or welfare, both of which I should be answerable for by a further stay here, after the sudden and universal rebellion which has taken place throughout the dominions.

The whole of the grain and forage in our vicinity is exhausted, and the defence of this extensive and ill-situated cantonment will not admit of distant expeditions to obtain supplies from the strongly-fortified dwellings of an armed and hostile population, our present numbers being insufficient for its defence, and

obliging the whole of the troops to be almost constantly under arms.

In conclusion, I can only repeat my opinion that you should lose no time in entering into negotiations.

W. K. ELPHINSTONE, Major-Gen.,
Commanding in Afghanistan.

I concur in the above opinions.

J. SHELTON, Brigadier.

In a military point of view, I concur in the above.

W. ANQUETIL, Brigadier,
Commanding Shah Soojah's Forces.

I also concur.

R. CHAMBERS, Lieut.-Col.,
Commanding Cavalry.

Still shrinking from the dreadful thought of surrender, Macnaghten, soon after the receipt of this letter, went over to the General's quarters, and wrung from him a reluctant promise to make one more attempt to secure supplies by an expedition against one of the forts or villages in which they were known to be stored. A council of war was held that evening at the General's quarters. The Envoy was present at the meeting. The Commissariat officers were also in attendance. There was a long and stormy discussion. At length it was determined that on the following morning a detachment of infantry and cavalry, with a gun, should be despatched, accompanied by Captain Johnson, to the village of Khoja Rewash, some four miles from cantonments, where it was believed that a considerable supply of grain was stored. The village was to be surprised before daybreak. The inhabitants were to be called upon to sell their grain; and, in the event of their acquiescence, Captain Johnson was to purchase it; but in the event of their refusal, the village was to be carried by assault, and the grain taken by force. The detachment was to start at two o'clock, and, that there might be no delay in the departure of the force,

every preparation was to be made before that hour, and the troops under arms for an immediate march.

The appointed hour arrived. Captain Johnson was ready to accompany the detachment. The troops were under arms; but no preparations had been made for their departure. A bridge was to have been laid down for the passage of the cavalry and artillery, and covered with straw, that no noise might be made to rouse the suspicions of the enemy; but at two o'clock no orders had been issued, and it was evident that there were doubts and embarrassments to impede the progress of the expedition. Something was wrong, and it became known at last that the enterprise was discovered to be a dangerous one. The enemy were in force in the dilapidated village of Beh-meru, and so, just as day began to dawn, the enterprise was altogether abandoned.

In the course of the day intelligence of a cheering character was received from Jellalabad. Sale's little garrison had sallied out and gallantly defeated the enemy. It was hoped by the Envoy and a few others, who were turning their eyes in every direction, straining to catch even the faintest ray of hope, that the improved aspect of affairs at Jellalabad would induce the military authorities to make new efforts to maintain their position. But all hope of this kind was soon dissipated. The General, fearful of the encouragement of such expectations, addressed the following letter to the Envoy:

Caubul, 9th Dec.

SIR,

With reference to my letter of yesterday's date, No. 215, I beg to state that the intelligence received this day from Sir R. Sale does not, in my opinion, after the most mature consideration, so improve our situation as to alter the sentiments I therein expressed as to the necessity of a treaty being entered into, if possible, with the enemy; but I look upon the arrival of this account of the success obtained over the rebels on the 1st

inst. as most opportune, for I consider it cannot but prove highly advantageous in our negotiations. I beg to annex a copy of a letter from the two officers at the head of the Commissariat Department, by which you will see our destitute state, and the little hope there is of obtaining further supplies.

W. K. ELPHINSTONE, Major-Gen.

The General could only see in the cheering news from Jellalabad another reason for entering into negotiations with the enemy.

All this time the Envoy had been anxiously looking for tidings of the advance of the force under Colonel Maclaren, which had been despatched from Candahar. The communications with that place had been so completely cut off, that it was not until the 10th of December that Macnaghten received intelligence from Colonel Palmer, who commanded the garrison at Ghuznee, that there was little prospect of Maclaren's brigade making good its march to Caubul. The inclemency of the weather and the loss of baggage cattle had been so great, that Maclaren, struggling on with difficulty, was dreading the necessity of a retrograde move. The Envoy had been eager to hold out so long as the least hope remained of receiving succour from the westward. That hope was now rapidly waning. The provisions in cantonments were almost wholly exhausted. On the morning of the 11th there was just food enough for the day's consumption of the fighting men. The camp-followers were starving. Food was not to be obtained by purchase, for the villagers would not sell; food was not to be obtained by fighting, for the soldiers would not fight. Macnaghten had urged the nobler course, until repeated disappointments had made him despair of military success. There was now, indeed, nothing left him but to negotiate with the enemy, or to suffer the force in cantonments to perish by the slow process of starvation before his face. He had suggested

every other course to no purpose. He had resisted the importunities of the military authorities, clamouring for surrender, until there were no provisions in store for the morrow, and no hope of replenishing our empty granaries. He could not now any longer resist; so he drew out the rough draft of a treaty, and met the Afghan chiefs in conference.

The meeting took place at the distance of about a mile from the cantonments, on the banks of the Caubul river. Captains Lawrence, Trevor, and Mackenzie accompanied the Envoy, with a few troopers of the body-guard as an escort. The chiefs of all the principal tribes in the country were present. Among the leading men assembled were Mahomed Akbar Khan, Oosman Khan, Sultan Mahomed Khan, Mahomed Sheriff, Mahomed Shah Khan, and Khoda Buksh Khan, Ghilzye. The first salutations over, the Envoy drew forth the draft treaty he had prepared, and read in Persian the following articles, with their preamble, to the assembled chiefs:

Whereas it has become apparent from recent events that the continuance of the British army in Afghanistan for the support of Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk is displeasing to the great majority of the Afghan nation; and whereas the British Government had no other object in sending troops to this country than the integrity, happiness, and welfare of the Afghans, and, therefore, it can have no wish to remain when that object is defeated by its presence; the following conditions have been agreed upon between Sir W. H. Macnaghten, Bart., Envoy and Minister at the Court of Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk for the British Government on the one part, and by Sirdar [ ] for the Afghan nation on the other part.

1st. The British troops now at Caubul will repair to Peshawur with all practicable expedition, and thence return to India.

2nd. The Sirdars engage that the British troops shall be unmolested in their journey, shall be treated with all honour, and receive all possible assistance in carriage and provisions.

3rd. The troops now at Jellalabad shall receive orders to retire

to Peshawur so soon as the envoy-and-minister is satisfied that their progress will be uninterrupted.

4th. The troops now at Ghuznee will follow, *viâ* Caubul, to Peshawur, as soon as arrangements can be made for their journey in safety.

5th. The troops now at Candahar, or elsewhere within the limits of Afghanistan, will return to India, either *viâ* Caubul or the Bolan Pass, as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made, and the season admits of marching.

6th. The stores and property of whatever description formerly belonging to Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan will be restored.

7th. All property belonging to British officers which may be left behind in Afghanistan will be carefully preserved and sent to India, as opportunities may offer.

8th. Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk will be allowed either to remain in Afghanistan on a suitable provision for his maintenance, not being under one lakh of rupees per annum, or to accompany the British troops on their return to India.

9th. All attention and respect will be paid to such of the Shah's family as may be unable to accompany him, and they shall be permitted to occupy their present place of residence in the Balla Hissar until their return to India, should the Shah resolve in accompanying the British troops.

10th. On the safe arrival of the British troops at Peshawur, arrangements will be immediately made for the return to Afghanistan of the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, his family, and all other Afghans detained in India.

11th. So soon as the Ameer with his family shall reach Peshawur, on their return to Caubul, the family of the Shah shall be allowed to return towards India.

12th. For the due fulfilment of the above conditions four respectable British officers will be left in Caubul as hostages, and will be allowed to return to India on the arrival of the Ameer and his family at Peshawur.

13th. Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan, Sirdar Mahomed Oosman Khan, and such other chiefs of influence as may be so disposed, will accompany the British troops to Peshawur.

14th. Notwithstanding the retirement of the British troops from Afghanistan, there will always be friendship between that

nation and the English, so much so that the Afghans will contract no alliance with any other foreign power without the consent of the English, for whose assistance they will look in the hour of need.

15th. Should it hereafter be the desire of the Afghan nation and the British Government to consent thereto, a British Resident at Caubul may be appointed to keep up the friendly communication between the two governments, but without interfering in any way with the internal administration of Afghanistan.

16th. No one is to be molested on account of any part he may have taken in the late contest; and any person desirous of going to India with the British troops shall be permitted to do so.

17th. From the date on which these articles are agreed, the Sirdars above named undertake that the British troops shall be supplied with provisions on rendering payment for the same.

18th. All British officers and troops who may be unable, from any cause, to quit Afghanistan immediately, shall be treated with all honour and respect, and receive every assistance until the state of the season and of their preparations admits of their departure.

When the Envoy came to the end of the second article, Akbar Khan, with characteristic impetuosity, interrupted him, saying that there was no need to furnish our force with supplies, as there was no impediment to their marching on the morrow. The other chiefs rebuked him for this interference. The remainder of the treaty was read without any further uncourteous interruptions; and, this ebullition over, the young Barukzye himself subsided into courtesy and repose.*

The conference lasted two hours. The terms of the treaty were discussed with as much calmness and moderation as could have been expected, and its main stipulations were agreed to by the assembled chiefs. It was resolved that the British troops should evacuate their cantonments within three days, and that the chiefs

* It is said that Akbar Khan proposed to seize the Envoy at this meeting, but that the other chiefs were adverse to the proceeding. I do not know whether this story rests upon good authority.

should, in the mean while, send in provisions for their use. The meeting broke up, and Captain Trevor accompanied the Khans to the city, "as a hostage for the sincerity of the Envoy."

It is scarcely necessary to write anything in vindication of the conduct of Macnaghten with respect to this early treaty. His vindication is to be found in the preceding correspondence with the military chiefs. But a few pregnant sentences, in which he has himself recorded the circumstances under which he was at last induced to throw himself upon the forbearance of the enemy, ought to be laid before the reader, embodying as they do the Envoy's own justification of his conduct. "The whole country," he wrote in his unfinished report, "as far as we could learn, had risen in rebellion; our communications on all sides were cut off; almost every public officer, whether paid by ourselves or his Majesty, had declared for the new governor, and by far the greater number even of his Majesty's domestic servants had deserted him. We had been fighting forty days against very superior numbers, under most disadvantageous circumstances, with a deplorable loss of valuable lives, and in a day or two we must have perished from hunger, to say nothing of the advanced season of the year and the extreme cold, from the effects of which our native troops were suffering severely. I had been repeatedly apprised by the military authorities that nothing could be done with our troops; and I regret to add that desertions to the enemy were becoming of frequent occurrence among our troops. The terms I secured were the best obtainable, and the destruction of fifteen thousand human beings would little have benefited our country, whilst our government would have been almost compelled to avenge our fate at whatever cost. We shall part with the Afghans as friends, and I feel satisfied that any govern-

ment which may be established hereafter will always be disposed to cultivate a good understanding with us. A retreat without terms would have been impracticable. It is true, that by entering into terms, we are prevented from undertaking the conquest of the entire country—a measure which, from my knowledge of the views of government, I feel convinced would never be resorted to even were the means at hand. But such a project, in the present state of our Indian finances, and the requisitions for troops in various quarters, I knew could not be entertained."*

I wish that it were not more difficult to acquit the military chiefs. General Elphinstone's correspondence contains what he conceived to be a justification of his conduct in urging Macnaghten to capitulate. Brigadier Shelton has left upon record a statement of which it is only just to his memory that it should have the full credit: "The great extent of cantonments," he wrote in the narrative drawn up by him at Buddeeabad, "and defenceless nature of the ramparts (an officer having actually ridden over them), effectually compromised our force, by the necessity to watch and protect every foot of the works, from their extreme weakness, and the consequent danger of sending out a force of sufficient strength to ensure victory, against a numerous enemy flushed with success, while our troops were disheartened, on half-rations of parched wheat, and harassed and worn out from constant duty on the ramparts, whose weakness required their presence night and day, exposed to excessive cold by night, with little covering and less comfort. The great oversight of neglecting to bring in provisions for the winter could not be remedied. The impossibility of procuring them by force in a country studded with forts, every one of which required a regular attack, was appa-

* *Unfinished Report of Sir W. H. Macnaghten: MS. Records.*

rent to all. The Ricka-bashee Fort, close to cantonments, cost us 200 men. What must distant ones not have cost us—sniped the whole way out and home by long rifles out of range of our fire, through snow, with the thermometer at zero? There was nothing under such circumstances dishonourable in a necessary retreat, which might have been effected before the snow fell, and whilst there were a few days' provisions in store, with some hope of success. Had provisions been stored in cantonments for the winter, the troops would have been in better heart, and resistance made until timely assistance should arrive. The party at Jellalabad was more favoured, both in provisions and a more congenial climate."

Posterity will not accept such apologies as these. That difficulties and dangers of no common kind beset the path of the military commanders in those Caubul cantonments is not to be gainsaid. But war is made of difficulties and dangers. It is the glory of the soldier to live in the midst of them. Elphinstone and Shelton were sent to Caubul to face difficulties and dangers, not to turn away from them. The existence of the evils here set forth in such formidable array is not questioned or doubted. Some, at least, of them were the growth of our own weakness; for difficulties not met with energy and decision are wonderfully reproductive. They thicken around the wavering and irresolute. If, on the 10th of December, Elphinstone and Shelton, after bravely struggling, throughout six long peril-laden weeks, against the difficulties which were thronging around them, had at last succumbed to their pressure, they would have been entitled to the respect, no less than to the pity, of the world. But it was not so much that the circumstances were strong, as that the men were weak. As early as the 5th of November—three days after the first outbreak of the insurrection—Elphinstone

had begun to think and to write about terms. Shelton was not much behind him in his recommendations of the same ignoble course. They were, both of them, brave men. In any other situation, though the physical infirmities of the one, and the cankered vanity, the dogmatical perverseness of the other, might have, in some measure, detracted from their efficiency as military commanders, I believe that they would have exhibited sufficient constancy and courage to rescue an army from utter destruction, and the British name from indelible reproach. But in the Caubul cantonments they were miserably out of place. They seem to have been sent there, by superhuman intervention, to work out the utter ruin and prostration of an unholy policy by ordinary human means.

It is remarkable, indeed, that the chief conduct of our military operations, in this critical conjuncture, should have been in the hands of two men so utterly unlike each other, and yet so equal in their incapacity for such command. I believe it to be no exaggeration to affirm, that there were not in India two men of the same high rank equally unfitted by circumstance and by character for the command of the Caubul army. The one had everything to learn; the other had everything to unlearn. Elphinstone knew nothing of the native army. Shelton was violently prejudiced against it. Elphinstone, in a new and untried position, had no opinion of his own, but flung himself upon the judgment of any one with confidence enough to form and express one. Shelton, on the other hand, was proud of his experience, and obstinately wedded to his own opinions. Opposition irritated and enfeebled him. To overrule and to thwart him at the commencement of an enterprise entrusted to his charge was to secure its ignominious failure. Whether by accident or by design, he generally con-

trived to demonstrate the soundness of his own judgment, by being disastrously beaten in every attempt to carry out the projects forced upon him by the preponderating counsels of others. Had Shelton exercised the chief military control, though he might have committed some errors, he would probably have distinguished himself more than in the secondary position which he was compelled to occupy. On him was thrown the burden of the executive duties. Whilst others overruled his opinions, he was made responsible for the success of enterprises against which he protested, and with which he was the last man in the country heartily to identify himself under circumstances so irritating and depressing. It would have been impossible, indeed, to have brought together two men so individually disqualified for their positions—so inefficient in themselves, and so doubly inefficient in combination. Each made the other worse. The only point on which they agreed was, unhappily, the one on which it would have been well if they had differed. They agreed in urging the Envoy to capitulate. There was a curse upon them that clouded their brains and made faint their hearts, and moved them to seek safety in a course at once the most discreditable and the most perilous of all that opened out before them.

CHAPTER VII.

[December, 1841.]

Preparations for the Retreat—Evacuation of the Balla Hissar—Progress of the Negotiations—Continued Delay—Variations of the Treaty—Designs of the Envoy—Overtures of Mahomed Akbar Khan—Death of Sir William Macnaghten—His Character.

And now began preparations for the retreat. Orders were despatched to the Balla Hissar for the evacuation of that position by the British troops; and it was said that in two days the whole force would be moving towards the British provinces. Doubtful of our good faith, the chiefs withheld the promised supplies; but small quantities of grain were procured from the Balla Hissar. In the mean while, though our commissariat store-rooms were empty, our military magazines were full.* There was a scramble among the soldiers for new arms and accoutrements; and even the camp-followers, to whom ammunition was served out by orders of the General, came in for a share of the spoil.

The Balla Hissar was evacuated by the British troops on the 13th of December. Akbar Khan had pledged

* The General had announced (*ante*, page 37), as early as the 6th of November, that his ammunition was failing him; but on the 13th of December the magazine was so well supplied that he ordered it to be served out to the camp-followers. The Balla Hissar had in the mean while been liberally furnished from cantonments.

himself to conduct the party safely to cantonments. Grain was of unspeakable value at this time; but time was valuable too. In our efforts to save the former we lost the latter. There were 1600 maunds of wheat to be conveyed to cantonments, and the packing and loading were more than a day's work. Great as had been the exertions of the Commissariat officer, and worthy of all praise, Major Ewart was compelled to break in upon his labours, and move off his force, before the baggage-cattle were ready to start with their precious loads. It was six o'clock in mid-winter, very dark, and bitterly cold, when the troops began to march slowly out of the Balla Hissar. Akbar Khan and his followers had been for some time in readiness to escort them to cantonments; and now it was whispered among the King's people that a trap had been laid for the destruction of the force, and that not a man would reach his destination. Major Ewart moved out his men; and the party had scarcely cleared the gate when a rush, it was said, was made by some of Akbar Khan's jezailchees to obtain admittance to the Balla Hissar. The gates were immediately closed; the King's troops on the walls opened a smart fire of musketry on friends and on foes alike. Then followed a shower of grape, striking down some of our Sepoys, and creating no little dismay and confusion in our ranks.

The Seeah-Sungh hills, along the base of which lay the road between the Balla Hissar and the cantonments, were bristling with Ghilzye banditti. At that late hour, Akbar Khan declared that it would be almost impossible to restrain them, and that therefore, if the British force would secure its safety, it must abstain from prosecuting its march towards cantonments until he had made arrangements with the chiefs—in fact, that it must halt till the morrow. On that dark, frosty December night this was,

indeed, a discouraging announcement. The troops were halted on low marshy ground, under the walls of the fort. The ground was white with the hoar frost. The air was bitingly cold. They would have lit fires and clustered around them, but there was no fuel in their reach. They had no tents. They had no bedding. They had no food. They were every minute expecting to be attacked by the enemy. In this cheerless, miserable state they could do nothing but stand, or walk about, looking for the rising of the morning star.* The night was a long one, but it came to a close at last. The miseries of the darkness were now to be succeeded by the perils of the dawn. They were only about six hundred strong, and the road was infested by thousands of the enemy. They had nothing on which to depend but the good faith of Akbar Khan and their own steadiness and courage. Happily the former did not fail them. Akbar Khan did not play the traitor. The rear guard was molested by a party of Afghans, and the Sirdar himself, with a few followers, galloped into the midst of his hostile countrymen, and threatened to cut down all who dared to oppose the progress of the detachment. About ten o'clock the force reached cantonments in safety; but "thoroughly exhausted with hunger and fatigue."†

It has been stated, that when on the evening of the 13th of December the British troops moved out of the Balla Hissar, an attempt was made by some of the followers of Akbar Khan to obtain admittance. It has been said that it was the Sirdar's object to seize the gate, so as to admit the main body of his followers, and to carry the place by storm. It has been surmised, also, that the Sirdar delayed the march of Major Ewart's detachment, hoping

* At the suggestion of Lieutenant Conolly they endeavoured to obtain re-admittance to the Balla Hissar, but were fired upon by the garrison, who had been ordered by the King to admit no one.

† *Narrative of Lieutenant Melville.*

that the gates of the Balla Hissar would be re-opened to the British troops; and that then, under cover of the night, his followers might force an entrance into the place.* A very different account of this incident, however, has been left on record by the Envoy himself. "On the 13th of December," he wrote, "it was agreed upon that our troops should evacuate the Balla Hissar, and return to the cantonment, whilst the Barukzyes should have a conference with his Majesty, with a view to his retaining the nominal powers of sovereignty, they, for their own security, placing a guard of their own in the upper citadel. No sooner, however, had our troops left the Balla Hissar, than his Majesty, owing to some panic or misunderstanding, ordered the gate to be shut, and the proposed conference was thereby prevented. So offended were the Barukzyes, that they determined never to offer his Majesty the same terms again. In explanation of his conduct, his Majesty states that the party whom the Barukzyes desired to introduce was not the party which had been agreed upon."† This was, probably, one of the last sentences ever penned by Sir William Macnaghten. It closes the fragment of the official report found in his writing-desk after his death.

The treaty read by the Envoy at the conference on the 11th of December contained an article involving the formal abdication of Shah Soojah. The restoration of the Barukzye Sirdars to their old principalities was, at that time, decreed by both contracting parties; but the meeting had scarcely broken up, when some of the Douranee chiefs, jealous of the power of the Barukzyes, which had ever been put forth to the injury and depression of the tribes, recoiled from this perilous stipulation, and began to think of the retention of the King, at all

* *Eyre's Journal.* † *MS. Records.*

events as a puppet and a name.* On the following day it was proposed by the chiefs that Shah Soojah should remain on the throne, on condition of his intermarrying his daughters with the leading Afghan Sirdars, and vesting the Wuzeership in the family of the Barukzyes. It was stipulated also that the King, whose love of pomp and ceremony was one of his besetting infirmities, and who had excited the indignation of many of the chiefs by his haughty bearing towards them, should dispense with some of the regal formalities which had given them so great offence.† The proposal, sanctioned by the British minister, was formally made to the Shah. There was the loss of his kingdom on the one side; there was the loss of some regal dignity on the other. The King hesitated; then yielded a reluctant assent; and a few days afterwards withdrew it altogether. His pride and his fear both deterred him from forming such an alliance with the chiefs. He was unwilling so to sully the purity of the royal blood; and he could not trust to the good faith of the Sirdars after the departure of his British allies. And so the treaty with the Barukzye chiefs reverted to its original shape, and the Shah determined to return to the British provinces, from which he had never yet emerged without plunging into new disasters.

The stipulations of the treaty were now to be brought into effect. But mutual distrust existed between the parties, and each was unwilling to give the other any advantage by being the first to act up to the obligations

* Mohun Lal says that this was the Envoy's design. "This agreement," he wrote in a letter to Mr. Colvin, "which the Envoy had prudently made to create dissension, disappointed all the Douranee rebels, &c., who were alarmed at the return of the Dost. They immediately began to communicate with the Shah, and assured him to take his side, which, in fact, was the object of the Envoy." —[*MS. Records.*]

† Mainly "the offensive practice of keeping the chief nobles of his kingdom waiting for hours at his gate, in expectation of audience."—[*Eyre's Journal.*]

that it imposed. The British authorities called upon the chiefs to send in the provisions which they had undertaken to provide; and the chiefs called upon the British authorities to demonstrate the sincerity of their promises to retire from Afghanistan, by giving up the different forts which they occupied in the neighbourhood of cantonments, and by placing hostages in their hands. The question of the abandonment of the forts was discussed between the Envoy and the General. On the 16th of December the latter wrote:

Dec. 16, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

I wish you would write me an official letter, with your opinion as to the necessity of giving up the forts, in furtherance of your negotiations. I think, if absolutely necessary, it must be done. Our situation cannot be made worse, but I think they ought to take them one at a time, beginning with Zoolfikar's (the grain fort) and the Ricka-Bashee, they sending us supplies. This will be a mutual proof of confidence: the abandoning of these forts if they are not sincere, giving up these cantonments and the possibility of retreat from them. Of *course* the hostages will be sent, as you think they ought to be: pray name them in your letter, if they have offered, or you proposed any.

I herewith return the two letters from Trevor and Captain Drummond.

Yours truly,

W. K. E.*

The magazine fort is, in fact, part of our cantonments, and ought for the present to be dispensed with, as an act of courtesy and faith to us.

Upon the receipt of this letter from the General, the Envoy addressed to him the required official communication:

December 16, 1841.

SIR,

I have the honour to acquaint you that I have received a proposition from Mahomed Oosman Khan and Ameen-oollah

* *Unpublished Correspondence.*

Khan, to the effect that we should give up to them certain forts in the vicinity of the cantonments, with a view to convince the population of the sincerity of our intention to leave the country; by which arrangement also they stated that they would be able to supply us punctually with provisions.

I am aware of the objections to such an arrangement, in a military point of view; but as I am of opinion that the proposition has emanated from a suspicion of our intentions, rather than from any sinister motive on the part of the Afghan chiefs, I would strongly recommend that the proposition be complied with. We are clearly completely in the power of our new allies as regards the article of provisions; and it is not clear to me what other course than compliance is open to us. By this course we show confidence, and have at least the chance of making a safe and honourable retreat out of the country: whereas, by refusal, we may exasperate those with whom we are treating, and be utterly cut off from the means of subsistence.

Since the above was written, I have received an intimation that no further supplies will be sent us, until the proposition of the chiefs be complied with; and I request that you will inform me whether you are prepared to give up the forts

(The new Magazine Fort,
The Musjeed,
The Fort of Zoolfikar,
The Fort of Ricka-Bashee)

this afternoon.

The chiefs have promised that thirty men, who shall be under control, are to occupy each of the places to be delivered up; and I hope that the brother of Newab Mahomed Zemaun Khan will reside in the cantonment as a hostage until our departure.

I have the honour to be, &c., &c.,

W. H. M.*

To this letter the General sent back the following official reply:

Head-Quarters, Caubul, Dec. 16, 1841.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date; in reply to which I beg to say that,

* *Unpublished Correspondence.*

from the emergency of the case, as therein stated, I see no alternative left us but to give up the forts mentioned to the chiefs with whom you are treating; and I shall accordingly give orders for their being vacated and delivered over to the persons who may be authorised to receive them, immediately on your intimating their arrival.

I have the honour, &c.,

W. K. ELPHINSTONE, Major-Gen.,

Commanding in Afghanistan.

No time was lost in carrying this arrangement into effect. Whatever dilatoriness may have been displayed on other occasions, there was no want of alacrity evinced when anything was to be yielded to the enemy. Our garrisons were speedily withdrawn from the forts, and the victorious insurgents duly placed in possession of them. By four o'clock in the afternoon, the Afghan conquerors were sitting on the walls of these ceded forts, looking into the British cantonments, and joking over our discomfiture.* A brother of the Newab Zemaun Khan was sent in as a hostage on the part of the enemy;† and a small supply of atta was furnished to the troops.

Provisions, however, came in very slowly; and carriage was not sent in at all. There was a mixed crowd of robbers and fanatics swarming between the city and the cantonments, ever on the alert to intercept the supplies that were sent in either by the Sirdars or by private speculators. All kinds of outrages were com-

* Shelton was opposed to the cession of the forts. "On my opinion being asked," he says, "I pronounced it injudicious, and it was declined; but about two days afterwards the order was given, and I was directed to give up all."—[*MS. Records.*]

† It was thought, however, that there was too much disunion among the Afghans, at this time, to render the hostage-giving any kind of security—inasmuch as the sacrifice of a hostage might have pleased more than it offended. It was said by Sultan Jan, of the hostage now in our camp, "Oh! he is a dog of a man; what should we have cared if you had killed him."—[*Lieut. Melville's Narrative.*]

mitted, in the very face of our guards, and under the very muzzles of our guns; but not a shot was fired upon the plunderers. Our enemies, now become "our new allies," were to be treated with all possible consideration. Nothing was to be done to interrupt the good feeling which was now said to have been established; and so, whilst our troops were starving, the military authorities suffered the grain so eagerly looked for by the wretched force to be swept away from them, under the very walls of cantonments, by a miserable rabble, whom a few rounds of grape would have scattered like a flock of sheep.*

* Captain Johnson's journal supplies the best information extant relative to the measures taken throughout the siege to supply the force with provisions. Under dates *Dec. 12th and 13th*, he writes: "A few provisions sent into cantonments by the Sirdars. A lakh of rupees advanced to Mahomed Akbar for the purchase of camels—not one as yet forthcoming. The Seeah-Sungh gateway, through which all supplies come in, is daily infested by parties of Afghans calling themselves *Ghazees*, or fighters for religion. They are, without exception, the most barefaced, impertinent scoundrels under the sun. Armed with swords, daggers, and matchlocks, they acknowledge no chief, but act independently—they taunt and insult the whole of us. Not a Sepoy can venture twelve paces from the bridge over the ditch without being plundered of what he has. People from the town, bringing in grain or *boosah* (bran), are often plundered and beaten. Although our cattle and men are starving, no measures are taken by our military authorities to check all this. It is true, our ramparts are lined with our soldiers, and plenty of cannon at each bastion, and a six-pounder at the bridge loaded with grape—but to what purpose? Our men are told, on no account, to fire upon the Afghans, without the most urgent necessity, for fear of putting a stop to the good feeling existing on their part. The chiefs have been applied to, to use their influence to prevent these people assembling near our cantonments. Their reply is, 'We cannot do so—they are not under our control; but if they misbehave themselves, fire upon them.' To-day, I was at the Seeah-Sungh gateway, anxiously looking out for some food for my public cattle. About thirty loads of *boosah* came to within six paces of the bridge, and where the guard was standing. The officer on duty, as also the field-officer of the week, was there. The wretched rabble above alluded to stopped the drivers of the donkeys and abused them, beat them and ordered them back, and threatened them with more ill-usage in the event of their returning to sell any article to the Feringhees. This was reported by me to the General, and there it ended."

And again, on the 15th, the active Commissariat officer writes: "A few supplies sent into cantonments, and people still bringing in private speculations; but are subjected to the same ill-treatment as noticed on the 12th and 13th. Attah and barley sell from 1½ to 3 and 4 seers the rupee (from 3lb. to 6lb. and 8lb. for 2s.) . . . To-day a flock of sheep belonging to

This was a season of perilous procrastination. Both parties seemed anxious to postpone the day that was to witness the departure of the British force; and each was suspicious of the good faith of the other. The chiefs withheld, from day to day, the provisions and the carriage-cattle, with which they had undertaken to facilitate our escape from Afghanistan; and Macnaghten, hoping still against hope, and sanguine, even in the midst of every kind of discouragement, still thought that "something might turn up" to avert the humiliation of an enforced withdrawal from the country which we had entered with so much pomp and parade. It was still possible, he thought, that Maclaren's brigade might make good its way to Caubul. It was not then known that it had retraced its steps to Candahar.

Then snow began to fall. On the 18th of December, the doomed force looked out upon the new horror. From morning to evening prayer it fell with frightful perseverance, and before sunset was lying many inches thick upon the ground. Our difficulties had now fearfully increased. Had the force been set in motion a few days before the first snow-fall, and, moving lightly, pushed on by forced marches through the passes, it might have reached Jellalabad in safety. But now everything was against us. The elements were conspiring for our destruction. It was more and more painfully obvious, every day, that the curse of God was brooding over the agents of an unrighteous policy. Whatever may have been the causes of that week's delay—whether the bad faith of the chiefs, the irresolution of the Shah, or the reluctance

cantonments was grazing outside of the walls, under the care of the shepherd. Two men attacked him close under where our sentries, with loaded muskets, were standing. The shepherd fled, and so did the two men with the whole flock of sheep, and drove them along the whole face of cantonment. Report made to the General, whose reply was, 'They had no business to go outside;' and all this time our garrison are starving!"—[*Captain Johnson's Journal: MS. Records.*]

of the British Envoy, it cut away from under us the last hope that remained of rescuing the British force from the annihilating dangers that hemmed it in on every side.

The 22nd was now fixed upon as the day for the departure of the British troops. On the 19th, the Envoy and the General despatched letters to Ghuznee, Candahar, and Jellalabad, ordering the evacuation of those positions. Money was given freely to the chiefs for cattle which was not sent in for our use; and it was believed that Mahomed Akbar was expecting the treasure thus raised on the instruments of our destruction. Every day "our new allies" became more insolent and defiant. As our difficulties thickened, their demands rose. All hope of succours from Candahar had vanished on the 19th, when intelligence of the return of Maclaren's brigade was received by the Envoy. Macnaghten had clung to this chance, with desperate tenacity, to the last—and now he abandoned all hope of saving the reputation of his country by beating the enemy in the field.

But he had not yet abandoned all hope of saving the reputation of his country by playing a game of dexterous diplomacy, such as could only have been played against a number of disunited factions, almost as hostile to each other as to the common foe. It is not easy to group into one lucid and intelligible whole all the many shifting schemes and devices which distracted the last days of the Envoy's career. It is probable that at this time he could have given no very clear account of the game which he was playing. He appears to have turned first to one party and then to another, eagerly grasping at every new combination that seemed to promise more hopeful results than the last. His mind was by this time unhinged;—his intellect was clouded; his moral perceptions were deadened. The wonder is, not that he was pressed down at last by the tremendous burden of anxiety which had

sate upon him throughout those seven long weeks of unparalleled suffering and disaster, but that he had borne up so long and so bravely under the weight.

It seems, indeed, that Macnaghten, at this time, never knew, from one day to another, with whom he would eventually conclude a treaty for the extrication of the unhappy force from the perils that girt it around as with a ring of fire. He was throwing about money in all directions, and there were hungry claimants, pressing on now from one direction now from another, eager to turn the sufferings of the Feringhees to the best account, and to find the best market for their own influence and authority. He saw no honesty and sincerity among the chiefs; he saw that they were all contending one against the other; every man thinking only of himself. He knew that they had failed in their engagements to him, and he doubted whether he was bound by the obligations which he had contracted, or was free to negotiate with any one who was willing, and able, to offer or to accept terms less degrading in themselves and less likely to be violated. It was his general design to keep the different factions in a state of antagonism with each other, and to cling to the one best able to protect us from the malice of the rest. But he could not determine, of the many combinations that could be formed, which was the best calculated to evolve a state of things most favorable to British interests, and so he seems to have had more than one game in hand at the same time, and hardly to have known which was to be played out.

Ostensibly Macnaghten was at this time in treaty with the Barukzye party. But he was offering at the same time large sums of money to the Ghilzyes and to the Kuzzilbashes to side with the Shah and the British; and if they had declared themselves openly on our side, he might have thrown over the Barukzye alliance. "You can tell the Ghilzyes and Khan Shereen," he wrote on

the 20th of December to Mohun Lal, "that after they have declared for his Majesty and us, and sent in 100 *kurwars* of grain to cantonments, I shall be glad to give them a bond for five lakhs of rupees; and if Naib Sheriff is satisfied that he will do so, he should advance to them as much money as he can. I fear for Mahomed Shah that he is with Akbar; but you will know best. You must let me know before sunrise, if possible, what is likely to be the effect of this proposal, as I must talk accordingly to the Barukzyes, who have shown no disposition to be honest. To save time, you may tell Khan Shereen to correspond with the Shah, if there is a chance of success."

On the following day he wrote again to Mohun Lal, unfolding his views more distinctly with regard to the contemplated alliance with the Ghilzyes and the Kuzzilbashes:

December 21, 4 P.M.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your two notes, and I approve of all that you have done. In conversing with anybody, you must say distinctly that I am ready to stand by my engagement with the Barukzyes and other chiefs associated with them; but that if any portion of the Afghans wish our troops to remain in the country, I shall think myself at liberty to break the engagement which I have made to go away, which engagement was made, believing it to be in accordance with the wishes of the Afghan nation. If the Ghilzyes and Kuzzilbashes wish us to stay, let them declare so openly in the course of to-morrow, and we will side with them. The best proof of their wish for us to stay is to send us a large quantity of grain this night—100 or 200 kurwars. If they do this, and make their salaam to the Shah early to-morrow, giving his Majesty to understand that we are along with them, I will write to the Barukzyes and tell them my agreement is at an end; but if they (Ghilzyes and Kuzzilbashes) are not prepared to go all lengths with us, nothing should be said about the matter, because the agreement I have made is very good for us.

Yours,

W. H. M.

An hour afterwards he wrote again to Mohun Lal, repeating all this in still more decided language, and declaring that if grain were obtained he should think himself "at liberty to break his agreement of going away on Friday, because that agreement was made under the belief that all the Afghan people wished us to go away." "Do not let me appear in this matter," he wrote, in conclusion; "say that I am ready to stand by my engagement, but that I leave it to the people themselves." And again, after the lapse of another hour, he wrote: "If any grain is coming in to-night, let me have notice of it a few minutes before. Anything that may be intended in our favour must appear before noon tomorrow."

Far better than any explanations that I could offer do these letters unfold the character of Macnaghten's designs. The days on which they were written saw the Envoy in conference, near the banks of the canal, with Akbar Khan and a few chiefs of the Barukzye party. As time advanced, the Sirdars rose in their demands; and every new meeting witnessed the dictation of fresh terms. They called upon us to deliver up to them all our military stores and ammunition, and to surrender the married families as hostages for the fulfilment, on our part, of the conditions of the treaty. Then they demanded that Brigadier Shelton should be given over to them as a hostage; but the Brigadier was unwilling to accept the duty, and the proposal was declined. The hostages given up on the 21st of December were Lieutenants J. B. Conolly, the Envoy's relative and assistant, and Lieutenant Airey, of the 3rd Buffs, who had been acting as the General's aid-de-camp.

On the following day the commissary of ordnance, Lieutenant Eyre, was "ordered to conduct an officer of the Newab Zemaun Khan over the magazine, that he

might make choice of such stores as would be most acceptable to the chiefs."* At the same time the Envoy sent his carriage and horses as a present to Akbar Khan. He was now beginning to despair of deriving any real assistance from the Ghilzyes, who were slow to declare themselves openly on our side, and he saw plainly how dangerous it was to appear to be in treaty with them and the Barukzyes at the same time. Some doubts, too, of the honesty of the course he was pursuing began to obtrude themselves upon him; and he wrote accordingly to Mohun Lal, requesting him to instruct the Ghilzyes not to send in any grain until further advised upon the subject:

December 22, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have just got your notes. Pray forbid the Ghilzyes to bring any grain to-night until I talk to them. I cannot say whether they are prepared to do any service. The sending grain to us just now would do more harm than good to our cause; and it would lead the Barukzyes to suppose that I am intriguing with a view of breaking my agreement; but I can never break that agreement so long as all the Khawanen wish me to stand by it. Pray thank our friends, nevertheless, for their kind attention to our interest. I wish very much to please them, and am sorry my treasury is so empty.

Yours,

W. H. M.

December 22, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have just received your note, and send 7000 rupees for Khan Shereen agreeably to your suggestion. He is a good friend of ours, but pray request him not to tell anybody that I have sent the money, for we have scarcely any left. I have not heard from him according to his promise of yesterday, but I suppose that he had no information of importance to send me. I have already written to you begging that the Ghilzye chiefs should send no grain to-night. They should first openly declare themselves, if

* *Eyre's Journal.*

they think that any injury is likely to occur to themselves by our agreement or our leaving the country. If they do not do so, I must stand by my agreement, whatever may be the consequences. You must understand that I wish to be considered as Sahib-i-rastee; and that if while our present agreement lasts I were to receive a large supply of grain from the Ghilzyes, suspicion would be raised that I intend to break my engagement, and wish to keep the troops here, in spite of the wishes of all the chiefs to the contrary. It would be very agreeable to stop here for a few months instead of having to travel through the snow; but we must not consider what is agreeable, but what is consistent with our faith. I am led to expect a visit to-night from N[aib] S[heriff] and the Ghilzye chiefs. Yours,

W. H. M.

It was on the evening of this 22nd of December, when Macnaghten, long tossed about on a sea of doubt and distraction—perplexed in the extreme by the manifest bad faith and the ever-increasing demands of the chiefs—seeing no end to the perilous uncertainties of his position, and wearied out beyond human endurance by days and nights of ceaseless anxiety and bewilderment—was in a temper to grasp at any new thing that might seem to open a door of escape from the embarrassments which surrounded him—that Akbar Khan sent in Captain Skinner from the city with a new string of proposals.

The Envoy had been warned of the danger of treating independently with the young Barukzye Sirdar; he had been told that treachery was spreading itself around him, and that he would be enclosed in its toils.* But he had

* Mohun Lal's story, as given in a letter to Mr. Colvin, is worth quoting, though its meaning is somewhat obscured by its dubious phraseology:—"Mahomed Akbar, being afraid of the union of the Douranees with the Shah, induced Surwar Khan and others, by the hope of reward, to deceive the Envoy, by saying that he will either spread dissension in the city to allow us to remain in the country, see us safely pass down to Jellalabad, or act as the Envoy tells him, on the condition that Mahomed Akbar was to receive four lakhs of rupees annually, besides the reward of thirty lakhs from the British Government, and made the Vizier of the Suddozye Kings from generation to generation. As soon as

now become desperate. Anything was better than the wearing uncertainty which had so long been unhinging his mind. Akbar Khan sent tempting proposals; and the Envoy flung himself upon the snare. He knew that there was danger, but he had become regardless of it. Anything was better than the life he had so long been leading. Even death itself was better than such a life.

Captain Skinner came into cantonments, accompanied by Mahomed Sadig and Surwar Khan, the Lohanee merchant.* The English officer sate down to dinner with the Envoy whilst the two Afghans remained in another room. A gleam of hope passed over Macnaghten's careworn face when Skinner told him, in a light jesting manner, that he was the bearer of a message from Akbar Khan of a portentous nature, and that he felt as one loaded with combustibles.† But the message was not

I heard this by the Persian chief, I wrote to the Envoy that Mahomed Akbar was deceiving us, and he should place no faith in anything he says. I also particularly informed him that he may give money to anybody he likes to espouse the cause of the Shah and us, but never to the chiefs, as it will not induce them to do us service like the others, but will incite and prepare them against us. Unfortunately he was assured by Surwar Khan, Naib Ameer, &c., of their favorable service, and to advance lakhs of rupees. He was also prompted by these individuals to give the paper of the above-mentioned agreement to Mahomed Akbar. He showed it, and said falsely to Ameen-oollah that the Envoy has promised the money it contains, if Mahomed Akbar were to kill, catch, or send him alive to the Envoy. Ameen-oollah threw himself at his feet, and said he is doing all this against us merely for the good of his father, and he (Akbar) has sense to know it perfectly; therefore he should not lose time either to catch or murder the Envoy, which will procure him all the power and money he wishes. I wrote all this to the Envoy on the very morning of his murder, begged him to take very great care of himself, and do not go so often to meet Mahomed Akbar out of the cantonment, as he is the man that nobody can trust his word upon oath. I also added that the Douranees, as well as Ameen-oollah (the instigation of Akbar), being jealous of the return of his father, have taken the part of the Shah, and will, in the course of two days, wait upon his Majesty, ask us to remain here in the hope of receiving the money promised them by me."—[*MS. Records.*]

* Mahomed Sadig was a first cousin of Akbar Khan. Surwar Khan had been, in the earlier stages of the campaign, extensively engaged in supplying the army with camels. He was in the confidence of Sir A. Burnes, and was generally esteemed a friend of the British.

† *Letter of Captain Colin Mackenzie to Lieutenant Eyre: Eyre's Journal.*

then delivered. The proposals were to be stated by the Afghan delegates, who were soon closeted with the Envoy. Skinner alone was present at the interview. Mahomed Sadig stated the proposals that had been made by Akbar Khan. It was proposed that an agreement should be entered into on the following day, to the effect that Akbar Khan and the Ghilzyes should unite themselves with the British troops, which were to be drawn up outside of cantonments, and at a given signal should assault Mahmood Khan's fort and seize the person of Ameen-oollah Khan. Then followed a startling offer, from which the Envoy shrunk back with abhorrence. This was the offer of Ameen-oollah's head, which, for a sum of money, Mahomed Sadig declared should be presented to the British Envoy. Macnaghten at once rejected the offer. It was never, he said, his custom, nor that of his country, to pay a price for blood. Then Mahomed Sadig went on to state the proposals of the Barukzye Sirdar. The English were to remain in Afghanistan until the spring; and then, to save their credit, by withdrawing, as though of their own free will. Shah Soojah was to remain in the country as King, and Akbar Khan was to be his Wuzeer. As a reward for these services, Akbar Khan was to receive an annuity of four lakhs of rupees from the British Government, and a bonus of thirty lakhs!

Wild as were these proposals, the Envoy caught eagerly at them. He did not hesitate for a moment. He had, from first to last, clung to the hope of something being evolved out of the chaos of difficulty, that would enable him to retain his position in the country, at all events till the coming spring; and now there suddenly welled up within him a hope that he had obtained the object of his desires. He now accepted the proposals; and signified his assent in a Persian paper written by his own hand. With this the Afghan delegates returned to

the city and made known to Akbar Khan the success of their mission. Captain Skinner returned with them.

The morning of the 23rd of December found Macnaghten restless and excited. A great crisis had arrived. That day was to decide the fate of the British force, and determine the question of the loss or the salvation of our national honour. It is probable that the morning brought with it some doubts and misgivings; but he brushed the obtrusive thoughts aside, and endeavoured to persuade himself, as he did to persuade others, that there was no treachery to be feared.

Having breakfasted, he sent for the officers of his staff—Lawrence, Trevor, and Mackenzie—who were his friends and counsellors, to whom on all occasions but this he had entrusted his designs—to accompany him to the conference with Akbar Khan. Mackenzie, finding him alone, heard from him now, for the first time, the history of this new negotiation, and at once exclaimed that it was a plot. "A plot!" replied the Envoy, hastily; "let me alone for that—trust me for that!"

He had braced himself up with desperate courage for the conference which was to be followed by such great results; and now he sent for the General to acquaint him with the nature of the proposals and to request his aid to carry the scheme into effect. Startled by the announcement, and little comprehending all the depths and intricacies of the perilous game which the Envoy had now in hand, Elphinstone asked what part the other Barukzyes, who had been foremost in the previous negotiations, were to take in those now on foot, and was told in reply that they were "not in the *plot*." On the untutored ear of the single-minded veteran this significant monosyllable smote with an ominous sound. He began now to understand the double game which was being played by the Envoy on one side, and the young Barukzye

Sirdar on the other, and he eagerly asked the former if he did not apprehend that some treachery was at work. "None at all," said Macnaghten, in reply; "I wish you to have two regiments and two guns got ready, as speedily and as quietly as possible, for the capture of Mahmood Khan's fort; the rest you may leave to me." But still the General spoke of the danger of such machinations, and urged him to pause before he committed himself irretrievably to so perilous a course. Elphinstone had unfortunately been talking about danger so incessantly since the very commencement of the outbreak, that now, when he uttered only words of common sense and prudence, the warning notes fell upon Macnaghten's ears like the old imbecile croakings of timidity and irresolution which had been irritating him for so many weeks, and he now turned away with impatience, saying, "I understand these things better than you."* Elphinstone went; but, in spite of Macnaghten's confidence, he could not dispossess himself of the belief that treachery was brewing, and that the Envoy was

* "On the morning of the 23rd," says General Elphinstone, "I received a note from the Envoy, saying that he hoped he had made an arrangement which would enable us to remain in the country; and that he would shortly acquaint me with all the particulars. I soon afterwards received a message from him, desiring to see me, when he informed me that he had made an arrangement with Mahomed Akbar, by which Shah Soojah would remain on the throne—Mahomed Akbar being Wuzeer. He was to receive a large sum of money, and Ameen-oollah was to be delivered to us a prisoner. I then asked what part Newab Zeman Khan and Oosman Khan were to take in this? To which I received answer that they were not in the plot. I replied that I did not like the word 'plot'—that it was an ominous one—and I begged to know if there were no fear of treachery? The Envoy's reply was, 'None whatever—I am certain the thing will succeed. What I want you to do is to have two regiments and guns got quickly ready, and, without making any show, to be prepared 'the moment required to move towards Mahmood Khan's fort.' I further discussed with him the danger he was incurring; but he replied, 'Leave it all to me—I understand these things better than you do.' I then left him, and he shortly afterwards proceeded with his suite and a few of his cavalry escort to the interview. Before we separated, I asked him if there was anything else I could do? He replied, 'Nothing, but to have the two regiments and two guns in readiness, and the garrison to be on the alert;' which was accordingly ordered."

rushing upon destruction. So, hoping that yet something might be done to arrest him, he sate down and wrote him this letter:

December 23.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

I have reconsidered the subject of our conversation, with respect to which I have to observe, that to enable us really to be of consequence in assisting our adherents, the magazine and forts ought to be restored, and the supplies, for at least three months, laid in at once; it would not do to depend on it daily, or even monthly. I hope there is no fear of treachery; the sending two guns and two regiments away would divide our force; and our sole dependence is the union of our force. The cantonment, I find, is at present full of Afghans. All this we must think of, and act for the best. What guarantees have we for the truth of all that has been said? I only mention this to make you cautious as to sending away part of our force. Perhaps it is unnecessary with you, who know these people so well. I will be prepared to turn out, if necessary, by drawing the men ready to man the ramparts.

W. K. E.*

This was the last letter ever addressed to the Envoy. It never reached its destination.

About the hour of noon the little party—Macnaghten, Lawrence, Trevor, Mackenzie, and a few horsemen—set out on their ill-omened expedition. Shelton had been invited to accompany them; but he was occupied in getting ready the two regiments and the guns, and was, therefore, unable to attend the conference.† The troops, however, were not ready when the ambassadorial cavalcade rode out of the Seeah-Sungh gate, and the Envoy, observing the backwardness of the military chiefs, bitterly

* *Unpublished Correspondence.*

† "On the morning of the 23rd," wrote Shelton, "about ten o'clock, I got an order to have two corps and some guns ready, to march out to seize, as I understood, the Logur chief. While thus occupied in giving it out, an invitation came from the Envoy to accompany him to an interview with the Sirdar. Being busy, I fortunately could not go, or should probably have shared the same fate."—[*MS. Records.*]

remarked that it was of a piece with all their arrangements since the commencement of the outbreak. He then went on to speak of the enterprise on which they were engaged; admitted that it was a dangerous one; said that he was playing for a heavy stake, but the prize was worth the risk that was to be incurred. "At all events," he said, "let the loss be what it may, a thousand deaths were preferable to the life I have of late been leading."

They passed out of cantonments. As they went, Macnaghten remembered that a beautiful Arab horse, which Akbar Khan had much coveted, and which the Envoy had purchased from its owner,* had been left behind. Mackenzie was sent back for it, that it might now be presented to the Sirdar. Lawrence was told to hold himself in readiness to ride to the Balla Hissar, to communicate with the King. There were many suspicious appearances, which excited the apprehensions of all but the Envoy. Crowds of armed Afghans were hovering about the cantonment, and clustering in the neighbourhood of Mahmood Khan's fort. Macnaghten saw nothing but the prospect of escaping the disgrace of a sudden retreat from Afghanistan. He looked neither to the right nor to the left. He had a great object in view, and he kept his eyes steadily upon it. He did not even, when the chiefs met him, perceive that a brother of Ameen-oollah Khan was one of the party.

* Captain Grant, the adjutant-general of the Caubul force. "It seems," says Captain Mackenzie, "that Mahomed Akbar had demanded a favourite Arab horse belonging to Captain Grant, assistant adjutant-general of the force. To avoid the necessity of parting with the animal, Captain Grant had fixed his price at the exorbitant sum of 5000 rupees. Unwilling to give so large a price, but determined to gratify the Sirdar, Sir William sent me to Captain Grant to prevail upon him to take a smaller sum, but with orders that, if he were peremptory, the 5000 rupees should be given. I obtained the horse for 3000 rupees, and Sir William appeared much pleased with the prospect of gratifying Mahomed Akbar by the present."—[*Captain Mackenzie's Narrative: Eyre's Journal.*]

Near the banks of the river, midway between Mahmood Khan's fort and the bridge, about 600 yards from the cantonment, there were some small hillocks, on the further slope of which, where the snow was lying less thickly than on other parts, some horse-cloths were now spread by one of Akbar Khan's servants. The English officers and the Afghan Sirdars had exchanged salutations and conversed for a little while on horseback. The Arab horse, with which Mackenzie had returned, had been presented to Akbar Khan, who received it with many expressions of thanks, and spoke also with gratitude of the gift of the pistols which he had received on the preceding day.* It was now proposed that they should dismount. The whole party accordingly repaired to the hill-side. Macnaghten stretched himself at full length on the bank; Trevor and Mackenzie, burdened with presentiments of evil, seated themselves beside him. Lawrence stood behind his chief until urged by one of the Khans to seat himself, when he knelt down on one knee, in the attitude of a man ready for immediate action. A question from Akbar Khan, who sate beside Macnaghten, opened the business of the conference. He abruptly asked the Envoy if he were ready to carry out the proposals of the preceding evening? "Why not?" asked Macnaghten. The Afghans were by this time gathering around in numbers, which excited both the surprise and the suspicion of Lawrence and Mackenzie, who said, that if the conference was to be a secret one, the intruders ought to be removed. With a movement of doubtful sincerity some of the chiefs then lashed out with their whips at the closing circle; but Akbar Khan

* A handsome pair of double-barrelled pistols belonging to Captain Lawrence, of which Akbar Khan had expressed his admiration at a previous meeting, and which had accordingly been presented to him.

said that their presence was of no consequence, as they were all in the secret with him.

Scarcely were the words uttered, when the Envoy and his companions were violently seized from behind. The movement was sudden and surprising. There was a scene of terrible confusion, which no one can distinctly describe. The officers of the Envoy's staff were dragged away, and compelled each to mount a horse ridden by an Afghan chief. Soon were they running the gauntlet through a crowd of Ghazees, who struck out at them as they passed. Trevor unfortunately slipped from his insecure seat behind Dost Mahomed Khan, and was cut to pieces on the spot. Lawrence and Mackenzie, more fortunate, reached Mahmood Khan's fort alive.

In the mean while, the Envoy himself was struggling desperately on the ground with Akbar Khan. The look of wondering horror that sat upon his upturned face will not be forgotten by those who saw it to their dying days. The only words he was heard to utter were, "*Az barae Khoda*" ("For God's sake"). They were, perhaps, the last words spoken by one of the bravest gentlemen that ever fell a sacrifice to his erring faith in others. He had struggled from the first manfully against his doom, and now these last manful struggles cost the poor chief his life. Exasperated past all control by the resistance of his victim, whom he designed only to seize, Akbar Khan drew a pistol from his girdle—one of those pistols for the gift of which only a little while before he had profusely thanked the Envoy—and shot Macnaghten through the body. Whether the wretched man died on the spot—or whether he was slain by the infuriated Ghazees, who now pressed eagerly forward, is not very clearly known—but these miserable fanatics flung themselves upon the prostrate body of the English gentleman, and hacked it to pieces with their knives.

Thus perished William Hay Macnaghten—struck down by the hand of the favourite son of Dost Mahomed. Thus perished as brave a gentleman as ever, in the midst of fiery trial, struggled manfully to rescue from disgrace the reputation of a great country. Throughout those seven weeks of unparalleled difficulty and danger he had confronted with steadfast courage every new peril and perplexity that had risen up before him; and, a man of peace himself, had resisted the timid counsels of the warriors, and striven to infuse, by the manliness of his example, some strength into their fainting hearts. Whatever may be the judgment of posterity on other phases of his character, and other incidents of his career, the historian will ever dwell with pride upon the unfailing courage and constancy of the man who, with everything to discourage and depress him, surrounded by all enervating influences, was ever eager to counsel the nobler and the manlier course, ever ready to bear the burdens of responsibility, and face the assaults of danger. There was but one civilian at Caubul; and he was the truest soldier in the camp.

It is not easy to estimate correctly the character of William Macnaghten. Of the moral and intellectual attributes of the ill-fated Envoy very conflicting accounts have been rendered; and it is probable that in all these conflicting accounts some leaven of truth resides. There are few men whose characters are not made up of antagonistic qualities; and Macnaghten was not one of the few. In early life he had distinguished himself by the extent of his philological acquirements; and was reputed as one of the most accomplished Oriental scholars in the presidencies of India. With a deep insight into the character of the natives of the East was blended the kindliest sympathy and toleration towards them. In the knowledge, indeed, of the native languages, the institu-

tions, and the character of the people of Hindostan, he was surpassed by none of the many accomplished officers who have made them their study. His long connexion with the judicial department of the public service had afforded him opportunities, which his temper and his taste led him to improve, of maturing and perfecting this essential branch of official knowledge. In attention to business he was one of the most unwearying of men; his pen was ever in his hand; he wrote rapidly, and expressed himself on most subjects with clearness; he was quick in his apprehension of the views of others, and accommodated himself with facility to shifting circumstances. But at this point there are many who believe that they cease to tread upon undebateable ground. It is admitted that he was an accomplished Oriental scholar, a good judicial officer, an apt secretary, and a kind-hearted man; but it is denied that, in any enlarged acceptation of the word, he is entitled to be called a statesman.

Sir Alexander Burnes was constantly writing to his friends in India, "Macnaghten is an excellent man, but quite out of place *here*." Burnes was not an unprejudiced witness; and he, doubtless, expressed himself in language too sweeping and unqualified. But there are many who believe with Burnes, that Macnaghten was out of his place in Afghanistan. It is hard to say who would not have been more or less out of place, in the situation which he was called upon suddenly to occupy. The place, indeed, was one to which no English officer ought to have been called. For a Calcutta Secretary to be at Caubul at all was necessarily to be out of place. If Macnaghten, suddenly transplanted from the bureau of an Anglo-Indian Governor to the stirrup of an Afghan monarch, is chargeable with some errors, it is, perhaps, more just, as it is more generous, to wonder not that those

errors were so numerous, but that they were so few. To govern such a people as the Afghans through such a King as Shah Soojah, was an experiment in which an English officer might fail without the sacrifice of his reputation. When we come to think, now, of what was attempted, we cease to marvel at the result. The marvel is, that utter ruin did not overtake the scheme at an earlier date—that the day of reckoning was so long delayed. The policy itself was so inherently faulty that success was an unattainable result.

The causes of the failure are not to be sought in the personal character of the Envoy. That character may have been one of many accidental circumstances which may in some sort have helped to develop it; but, sooner or later, ruin must have overtaken the scheme, let who might be the agent of it. In this view of the case, Macnaghten is not to be acquitted; but it is on Macnaghten the Secretary, not on Macnaghten the Envoy, that our censures must then descend. Macnaghten the Envoy, however, was not free from human infirmity. Most men have an unhappy faculty of believing what they wish to be true. In Macnaghten this propensity was unnaturally developed. God had cursed him with a strong delusion that he should believe a lie. He believed in the popularity of Shah Soojah and the tranquillity of Afghanistan. To have admitted the non-existence of either, would have been to have admitted the failure of the policy which he had recommended, and with which he was, in no small measure, personally identified. But Macnaghten did not seek to deceive others; he was himself deceived. When he spoke of the popularity of Shah Soojah, he believed that the Shah was popular; when he reported the tranquillity of Afghanistan, he believed that the country was tranquil. He was sincere, but he was miserably mistaken. Everything he saw

took colour in his eyes from the hues of his own sanguine temperament. From the day when on entering Candahar he beheld a joyous people welcoming their restored monarch with feelings almost amounting to adoration, to the last luckless day of his life, when he went out to the fatal conference, firmly believing in the good faith and good feeling of his Afghan allies, he continued steadily to create for himself all kinds of favorable omens and encouraging symptoms, and lived in a state of blind confidence unparalleled in the history of human infatuation. To this self-deception some of the finest qualities of his nature largely contributed. The very goodness of his heart and generosity of his disposition moved him to regard the character and conduct of others with a favour to which they were seldom entitled. Macnaghten was too noble-minded to be suspicious—but he erred on the other side; he wanted some of the sterner stuff which will not suffer the soundness of the judgment to be weakened by the generosity of the heart.

When not blinded by his partiality for any pet projects of his own, he was by no means wanting in political sagacity. He could decide justly, as he could promptly, on points of detail as they rose up one by one before him; but as soon as anything occurred to cast discredit upon the general policy of the Afghan expedition, by indicating the germs of failure, he resolutely refused to see what others saw, and censured those others for seeing it. Hence it was that he received coldly, if not contemptuously, those elaborate general reviews of the condition and prospects of Afghanistan which Burnes and Conolly thrust upon him, and resented every effort that was made by Rawlinson and others to draw his attention towards the unquiet and feverish symptoms, which, from time to time, developed them-

selves in different parts of the unsettled country. His correspondence indicates an unwillingness, rather than an inability, to take any large and comprehensive views of Afghan policy. He seems to have shrunk from applying to that policy the test of any great principles; and to have addressed himself rather to the palliation of accidental symptoms than to the eradication of those constitutional diseases which were eating into the very life of the government which he directed.

Of Macnaghten's humanity I have never entertained a doubt. But it is a proof of the inconsistency even of the kindest and most amiable characters, that the Envoy, when greatly disquieted and perplexed by the difficulties which thickened around him, and irritated by the opposition, which he could not subdue, sometimes thought of resorting to measures repugnant to humanity, for the suppression of evils which baffled all the more lenient efforts of legitimate diplomacy. But these sterner feelings soon passed away; and all the more generous sentiments of his nature held dominion over him again. He regretted the excesses—always rather those of word than of deed—into which he had been momentarily betrayed, and was as merciful towards a fallen enemy as he had been eager in his pursuit of a triumphant one. Macnaghten was anything but a cautious man; his first hasty impulses were often set down in writing with perilous unreserve; and it would be unjust to record against him, as his positive opinion, everything that he set down suggestively in his hasty letters to his numerous correspondents, or spoke out still more hastily to his friends.

Posterity may yet discuss the question, whether, in these last fatal negotiations with Akbar Khan, Macnaghten acted strictly in accordance with that good faith which is the rule of English statesmen, and

for which our country, in spite of some dubious instances, is still honoured by all the nations of the East. In one of the last letters ever written by him, the Envoy said, "It would be very agreeable to stop here for a few months instead of to travel through the snow; but we must not consider what is agreeable, but what is consistent with our faith." On the same day, too—the day before his death—he had written, "I can never break that agreement (with the Barukzyes) so long as all the Khawanen wish me to stand by it." It has been questioned whether the negotiations he was then carrying on with the Ghilzyes and Kuzzilbashes were consistent with his obligations to the Barukzye Sirdars. The stipulations, however, on the part of the British diplomatist, in this case, extended no further than the promise of certain money payments in return for certain specific services, and Macnaghten may have considered himself justified in retaining those services conditionally on the rupture of the existing covenant with the Barukzye chiefs. That covenant, indeed, was one of so precarious a nature—it was sliding away from him more and more certainly as time advanced—there was so little prospect of its obligations being fulfilled, that it seemed necessary to have something to fall back upon in the event of the open annulment of the treaty, the obligations of which had long been practically denied. Up to the evening of the 22nd of December, Macnaghten had been willing to abide by the stipulations of the treaty with the confederate chiefs; but there were such manifest symptoms of bad faith on the part of the chiefs constantly breaking out, that it appeared to him but ordinary prudence to prepare himself for an event so probable as an open rupture. He was ready to proceed, in mutual good faith, to the accomplishment of the original treaty; and so long as the

chiefs adhered to their engagements, he was prepared to evacuate the country, but he believed that it was his duty to prepare himself also for a rupture with the chiefs, and to purchase supplies wherever he could obtain them, for the use of the troops in the event of their retaining their position.

But the compact with Akbar Khan was altogether of another kind. There was nothing of a conditional character about it. The Envoy had, in the course of the day, virtually acknowledged that to break off the negotiations then pending with the chiefs would be a breach of good faith. Nothing had occurred between the hour in which he wrote this to Mohun Lal and that in which he received the overtures of Akbar Khan, to absolve him from obligations from which he was not absolved before. The same principle of diplomatic integrity which he had applied to the case of the Ghilzye alliance was doubly applicable to this: "It would be very agreeable to stop here for a few months instead of to travel through the snow; but we must not consider what is agreeable, but what is consistent with our faith." If we read Macnaghten's subsequent conduct by the light of these high-principled words, it must in truth be pronounced that he stands self-condemned.

In estimating the character of these transactions, it should always be borne steadily in mind that the Afghan chiefs had from the first violated their engagements with the British, and exacted from them after-conditions not named in the treaty. Their want of faith, indeed, was so palpable, that Macnaghten would, at any time, have been justified in declaring that the treaty was annulled. It is plain, that whilst they were violating their engagements he was under no obligation to adhere to the conditions of the violated treaty. But it appears to me that this matter is altogether distinct from the question of the

honesty of negotiating with one party whilst negotiations are pending with another. There would have been no breach of faith in breaking off the treaty with the confederate chiefs; but it was a breach of faith to enter into any new engagements until that treaty was broken off. It is certain that up to the time of his receipt of the fatal overtures from Akbar Khan, Macnaghten considered that he was bound by his engagements with the confederate chiefs. He might, it is true, have declared those engagements at an end, but until such a declaration was made, he was not at liberty to enter secretly into any new negotiations practically annulling the old.

And whatever objections may lie against the general honesty of the compact, it is certain that they apply with double force to that portion of it which involved the seizure of Ameen-oollah Khan. It is not to be justified by any reference to the infamous character of that chief. Ameen-oollah Khan was one of our "new allies." He had been, with the other chiefs, in friendly negotiation with Macnaghten. It was now proposed, during a suspension of hostilities—whilst, indeed, we were in friendly intercourse with the Afghan chiefs, this very Ameen-oollah Khan included—that a body of troops should be got ready as quietly as possible for secret service, that a sudden attack should be made on the unsuspecting garrison of Mahmood Khan's fort, and that one of our allies—one of the chiefs with whom the Envoy was in treaty—should be violently seized. I confess that I cannot see anything to justify such a measure as this. It certainly was not in accordance with that good faith, the observance of which Macnaghten had declared to be of more importance than the retention of our position in the country.

But although I cannot bring myself to justify the act, either on the plea that the chiefs had not observed the engagements into which they had entered, or that

Ameen-oollah Khan was an infamous wretch, and one of the arch-enemies of the British, it appears to me to be as little the duty of the historian severely to condemn the actor as to justify the act.* It is one of those cases in which the exercise of charity is a solemn duty—one of those cases, to the consideration of which every one should bring the kindliest resolution to weigh well the temptation before he measures the offence. There are cases to which, it is my deliberate conviction, a strict application of the ordinary rules of right and wrong would be a grievous injustice. It is easy, in one's closet, to sit in judgment upon the conduct of a man tempted far beyond the common limits of human temptation—environed and hemmed in by difficulties and dangers—overwhelmed with responsibility which there is no one to share—the lives of sixteen thousand men resting on his decision—the honour of his country at stake—with a perfidious enemy before him, a decrepit general at his side, and a paralysed army at his back—driven to negotiate by the imbecility of his companions, and then thwarted in his negotiations by the perfidy of his "new allies." But if, without injustice and cruelty, we would pass sentence on the conduct of a man so environed, we must ponder well all these environments, and consider what must have been the effect of seven wearing weeks of such unparalleled trial even on the strongest mind, and what must have been the temptation that arrayed itself before him, when there suddenly gleamed upon him a hope of saving at once the lives of his companions and the credit of the British nation. If, when that great temptation burst suddenly upon his path, and, dazzled by its delusive brilliancy, he saw the great object set before him,

* That it was not actually committed is, of course, nothing to the point. The question is to be argued as though the seizure of Ameen-oollah Khan had been a perpetrated act and not a baffled intention.

but did not see the slough of moral turpitude to be passed through before it could be attained, it is right that we should remember that Macnaghten, though a good and a brave man, was *but* a man after all, and that human strength, at the best, is but weakness to resist the pressure of an overwhelming Providence.

We have not the same intelligible guides to a right estimate of the conduct of Akbar Khan. If we regard the assassination of the British Envoy as a deliberate, predetermined act, it can only be said of it that it stands recorded as one of the basest, foulest murders that ever stained the page of history. But it does not appear that the murder of Macnaghten was premeditated by the Sirdar. It seems to have been the result of one of those sudden gusts of passion which were among the distinguishing features of the young Barukzye's character, and which had often before betrayed him into excesses laden with the pangs of after-repentance. The seizure of the Envoy and his companions, which was designed by the Sirdar, was an act of deliberate treachery, which the chiefs would perhaps endeavour to justify by declaring that they only designed to do towards the Envoy as the Envoy had declared himself willing to do towards Ameen-oollah Khan.* But whilst Macnaghten had only consented to a proposal made to him by others—whilst he had merely yielded to temptation, and at the instance of one Afghan chief consented to the betrayal of the other—Akbar Khan, with deliberate subtlety and malice, wove the net which he was to cast over the deluded Englishman, and treacherously enclosed him in the toils. The trap

* It appears to have been Akbar Khan's intention to have seized the person of the Envoy, and to have held him as a hostage, to secure both the evacuation of Afghanistan and the restoration of Dost Mahomed. I have been informed that, during the struggle, a cry was raised that the English were coming out of cantonments, and that Akbar Khan, thinking that he might still be baffled, in a sudden gust of passion drew out a pistol and fired.

was cunningly laid and craftily baited; and the unhappy Envoy, all his perceptions blunted by the long-continued overstraining of his mind, fell readily into the snare, and went insanely to his undoing. Like Burnes, he had been warned of the treachery that encompassed him; and like his ill-fated colleague he had disregarded the warnings that might have saved him. The brave confidence of Macnaghten clung to him to the last; his sanguine temperament, at one time so dangerous and disastrous, at another so noble and inspiriting—which more than anything else had sustained the character of the nation throughout the sore trials which it had brought upon us—lured him at last to his death.

CHAPTER VIII.

[December, 1841—January, 1842.]

The Capitulation—Supineness of the Garrison—Negotiations resumed—Efforts of Major Pottinger—Demands of the Chiefs—The Final Treaty—Humiliation of the Garrison—General Remarks.

It is recorded, that on the 23rd of December, 1841, the representative of the British Government was slain at a conference with the Afghan Sirdars, within sight of the British cantonments at Caubul; and it is now to be added to the record that this—the foulest indignity that one nation can put upon another, the murder of an ambassador in the performance of his ambassadorial duties—roused not the dormant energies of the military chiefs, or awakened them to a sense of the depths of humiliation in which they were plunging their unhappy country. The British Envoy was killed, in broad day, and upon the open plain, but not a gun was fired from the ramparts of the cantonment; not a company of troops sallied out to rescue or to avenge. The body of the British Minister was left to be hacked to pieces, and his mangled remains were paraded, in barbarous triumph, about the streets and bazaars of the city.

The military chiefs assert that they did not know, until the day after his death, that Macnaghten had been

murdered. Elphinstone says it was thought by himself and others that the Envoy had proceeded to the city for the purpose of negotiating.* But there were those in cantonments who had seen the tumult at the place of conference, and who knew that some violence had been committed. One officer said that he distinctly saw the Envoy fall—and that afterwards he could see the Ghazees hacking to pieces the body of the murdered man. If the General did not tremble for the safety of the political chief, he was the only man in the garrison who encouraged the belief that the lives of the Envoy and his companions, if they had not been already sacrificed, were not now in imminent danger. There was something very remarkable, if not suspicious, in the unwonted confidence of the General at this time. It was not his habit to look upon the bright side of things, or to take any great pains to encourage and reassure the troops under his command. He had, on almost every occasion, taken the most desponding view of affairs, and freely expressed his apprehension of dangers, which had no existence save in his own mind. But now he sent round his Adjutant-General to the troops to assure them of the Envoy's safety. They were all under arms. Captain Grant rode to the head of each regiment, and by Elphinstone's orders told them that the conference had been interrupted by the Ghazees—that the Envoy and his companions had been removed to the city—but that they would return immediately to cantonments. Some who heard this authoritative announcement still believed that they would

* "Some time after I had given the necessary orders (for the two regiments and the guns), Captain Anderson came to me and said, 'They have seized the Envoy;' and one of the escort at the same time said, 'They have seized the Lord Sahib and taken him off to the city.' By myself and others it was thought at the time that Sir William had proceeded to the city for the purpose of negotiating. I was also told that a few shots had been fired. The garrison was got ready and remained under arms all day."—[*Statement of General Elphinstone.*]

never hear the Envoy's voice, or look upon his living face again. The whole garrison was in a state of painful excitement; and when the shades of evening fell over the cantonment, and still no certain intelligence of the fate of Macnaghten had arrived, not an officer joined the mess-table of his regiment, or sate down to his solitary meal without a leaden weight of gloom and despondency at his heart.

The day, indeed, had been one of intense anxiety. It had been, too, a busy stirring time within the cantonment walls. The authorities seem to have been stimulated into something of activity at home, though they could not bring themselves to do anything abroad. They got up a little war against the Afghans, whom business or curiosity had brought into cantonments, and who were now either eagerly trafficking or idly looking about them in the square. All the men of rank who could be found were placed under arrest; whilst hundreds of less note, apprehending that a similar fate might be awaiting them, rushed towards the different gates, jostling and upsetting each other on the icy ground, and creating a scene of indescribable confusion in their efforts to escape. A lull succeeded; but as the evening advanced, the noise and confusion in the city were such that the troops were again turned out and the cantonment works manned,* in expectation of coming dangers. The Ghazees were mustering, in the belief that the British troops would attack the city and avenge the murder of their ambassador. But all thought of doing had long ago passed away from the minds of our military chiefs. They had settled down into the belief that now it had become their duty only to suffer.

With the morrow came a confirmation of the worst

* "At nine P.M. a great disturbance was heard towards the city, horrible shouts and cries, with rattling of musketry, caused the assembly to be sounded and the walls again manned." —[*Lieutenant Melville's Narrative.*]

fears of those who never thought to see the Envoy re-enter the cantonment-gates. They waited for tidings of him, and tidings came at last. Though he had been killed almost within musket-shot of our ramparts, nothing had been done by the military chiefs to solve the painful doubts which perplexed them throughout that disastrous 23rd of December. It was thought that if they only waited long enough for it, some certain intelligence would come at last; and it came at last, on the afternoon of the 24th, in the shape of a letter from Captain Lawrence, and certain overtures from the confederate chiefs, seeking a renewal of the negotiations on the basis of the treaty initiated by the deceased Envoy.

As the game of negotiation was now to be commenced anew, it was necessary to secure the services of a new negotiator. There was a man then in cantonments of whom little had been seen or heard for some weeks, and of whom the chroniclers and journalists of the insurrection had up to this time made little or no mention, in connexion with the stirring scenes in which Macnaghten had been the chief actor, but to whom the garrison now turned as to the only man fitted to take the Envoy's place. Ever since his arrival from Charekur, Major Pottinger had been incapacitated from active employment by the wound he had received in the early part of November. The severity of his sufferings had necessarily been much increased by the hardships of his perilous journey from Charekur to Caubul, and during the greater part of the time since his arrival at the latter place he had been confined to his bed. But he was now, in the difficult conjuncture that had arisen, ready to bring all the manly vigour and high courage which had done so much to roll back from the gates of Herat the tide of Persian invasion, to the new duty of endeavouring to rescue his country from the degradation in which

it had been sunk by the faint hearts of the military chiefs.

The evening of the 24th saw Pottinger in council with General Elphinstone, Brigadiers Shelton and Anquetil, and Colonel Chambers, the four senior officers of the garrison. The chiefs had sent in a letter, sealed by Mahomed Zemaun Khan, Akbar Khan, Ameen-oollah Khan, Oosman Khan, and others, with a memorandum of the terms on which they were prepared to grant the army a safe conduct to Peshawur. This was now translated to the military officers, who agreed upon a memorandum to be sent back in reply. On the following day the memorandum was sent in by Ameer Mahomed Khan, who, being in the British cantonments on the day of the Envoy's death, had been seized and detained as a hostage. It was a rough draft of the treaty proposed by the chiefs with the assent of the English authorities; and it thus appears translated from the original, with the subsequent remarks of the chiefs, after each article, believed to be in the hand-writing of Akbar Khan:

ROUGH DRAFT OF THE TREATY WITH THE ASSENT OF THE ENGLISH AUTHORITIES.

Article 1. "There shall be no delay in the departure of the English army."

Agreed to. They will march twenty-four hours after having received a thousand carriage-cattle, which shall be either camels or yaboos.

[*Remark.* It rests with them (the English); let them pay the hire as they may be able.]

Article 2. "Afghan Sirdars shall accompany the army, to prevent any one offering opposition, and to assist in procuring supplies."

It is very advisable.

[*Remark.* Sirdar Oosman Khan and Shah Dowlut Khan.]

Article 3. "The Jellalabad army shall march from Peshawur before the Caubul force starts."

It is agreed to. Do you name some person who shall accompany them.

[*Remark.* Abdool Ghuffoor Khan.]

Article 4. "The Ghuznee force, having made their preparations, shall speedily march to Peshawur by Caubul."

It is agreed to. Do you name some proper person to accompany them.

[*Remark.* A relation of the Naib or of Mehtur Moossa.]

Article 5. "The Candahar force, and all other British troops in Afghanistan, shall quickly depart for Hindostan."

It is agreed. Let proper people accompany them.

[*Remark.* Newab Jubbur Khan.]

Article 6. "The whole of the property of the Ameer (Dost Mahomed Khan) which is in the hands of the English Government, or of individual officers, shall be left behind."

It is agreed to. Whatever is with the public authorities is known to you; whatever is with private officers point out and take.

Article 7. "Whatever property belonging to the English cannot be carried away shall be taken care of and sent by the first opportunity."

It is agreed to: but we have given over all that remains to the Newab.

[*Remark.* The guns, ordnance stores, and muskets, must be given to me.]

Article 8. "In case Shah Soojah should wish to remain at Caubul, we will give him yearly a subsistence of a lakh of rupees."

It is agreed to. Do whatever you think advisable, wishing to show your friendship for us.

Article 9. "In case the family of Shah Soojah should be left behind, from want of carriage-cattle, we will fix the place now occupied by them in the Balla Hissar for their dwelling-place, until they can depart for Hindostan."

It is agreed to. The honour of the King is the honour of the Douranees; and it is becoming in you.*

Article 10. "When the English army arrives at Peshawur, arrangements shall be made for the march of Dost Mahomed

* The 8th and 9th articles are scored out in the orginal by Akbar Khan, as though, on consideration, they were distasteful to him.

Khan, and all other Afghans, with all their property, families, and children."

It is agreed to. They shall all be sent to you with honour and in safety.

Article 11. "When Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan and the others arrive safely at Peshawur, then the family of the Shah shall be at liberty to depart; that departing they may arrive at the place fixed upon."

It is agreed to.

Article 12. "Four English gentlemen shall remain as hostages in Caubul until Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan and the other Afghans shall have arrived at Peshawur, when the English gentlemen shall be allowed to depart."

It is agreed to.

[*Remark.* Let there be six hostages.]

Article 13. "Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan and Sirdar Oosman Khan shall accompany the English army to Peshawur, and take them there in safety."*

It is agreed to.

[*Remark.* Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan.]

Article 14. "After the departure of the English, friendly relations shall be continued,—*i.e.*, that the Afghan Government, without the consent and advice of the English Government, shall not form any treaty or connexion with a foreign power; and should they (the Afghans) ever ask assistance against foreign invasion, the English Government will not delay in sending such assistance."

It is agreed to, as far as we are concerned; but in this matter the Governor-General of India alone has authority. We will do our best to bring about friendship between the two governments; and by the blessing of the Almighty this wish will be obtained and friendship exist for the future.

Article 15. "Any one who may have assisted Shah Soojah and the English, and may wish to accompany them, shall be allowed to do so. We will not hinder them. And if they remain here, no one will call them to account for what they have done, and no one shall molest them under any pretence. They may remain in this country like the other inhabitants."†

* This article is scored out in the original.

† The whole of this article also is scored out. Its provisions seem to have been extended, suggestively, by Pottinger, but disapproved of by Akbar Khan.

We have interpolated a few words, and it will be friendship if you comply with them.

Article 16. "Should any English gentleman unavoidably be detained, he shall be treated honourably until such time as he can depart."

ARTICLES WHICH HAVE BEEN NEWLY WRITTEN.

Article 1. "Whatever coin there may be in the public treasury must be given up."

We have set apart two lakhs of rupees for our expenses to Peshawur, which is twenty-four yaboos' loads. If there is more than this in the public treasury, either in gold mohurs, ducats, or rupees, it is yours. If you do not believe this, send some one to note and inspect the loads on the day of our departure. If we have said truly, give us a blessing; and if we have spoken falsely, it is your property, take it away, and we shall be convicted of falsehood.

[*Remark.* Let them pay the hire of the yaboos and camels.]

Article 2. "With reference to the remark that was made that we should give up all our guns but six, we have with the force one and a half companies of artillerymen. You have fixed six guns. Half of a company would remain without equipments. Be good enough to give three more small guns, such as are drawn by mules, for the other half-company. It will be a great kindness."

[*Remark.* They cannot be given.]

Article 3. "The muskets in excess of those in use with the regiments must be left behind."

This is agreed to. Whatever muskets are in addition to those in use with the regiments, together with shot and powder and other ordnance stores, all by way of friendship shall be the property of the Newab.

Article 4. "General Sale, together with his wife and daughter, and the other gentlemen of rank who are married and have children, until the arrival of the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan and the other Afghans and their families, and Douranees and Ghilzyes, from Hindostan, shall remain as guests with us; that when the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan shall have arrived, they also shall be allowed to depart with honour from Afghanistan."

General Sale is with the army in Jellalabad, the departure of which is fixed to take place previous to our arrival; and as for the

other two or three gentlemen who are married and present her we have sent a man to them. They, having seen their familie report that their families will not consent to this proposal; (addin that you men may do as you like—no one can order us. Th proposal is contrary to all order. We now beg you to be goc enough to excuse the women from this suffering, and we agree give as many gentlemen as you may wish for. In friendshi kindness and consideration are necessary, not overpowering tl weak with sufferings. Since, for a long time past, we have show kindness and respect to all Afghans of rank and consequence wi whom we have had dealings, you should consider what we ha done for them, and not forget kindness. As Shah Soojah w father of a family, and the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan was wi his family, and no one gave them annoyance, and we showe them respect, you also now show similar kindness, that friendsh may be increased.

[*Remark.* Let them remain with their families. Let the fami of the General stop in Caubul, until he himself comes from Jell labad,—Sturt with his family, Boyd with his family, and Ande son with his family.]

ELDRED POTTINGER, Pol. Agent.
W. K. ELPHINSTONE, Major-Gen.*

To this the chiefs sent back the following

Agreement of Peace that has been determined on with the Fra English gentlemen, to which engagement, if they consent and a accordingly, on the part of the heads and leaders of Afghanist henceforward no infractions will occur to their friendly engag ments :

1st. That the going of the gentlemen shall be speedy. In rega to the carriage-cattle, let them send money that they may be pu chased and sent.

2nd. As regards the going of the Sirdars with the Engli army that no person may injure it on the way, Sirdar Mahom Akbar Khan or Sirdar Mahomed Oosman Khan, whichever m be wished by the English, will be appointed and sent.

3rd. The army of Jellalabad shall march previous to the arm of Caubul, and proceed to Peshawur. Sirdar Abdool Suffoor Kh

* *MS. Records.*

having been appointed, will leave this and proceed that he may previously accompany them; secondly, the road of Bhungush has been appointed.

4th. The Ghuznee force having got quickly ready will proceed by the road of Caubul to Peshawur. A relative of Naib Ameen-oollah Khan, with Mehtur Moosa Khan, has been appointed to accompany it.

5th. The army of Candahar and other parts of Afghanistan, wherever an army may be, will quickly depart for India. Newab Abdool Jubbar Khan has been appointed to carry this into effect.

6th. Whatever property of the Ameer may be with the English will be returned, and nothing retained.

7th. Whatever property of the English may be left for want of carriage will become the property of the Newab.

8th. If the family of Shah Soojah, on account of want of carriage, may remain here, they will be placed in the house of Hadjee Khan.

9th. Whenever the English army may arrive at Peshawur, they will make arrangements for the return of Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, the Afghans and their families, that are in India.

10th. That the English gentlemen, with their families, will be left at Caubul as hostages, until the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, with the rest of the Afghans and their families, may arrive at Peshawur; or, secondly, that six hostages may be left.

11th. After the departure of the English there shall be perfect friendship between the two states, in so much so that the Government of Afghanistan, without the advice and approval of the British Government, shall enter into no connexion or correspondence with any other power; but if, in its defence, it may require the assistance of the English, they will not delay to afford it. Should the British Government not consent to this, the Afghans are free to make friends with any one they like.

12th. If any gentleman would wish to remain in Caubul, on account of his private affairs, he may do so, and will be treated with justice and respect.

13th. Whatever cash, whether gold or silver, may be in the treasury, shall be paid to Newab Zemaun Khan. A trustworthy person will be appointed, who will issue supplies from stage to stage as far as Peshawur.

14th. With regard to artillery, six guns have been determined

on. They are enough. More will not be given. Secondly, the three mule guns will be given.

15th. The spare arms shall be given to Newab Mahomed Zemaun Khan.

16th. The hostages to be left here, and these persons with their families—General Sale, Captains Sturt, Boyd, and Anderson.

17th. Let General Sale go with the army to Jellalabad and his family remain here; after taking the army to Jellalabad, let him return to Caubul.

18th. If any of the Frank gentlemen have taken a Mussulman wife, she shall be given up.

If there may be questions about any article, send a note quickly by the bearer.*

All this was grievously humiliating. To treat upon such terms with such an enemy—to be so dictated to—so overborne—so insulted—was a sore trial to the manly spirit of Eldred Pottinger; who lifted up his voice against these degrading concessions, but ever remonstrated in vain. On that Christmas-day, which was not all cheerless, there arrived the encouraging intelligence that reinforcements were on their way from India. Macgregor and Mackeson wrote from Jellalabad and Peshawur, urging Macnaghten to hold out to the last; and the letters were now opened by one who had carried to the performance of Macnaghten's duties all Macnaghten's constancy and courage. Pottinger stood up manfully in council, and declared that it now became the leaders of the British army either to fling themselves into the Balla Hissar or to fight their way down to Jellalabad. But the military chiefs clung to the old idea of capitulation, and determined to cast themselves on the mercy of the Afghan Sirdars.

It is right that Pottinger should tell his own story—that the reasons he urged for the adoption of the nobler

* *MS. Records.* This memorandum seems to be based on the "Remarks" appended to the preceding document.

course should be well understood: "On that day," he writes, in his report from Budeeabad, "we received a tender from Mahomed Oosman Khan, offering to escort the army to Peshawur for the sum of five lakhs of rupees, as had been offered him (he said) by Sir W. Macnaghten. At the same time, letters from Captains Macgregor and Mackeson were received, urging Sir William to hold out, and informing us of the reinforcements which were on their way from India. The information from the city showed that feuds were running high there, and that Shah Soojah appeared to be getting up a respectable party for himself. When I informed General Elphinstone of these facts, he summoned a council of war, consisting of Brigadier Shelton, Brigadier Anquetil, Lieut.-Colonel Chambers, Captain Bellew, and Captain Grant. At the Major-General's request I laid the above-mentioned facts, and the enemy's tenders, before these officers, and also my own opinion that we should not treat with the enemy, because—*firstly*, I had every reason to believe that the enemy were deceiving us; *secondly*, I considered it our duty to hold aloof from all measures which would tie the hands of government as to its future acts; and *thirdly*, that we had no right to sacrifice so large a sum of public money (amounting to nineteen lakhs) to purchase our own safety—or to order other commanding officers to give up the trusts confided to them—for it was especially laid down by writers on international law, that a general had no authority to make any treaty, unless he were able to enforce the conditions, and that he could not treat for the future, but only for the present. The council of war, however, unanimously decided that remaining at Caubul and forcing a retreat were alike impracticable, and that nothing remained for us but endeavouring to release the army, by agreeing to the tenders offered by the enemy;

and that any sum, in addition to what had already been promised by Sir William Macnaghten, if it tended to secure the safety of the army, would be well expended, and that our right to negotiate on these terms was proved by Sir William Macnaghten having agreed to them before his assassination. Under these circumstances, as the Major-General coincided with the officers of the council, and refused to attempt occupying the Balla Hissar; as his second in command, who had been in there, declared it impracticable, I considered it my duty, notwithstanding my repugnance to and disapproval of the measure, to yield, and attempt to carry on a negotiation. For the reasons of the military authorities, I must refer you to themselves."*

The statement of the chief military authority is to the same effect, but it does not deal largely in "reasons." The plan recommended by Major Pottinger was pronounced to be "impracticable." "On the 26th," says General Elphinstone, "Major Pottinger received letters from Captain Macgregor and Captain Mackeson, addressed to the late Envoy, announcing the march of strong reinforcements from India. He also received a tender from Mahomed Oosman Khan to escort the troops to Peshawur himself for five lakhs of rupees. Shortly after, the Naib Ameer Mahomed Khan came into cantonments with the verbal agreement to the amendments proposed to the renewed treaty, and brought with him a Cashmere merchant and several Hindoo Shroffs to negotiate bills payable to the several chiefs, on the verbal promise of the late Envoy, amounting to about 14 lakhs of rupees. The proposal was submitted to the council of war composed as above. Major Pottinger informed the council that he considered any treaty with the chiefs as exceedingly doubtful, and that he thought it was our duty

* *Report of Major Eldred Pottinger: MS. Records.*

either to hold out, or to force a retreat to Jellalabad, so as, in no way, to bind the hands of our government by promising to evacuate the country, or to waste so much public money to save our own lives and property under such doubtful circumstances of faith being kept with us. The council, one and all, were of opinion that Major Pottinger's views were impracticable—that we could not hold out for want of provisions, and from having surrendered the forts commanding cantonments; and that we could not force a retreat to Jellalabad; also, that it was better to pay any sum of money than sacrifice the troops then at Caubul. It was consequently determined, *nem. con.*, that Major Pottinger should enter into negotiations and pay the money to the different chiefs, which was accordingly done."*

* Shelton's reasons are given elsewhere. Pottinger says, in another letter, that it was mainly the Brigadier's opposition that prevented the occupation of the Balla Hissar;—the passage is on other accounts worth quoting: "There are many points that my character requires me to explain, particularly that we continued our negotiations with the enemy in direct opposition to my advice, and that we were prevented from going into the Balla Hissar by the obstinacy of Brigadier Shelton, who declared the attempt impracticable. The General, from his illness, was incapable of making up his mind, and the constant assertion of the impossibility by his second in command, outweighed the entreaties of the Envoy when alive (who was always afraid to commit himself in military matters), and of mine after; and a retreat on you (Jellalabad) was the only thing they would hear of; and, notwithstanding that I pointed out the very doubtful character of any engagement we might make with the heads of the insurgents, the probability they could not make it good; and begged that they would spare us the dishonour and government the loss which any negotiation must entail. In a council of war held at the General's house—Shelton, Anquetil, Chambers, Grant, and Bellew present, every one voted to the contrary; so seeing I could do nothing, consented. At the time we had but two courses open to us, which, in my opinion, promised a chance of saving our honour and part of the army. One was to occupy the Balla Hissar, and hold it till spring. By this we should have had the best chance of success. The other was to have abandoned our camp and baggage and encumbrances, and forced our way down. This was perilous but practicable. However, I could not persuade them to sacrifice baggage; and that was eventually one of the chief causes of our disasters. You may conceive my anxiety to have this properly made known to government. I am more anxious on the General's account, if it be possible, than my own, for the noble courage and resignation with which he bears himself under such a load of misfortune and physical suffering (an attack of rheu-

"As soon as this was decided upon," says Pottinger, "I commenced negotiating. The enemy's first demand (on complying with which they promised to agree to the terms we offered on the 25th) was that we should settle with the Hindoos they brought forward regarding the payment of the money the Envoy had promised, *i.e.*, which the council of war had decided should be paid. * * * I would willingly have avoided the payment of such; but the enemy, by stopping our supplies, obliged me to suffer the imposition, as the military authorities were urgent to prevent a renewal of hostilities, cost what it might. These sums were promised in the name of Sir William Macnaghten, by his agent (the Naib Ameer), to the different chiefs to bring about a treaty and support it when formed. Major-General Elphinstone recollected the Envoy having informed him of his having authorised the agent to make the promises, as also did Captain Skinner."*

Captain Lawrence, who since his seizure at the fatal conference, had resided in the house of Akbar Khan in the city, was sent for to draw the bills, and on the 27th of December came into cantonments. Fourteen lakhs of rupees were then signed away. Then came a more

matic gout in the joints of each hand, and a shot through the buttock) makes a man's heart bleed that he should have been fated to hold such a command when so incompetent from disease; and seconded so badly, that the second-in-command would never give advice but to oppose that of the other."—[*Major Pottinger to Captain Macgregor: MS. Records.*]

The following passage is the only one in Shelton's statement that relates to the final negotiations:—"Soon after this (the death of the Envoy) arrangements, or rather agreements, were entered into for our retreat, and for a protecting force to accompany us and supply us with provisions on the road. The refusal of the Afghans to hire their cattle, and sinister reports, fully convinced me what that protection would be. Indeed, many friendly towards us frankly forewarned us to prepare for the worst. My opinion was to march early (by loading the baggage at moonrise), at 5 A.M., and when once out of cantonments to depend on ourselves, and never to halt, except merely to take refreshments for a couple of hours, and so to renew the march."—[*MS. Records.*]

* *Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report.*

dreadful concession. The enemy demanded our guns. All but six field-pieces, which were to be suffered to accompany the retreating force, were now to be given up to the triumphant Afghans. This was the sorest trial that the British garrison had yet been called upon to encounter. It burnt in our humiliation as with a brand of iron. The troops chafed under this crowning indignity; and the military chiefs, when the hour of surrender came, shrunk from the mortifying necessity of giving up to a barbarous foe those muniments of war, which soldiers of all nations honour, and some almost idolise. But they could not bring themselves to risk a renewal of the conflict by openly refusing to accede to the demand. So, Pottinger hoping, perhaps, that something might yet arise to break off the negotiations, determined to procrastinate. He began by giving up the Shah's guns, by twos, on successive days; but if this alleviated the pain of the concession, it did not really soften the disgrace.

From day to day, guns, waggons, small arms, and ammunition were surrendered to the enemy. The hostages, too, were given up. Lieutenants Conolly and Airey were already in the hands of the Afghans. Now Captains Walsh and Drummond, and Lieutenant Warburton and Webb, were sent to join them in captivity.*

* On these additional hostages being sent, Captains Skinner and Mackenzie, who had been detained in the city, were released. Captains Lawrence and Mackenzie have each drawn up a narrative of the circumstances attending their capture, and their detention in the city, the former in the house of Ameen-oollah, and the latter in that of Akbar Khan. These narratives, though they have been very extensively read in Eyre's Journal, are of too much interest and importance to be omitted from such a work as this. They will, therefore, be found in the appendix. Both the English officers owed their lives to the efforts of the chiefs, who at much personal risk defended them against the furious assaults of the *Ghazees*. "I must do Mahomed Akbar the justice to say," writes Captain Mackenzie, "that finding the Ghazees bent on my slaughter, even after I had reached his stirrup, he drew his sword and laid about him right manfully, for my conductor and Meerza Baoodeen Khan were obliged to press me up

The enemy were anxious to get some of the married families into their hands; but there was a general unwillingness on the part of the officers to suffer their wives and children to be cast upon the forbearance of an enemy supposed to be so cruel, so treacherous, and so unscrupulous. On the 29th, such of the sick and wounded as were believed to be unable to bear the fatigues of the march, were sent into the city; and two medical officers, Drs. Berwick and Campbell, were appointed to take charge of them.

On the 1st of January, the ratified treaty was sent in, duly bearing the seals of eighteen of the Afghan Sirdars. It appears thus in its English dress:

TRANSLATION OF A TREATY BETWEEN THE ENGLISH AUTHORITIES AT CAUBUL AND THE AFGHAN NOBLES. (DATED IN THE MONTH OF ZE-VOL-KADH.)

The cause of writing this confidential paper, and the intention of forming this unparalleled friendly treaty, is this:—That at the present happy moment, to put away strife and contention, and avert discord and enmity, the representatives of the great English nation—that is, the high of rank and respected Eldred Pottinger, the ambassador and agent of the English Government, and General Elphinstone, the commander of the English forces—have concluded a comprehensive treaty containing certain articles, which they have confided to the hands of the Afghan nobility, that by it the chain of friendship may be strengthened. And it has been settled that the Afghan nobles shall give a similar writing.

An engagement is now made by his Majesty Newaub Mahomed Zemaun Khan, King of Afghanistan, and Naib Ameen-oollah

against the wall, covering me with their own bodies, and protesting that no blow should reach me but through their persons. Pride, however, overcame Mahomed Akbar's sense of courtesy, when he thought I was safe, for he then turned round to me, and repeatedly said, in a tone of triumphant derision, 'Shuma moolk-i-magereed' (You'll seize my country, will you?)" The conduct of Akbar Khan and other chiefs towards Lawrence and Mackenzie may be taken as a presumptive proof that the murder of the Envoy was not designed. His seizure, however, was deliberately planned between Ameen-oollah and Akbar Khan.

Khan, and the chief nobles of Afghanistan, whose seals are affixed to and ornament this document. The articles of the treaty are as follow:—

Article 1. That the British troops shall speedily quit the territories of Afghanistan and march to India, and shall not return; and twenty-four hours after receiving the carriage-cattle the army shall start.

Article 2. That on our part the Sirdars, Oosman Khan and Shoojah-ool-dowlah Khan, be appointed to accompany the before-mentioned army to the boundaries of Afghanistan and convey it to the boundary of the Sikh territory; so that no one shall offer molestation on the road; and that carriage-cattle and provisions may be procured for it.

Article 3. That the English force at Jellalabad shall march for Peshawur before the Caubul army arrives, and shall not delay on the road.

Article 4. Having brought the force at Ghuznee in safety to Caubul, under the protection of one of the relations of Naib Ameen-oollah Khan, we will send it to Peshawur unmolested under the care of another trustworthy person.

Article 5. Since according to agreement the troops at Candahar and other parts of Afghanistan are to start quickly for India and make over those territories to our agents, we on our part appoint trustworthy persons who may provide them with provisions and protection, and preserve them from molestation.

Article 6. All goods and property, and stores and cattle, belonging to Sirdar Dost Mahomed Khan, which may be in the hands of the English, shall be given up, and none retained.

Article 7. Six English gentlemen, who remain here as our guests, shall be treated with courtesy. When the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan and the other Afghans shall arrive at Peshawur, we will allow the above-mentioned English gentlemen to depart with honour.

Article 8. After the departure of the English army according to the treaty, should assistance against foreign invasion be at any time demanded, they (the English Government) shall not delay. Between (the Governments) friendship and good-will shall exist; and we will not make a treaty with any but the above-mentioned English Government. And in case the Governor-General of

India should not agree to this proposal, we are at liberty to form an alliance with any other power.

Article 9. Should any English gentleman be unavoidably detained in Caubul, we will treat him with all respect and consideration, and on his departure dismiss him with honour.

Article 10. The English can take six horse-artillery guns and three mule guns, and the rest, by way of friendship, shall be left for our use. And all muskets and ordnance stores in the magazine shall, as a token of friendship, be made over to our agents.

Article 11. Such English soldiers as may be left sick or wounded at Caubul shall be at liberty to return to their own country on their recovery.

This is the treaty, the articles of which have been entered into between the nobles of the Mahomedan faith and the distinguished gentlemen. From which articles we will not depart. Written in the month of Ze-vol-Kadh, in the year of the Mahomedan faith 1257.

(Sealed)

MAHOMED ZEMAUN KHAN.	KHAN MAHOMED KHAN.
MEER HAJEE KHAN.	ABDOOL KHALIK KHAN.
SEKUNDUR KHAN.	AMEEN-OOLLAH KHAN.
DARWEESH KHAN.	MEER ASLAN KHAN.
ALLEE KHAN	SUMUD KHAN.
MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN.	MAHOMED NASIR KHAN.
MAHOMED OOSMAN KHAN.	ABDOOLLAH KHAN.
GHOLAM AHMED KHAN.	GHUFFOOR KHAN.
GHOLAM MAHOMED KHAN.	MEER ALTEB KHAN.

Such were the terms of the treaty under which the British commanders consented to evacuate Afghanistan. There is nothing more painful in all this painful history than the progress of the negotiations which resulted in the accomplishment of this treaty. The tone of the enemy was arrogant, dictatorial, and insulting; whilst the language of our diplomatists was that of submission and self-abasement. It is so rare a thing for English-

men to throw themselves upon the clemency and forbearance of an insolent foe, that when we see our officers imploring the Afghan chiefs "not to overpower the weak with suffering," we contemplate the sad picture of our humiliation with as much astonishment as shame. The disgrace rests on the military commanders. Pottinger, had he not been overruled in council, would have snapped asunder the treaty before the faces of the chiefs, and appealed again to the God of Battles.

There were other things, too, to humble us. The state of affairs in cantonments was something very grievous to contemplate. The Ghazees hovering round the walls were insulting our people at their very gates, and bearding them at the very muzzles of their guns. Intercepting the supplies of grain which the commissariat had purchased with so much difficulty, they drove off the cattle and ill-treated their attendants. The chiefs declared that they had no power to prevent these outrages, and told the British authorities that they should order the garrison to fire upon all who molested them. Officers and men alike were burning to chastise the wretches who thus insulted their misfortunes; but they were not suffered to fire a shot. The Afghans had triumphed over us so long with impunity that they now believed the Feringhees had sunk into hopeless cowardice, and had become as patient of injury and insult as a herd of broken-spirited slaves.*

* The following extracts from Captain Johnson's Journal will show better than anything else the indignities to which they were subjected: "*December* 28.—Very busy, buying camels and yaboos—the price of the former 160 rupees each. The Ghazees still infest our gates and insult us in every possible way—stop our supplies coming in from the town, and abuse and ill-treat those who bring them. No notice taken by our military leader, although our officers and soldiers are burning for revenge. Several of my native friends from the city come daily to see me, and all agree, without one dissenting voice, that we have brought the whole of our misfortunes upon ourselves, through the apathy and imbecility displayed at the commencement of the outbreak. They also tell me that

All this was very hard to bear. Other trials, too, were upon them. All who had friends in the city—and many of our officers had among the Caubulees faithful and long-tried friends—were now receiving from them alarming intimations of the dangers that threatened them on the retreat. It was no secret, indeed, either in the city or in cantonments, that the promises of the chiefs were not to be depended on, and that treachery was brewing for the destruction of our wretched force. Mohun Lal warned Pottinger that the chiefs were not to be believed, and that unless their sons accompanied the army as hostages, it would be attacked upon the road. To this Pottinger replied: "The chiefs have signed the treaty, and their

our safety on the retreat depends solely on ourselves—that no dependence is to be placed on the promises of any of the chiefs, and more especially Mahomed Akbar Khan. Every one of them will now, that they are in a measure paid before hand, do his utmost to destroy us. *December* 30.—A body of Ghazees made a rush at the rear gate of cantonments; but did not effect an entrance. More guns and ammunition made over to the enemy, or what are called our new allies. Precious *allies*, who are only waiting the opportunity to annihilate us! . . . . *December* 31.—The chiefs say they cannot control their men, and that if their people misbehave themselves at our gates, or around our walls, we must fire upon them. No orders, however, given by General Elphinstone to punish our insulting foe, who naturally attribute our forbearance to dastardly cowardice, and take every opportunity of taunting us with it. The error lies with our leader, not with our troops. Several camels laden with grain plundered close to the Seeah-Sung gateway, within a few paces of a gun loaded with grape, and a large guard of Europeans and Natives. No steps taken to recover the plundered grain or punish the offenders. How we must be despised by our miserable foe! Mahomed Zemaun Khan sent in word that some of the chiefs will be in attendance to escort us to Jellalabad to-morrow. In the evening another message came that we must halt another day. Every day's delay increases our difficulties on the road. *January* 1, 1842.—New Year's Day! God grant that we may never see such another. My kind friends, Naib Shureef, and Khan and Ali Reza Khan (both Kuzzulbashes), sent me in secretly some very excellent cakes to carry with me on the road, as we shall not get a particle of firewood for cooking for a distance of ninety miles, ere we can get into a milder climate. How dreary a prospect we have before us—having to traverse ninety miles, and the greater part of this distance through snow now upwards of a foot deep, and the thermometer at night below zero. Some negotiations still going on. All the firewood that was laid in for the winter's consumption expended, and almost every tree in cantonments cut down. They had long ago been stripped of their bark, and everything eatable, for the purpose of feeding our starving cattle."—[*MS.*]

sons accompany us. As for attacking us on the road, we are in the hands of God, and him we trust."* Again, Mohun Lal wrote that the troops would be attacked as soon as they quitted cantonments; but it was too late now to recede. Other warning notes of still more ominous import were sounded at this time. Moollah Ahmed Khan told Captain Johnson that Akbar Khan had sworn that he would obtain possession of the English ladies as a pledge for the safe return of his own wives and family; and annihilate every soldier of the British army, with the exception of one man, who should reach Jellalabad to tell the story of the massacre of all his comrades.†

But to those who pondered well the dangers that threatened the retreating force in the gloomy defiles between Caubul and Jellalabad, there was something more terrible still than the vindictive treachery of the Afghan tribes. Ever since the 18th of December, snow had been falling heavily at intervals—sometimes from morning to evening—with terrible perseverance. It was now lying more than ankle-deep upon the ground. Already had the Sepoys and the camp-followers begun to faint under the cruel sufferings of a frosty winter, fearfully aggravated by the exhaustion of all the firewood in their reach. The trees in cantonments had already been cut down and consumed. What was once a flourishing grove or orchard (for they were mainly fruit-trees) had now become a desert. But the sufferings which these wretched men, transplanted from the torrid plains of Hindostan, were now enduring in the Caubul cantonment, seemed but faintly to foreshadow the misery of a long march through the dreadful snow. Even to the hardy people of the north such a march, it was known, must be a sore trial; but to the weak and effeminate strangers

* *Letter of Mohun Lal to Mr. Colvin: MS. Records.*

† *Captain Johnson's Journal: MS. Records.*

from the plains of Hindostan, who had followed our fortunes into those dreary regions, it seemed to threaten nothing short of absolute extermination.

Those few first days of January were days of painful doubt and anxiety.* Every preparation for the march had been made by the garrison. For some time our officers had been gathering together and securing such property as they could take with them, and destroying what they were compelled to abandon. Every night, since the commencement of the new year, they had retired to rest, believing that the army would commence its march on the following morning; but the movement was delayed day after day, because the chiefs had not completed their promised arrangements for the safe conduct of the force. At last, on the evening of the 5th of January, the engineer-officer received instructions actually to commence the work, which he had been so long in readiness to accomplish. He was ordered to cut an opening through the rampart-walls of the cantonment to admit the egress of the troops, more rapidly and less confusedly, than they could pass out through the gates. The chiefs had not sent the promised safeguard; but, contrary to the advice of Major Pottinger,† the military authorities determined to march out of their entrenchments. And so, on the following morning, the British

* The letters written at this time from Caubul were full of gloomy forebodings. On the 4th of January, Captain Lawrence wrote: "The troops march to-morrow; treachery is feared. We look to Jellalabad for assistance. We have no money and no friends." Lady Sale wrote not more hopefully, describing the treaty as a disgraceful one: "Guns, ammunition, money, and all the forts have been given up; and likewise six hostages. All the sick have been sent to the city—to the new King. We are to depart without a guard, without money, without provisions, without wood." At the same time, Lieutenant Sturt wrote: "The day in the end will be the King's. If we march we shall fight but once; the result is in the hands of God."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

† "On the 6th of January, the military authorities refused to wait for the safeguard; and notwithstanding my advice to the contrary, marched out of our entrenchments." —[*Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report: MS. Records.*]

force, beaten and disgraced, commenced its ill-fated retreat towards the provinces of Hindostan.

I have commented upon the various incidents of the Caubul insurrection as they have arisen, one by one, to claim the attention of the reader; and little now remains to be said in explanation of the causes which conduced to the calamitous and disgraceful defeat of a British army by an undisciplined and disunited enemy, who had no artillery to bring into the field. Whatever more remote causes of this lamentable failure may be found elsewhere, it is impossible to conceal or to disguise the one galling fact, that the British army at Caubul was disastrously beaten because it was commanded by an incapable chief. Whether that chief would have beaten the enemy if the military arrangements for which he was not responsible had been better ordered—if the site of the cantonments had been more judiciously chosen, and its defences more effectively constructed, if all our magazines and godowns had been well located and well protected,—may still be an open question; but it appears to me that there is no question as to whether a commanding officer of the right stamp would have triumphed over these difficulties, and beaten the enemy in spite of them. The Caubul cantonments were very badly situated, and very ill-constructed for purposes of defence; but if our troops had been commanded by an officer with a robust frame, strong nerves, a clear understanding, and a proper knowledge of his business, as the chief of a mixed army of British and Hindostanee troops, they would have crushed the insurrection in a few hours, and demonstrated the irresistible power of British valour and British discipline.

It has been said that the British army was not beaten out of Caubul, but that it was *starved* out of Caubul. This is a belief that I would willingly encourage, if I

could only bring my judgment to embrace it. But the fact is, that the army was driven out of Caubul for want of supplies, only because the troops would not fight, or were not suffered to fight, to obtain them. The Commissariat officers would have fed the troops, if the military authorities had not shamefully sacrificed their supplies,—if they had not ignominiously lost what was already in store; and ignominiously refused to make an effort to obtain fresh supplies from the surrounding country. The troops, indeed, fought neither to keep their food when they had it, nor to procure food when they had none. There was an alacrity only in losing. The imbecility which sacrificed the Bengal Commissariat Fort, on the 5th of November, and the miserable abandonment of the expedition to Khoja Rewash, on the 9th of December, are equally apt illustrations of the truth, that, if the army was starved out of Caubul, it was only because it courted starvation.

This is a very humiliating confession, but it is impossible, without a sacrifice of truth for the sake of administering to our national vanity, to avoid the mortifying conclusion that the Caubul army wanted food, only because it wanted vigour and energy to obtain it. If General Elphinstone had thrown half as much heart into his work as Captain Johnson threw into his, the army would not have been starved out of Caubul. There is nothing sadder than the spectacle of a fine army sacrificed by the imbecility of an incapable general, and nothing more painful than to write of it. But such humiliating revelations are not without their uses. They operate in the way of warning. Never again, after this frightful illustration of the evils of a vicious system of routine, will the lives of sixteen thousand men, and the honour of a great nation, be placed in the hands of a senile commander, crippled by disease and enfeebled by suffering. It was General Elphinstone's

misfortune that he was sent to Caubul. It was Lord Auckland's fault that he sent him there. General Elphinstone knew that he was incapable of performing worthily the duties of such a command, and he took the earliest opportunity of applying for relief from a burden of responsibility which he was not able to bear. Lord Auckland knew that he was incapable, for the attention of the Governor-General was strongly called to the fact; but he sent the infirm old General to Caubul, in spite of the representations that were made to him by men less jealous of the integrity of the roster than of the honour of their country. The British army was beaten at Caubul, because it was commanded by General Elphinstone; and it was commanded by General Elphinstone, because Lord Auckland decreed that it should be so.

General Elphinstone has left upon record a declaration of his belief that if he had been more worthily supported he would not have been beaten at Caubul. So long as he held the chief command in his own hands, he—and he alone—was responsible for all the operations of the army. He never relinquished the command. Though he did not take the field in person, every order emanated from him. To him the Envoy addressed himself; with him the Envoy took counsel. It is possible that if the second-in-command had been an officer of a different stamp, the army would not have been so disastrously and ignominiously beaten; but this admission does not affect the question of responsibility. Brigadier Shelton, throughout the siege, held a subordinate situation. He was immediately under Elphinstone's orders; and though he may be chargeable with certain individual miscarriages—with certain errors in the executive management of details—he is not chargeable with the great comprehensive failure which has plunged his

country into such a sea of disgrace. Of Shelton's faults I have not been unmindful; but when I have admitted all his perverseness, his arrogance, his contumacy, and expressed my belief that there was not another man in the British army so unfitted by nature for the post he occupied under such a General, the admission amounts to little more than this: that Brigadier Shelton was not the man to supply the deficiencies of General Elphinstone. It is only because General Elphinstone was so incapable himself that we come to canvass at all the merits of his second-in-command. History does not trouble itself much about seconds-in-command when the chiefs are fit for their posts.

Unquestionably Elphinstone was not well supported. Macnaghten, in emphatic language, described the troops as "a pack of despicable cowards." On more than one occasion they forgot that they were British troops, and turned their backs upon the enemy. They did not fight as they would have fought if they had been well commanded. The commander had less reason to complain of his troops than the troops had to complain of their commander. It was the faint-heartedness of the commander at the outset of the insurrection that dispirited and unnerved the troops. If Elphinstone, on the 2nd of November, had struck a vigorous blow at the then incipient rebellion, and proved himself, by his energy and resolution, worthy of the confidence of the troops, they would have had confidence in him and in themselves. But they were held in restraint by the backwardness of their leader; the froward feeling that then inspired them was crushed and deadened. There was nothing to encourage and to animate them, but everything to dishearten and depress. They saw that the enemy were suffered to triumph over and insult them—that the worst indignities were unresented, the vilest outrages

unpunished. Thus abased, they soon lost their self-respect, and forgot what was due to their colours and their country.

Brigadier Shelton has attributed to physical causes the deterioration of the troops; but it is rather to moral than to physical causes that that deterioration is to be ascribed. The troops would have borne up against continued harassing duty in cantonments—against cold, hunger, and fatigue; they would have kept up a brave heart under the sorest physical trials, if there had been no moral influences to sicken and to chill. They bore, indeed, their outward sufferings without complaining. Cold, hunger, and fatigue they could endure without a murmur; but the supineness of those who suffered them to be robbed and insulted under the very shadow of their guns filled them with burning indignation, which, in time, was succeeded by a reaction of sullen despondency. They felt that they were sacrificed to the imbecility of their commander; and, in time, under the sure process of moral deterioration, they became in all respects worthy of their chief.

Examples of individual heroism were not wanting. Wherever Englishmen congregate, there are surely to be found brave hearts and resolute spirits amongst them. There were many in that Caubul garrison who bore themselves throughout the perilous season of their beleaguerment in a manner worthy of the chivalry of the empire. When the retreating force commenced its miserable march towards the British provinces, it left behind it the remains of many brave men who had fallen nobly on the field of battle; and many brave men were now bracing themselves up in the desperate resolution to sell their lives dearly to the enemy, if treachery were at work for their destruction. But they who had been most eager to counsel a vigorous course of action, and

who had felt most deeply the humiliation into which the feebleness of their chief had sunk them, were mostly officers of the lower grades; and though the opinions of captains and subalterns were sought, and offered when not sought, in a manner unprecedented in the annals of British warfare, they had no power to direct the current of events or to avert the evils which they clearly foresaw. Even Pottinger, with all the influence of recognised official position, and the prestige of an heroic character, could only lift up his voice in remonstrance against the sacrifice of national honour involved in the humiliating treaty with the Afghan Sirdars. The military chiefs were fixed in their determination to abandon Afghanistan, and to leave Shah Soojah to his fate.

BOOK VI.

[1841—1842.]

CHAPTER I.

[November, 1841—January, 1842.]

Sale's Brigade—Evacuation of Gundamuck—Skirmishes with the Enemy—Occupation of Jellalabad—State of the Defences—Successful Sallies—The Fortifications repaired—Disastrous Tidings from Caubul—Summons to Surrender—Arrival of Dr. Brydon.

WHILST Elphinstone was flinging himself into the snares of the enemy at Caubul, Sale was holding out manfully at Jellalabad. Whether the latter ought not to have returned to Caubul, or, if such a movement were impossible, to have stood his ground at Gundamuck, is a question which military critics will long continue to discuss. That the appearance of this brigade at Caubul would have changed the aspect of affairs at that place, and in all probability rescued Elphinstone's unhappy force from destruction, and the national character from disgrace, there seems no reason to doubt. But it was the opinion of General Sale that his brigade could not reach Caubul. "My retracing my steps on that city," he says, "was, in a military sense, impracticable, since the first inevitable

sacrifice would have been of the lives of 300 sick and wounded, whom I could not have left in depôt with the treasonable irregulars at Gundamuck, whilst my cattle was unequal to the transport of my camp-equipage, and my ammunition insufficient for protracted operations. In the position which I occupied, I could not absolutely command a day's provisions, or even water, and should have been hemmed in on every side by hostile tribes, amounting to thirty or forty thousand men, part of whom might have seized Jellalabad, and reduced it to ashes; or, holding it, have left me no alternative but a disastrous retreat to Peshawur. I therefore came to the resolution of anticipating any movement of this kind, and, by possessing myself of Jellalabad, establishing a point on which the force at Caubul might retire if hardly pressed, and restoring a link in the chain of communication with our provinces."

This was written five months after the brigade had abandoned its position at Gundamuck. It does not, however, differ much from the statement of reasons sent to General Elphinstone only as many days afterwards.* But the fact is, that those few days had given a very dif-

* In this letter, written from Jellalabad (Nov. 15), General Sale says: "I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, requiring the force under my command to move again upon Caubul. In reply, I beg to represent that the whole of my camp-equipage has been destroyed; that the wounded and sick have increased to upwards of 300; that there is no longer a single depôt of provisions on the route; and that the carriage of the force is not sufficient to bring on one day's rations with it. I have, at the same time, positive information that the whole country is in arms, and ready to oppose us in the defiles between this city and Caubul, whilst my ammunition is insufficient for more than two such contests as I should assuredly have to sustain for six days at least. With my present means I could not force the passes of either Jugdulluck or Koord Caubul, and even if the *debris* of my brigade did reach Caubul, I am given to understand that I should find the troops now garrisoning it without the means of subsistence. Under these circumstances, a regard for the honour and interests of our government compels me to adhere to my plan already formed, of putting this place into a state of defence, and holding it, if possible, until the Caubul force falls back upon me, or succours arrive from Peshawur or India."

ferent complexion to the aspect of affairs. It was on the 10th of November that Captain Macgregor, who for days had been perplexed by alarming rumours of native origin, received the first authentic intelligence of the outbreak at Caubul, coupled with an urgent requisition from the Envoy to bring back Sale's brigade. Some, at least, of the military objections urged against the movement by the General had not then begun to exist. The irregulars were not then known to be treasonable. The surrounding country was not then known to be hostile. Food was believed to be procurable. The brigade was at this time halted in the valley of Gundamuck. There was no more fertile spot than this between Caubul and Jellalabad. Orchards and vineyards, green fields and rippling streams, refreshed the eyes and gladdened the hearts of men who, for many weary days, had been toiling through arid defiles, under the shadow of dreary walls of rock. Here the brigade had encamped itself on the 30th of October, and looked forward to a brief season of repose.

Everything, indeed, at this time wore a most encouraging aspect. Provisions were freely coming into camp, and the Ghilzye chiefs were making their submission. "On the 31st," says Captain Macgregor, in his narrative of these events, "Burkutt Khan paid me a visit, and brought with him two of the rebel chiefs, Sadad Meer and Sir Biland Khan; they had returned to their allegiance, and delivered over to me sixteen camel loads of property (not very valuable) which had been plundered from some Rehwaree merchants; this property I made over to their owners. Aghur Khan Sahuk, a Ghilzye chief of considerable influence, and Attah Mahomed Khan Sahuk, joined me at Gundamuck, and established their Thanahs for the protection of the Caubul road within their respective boundaries from Seh Baba to near Jugdulluck. Burkutt Khan had re-

posted his Thanahs at Jugdulluck, and at this time there seemed to be a great promise of the Ghilzye country being shortly tranquillised." *

There was one exception, however, to the general amity which the chiefs seemed now inclined to offer to Macgregor. "On the 3rd of November," writes that officer, "I was informed that Meer Afzool Khan Urz-Begee had fled from Caubul, and had joined the rebels, and was then at Ghanni, endeavouring to excite the Khogrannees and Ghannees to rebel against us. Meer Afzool had a fort and extensive lands at Mama Kheil, about two miles distant from our encampment at Gūn-damuck, from which he had removed his family and portable property, and might chupao our camels when at graze, stop our supplies, and molest us in many ways with impunity. I had information that the party which was intended to garrison the fort had not yet reached it; and by our moving at once on it, we should meet with less resistance at that time, than would be offered a few days subsequently; on the other hand, if the British troops took possession of this fort, our position at Gundamuck would be greatly strengthened; I therefore requested Major-General Sir Robert Sale to capture the fort in question. The troops marched against it on the 5th, found it had been evacuated, a party of Ferris's Jezailchees and fifty of Dowson's Hazarbash, under Captain Gerrard, having been left in occupation of it. The troops returned to Gundamuck the following day. A quantity of grain, which had been left in the fort by the enemy and had been stored outside, fell into our possession." †

Up to the day, indeed, on which Macgregor received the pressing solicitations of the Envoy to bring back

* *Captain Macgregor's Report: MS. Records.*

† *Report of Captain Macgregor: MS. Records.*

Sale's brigade to Caubul, circumstances, since the arrival of the force at Gundamuck, had been all in its favour. When, therefore, Macnaghten's letter was received, and they took counsel together as to the course it then became them to pursue, some at least of those strong reasons against the movement on Caubul, which Sale set forth in his official letters, had not yet been forced into being. A council of war was held, and the members of it were divided in opinion; but the majority pronounced against the movement for the rescue of Elphinstone's force. It was determined that the brigade should throw itself into Jellalabad. There was a middle course open to them—the retention of their position at Gundamuck; but it seems to have found no favour in their eyes. Had Sale's force remained in the valley of Gundamuck, it might have saved Elphinstone's army from annihilation on its fatal January retreat. As long as it was encamped there, the tendency of the Ghilzye chiefs was towards the establishment of friendly relations with the British, but no sooner had we determined to abandon our position, than the whole country broke out into hostility, and the passes were sealed.*

On the 11th of November the brigade commenced its march towards Jellalabad. Sale had wisely determined to move with as little encumbrance of baggage as possible. He was partly, indeed, compelled to this by the depredations of the tribes who had swept off the bulk of his cattle whilst the animals were grazing on the plain. The injury inflicted upon us by their predatory adroitness was of a very doubtful character. The taste for

* It has been said (*Calcutta Review*, vol. xiv.) that the instructions sent to Sale were of such a character as to throw a large amount of responsibility upon him; and that Sale always shrank from responsibility,—but the letters from the Envoy to Macgregor were couched in unqualified and unconditional language, and the official letter from Elphinstone ordered Sale to return "*at all risks.*"

baggage is ordinarily so strong that little short of absolute necessity compels its abandonment. Sale was forced to move lightly out of Gundamuck, and he found the advantage of the absence of the usual impediments before he had been long on the march.

To leave, however, any property at Gundamuck was virtually to sacrifice it. To the care of the Shah's irregulars posted in the cantonment all that could not be carried away was now consigned. As soon as Sale's brigade had commenced its march to Jellalabad the cantonment was attacked. True to their character, the Janbaz, who seem to have been raised for the express purpose of going over to the enemy, did it with their wonted address. The property left at Gundamuck fell into the hands of the Afghans; the cantonment was burnt to the ground; and all the surrounding country rose against us in open revolt.

Without any serious opposition, the march to Jellalabad was accomplished. On the morning of the 12th, however, soon after the brigade got under arms in the grey twilight, the tribes were seen clustering on the steep hills on either side, and soon poured themselves down on the rear-guard, vainly striving to sweep off the baggage. A running skirmish, which lasted for some miles, and brought out the fine qualities of our troops, their admirable discipline and steadiness under fire, the gallantry of their bearing, and the rapidity of their movements, ended in the complete dispersion of the depredators, and secured the safety of the remainder of their march. Clever were the manœuvres by which on that day Dennie drew the enemy into his toils, and heavy the retribution which descended upon them. Placing his cavalry in ambush, he brought up his infantry to the attack, ordered them to advance firing, and then wheeled them about, as though in panic flight.

The stratagem succeeded to admiration. The enemy, after a brief pause of wonderment, believed they had accomplished a great victory, sent up a wild shout, and then rushed in pursuit of the flying Feringhees. They were soon in the clear open space to which Dennie had designed to lure them. The cavalry, whom they had laughed at on the hills, able now to operate freely, dashed at them with sudden fury. The slaughter was tremendous; the rout was complete. It was said of the British horsemen that day that "their right arms were wearied with the blows which they struck; and the quantity of dead that might be seen scattered over the face of the valley proved that they had not struck at random."*

On the morning of the 13th of November Sale's brigade took possession of Jellalabad. The movement took the Afghans by surprise. They had believed that the Feringhees were making the best of their way to the provinces of Hindostan; and now their entrance into the city struck a panic into the hearts of the inhabitants. As the regiments marched in, the citizens fled out in dismay. Everything was abandoned to the British troops. There was no need to fire a shot or to draw a sabre. Sale's brigade had now become the garrison of Jellalabad.†

Scarcely, however, had Sale made himself master of the place before it was surrounded by yelling crowds, who threatened death to the infidels if they did not at once abandon the town. The utmost caution was now necessary. The place, though surrounded by fortifications, was absolutely without any real defences; and the

* "*Sale's Brigade in Afghanistan.*" *By the Rev. G. R. Gleig, Chaplain to the Forces.*

† The place, at the request of Captain Macgregor, was officially given over to the British garrison by the nominal Governor, Abdool Rahman, who ruled the Jellalabad district in the name of Shah Soojah. Abdool Rahman continued for some time to reside in the town under Captain Macgregor's protection. — [*Captain Macgregor's Report*: *MS. Records.*]

troops within its dilapidated walls and its filled-up ditches, were almost as much exposed as in the open country. The extent of the works was very great, and it was quite impossible to man them. But guards were posted at all the gates; and a strong piquet planted in a central position, and ordered to hold itself in readiness to send supports to any point from which the sound of firing might proceed.* These arrangements made, the remainder of the troops were suffered to lie down to rest by companies, with their officers beside them, whilst Sale summoned the commanders of regiments and detachments to a council of war.

The question to be determined was this. There was the extensive, ill-defended city of Jellalabad; and in the midst of it was the Balla Hissar or citadel, surrounded by a wall, sufficiently extensive to enclose the brigade without inconvenience, but yet not so extensive as to exhaust our means of defence. It was now debated whether it would be more expedient to abandon the town and concentrate our troops in the Balla Hissar, or to hold possession of the former. Weighty and very apparent were the arguments in favour of the occupation of the citadel; and for a time the council seemed inclined towards the adoption of that securer course; but to Dennie and others it was clear, that the abandonment of the city would be a virtual acknowledgment of weakness, and that it would have a far better political effect, as it would a more becoming military appearance, to hold the city itself, than to be cooped up within the walls of the citadel. And so it was at last determined that the city should be held, and the enemy resolutely defied.

But to hold the city it was necessary that the defences should be repaired. Well might Sale look with dismay at their condition, and almost regard it as a wild hope ever

* "*Sale's Brigade in Afghanistan.*" *By the Rev. G. R. Gleig.*

to look for the completion of the work that he had marked out for his little garrison. "I found the walls of Jellalabad," he said, "in a state which might have justified despair as to the possibility of defending them. The *enceinte* was far too extensive for my small force, embracing a circumference of upwards of 2300 yards. Its tracing was vicious in the extreme; it had no parapet excepting for a few hundred yards, which, there, was not more than two feet high earth; and rubbish had accumulated to such an extent about the ramparts, that there were roads in various directions across and over them into the country. There was a space of 400 yards together, on which none of the garrison could show themselves excepting at one spot: the population within was disaffected, and the whole *enceinte* was surrounded by ruined forts, walls, mosques, tombs, and gardens, from which a fire could be opened upon the defenders at twenty and thirty yards."*

The first thing now to be done was to appoint a committee of officers to examine and report upon the works of the place. On the 13th of November, Captain Broadfoot, who commanded the corps of sappers, with some other officers, went round the dilapidated works. Broadfoot alone succeeded in making the circuit of them. "Large gaps cut off the communication, or insecure footing compelled the officers to descend among the adjoining enclosures, from which it was difficult to find the way; whilst on the south side the rampart was so embedded in houses and surrounded by them, that its course could only be traced by laboriously threading the lanes of the native town. On the north side the wall rose to a very great height *towards the town*, but sloped down to the exterior in a heap of ruins almost everywhere accessible; while at the foot were houses and gardens so strongly occupied by the enemy, that during the night of the 13th

* *General Sale to Secretary to Government, April* 16, 1842.

of November our troops were unable to maintain their posts; and with the exception of the gateway, a line of four hundred yards on the northern face was without a man on the works. Had the enemy then attacked us, we must have been reduced to a street combat."*

Broadfoot, now appointed garrison engineer, set about the work entrusted to him with all the energy and zeal for which his character was distinguished. His little corps of sappers had brought with them their pickaxes, shovels, and other working tools from Caubul; and were now ready to ply them with the heartiest good-will. There was not a soldier in garrison, European or Native, who was not eager to join in the work. Wood was to be collected; and iron was to be collected; for there were no available supplies of either. But from the ruins of old houses in the cantonment and in the town the former was extracted in sufficient quantity, and the neighbouring country supplied the latter.† Every difficulty was overcome as it arose. Impossibilities did not grow in Jellalabad.

But before our soldiers could carry on their work in safety upon the ramparts, it was necessary to give the enemy, who assembled in great force beyond the walls of the city, a taste of our military strength. The morning of the 16th of November was an exciting, and it proved to be a glorious one. On the preceding evening it had been determined that Colonel Monteith, of the 35th Bengal Infantry, a true soldier and a good officer, should take out eleven hundred men, at daybreak, and give battle to the molesting Afghans. As soon as the early dawn would suffer him to take a survey of surrounding objects, Monteith ascended to the flat house-top of one

* *Captain Broadfoot's Report — Jellalabad, April* 16, 1842.

† "The iron," says Broadfoot, "was good in quality, but imperfectly smelted, and requiring ten times as much labour and time as English iron."

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* *General Sale to Secretary to Government, April* 16, 1842.

foot was toiling all day long to repair the decayed ramparts and clear out the ditches, which, ditches no longer, had been filled up to the consistency of thoroughfares. Abbott, who had been appointed commissary of ordnance was getting his guns into position, and making up his ammunition as best he could from the materials to be found in the neighbourhood. Macgregor, with his wonted activity, was playing the part of the Commissariat officer—and playing it well—bringing all his political influence, which was great, to bear upon the important business of the collection of supplies. And so successful were his exertions—so successful were the efforts of the foraging parties, which went out from time to time in search of grain, sheep, firewood, and other essentials—that in a little while a month's provisions were in store. It is true that the men were on half-rations; but they did not work the worse for that. It was never said at Jellalabad that the soldiery were unequal to their accustomed duties because they had not their accustomed supplies of food. The gallant men who composed the garrison of Jellalabad, took their half-rations cheerfully, and cheerfully did double work.*

Not again, until the 1st of December, was the mettle of Sale's brigade tried in the open field. For some days before, the enemy had been hovering about and threatening the garrison, who, chary of their ammunition, which was running scarce, gave back nothing in reply to the desultory fire of the Afghans. But on the 1st of December they appeared in such formidable array, and grew so bold and menacing—closing in nearly and more

* Cheerfully, too, worked the Europeans without their accustomed drams. There were no ardent liquors in Jellalabad; and the consequence was, that the men enjoyed, even on half-rations, an amount of health and strength and elasticity, and preserved a regularity of discipline unknown to even the 13th, when the fire-water was served out to them.

nearly about the walls, until the workmen on the ramparts could not safely perform their accustomed duties—that Sale could no longer refrain from sending out his fighting men against them. Monteith, an officer of the Company's service, had led the attack on the 14th of November. Now, the direction of the sortie was entrusted to an officer of the Queen's army, who had already, on more than one occasion, shown his capacity for command. Dennie led out the garrison this time; and gallantly they moved to the attack. It was mid-day when they sallied out with a cheer, and fell upon their besiegers. It were scarcely truth to say that a battle was fought on that 1st of December. The affair began and ended with the rout of the Afghans. Two guns of Abbott's battery were unlimbered, and with murderous execution poured in their thick showers of grape upon the discomfited mass. They, who had of late been so bold and defiant, now fled in wild confusion, but could not escape the sabres of our cavalry, who charged them home, and drove them across the plain into the river, whilst our infantry pursued them up the hill-sides, and fell upon them with their gleaming bayonets. And so, without the loss of a single man, Dennie dispersed the investing force; and not a trace of it was to be seen on the morrow except the dead bodies on the plain.

And now, with little or no interruption, the labours of the garrison proceeded, and the works began to assume an appearance of effective defence. In fine health, in good working condition, and in an admirable state of discipline, European and Native troops alike laboured with axe and shovel, and soon saw the mud-walls rising around them. Had they thought only of themselves, they would have toiled on, in high spirits as in high health. But the worst rumours were coming in from Caubul. It was plain that their fellow-soldiers at the

capital were not achieving like honourable success. It was believed, too, that Sale and Macgregor knew more than they were willing to reveal. Men asked each other fearful questions; but beyond the leading outline of events, nothing was known that could be shaped into intelligible replies.

How it happened that such an army as that commanded by General Elphinstone had been so disastrously and disgracefully beaten in the field by an enemy of such calibre as these undisciplined Afghans, was a terrible mystery to the brave men who had been scattering their besiegers like sheep. They heard something of the want of provisions that had reduced the force to this melancholy strait; but when Sale's brigade sate down in Jellalabad it had only two days' provisions. They heard, too, that the extent and the weakness of the Caubul cantonments had paralysed the efforts of the garrison; but there, at Jellalabad, they had found their defences in a state of absolute ruin. It seemed to them easy to obtain provisions, and to build up their defences. At all events, they had done both; and the troops at Caubul were of three or four times their strength.

Half of the month of December had worn away, when a whisper went round the garrison that the Caubul force had capitulated. With mingled feelings of incredulity and indignation the humiliating intelligence was received. Sale and Macgregor knew only too well how Elphinstone and Shelton had been throwing away chance after chance of rescuing their miserable troops from destruction. But it was not wise to damp the spirits of their own gallant and successful garrison by any revelations of the unhappy manner in which their old comrades had been sacrificed at Caubul. When, therefore, on the 17th of December, it was known that some disastrous intelligence had been received from the capital, it was slowly believed that the

main body of the British army in Afghanistan had thrown itself on the mercy of a barbarous foe.

But soon other intelligence of a grievous and afflicting character was conveyed to the garrison. At first it appeared only in the shape of a native rumour, which, though it seemed to swell into bulk and significance, was believed, with something perhaps of self-deception, by Macgregor, to be only a shadowy figment that he ought at once to dismiss from his mind. It was rumoured that the British Envoy at Caubul had been murdered at a conference by Akbar Khan; but Macgregor argued, when communicating, on the 30th of December, this report to the authorities below, that it was not likely Macnaghten would have gone unattended to a conference with the chiefs, or that Akbar Khan, whose father and family were in the hands of the British, would commit an act of such outrageous folly as to murder the representative of the British Government. But Macgregor's incredulity was soon dispersed. After three days of doubt, authentic tidings came in from Caubul to disquiet the hearts of the British chiefs at Jellalabad. On the second day of the new year, a letter was received from Major Pottinger, full of the most painful and disheartening intelligence. It announced the murder of Macnaghten. It announced that the Caubul force was about immediately to abandon its position, and to fall back upon Jellalabad, with every prospect of being attacked by a faithless and infuriated enemy upon the way. Into a few sentences of terrible significance was crowded the record of these melancholy events. The letter was written on Christmas-day:

Caubul, December 25, 1841.

MY DEAR MACGREGOR,

We have had a sad Comedy of Errors, or rather tragedy here. Macnaghten was called out to a conference and murdered.

We have interchanged terms on the ground he was treating on for leaving the country; but things are not finally settled. However, we are to fall back on Jellalabad to-morrow or next day. In the present disturbed state of the country we may expect opposition on the road, and we are likely to suffer much from the cold and hunger, as we expect to have no carriage for tents and superfluities. I have taken charge of the Mission. Mackenzie, Lawrence, and Conolly are all seized. The first two I fear for. The latter is quite safe. The cantonment is now attacked.

Yours, very truly,
ELDRED POTTINGER.

With deep emotion the officers now discussed the dangers of this fearful retreat through the snow, and the too probable treachery of the chiefs; and there were those among them who predicted that Elphinstone's army would be cut to pieces by the enemy, or destroyed by the snow almost to a man. All this was very discouraging; but the Jellalabad garrison were not in a temper to be easily cast down. On they went from day to day, working cheerfully at the defences—never fearing for themselves, and, in spite of the evil prophecies of a few amongst them, hoping the best for their miserable comrades.

So passed the first week of January. To Sale and Macgregor they were days of intense anxiety. Eagerly as they looked for cheering intelligence from Caubul, nothing came to refresh them with new hopes. On the 8th of January, another letter from Pottinger, dated the 28th of December, was received by Macgregor. It was written in French, as there were men in the enemy's camp who could read and interpret English;*

* I append the letter itself, as well as one, also in French, written two days afterwards to Mackeson at Peshawur:

"Cabool, 28me Déc., 1841.

"MON CHER MACGREGOR,

"Notre situation devient perilleuse de plus en plus; les forts à l'entour du cantonnement ayant été rendus aux chefs, selon le traité que le feu Envoyé et Ministre avoit commencé. Nous nous trouvons dans la necessité de renouveler les negociations depuis qu'il a été tué. Le manque de vivres, desquels ils ne nous restent que pour huit jours, et

and it announced that the position of the British force at Caubul was becoming more and more perilous—that the treaty commenced by the late Envoy was still being negotiated—that some delays had been occasioned by the difficulty, real or pretended, of providing carriage and provisions to enable the troops to commence their march; and that it was not improbable that, in spite of the promises of the chiefs, the British column would be compelled to fight its way down to Jellalabad. In conclusion, Pottinger spoke of instructions for the evacuation of Jellalabad that had been despatched by Macnaghten, but urged Macgregor to stand fast until the receipt of further orders from Caubul.

On the following day those instructions arrived. A

des moyens de transport pour nos malades et blessés, qu'ils nous ont promis de jour en jour, font autant de raisons de plus pour que nous faisons traité, s'il est possible. Mais aussi leurs promesses meritent si peu de foi, que peut-être nous serons obligés de battre de retraite sur Jellalabad; sur tout, qu'ils exigent que nous marchons par le route de Bungeish—demande que nous ne pouvons pas agréer.

"Pour ces causes alors, si vous avez reçu l'ordre de marcher du feu Envoyé et Ministre, il ne faut pas le faire à present, mais attendre jusqu'au temps que vous recevez nouvelle ordre d'ici, quand le traité de paix sera fait.

"Votre ami,

"ELDRED POTTINGER."

"Cantonnements à Cabool,
30me de Décembre, 1841.

"MON CHER MACKESON,

"J'ai eu le plaisir de recevoir votre lettre du 12me au feu Envoyé. Notre situation ici est des plus dangereuses. L'Envoyé était tué à une conférence, qui avait lieu hors d'ici, le 23 de ce mois. Quand je prenais charge je trouvais qu'il avait engagé du part du gouvernement de quitter Afghanistan, et de donner *hostages* pour que le Dost soyait mis en liberté, aussi que pour préliminaires il avait rendu le *Balla Hissar* et les forts qui dominent les cantonnements. *Ces acts* et le manque des vivres faisaient les cantonnements untenable, et les quatre officiers militaires supérieurs disaient qu'il fallait résumer le traité au lieu de forcer une marche rétrograde sur Jellalabad. Nous avons aujourd'hui finis les termes du traité, et nous espérons partir d'ici demain ou après demain. De leur promesses je m'en doute, malgré que les ordres ont été expédiés pour que nos troupes quittent Candahar et Ghizny. Il faut que vous tenez ouvert le Khyber, et que vous soyez prêt nous aider le passage; car si nous ne sommes pas protégés, il nous serait impossible faire halte en route pour que les troupes se refraichissent, sans laquelle j'ai peur qu'ils soient désorganisés.

"Votre ami,

"Ελδρεδ Ποττιγερ.

"Après aujourd'hui j'écrirai mon nom en lettres Grecques. Lorsque le Cossid vous remettra cette lettre vous lui donnerez trois cent rupees."

few horsemen appeared under the walls of Jellalabad, one of whom was the bearer of a letter from the English authorities at Caubul, addressed to Captain Macgregor. It contained instructions for the evacuation of Jellalabad, couched in the following words:

Caubul, December 29, 1841.

SIR,

It having been found necessary to conclude an agreement, founded on that of the late Sir W. H. Macnaghten, for the evacuation of Afghanistan by our troops, we have the honour to request that you will intimate to the officer commanding at Jellalabad, our wish that the troops now at that place should return to India, commencing their march immediately after the receipt of this letter, leaving all guns, the property of Dost Mahomed Khan, with the new Governor, as also such stores and baggage as there may not be the means of carrying away, and the provisions in store for our use on arriving at Jellalabad.

Abdool Ghuffoor Khan, who is the bearer of this letter, will render you all the assistance in his power. He has been appointed Governor of Jellalabad on the part of the existing government.

We have the honour to be, &c.,

ELDRED POTTINGER, in charge of Caubul Mission.
W. K. ELPHINSTONE, Major-General.

Macgregor laid the letter before Sale, and a council of war was held. It does not seem that there were many doubts and misgivings to agitate and perplex the brave men, who then asked each other whether they should cast further discredit on their country, by abandoning their post and flinging themselves into the snares of the enemy. It seemed to them that a bait had been laid to lure them to destruction. Macgregor knew that Akbar Khan had issued a proclamation to the chiefs of the surrounding country, calling upon them, as followers of the true faith, to rise and slay the Feringhees on the road; his voice was all for the retention of their post, and the military chiefs were of the same temper. Little time elapsed, therefore, before the following letter was written to Major Pottinger and General Elphinstone:

Jellalabad, January 9, 1842.

SIRS,

We have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, which you therein state was to be delivered to us by Abdool Ghuffoor Khan, appointed Governor of this place by the existing powers at Caubul. That communication was not delivered to us by him, but by a messenger of his, and though dated 29th of December, 1841, has only this moment reached us. I have, at the same time, positive information that Mahomed Akbar Khan has sent a proclamation to all the chiefs in the neighbourhood, urging them to raise their followers for the purpose of intercepting and destroying the forces now at Jellalabad. Under these circumstances we have deemed it our duty to await a further communication from you, which we desire may point out the security which may be given for our safe march to Peshawur.

We have the honour to be, &c.,

R. SALE, Major-General.
G. H. MACGREGOR, Political Agent.

It is right that Macgregor and Sale should be suffered to state in their own words the motives which impelled them to adopt this worthy resolution. "The conduct," says Captain Macgregor, "of Major-General Sir R. Sale and myself, in having declined, under the circumstances, to deliver up Jellalabad to Abdool Ghuffoor Khan, Barukzye, in conformity with the instructions contained in the letter to my address of the 29th of December, signed by Major Pottinger and General Elphinstone, has already been approved by government; but perhaps it may be proper here to relate a few of the causes which led to such a resolution. When the British authorities at Caubul had decided upon capitulating, and the terms of capitulation were in the course of negotiation, my spies informed me that letters had been received from Mahomed Akbar Khan, and the Ghilzye chiefs, desiring the different tribes on the road to assemble to attack the British army, which was shortly to leave Caubul for

India. This information was confirmed by the letter from Burkutt Khan. . . . . An intercepted letter from Mahomed Akbar Khan, which reached us at the same time, will serve to show the spirit with which he regarded us; therefore I felt convinced that treachery was intended by the Afghan chiefs, in which case our retaining possession of the fortress of Jellalabad became of incalculable advantage to the retreating force; and if it succeeded in reaching Jellalabad, strengthened as it would be by the garrison, we might yet have upheld our authority in Ningrahar, until an opportunity would have been afforded to the British Government to reinforce us, so as to commence operations for the recapture of Caubul. The troops left Caubul on the 6th of January; and not until the 9th did we receive the letter in question. Their fate had been sealed ere that period; and had the requisition been complied with, government would most undoubtedly have had to lament the destruction of the Jellalabad garrison as well as that of the Caubul force, the wishes of the enemy evidently being to inveigle us into their power, and then to do their worst towards us. Moreover, to have evacuated Jellalabad would have doubtless increased a hundredfold the difficulties of re-establishing the British authority in this country, in the event of government determining so to do. Our national honour, and the safety of our Indian dominions, seemed to render this latter course of paramount necessity."*

"As regards my own line of conduct," writes General Sale, "in this difficult crisis, I am of opinion, in the absence of all instructions from India, that I am at liberty to choose between the alternatives of being bound or not by the convention, which was forced from our Envoy and military commander with the knives at their throats,

* *Captain Macgregor's Report: MS. Records.*

according as I may see either one course or the other to be most conducive to British interests. It does not absolutely impose any obligation on my force, which is no party to it; and under the consideration of its having been extorted by force, unless it should be ratified by the Governor-General in Council. If, therefore, I see a prospect of being reinforced from Peshawur within the period for which my provisions and ammunition will last, I propose to hold this place on the part of government, until I receive its orders to the contrary. If, however, any untoward incidents should preclude the prospect of Brigadier Wild's crossing the Khybur, I should esteem it wiser and better to retire upon Peshawur, with the debris of the force at Caubul, on its reaching me, than to remain here; but in no event would I retire unsupported by other troops to Peshawur, unless absolutely compelled to do so by the failure of food and ammunition. I feel assured that the rebels at Caubul dare not proceed to extremities with the force there, so long as they know me to be strong here; and that I should therefore be compromising them by evacuating this place, until they have been permitted to retire upon it."*

A season of painful anxiety and suspense followed the receipt of the letter from Pottinger and Elphinstone. But it was not without its alleviations. Money had become scarce at Jellalabad. The cupidity of the Afghans had seldom been proof against English money; and now to lack the means of appealing to it was to lose one of our principal means of defence. It was, therefore, with no common delight that the garrison now welcomed the arrival of a sum of money which Mackeson, ever strenuous in his activity, had sent on from Peshawur, through the agency of Tora-baz Khan, the loyal chief of Lalpoora.

* *General Sale to Sir J. Nicholls, Jellalabad, January* 11, 1842: *MS. Records.*

The defences of the place, too, were rising under Broadfoot's hands, and "by the middle of January, the commencement of the rainy season, a parapet, nowhere less than six feet high, with a banquette as wide as the nature of the rampart allowed, was completed entirely round the place. The gates were repaired and strengthened by buttresses. Two of them were retrenched, and a ditch carried round the north-west angle, whilst some of the most dangerous ravines were laid open to our force, and roads were opened into the low ground on the north side."* There was little, indeed, at this time, except a scarcity of ammunition, to render the garrison apprehensive on their own accounts; but every day made them more and more anxious concerning the fate of their countrymen, who by this time had left Caubul on their perilous retreat through the snowy passes. A letter from Captain Lawrence, dated on the 4th instant,† announced that the force was to march in a day or two with every expectation of being attacked

* *Captain Broadfoot's Report.*

† Caubul, January 4th, 1842.

My dear Macgregor,

Pottinger being busy, I write to tell you of the Envoy being murdered, and Trevor, on the 23rd. We have been obliged to conclude the treaty, and it is settled we march to-morrow. Whether we are attacked on the road depends upon their good faith. I believe we do not run very much risk as far as Jugdulluck, except from the weather, which is very severe here; and we are obliged to march very lightly, and may expect to lose many men. Orders have been sent to you to evacuate Jellalabad before our arrival: if, however, the treaty is broken by our being attacked, you will consider the orders cancelled, and you will use every exertion to aid us. We have received your letter of the 24th, but our word cannot be broken. Pottinger wishes you, if possible, to send intelligence of these matters to government and Rawlinson, that the latter may be aware of the state of affairs, and not do anything hurriedly. If you understand faith has been kept and are obliged to leave Jellalabad, you had better not pass the Khybur till we come, as it is feared our troops will be so disorganised as to require your aid through that pass. If you could take supplies for us to the mouth of the Khybur, it would be very desirable. We are all well. Lady M(acnaghten) ditto, though still much afflicted. Keep your scouts on the road, and give us as much intelligence as you can. You must chiefly depend on yourself for news of us, as all our Afghans have deserted us. We have no money in our treasury; so tell Mackeson to have some ready for us, if possible.

Yours, &c., &c.,

G. St. P. Lawrence.

upon the road. Nothing could Sale's brigade do in this emergency, but patiently abide the result.

At last, on the 13th of January, when the garrison were busy on the works, toiling with axe and shovel, with their arms piled and their accoutrements laid out close at hand, a sentry, on the ramparts, looking out towards the Caubul road, saw a solitary white-faced horseman struggling on towards the fort. The word was passed; the tidings spread. Presently the ramparts were lined with officers, looking out, with throbbing hearts, through unsteady telescopes, or with straining eyes tracing the road. Slowly and painfully, as though horse and rider both were in an extremity of mortal weakness, the solitary mounted man came reeling, tottering on. They saw that he was an Englishman. On a wretched, weary pony, clinging, as one sick or wounded, to its neck, he sate or rather leant forward; and there were those who, as they watched his progress, thought that he could never reach, unaided, the walls of Jellalabad.

A shudder ran through the garrison. That solitary horseman looked like the messenger of death. Few doubted that he was the bearer of intelligence that would fill their souls with horror and dismay. Their worst forebodings seemed confirmed. There was the one man who was to tell the story of the massacre of a great army.* A party of cavalry were sent out to succour him. They brought him in wounded, exhausted, half-dead. The messenger was Dr. Brydon, and he now reported his belief that he was the sole survivor of an army of some sixteen thousand men.

* It is said that Colonel Dennie predicted that not a soul would escape except one man, and that he would come to tell that the rest were destroyed. "The voice of Dennie," says Mr. Gleig, "sounded like the response of an oracle when he exclaimed, 'Did I not say so—here comes the messenger.'"—[*Sale's Brigade in Afghanistan.*]

CHAPTER II.

[January, 1842.]

The Retreat from Caubul—Departure of the Army—Attack on the Rear-Guard—The First Day's March—Encampment at Begramee—The Passage of the Koord-Caubul Pass—Tezeen—Jugdulluck—Sufferings of the Force—Negotiations with Akbar Khan—Massacre at Gundamuck—Escape of Dr. Brydon.

THE story told by Dr. Brydon was one of which history has few parallels. A British army, consisting of more than four thousand fighting men and twelve thousand camp-followers, had, as he confusedly related, disappeared in a few days. Some had perished in the snow; others had been destroyed by the knives and the jezails of the enemy; and a few had been carried into captivity, perhaps to perish even more miserably than the unhappy comrades who had died in the deep passes of Koord-Caubul, Tezeen, and Jugdulluck.

In the struggle between life and death which then threatened to stifle the evidence of poor Brydon, he told but imperfectly what he knew; and but imperfectly did he know the whole dire history of that calamitous retreat. It was long before the garrison of Jellalabad had more than a dim perception of the events which ended in the annihilation of the Caubul force. No one man could speak of more than certain scenes of the great tragedy;

what had happened before, behind, around him, he could only conjecture. But there were other survivors than the solitary man who was brought, wounded and feeble, into Jellalabad on that January morning; and enough is now on record to enable the historian to group into one intelligible whole all the crowded circumstances of that lamentable retreat.

On the 6th of January, 1842, the army commanded by General Elphinstone, which, for sixty-five days, had been enduring such humiliation as never before had been borne by a British force, prepared to consummate the work of self-abasement by abandoning its position, and leaving the trophies of war in the hands of an insolent enemy. A breach had been cut, on the preceding day, by the Engineer Sturt, through the low ramparts of the cantonments, the earth of which bridged over the ditch; and now through this opening, and through the rear gate, the baggage filed out into the open plain, and the troops prepared to follow it. It was a clear, bright, frosty morning. The cold was intense. The snow was lying deep on the ground. Shelton had recommended that the baggage should be loaded by moon-rise; but it was not before eight o'clock that it was ready to move. About half-past nine the advanced-guard* moved out of cantonments. The English ladies and the children were with it; for it was supposed to be the place of safety, if safety could be found amidst the certain horrors of this perilous retreat.

* "The advanced-guard consisted of the 44th Queen's, 4th Irregular Horse, and Skinner's Horse, two horse-artillery six-pounder guns, sappers and miners' mountain-train, and the late Envoy's escort. The main body included the 5th and 37th Native Infantry; the latter in charge of treasure; Anderson's Horse, the Shah's 6th Regiment, two horse-artillery six-pounder guns. The rear-guard was composed of the 54th Native Infantry, 5th Cavalry, and two six-pounder horse-artillery guns. The force consisted of about 4500 fighting men, and 12,000 followers."—[*Lady Sale's Journal.*]

It had been agreed that the chiefs should furnish a strong Afghan escort to protect our retiring troops from the furious zeal of the Ghazees, and the uncontrollable cupidity of those Afghan bandits who had all along looked upon the revolution only as an opportunity for much plunder. But the army commenced its march without an escort; and the Newab Zemaun Khan, whose good faith and true nobility of character are beyond suspicion, despatched a letter to Pottinger, warning him of the danger of leaving cantonments without any such provision for their safety.* But it was too late now to stand still. The Mission premises had already fallen into the hands of the enemy; and could not be regained without an engagement, which at such a time it would have been folly to risk. Pottinger instructed Conolly, who remained as one of our hostages with Zemaun Khan, to explain all this to the Newab. The good old man admitted the cogency of Pottinger's arguments, and promised to do his best to protect the retreating force. He fulfilled his promise to the utmost of his ability; but he lacked the power to restrain the people from perpetrating the outrages of which long impunity had habituated them to the commission, and made them regard themselves as the privileged instruments of chartered violence and rapine.

* "About eleven o'clock, when about half of the column had moved off, I received a letter from Newab Zemaun Khan, remonstrating against our march. But as the enemy had been enabled to seize the enclosures of the late Envoy's house and offices, owing to the early withdrawal of our guards, we could not consent without commencing an action for the recovery of part of our works. I represented this to the Newab, and begged Mr. Conolly to explain our situation. In consequence, about one P.M. I received another letter from the Newab, agreeing to our movement, and promising that he would protect us as far as he could; and it is my duty to state that he did so to the utmost of his power; but the quantity of baggage delayed the march of the rear-guard, which was obliged to retreat with severe loss, abandoning two guns and much baggage, notwithstanding it did not reach the bivouac at Begramee till two the next morning." — [*Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report: MS. Records.*]

The good intentions of the Newab are not to be denied; but the true policy of the British, on that January morning, was to wait for nothing, however advantageous in itself, but to push on with the utmost possible despatch.* But everything seemed to favour delay. The passage of the Caubul river was to be accomplished by means of a temporary bridge constructed of gun-waggons, though the river was fordable at many places, and might have been ridden or waded through without detriment to those who had been struggling through the deep snow. On this service, Sturt, active in spite of his wounds, was employed from an early hour; but it seems that the despatch of the gun-waggons was delayed, for some unexplained reason, and it was not until the hour of noon that the bridge was ready for the passage of the troops. Shelton had endeavoured to expedite the movement;† but had met with his usual success. He went to the General's quarters—found him at breakfast; and returned with nothing but a rebuke.

Had the whole of Elphinstone's army crossed the Caubul river before noon, and pushed on with all possible despatch to Koord-Caubul, it might have been

* "Before leaving Caubul, it was generally believed to be the General's intention to proceed, the first day to Koord-Caubul, and the second to Tezeen, which could easily have been accomplished, had proper arrangements for leaving cantonments been made beforehand, as the distance from Caubul to Tezeen is only thirty miles. Had this been effected, how different would have been the fate of the Caubul army. We should only have been one night and one day and a half in the snow, and should have escaped our enemy, who, the first day, were not ready to follow us."—[*Capt. Johnson's Journal.*]

† Brigadier Shelton says: "I knew nothing of the arrangements for the retreat till they were published the evening before. The order was for the baggage to assemble at eight A.M. At that hour I went to Elphinstone's quarters, to beg he would let the carriages of the gun-waggons go out that were to form a foot-bridge for the infantry over the Caubul river, about 300 yards from cantonments, and got offended for my trouble. He was just sitting down to breakfast. They did not go out till between nine and ten, and having to be dragged through a canal caused further delay, so that the bridge was not completed for the advanced-guard to pass till past twelve."—*Statement of Brigadier Shelton: MS.*]

saved. But the delays which arose on that dreadful morning sealed the fate of the unhappy force. The day was well-nigh lost. It was a day of suffering and confusion—presaging worse suffering and confusion to come. The advanced-guard under Brigadier Anquetil moved out with some order and steadiness—but in a little while the rush of camp-followers destroyed all semblance of military array. They mixed themselves up with the soldiers — a vast overwhelming assemblage of ten or twelve thousand men. Not a mile of the distance had been accomplished before it was seen how heavily this curse of camp-followers sate upon the doomed army. It was vain to attempt to manage this mighty mass of lawless and suffering humanity. On they went, struggling through the snow—making scant progress in their confusion and bewilderment—scarcely knowing whether they were escaping, or whether they were rushing on to death.

The main body under Brigadier Shelton, with its immense strings of baggage-laden cattle, was moving out of cantonments during the greater part of the day. The rear-guard manned the cantonment-walls, and looked down upon a scene of uproar and confusion beyond the imagination to conceive. The enemy, as the day advanced, began to be busy at their work of plunder. Dashing in among the baggage, they cut down the helpless camp-followers, and carried off whatever they could seize. The snow was soon plashed with blood. From the opening in the ramparts to the bridge across the river streamed one great tide of soldiers and camp-followers, camels and ponies; and at the bridge there was an enormous mass of struggling life, from which arose shouts, and yells, and oaths—an indescribable uproar of discordant sounds; the bellowings of the camels, the curses of the camel-drivers, the lamentations of the

Hindostanees, the shrieks of women, and the cries of children; and the savage yells of the Ghazees rising in barbarous triumph above them all.

So tedious was the exode of the force, such were the embarrassments that beset its progress, that when the shadows of evening began to descend upon this melancholy scene, the rear-guard was still on the walls. At six o'clock they marched out of cantonments, and, moved by one common thirst of plunder, the Afghans poured themselves upon the abandoned homes of the English, and, when they could not gratify their cupidity, began to gratify their revenge. The Feringhees had left little behind them. They had destroyed almost everything which they could not carry away, except the guns, which the General had deemed it expedient to leave in good condition for the use of his "new allies."* But at all events there were buildings standing there—buildings erected by the English for their own purposes—insolent monuments of the Feringhee invasion. The work of the incendiary commenced. The Mission-house, the General's quarters, and other public buildings, were soon in a blaze; and the British army, now scattered over the whole line of country between Caubul and Begramee, some already at the halting-ground and others only now starting on their dreary march, looked out through the frosty night at the great conflagration, which lit up the

* Eyre says that "the General had often been urged to destroy these guns rather than suffer them to fall into the enemy's hands; but he considered that it would be a breach of the treaty to do so." We cannot restrain a smile at Elphinstone's simplicity; but at the same time, the circumstance noted affords rather a pleasant indication of the General's honesty of purpose and singleness of character. As an honourable English gentleman, having covenanted to give up his guns, he considered himself bound to deliver them over in the state in which they were at the time the covenant was made. The enemy do not seem to have appreciated Elphinstone's generosity, for they burnt the carriages of the guns as soon as our troops evacuated the cantonments.

incumbent sky like a stormy sunset, and for miles around reddened the great coverlid of snow.

Not until two hours after midnight did the rear-guard reach its encamping-ground, on the right bank of the river, near Begramee. They had been under arms since eight o'clock in the morning. They had been savagely attacked on leaving cantonments, and had left fifty of their numbers dead or dying in the snow, and two of their guns in the hands of the enemy.* They had now only accomplished five or six miles of their fearful journey; but they had seen enough to fill them with horrible forebodings of the fate that was in store for them. The road was strewn with dying wretches, smitten by the unendurable cold. The miserable people of Hindostan—the weaker women and young children—had already begun to lay themselves down to die in the dreadful snow. Even the Sepoys were sinking down on the line of march, and quietly awaiting death.

The night was one of suffering and horror. The snow lay deep on the ground. There was no order—no method in anything that was done. The different regiments encamped anywhere. Soldiers and camp-followers were huddled together in one inextricable mass of suffering humanity. Horses, camels, and baggage-ponies were mixed up confusedly with them. Nothing had been done to render more endurable the rigour of the northern winter.† The weary wretches lay down to sleep—some

* Lieut. Hardyman, of the 5th Cavalry, was here shot through the heart.

† A writer in the *Calcutta Review* says: "Major Pottinger told us that when the retreat was decided on, and no attention was paid to his, Lawrence's, and Conolly's advice to concentrate in the Balla Hissar, he urged the officers to have all the old horse-clothing, &c., cut into strips and rolled round the soldier's feet and ankles after the Afghan fashion, as a better protection against snow than the mere hard leather shoes. This he repeatedly urged, but in vain, and within a few hours the frost did its work. Major Pottinger said that there was not an Afghan around them who had not his legs swathed in rags as soon as the snow began to fall."

never rose again; others awoke to find themselves crippled for life by the biting frost.

The morning dawned, and without any orders, without an attempt to restrain them, the camp-followers and baggage struggled on ahead, and many of the Sepoys went on with them. Discipline was fast disappearing. The regiments were dwindling down to the merest skeletons. It was no longer a retreating army; it was a rabble in chaotic flight. The enemy were pressing on our rear; seizing our baggage; capturing our guns;* cutting up all in their way. Our soldiers weary, feeble, and frost-bitten, could make no stand against the fierce charges of the Afghan horsemen. It seemed that the whole rear-guard would speedily be cut off. All thoughts of effectual resistance were at an end. There was nothing now to be hoped for but from the forbearance of the Afghan chiefs.

The Newab Zemaun Khan had ever been true to us—ever in the midst of the wild excitement of the Caubul outbreak, and in the flush of national triumph, he had been serene, generous, and forbearing; had borne himself as a worthy enemy; had been betrayed into no excesses; but had endeavoured to vindicate the rights of the Afghans without inflicting upon the Feringhees the misery and humiliation which others contemplated with irrepressible delight. He had exerted himself on the preceding day to control the fierce passions of his countrymen, and now he wrote to Major Pottinger, exhorting him to arrest the progress of the retreating army, and promising to send supplies of food and firewood, and to disperse the fanatic bands which were hovering so

* The mountain-train guns here fell into the enemy's hands, in spite of the gallantry of Lieutenant Green, who was in charge, and the artillerymen under his command. Green succeeded in spiking the guns, but being poorly supported by the infantry, he could not recapture them. Two horse-artillery guns were abandoned soon afterwards.

destructively on our flanks. Pottinger went to the General; and the General consented to the halt.* Shelton, on the other hand, was eager for an advance. He believed that their only chance of safety lay in a rapid forward movement, shaking off the baggage and camp-followers as they went. In this conviction, he hurried forward to Elphinstone, and implored him to proceed.† But the General was not to be moved; and the doomed army halted at Boot-Khak.

Here Akbar Khan appeared upon the scene. With a body of some 600 horsemen he rode up, and Pottinger saw him in the distance. Believing that he was a Sirdar of note, the political chief despatched Captain Skinner, with a flag of truce, to communicate with him. Skinner brought back a friendly message. The Sirdar, he said, had reproached the British authorities for their hasty movement on the preceding morning; but added that he had come out to protect them from the attacks of the Ghazees. His instructions were to demand other hostages, as security for the evacuation of Jellalabad; and to arrest the progress of the force, supplying it in the interval with everything it required, until such time

* "About mid-day I received a letter from Newab Zemaun Khan and Naib Ameen-oollah, requesting us to halt till they dispersed the fanatics, and promising us supplies of provisions and firewood if we did so. I communicated this to General Elphinstone, with the information that the defile in front was strongly occupied. The General having taken this into consideration, the utter confusion which prevailed, the exhausted state of the Sepoys, who had been under arms in deep snow from daylight of the 6th (with scarcely any rest, and neither food nor water at the bivouac), joined with the pressure on the rear-guard, he determined to halt till night and then pursue his march."—[*Major Pottinger's Budeeabad Report: MS. Records.*]

† "I had just formed up a corps near Boot-Khak to resist a threatened attack, and was moving on again, when I heard the General had ordered a halt. I immediately hurried forward and entreated him to continue the march, having only come three miles, and assured him a halt on the snow, without tents or food, would destroy the troops; but he was immoveable, talked of the Sirdars' promises, and sending a letter to Caubul to know why they had not sent us a safeguard. Here was another day entirely lost, and the enemy collecting in numbers."—[*Statement of Brigadier Shelton: MS. Records.*]

as intelligence of the retirement of Sale's force should be received. "It was too late to send a reply," wrote Pottinger, in his report of these proceedings, "and nothing was determined—but some persons persuaded the General to abandon his intention of marching by night." And so the doomed force, whilst the enemy were mustering to block up the passes in advance, spent another night of inactivity and suffering in the cruel snow.

It was at the entrance of the Koord-Caubul Pass that the force, now on the evening of the 7th of January having in two days accomplished a distance of only ten miles,* halted on some high ground. The confusion far exceeded that of the preceding night. The great *congeries* of men, women, and children, horses, ponies, and camels, there wallowing in the snow, no words can adequately describe. Many lay down only to find a winding-sheet in the snow. There was no shelter—no firewood—no food. The Sepoys burnt their caps and accoutrements to obtain a little temporary warmth. One officer† narrates how he and eleven others "crowded round the hot ashes of a pistol-case, and with some bottles of wine still remaining, tried to keep off the effect of the cold. They then all huddled together and lay down on the ground to sleep."

The sun rose upon many stiffened corpses; and a scene of still greater confusion than had marked the dawn of the preceding morning now heralded the march of the force. Doubt and uncertainty regarding the intentions of their chiefs brooded over the officers of the force; but few of the soldiers now remembered their chiefs, and the camp-followers were wholly regardless of their intentions. One paramount desire to escape death held possession of that wretched multitude; and a

* *Eyre's Narrative.* † Lieutenant Melville.

crowd of soldiers and camp-followers, at an early hour, began to push on confusedly to the front. Whilst some efforts were being made to restrain them, Akbar Khan was in communication with the officers of the British Mission. Skinner again went out to meet the Sirdar. It was proposed that the army should either halt on their present ground at Boot-Khak, or make their way to Tezeen, there to await intelligence of the evacuation of Jellalabad. Four hostages were demanded as security for Sale's retreat; and Brigadier Shelton and Captain Lawrence were named as two of them. But Shelton had always resolutely refused to give himself up to the enemy, and Elphinstone was unwilling to order him. Pottinger, therefore, volunteered to take his place,* and Brigadier Anquetil consented, if a general officer were peremptorily demanded, to accompany the political chief.

Pottinger rode to the rear, where Akbar Khan sent a party of horsemen to conduct him to his presence. Welcoming the young English officer with a respectful kindliness of manner, the Sirdar declared himself willing to receive three hostages—Major Pottinger, Captain Lawrence, and any other officer whom the former might select. Pottinger named Colin Mackenzie, than whom there was not in all the army a braver or a better solider,† and those three officers placed themselves in the hands of Akbar Khan.

The force was now again in motion. It was agreed that they should push on to Tezeen, there to await

* "I volunteered to go in his place, thinking that such a mark of confidence would induce the chief not only to spare that officer (Shelton), but also Captain Lawrence (whose presence was requisite in charge of the Mission, as my wound rendered me incapable of exertion), and probably some other officers whose services in the disorganised state of the force could scarcely be dispensed with."—[*Major Pottinger's Report: MS. Records.*]

† The Jezailchees whom he commanded had been by this time nearly annihilated, and "his services with them, therefore," said Pottinger, "could be of little further use."

certain tidings of the evacuation of Jellalabad. Between Boot-Khak and Tezeen lies the stupendous pass of Koord-Caubul. For a distance of five miles it runs between precipitous mountain-ranges, so narrow and so shut in on either side that the wintry sun rarely penetrates its gloomy recesses.* Into the jaws of this terrible defile the disorganised force now struggled in fearful confusion. In vain did Akbar Khan issue his orders; in vain did his principal adherents exert themselves to control the hordes of fanatic Ghilzyes, who poured upon our struggling rabble a deadly fire from their jezails.† Nothing could restrain the fierce impetuosity of our cruel assailants. Pent in between the incumbent walls of the narrow pass, now splashing through the mountain torrent, now floundering through the snow which filled the hollows, or was banked up beside the stream, the wretched fugitives fell an easy prey to the Ghilzye marksmen, who shot them down from the hill-sides. It was not a time to think of saving anything but human life. Baggage, ammunition, public and private property, were abandoned;‡ and the Sepoys

* "Down the centre," says Eyre, "dashed a mountain torrent, whose impetuous course the frost in vain attempted to arrest, though it succeeded in lining the edges with thick layers of ice, over which the snow lay consolidated in slippery masses, affording no very easy footing for our jaded animals. This stream we had to cross and recross eight-and-twenty times."

† Pottinger says, that "notwithstanding the repeated and urgent orders of Mahomed Akbar Khan, the fanatics attacked our column, whereon the chief left us in charge of his cousin, Abdool Ghyas Khan, and proceeded, to try if his presence would restrain the Afghans. After some time, we also moved on, and after a slow and tedious march amidst miserable scenes of cruelty and plunder, through which our escort had considerable difficulty in preserving our lives, Abdool Ghyas Khan being obliged to call in Sooltan Ahmed Khan to aid him, we after dark reached Koord-Caubul, having on the way picked up a child of Captain Boyd's, an European women of her Majesty's 13th, and a private of her Majesty's 44th, whose lives had been saved by Mahomed Akbar Khan."—[*Major Pottinger's Report: MS. Records.*]

‡ "On leaving Caubul," says Captain Johnson, "each Sepoy had 40 rounds of ammunition in pouch, and about 60 camel loads per regiment, with 100 spare loads. We have not at present (January 8), for the whole force, three camel loads in box, and numbers of the Sepoys have not a single cartridge in pouch."

suffered their very firelocks to be taken out of their hands.

The massacre was fearful in this Koord-Caubul Pass. Three thousand men are said to have fallen under the fire of the enemy, or to have dropped down paralysed and exhausted, to be slaughtered by the Afghan knives.* And amidst these fearful scenes of carnage, through a shower of matchlock balls, rode English ladies on horseback, or in camel-panniers, sometimes vainly endeavouring to keep their children beneath their eyes, and losing them in the confusion and bewilderment of the desolating march.

That night the force again halted in the snow, now deepened by a heavy fall, which, as the army neared the high table-land of Koord-Caubul, had increased the bitterness of the march.† The night was, like its predecessors, one of intense suffering, spent by the perishing troops without shelter, without firewood, and without food. At early morn there was another rush of camp-followers and undisciplined Sepoys to the front; but the march of the troops, which had been ordered at ten o'clock, was countermanded by the General. Akbar Khan was then offering to supply the force with provisions, and to do his best for its future protection. At

* Many officers perished in the Koord-Caubul Pass. Among these was Captain Paton, the assistant adjutant-general, who had lost an arm in action at Caubul. Here, too, fell mortally wounded, Lieutenant Sturt of the engineers, a very fine young officer, who, though severely wounded at the commencement of the outbreak, stabbed in the face at the door of Shah Soojah's presence-chamber, had exerted himself with overflowing zeal and unfailing activity, whenever his services, as the only engineer at Caubul, were required; and whose voice, when others counselled unworthy concessions, had *ever been lifted up* in favour of the noblest and the manliest course. He died on the 9th inst., attended by his wife and mother-in-law; the daughter and wife of Sir Robert Sale.

† Eyre says: "On the force reaching Koord-Caubul, snow began to fall and continued till morning."—[*Military Operations*, page 210.] General Elphinstone says: "Ere we reached the bivouac snow fell and continued during the night." Brigadier Shelton says, on the other hand, "On approaching Koord-Caubul it began to snow, but fortunately cleared up about dusk." Such discrepancies as these may well excuse the historian, if he be guilty of any slight errors of detail.

his suggestion a halt was ordered by Elphinstone; and the perishing troops sate down in the snow, which another march would have cleared, for a day of painful uncertainty. The whole force was against the delay. Shelton went to the General to remonstrate against it. In vain he urged that such a measure would cause the total destruction of the column. The General was not to be moved from his purpose.* The day was one of idleness and desertion. The Native troops, led by Shah Soojah's cavalry, began to bethink themselves of escaping from the horrors of the retreat by going over to the enemy. The General had paraded the ruins of the different regiments to repel an anticipated attack; and now Captain Grant, the adjutant-general, accompanied by the Tezeen chief, Khoda Bux Khan, rode to the head of these skeleton corps, now numbering scarcely more than a hundred men in each, and explained to them that Akbar Khan had declared his intention to kill all, who deserted to him, on the spot.† But the contagion was then fast spreading; and nothing could check the pro-

* "I went to E. and told him such a measure would cause the total destruction of the whole force; but he was not to be moved, replying that the Sirdar had sent to him to say, if he would stop there, that he (the Sirdar) would send him provisions, which, as I foretold, never came."—[*Statement of Brigadier Shelton: MS. Records.*]

† Captain Johnson says, in his Journal, "A message was sent to Mahomed Akbar regarding the desertion of our troops, and a hope expressed that he would not encourage it. He sent back one of his chiefs (the Tezeen chief, Khoda Bux Khan) to explain that any of our men deserting from us and going over to him would be shot. Our few troops had already been paraded to repel the supposed attack, which, however, did not take place. At the time of doing so, a Mission chuprassie was observed in the act of deserting. He was immediately seized and as instantly shot." The same accurate writer thus describes the state of the force at this time:—"We have no means of carrying on the sick. All our dooley-bearers deserted the first day, or were murdered. The whole of our camels and yaboos have been either seized by the enemy or by our camp-followers; and even were they forthcoming, we have not men to look after them: the greatest confusion prevailed all day, and anxiety and suspense for our ultimate fate intense. Every man among us thought that ere many hours should pass he was doomed to die either by cold, hunger, or the swords of our enemies; for, if attacked, although we might for a short time hold out, nothing could eventually save us. . . . My eyes had become so inflamed from the reflection of the snow, that I was nearly blind, and the pain in-

gress of the disease. The Shah's 2nd Cavalry had gone over nearly to a man.

In the mean while Major Pottinger, who had passed the night in a neighbouring castle, was in consultation with Akbar Khan, and Captain Skinner was acting as the vehicle of communication between them and the head-quarters of the army. A new, and, at the first sound, startling proposition was now made by the Sirdar. He proposed that all the English ladies with the force should be placed under his charge, that he might convey them safely to Peshawur. Remembering that the families of the Sirdar himself were prisoners in the hands of the British, and believing that he was sincere in his desire to save the ladies and children from the destruction that awaited them on the line of march, Pottinger sanctioned the proposal; and Skinner was despatched to the head-quarters of the force to obtain the General's consent. "Desirous to remove the ladies and children, after the horrors they had already witnessed, from the further dangers of our camp, and hoping that, as from the very commencement of the negotiations the Sirdar had shown the greatest anxiety to have the married people as hostages, this mark of trust might elicit a corresponding feeling in him,"* Elphinstone complied with the request. A party of Afghan horse were in readiness to conduct them to the presence of the Sirdar; and so Lady Macnaghten, Lady Sale, and the other widows and wives of the Caubul force, became the "guests" of the son of Dost Mahomed Khan.

They did not go alone. The married men went with

tense. Several officers were more or less affected—one or two quite blind." The portion of Captain Johnson's Journal which relates to the retreat has been published in the *Asiatic Journal.* The preceding portion, relating to the outbreak, from which I have so largely quoted in Book V., and that relating to the captivity, which I shall have occasion subsequently to quote, have never been made public. It should be added, however, that Lady Sale had access to these Journals, and has used them freely without acknowledgment.

* *Statement of General Elphinstone.*

them. The propriety of this step has been questioned. It has been even said that they were not demanded at all by Akbar Khan, but that they threw themselves spontaneously upon the mercy of the chief. It is right, therefore, that so grave a question should not be slurred over. There were three unprejudiced witnesses, whose statements, on such a point, would be worthy of acceptation, as the statements of honourable and unprejudiced men, familiar with all the circumstances of the case. Major Pottinger, Captain Skinner, and General Elphinstone knew all these circumstances, and had no reason to misrepresent them. Major Pottinger says that, "on Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan offering to take charge of the ladies and protect them to Peshawur, I considered it advisable to recommend that they should come over, as the Sirdar's family being in our hands was a sufficient guarantee for their good treatment, and it was evident that our own people were too diminished to protect them. Captain Skinner accordingly went over and mentioned the offer to General Elphinstone, who approved of it, and sent over the ladies, children, and married officers." Captain Skinner has left upon record no narrative of these proceedings. But General Elphinstone has distinctly stated that Captain Skinner was sent to him with a proposal "that the married people and their families should be made over to him, promising honourable treatment to the ladies." Whatever may have been the proposition, as it originally emanated from the Sirdar, there is no room to doubt that General Elphinstone shaped it into a recommendation that the husbands should accompany their wives, and that the former went over to Akbar Khan with the entire sanction of their military chief.*

* The party consisted of Lady Macnaghten, Lady Sale, Mrs. Sturt and one child; Mrs. Trevor and seven children; Captain Boyd, wife and

That the safety of the women and children was secured by their removal from General Elphinstone's disorganised camp to the custody of Akbar Khan, is now a fact which stands out distinctly in the broad light of historical truth. But writing now after the event, it becomes one to consider rather the wisdom of the experiment than the success of the result. I believe that Pottinger and Elphinstone judged wisely. There was a choice of evils, and it appears to me that they chose the least. The women and the children could not long have survived the horrors of that perilous march. They had hitherto escaped, almost by a miracle, the assaults of the cruel climate and the inexorable foe. They were insufficiently clad. They had no servants to attend upon them. They had scarcely tasted food since they left Caubul. They had no shelter during the frosty night-season. Some had just become, or were about soon to become, mothers; and yet they had been compelled to ride in jolting camel-panniers, or on the backs of stumbling baggage-ponies. It was plain that Akbar Khan had no power to restrain the tribes who were butchering our helpless people. The army was fast melting away. It was doubtful whether a man would reach Jellalabad in safety. To have left the women and children to pursue their march would have been to have left them to inevitable destruction. Akbar Khan might be a man of violent and ferocious temper, and no very scrupulous good faith; but because he had slain the Envoy in a gust of passion, it did not necessarily follow that he

child; Captain Anderson, wife and child; Lieutenant Waller, wife and child; Lieutenant Eyre, wife and child; Mr. Ryley, wife and child; Mrs. Mainwaring and child; Sergeant Wade and family. Captain Troup and Lieutenant Mein, being wounded and unserviceable, went with them. Eyre says that it was the intention of the General that all the wounded officers should go; but that there was not time to make known his intentions.

would betray the widow of his victim and the other English ladies who were now to be entrusted to his safe keeping. Moreover, if no sentiments of honour and no feelings of compassion were within him, he might still be swayed by motives of self-interest; and it was not forgotten that his father, his brothers, and the ladies of his family were prisoners in the hands of the British Government, in the provinces of Hindostan.

The married officers and their families went over to the Sirdar; and on the following morning (the 10th of January) the remnant of the doomed force resumed its march towards Jellalabad. There was the same miserable confusion as on the preceding morning. Soldiers and camp-followers rushed promiscuously to the front. The Native regiments were fast melting into nothing. Throwing down their arms and crowding in among the mass of camp-followers, the Sepoys were rapidly swelling the disorganised rabble in front. Their hands were frost-bitten; they could not pull a trigger; they were paralysed, panic-struck; they rushed forward in aimless desperation, scarcely knowing what they did or where they went; whilst the Afghans, watching the cruel opportunity, came down, with their long knives, amidst their unresisting victims, and slaughtered them like sheep. "A narrow gorge between the precipitous spurs of two hills" was the appointed shambles. There the dead and the dying soon choked up the defile. There was not now a single Sepoy left. Every particle of baggage was gone. About fifty horse-artillerymen, with one howitzer-gun; some 250* men of the 44th; and 150 cavalry troopers, now constituted the entire force. Of the 16,000 men—soldiers and camp-followers—who had left Caubul, not more than a quarter survived.

* Eyre says "seventy files." I give the above number on Shelton's authority—they were men of his own corps, and he was with them.

Still hovering on the flanks of our retreating force, Akbar Khan, attended by a party of horsemen, watched the butchery that was going on below; and when Elphinstone sent Skinner to remonstrate with him, declared that he was powerless to restrain the savage impetuosity of the Ghilzyes, whom even their own immediate chiefs could not control. But he had a proposal to make. Those were not times when any very nice regard for the national honour prompted the rejection of even humiliating terms offered by our Afghan enemies; but when the Sirdar proposed that the remnant of the British army should lay down their arms, and place themselves entirely under his protection, Elphinstone at once refused his consent. The march was therefore resumed. The wreck of the British force made its desperate way down the steep descents of the Haft-Kotul, into a narrow defile, strewn with the ghastly remains of the camp-followers and soldiers, who had pushed on in advance of the column. As they passed down the defile, the enemy opened a destructive fire on their rear. The rear was then commanded by Shelton. With a handful of Europeans he repulsed their attacks, "though obliged to nurse their ammunition by a watchful check on its expenditure." "Nobly and heroically," says Shelton, in his rapid narrative of the march, "these fine fellows stood by me."* The gallantry of these few men was, for a time, the salvation of the whole.

After another attempt at negotiation, resulting only in the same demand for the disarming of the remnant of the force,† it was determined, at Shelton's suggestion, that a

* *MS. Records.* Eyre says: "Brigadier Shelton commanded the rear with a few Europeans; and but for his persevering energy and unflinching fortitude in repelling the assailants, it is probable the whole would have been sacrificed."

† "About a quarter of an hour after our arrival, the Sirdar and his party came into the valley, and proceeded to a fort higher up, belonging to Ghool Mahomed Khan. A signal was made for some of his horsemen to approach us. Two came; and

desperate effort should be made to reach Jugdulluck by a rapid night-march. Enfeebled by starvation, the troops were little able to struggle forward, on their perilous march, over a difficult country, and in the face of an active enemy. But despair had given them strength; and when the order was given, having spiked their last remaining gun, they moved off lightly and quietly in the hope of shaking off, under cover of the night, the curse of camp-followers, which had sate upon them with such destructive tenacity from the first. But no sooner had the soldiers begun to move, than the camp-followers started up to accompany them; and throughout that fearful night-march clustered around the few good fighting men and paralysed the movements of the force.

It was a bright, frosty night. The snow was lying only partially on the ground. For some miles they proceeded unmolested. But when, at Seh-Baba, the enemy again opened a fire upon their rear, the camp-followers rushed to the front; and when firing was heard ahead of the column, again fell back on the rear. Thus surging backwards and forwards—the ebb and flow of a great tide of people—these miserable camp-followers, in the wildness of their fear, overwhelmed the handful of soldiers who were still able and willing to show a front to the enemy, blocked up the road, and presented to the eyes of the Afghan marksmen a dark mass of humanity, which could not escape their fire even under cover of the night.

Soon after daybreak the advance reached Kutter-

Captain Skinner, by the General's desire, accompanied them to Mahomed Akbar, to devise some means of saving our now small party from destruction. All was the intensest anxiety till Skinner's return at dusk, when he brought back the same message as at Khubbur-i-Jubbar regarding the disarming of the Europeans. Again this was not acceded to. The General decided, weak and famished as the troops were, and as there was no prospect of provisions being had at Tezeen, on again marching at seven P.M., and proceeding, if possible, through the Jugdulluck Pass, by eight or nine the next morning."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal.*]

Sung. They were still ten miles from Jugdulluck. Halting only till the rear-guard had come up, they pushed on with an energy, which at the commencement of the retreat might have saved the force from destruction. But it was now too late. The enemy were crowning the heights; there was no possibility of escape. Shelton, with a few brave men of the rear-guard, faced the overwhelming crowd of Afghans with a determined courage worthy of British soldiers; and fought his way to Jugdulluck. Almost every inch of ground was contested. Gallantly did this little band hold the enemy in check. Keeping the fierce crowd from closing in upon the column, but suffering terribly under the fire of their jezails, they made their way at last to the ground where the advance had halted, behind some ruined walls on a height by the road-side. Their comrades received them with a cheer. The cheer came from a party of officers, who had extended themselves in line on the height to show an imposing front to their assailants.* The enemy seemed to increase in number and in daring. They had followed the rear-guard to Jugdulluck, and they now took possession of the heights commanding the position of their victims.

The hot fire of the enemy's jezails drove the survivors of the Caubul army to seek safety behind the ruined walls, near which they had posted themselves. Withdrawn from the excitement of the actual conflict, these wretched men now began to suffer in all their unendurable extremes the agonies of hunger and thirst. They scooped up the snow in their hands and greedily devoured it. But it only increased their torments. There

* "As scarcely any Europeans of the advance now remained, and the enemy were increasing, the General called several of the officers (about twenty of us) to form line and show a front. We had scarcely done so, when my friend, Captain Grant, who was next to me, received a ball through his cheek, which broke his jaw. I lifted him off his horse, and seated him on the ground."—[*Capt. Johnson's Journal.*]

was a stream of pure water near at hand, but they could not approach it without being struck down by the fire of the enemy. Behind the walls they had a brief respite; and they tried to snatch a hasty meal. The ever active Commissariat officer, Johnson, found among the camp-followers three bullocks, which were instantly killed and served out to the famishing European soldiers, who devoured, with savage voracity, the raw and reeking flesh.*

The respite was but of brief duration. A party of horsemen was observed near at hand, and one of the number, having approached our people, said that the chief who commanded them was Akbar Khan. Skinner, who had acted throughout as the negotiator, now went to remonstrate with the Sirdar against the continued attacks of his countrymen. He had scarcely set out, when the firing was resumed. The men had lain down in the snow, to snatch a little brief repose after a long vigil of thirty hours; when the enemy poured in volley after volley upon their resting-place, and compelled them, in wild confusion—soldiers and camp-followers again huddled together—to quit the enclosure in which they had bivouacked. Individual acts of heroism were not wanting at this time to give something of dignity even to this melancholy retreat. A handful of the 44th Regiment here made a gallant rush at the enemy and cleared all

* "On the arrival of the rear-guard, which was followed up by the enemy, the latter took possession of the heights close to our position. For security we went within the ruined walls; our men almost maddened with hunger and thirst. Some snow was on the ground, which we greedily devoured; but instead of quenching it increased our thirst. A stream of clear pure water was running at the foot of and within 150 paces of our position; but no man could venture down without a certainty of being massacred. For about half an hour we had a respite from the fire of the enemy, who were watching our proceedings. I was desired by the General to see if any bullocks or camels were procurable among the camp-followers. I luckily found three of the former, which were instantly killed, served out to the Europeans, and as instantly devoured, although raw and still reeking with blood."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal.*]

the ground before them. Bygrave, the paymaster of the Caubul army, was at their head. Thinking that our whole force would follow them, the Afghans fled in dismay. But the little party was soon recalled to the main body, which again retired behind the ruined walls; and again the enemy returned to pour upon them the destructive fire of their terrible jezails.*

All night long and throughout the next day the force halted at Jugdulluck. In the mean while Akbar Khan was in communication with the British chiefs. Skinner had returned with a message from the Sirdar, inviting the General, Brigadier Shelton, and Captain Johnson to a conference. They went; and were received with every possible demonstration of kindness and hospitality. A cloth was spread on the ground. Food was placed before them, and draughts of tea satisfied their thirst. The meal completed, the Afghan chiefs and the English officers sate round a blazing fire and conversed. Captain Johnson was the spokesman on the part of the latter;

* "A few horsemen being observed near at hand, a signal was made for one of them to approach. He did so, and was questioned as to what chief was present. He replied, 'Mahomed Akbar Khan.' A message was sent to the Sirdar by the General as to why we were again molested. A reply was brought back that the chief wished to converse with Skinner, who accompanied the messenger. This was at about half-past three P.M. We had now fondly hoped that further massacre would be stopped. Scarcely, however, had Skinner taken his departure, and we, who had now been marching for the last thirty hours, had lain ourselves down in the snow, completely worn out by cold, fatigue, hunger, and thirst, than our persevering foe, not yet glutted with the blood of the thousands that had fallen, suddenly commenced firing volley after volley into the enclosure where we were resting. (It was here General Elphinstone was wounded.) All was at once instant confusion. There was a general rush outside the walls; men and cattle all huddled together, each urgently striving to screen himself from the murderous fire of the enemy. At this time about twenty gallant soldiers of the 44th Queen's made a simultaneous rush down the hill to drive the enemy off the heights. In this they were most successful; for the latter, in the supposition that they would be followed by others, had taken flight ere our soldiers had reached their position. In about a quarter of an hour, as our small party would not admit of any division, the before-mentioned soldiers were withdrawn. We again entered within our broken walls, and again, instantly, was our foe in its former position, dealing death amongst us."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal.*]

for he understood the language employed. Through him the wishes of the General were now conveyed to Akbar Khan. The Sirdar promised to send provisions and water to the famishing troops,* but insisted on retaining the General, Shelton, and Johnson, as hostages for the evacuation of Jellalabad. Elphinstone earnestly entreated permission to return to his troops—urged that, as commanding officer of the force, his desertion would appear dishonourable in the eyes of his countrymen, and promised, on returning to camp, to send Brigadier Anquetil in his place. But the Sirdar was inexorable; and so General Elphinstone, Brigadier Shelton, and Captain Johnson remained as hostages in the hands of Akbar Khan. That night, under a tent provided for them by the Sirdar, they laid themselves down in their cloaks, and enjoyed such sleep as they only can know who have spent such nights of horror as closed upon the sufferers in this miserable retreat.

Next morning the conference was resumed. The English officers earnestly implored the Sirdar to save the remnant of the unhappy force; and he promised to exert all the authority he possessed to restrain the tribes from their unholy work of massacre and plunder. But the petty chiefs of the country between Jugdulluck and Jellalabad came flocking in; and it seemed impossible to control the savage impulses of hatred and vindictiveness which broke out even in the presence of the English officers, and seemed to shut out all hope for the future.†

* "Subsequently," says Captain Johnson, "we had the extreme mortification to learn that not one particle of food or water had been tasted by the troops from their arrival to their departure from Jugdulluck."

† "At about nine A.M. the chiefs of the pass and of the country towards Soorkhab arrived, when we all sat down to discuss matters. The chiefs were most bitter in their expressions of hatred against us; and declared that nothing would satisfy them and their men but our extermination, and money they would not receive. The Sirdar, as far as words went, tried all in his power to conciliate them, and when other arguments failed, put them in mind of his father and the whole of his family being in the power

They had trampled down every feeling of mercy and compassion. Even avarice had ceased to be a moving principle; offers of money were disregarded, and they loudly declared that they wanted only the blood of the Feringhees. In vain Akbar Khan tried to dissuade them from their horrid purpose—in vain he urged that his father and his family were prisoners in the hands of the British Government; in vain the offer of large sums of money for a safe conduct to Jellalabad was made to these unrelenting chiefs. Johnson, who understood the language well, heard them conversing in Persian; and it was plain that they revelled in the thought of cutting the throats of the Feringhees even more than of growing rich on their plunder. They were not to be conciliated. Akbar Khan made an effort to pacify them, and they said in reply that they had recommended his father to kill Burnes, lest he should return and bring an army with him.*

of the British Government at Loodhianah, and that vengeance would be taken by the latter in the event of mercy not being shown to us. Mahomed Shah Khan offered them 60,000 rupees on condition of our not being molested. After some time they took their departure, to consult with their followers; and Mahomed Shah Khan mentioned to me that he feared the chiefs would not, without some great inducement, resist the temptation of plunder and murder that now offered itself, and wound up by asking if we would give them two lakhs of rupees on condition of being allowed a free passage. I mentioned this to General Elphinstone, obtained his consent, and made known the same to Mahomed Shah, who went away and promised to return quickly. The General again begged of the Sirdar to permit him to return to his troops; but without avail."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal.*]

* "Until twelve o'clock crowds of Ghilzyes with their respective chiefs continued to pour in from the surrounding country to make their salaam to Mahomed Akbar; to participate in the plunder of our unfortunate people; and to revel in the delights of massacring the Europeans. From their expressions of hatred towards the whole race of us (whilst conversing in Persian, which they frequently did, until from a hint of the Sirdar they began to talk in Pushtoo, which I did not understand), they appeared to anticipate much more delight in cutting our throats than even in the expected booty. The Sirdar, to all appearance, but possibly only as a blind to his real feelings, whilst sitting with me endeavoured as much as possible to conciliate them. The reply in two instances was, 'When Burnes came into this country was not your father entreated by us to kill him; or he would go back to Hindostan, and on some future day return with an army

If there was any hope at this time it lay in an appeal to the cupidity of the chiefs, but their hatred seemed to overlay their avarice. Mahomed Shah Khan,* however, had undertaken to work upon their known love of money, and asked whether the British were prepared to pay two lakhs of rupees for safe conduct to Jellalabad. The General had assented to this, and Mahomed Shah Khan had undertaken the office of mediator; but it was long before he could bring about any satisfactory arrangement. At length, as the shades of evening were thickening around them, he brought intelligence to the effect that everything had been peaceably settled, and that the remnant of the British army would be allowed to proceed unmolested to Jellalabad.†

But scarcely had he announced this consoling intelligence, when the sound of firing was heard to issue from

and take our country from us. He would not listen to our advice, and what is the consequence? Let us, now that we have the opportunity, take advantage of it and kill these infidel dogs.'"—[*Captain Johnson's Journal.*]

* Mahomed Shah Khan was father-in-law of Akbar Khan.

† "I must not," says Captain Johnson, "omit to mention that Mahomed Akbar Khan told me in the morning, after Mahomed Shah Khan had gone to consult with the chiefs of the pass, that the latter were dogs, and no faith to be placed in them; and begged that I would send for three or four of my most intimate friends, that their lives might be saved in the event of treachery to the troops. My reply was that I would gladly do so, could my request be acceded to; but that the commanding-officer would never consent, and that the feelings of my friends would also be opposed to such a proceeding at a time of so imminent peril to their comrades. The Sirdar also proposed that in the event of the Ghilzyes not acceding to our terms, he would himself, with his party of horsemen, proceed at dusk to the foot of the hill, where our troops were bivouacked; and previous orders having been given by the commanding-officer that they should be held ready, he would bring away in safety every European, by desiring each of his horsemen to take up a man behind him; that the Ghilzyes would not fire on the Europeans for fear of hitting him or his men: but that he could not allow a single Hindostanee to follow, as it was impossible for him to protect 2000 people (our computed number). I mentioned this to the General; but it was deemed impracticable, as, from past experience, we had seen how impossible it was to separate the non-combatants from the fighting men. Four or five times during the day we heard the report of musketry, which appeared in the direction of our troops, but were always told on making inquiry that all fighting had ceased."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal.*]

the direction in which the British troops were bivouacked. By the order of the General, Captain Johnson had written to Brigadier Anquetil, upon whom now as, senior officer, the command of the troops had devolved, directing him to have the troops in readiness to march at eight o'clock on the following morning. But the letter had not been despatched when the firing was heard, and it became evident that the British troops were again on the move.* It was about eight o'clock, on the evening of the 12th, that the few remaining men—now reduced to about a hundred and twenty of the 44th, and twenty-five artillerymen—prepared to resume their perilous march. The curse of camp-followers clung to them still. The teeming rabble again came huddling against the fighting men; and the Afghans, taking advantage of the confusion stole in, knife in hand, amongst them, destroying all the unarmed men in their way, and glutting themselves with plunder.

They did not, this time, escape. The soldiers turned and bayoneted the plunderers; and fought their way bravely on. But there was a terrible fate awaiting them as they advanced. The Jugdulluck Pass was before them. The road ascends between the steep walls of this dark precipitous defile, and our wretched men struggled onward, exposed to the fire of the enemy, till on nearing the summit they came suddenly upon a barricade, and

* "By the General's desire I wrote a note to Brigadier Anquetil, requesting him to have the troops in readiness to march at eight o'clock. I had commenced a letter to General Sale to evacuate Jellalabad (this was part of the terms). Suddenly, and before my note to the Brigadier had gone off, a great deal of musket firing was heard down the valley and in the direction of the troops; and a report was brought in that the Europeans were moving off through the pass, followed by the Ghilzyes. We were all in consternation. At first the Sirdar suggested, and the General concurred in the same, that he and we should follow them. In two or three minutes, however, the former changed his mind; and said he feared our doing so would, instead of benefiting, greatly injure the party, by bringing after them the whole horde of Ghilzyes that were then assembled in the valley."—[*Captain Johnson's Journal.*]

were thrown back in surprise and dismay. The enemy had blocked up the mouth of the pass. Barriers, made of bushes and the branches of trees, opposed the progress of the column, and threw the whole into inextricable confusion. The camp-followers crowded upon the soldiers, who, in spite of the overwhelming superiority of the enemy, fought with a desperate valour worthy of a better fate. The Afghans had been lying in wait for the miserable remnant of the British army, and were now busy with their cruel knives and their unerring jezails. The massacre was something terrible to contemplate. Officers, soldiers, and camp-followers were stricken down at the foot of the barricade. A few, strong in the energy of desperation, managed to struggle through it. But from that time all hope was at an end. There had ceased to be a British army.

In this terrible Jugdulluck Pass many brave officers fell with their swords in their hands. Up to this time death had not been very busy among the commissioned ranks of our ill-fated army. The number of officers that survived, when the column left Jugdulluck, was large in proportion to the number of soldiers who remained to follow them. Though they had ever been in the midst of danger, and had been especially marked by the Afghan jezailchees, they had hitherto escaped with an impunity which had not been the lot of the common soldiers. This is to be attributed partly to external and partly to internal advantages. They had enjoyed no better covering and no better food than their comrades; but they had ridden good horses; and though, outwardly, means of keeping off the cruel cold had not been enjoyed by them less scantily than by the European soldiers, they had brought to their aid all the advantages of superior mental resources. They had been more cautious and more provident, and had been

greatly upheld by the knowledge of the responsibility which in such a fearful conjuncture devolved upon them. There is a sustaining power, under severe physical trial, in the sense of moral responsibility; the feeling that others are dependent upon one's exertions has a bracing and invigorating effect; and whatever excites mental activity is favorable to physical endurance. Many, in the course of that terrible retreat from Caubul, had perished under the influence of mental despondency; many had been destroyed by their own incaution. The officers had fallen only under the fire of the enemy. Thousands of the soldiers and camp-followers had been destroyed by the cruel cold.

But here, at this fearful Jugdulluck barrier, death struck at the officers of the wretched force. Twelve of the best and bravest here found their last resting-place.* Here fell Brigadier Anquetil, upon whom, after the departure of Elphinstone and Shelton, had devolved the command of the column. He had been the chief of Shah Soojah's force; was held in esteem as a good officer; but during almost the entire period of the siege had been incapacitated by sickness from taking a prominent part in the military operations which had ended in so much disaster and disgrace. Here, too, fell Major Thain, who had gone out to India as the friend and aide-de-camp of General Elphinstone, and in that capacity had followed his chief to Caubul; but throughout the time of their beleaguerment, and all through the retreat, had been forward in the hour of active danger, and had gallantly served as a regimental officer whenever one was wanted to lead a charge. Here, too, fell

* Brigadier Anquetil; Col. Chambers, Captain Blair, Captain Bott, and Lieut. Bazett (5th Cavalry); Captain Nicholl (Horse Artillery); Major Thain, A.D.C.; Captain Dodgin; Quartermaster Halahan; Surgeon Harcourt (H.M.'s 44th); Lieutenant Steer (37th N.I.); Captain Marshall, Shah's force.

Colonel Chambers, who had commanded the cavalry at Caubul, and who now, with other officers of his regiment, perished in the attempt to clear the destroying barriers. And here, too, fell Captain Nicholl, of the Horse Artillery, who with his men, all through the dangers of the investment and the horrors of the retreat, had borne themselves as gallantly as the best of English soldiers in any place and at any time. Ever in the midst of danger, now charging on horse and now on foot, were those few resolute artillerymen. With mingled admiration and awe the enemy marked the desperate courage of the "red men," and shrunk from a close conflict with what seemed to be superhuman strength and endurance. There is not much in the events of the outbreak at Caubul and the retreat to Jellalabad to be looked back upon with national pride; but the monumental column, on which is inscribed the names of the brave men of Nicholl's troops, who then fell in action with the enemy, only displays the language of simple, unostentatious truth when it records that, on "occasions of unprecedented trial, officers and men upheld, in the most noble manner, the character of the regiment to which they belonged;" and years hence, when it has become a mere tradition that Dum-Dum was once the head-quarters station of that distinguished corps, the young artilleryman, standing in the shadow of the column, will read how Nicholl's troop, the oldest in the regiment, was annihilated in the fearful passes of Afghanistan, will dwell on the heroic conduct which preceded their fall, and glow with pride at the recollection that those brave men were a portion of the regiment which now bears his name on its rolls.

At this Jugdulluck barrier it may be said that the Caubul force ceased to be. A few officers and a few men cleared the barricade; and struggled on towards

Gundamuck. About daybreak they reached that place; and the sun rose upon a party of some twenty officers and forty-five European soldiers. The enemy were mustering around them. "Every hut had poured forth its inhabitants to murder and to plunder."* There were not more than two rounds of ammunition remaining in the pouches of our men. But they had not lost all heart. "Their numbers were as one to a hundred—most of them already wounded,"† but they were resolute not to lay down their arms whilst a spark of life remained. A messenger came from the chief of the district with overtures to the senior officer present. Major Griffiths, of the 37th Native Infantry, was then the chief of that little band; but whilst he was on his way to the Sirdar, the enemy mustering around them called upon them to give up their arms. The refusal of the brave men, followed by a violent attempt to disarm them, brought on a hand-to-hand contest. The infuriated mob overwhelmed the little party of Englishmen, and cut them up almost to a man. Captain Souter, of the 44th Regiment, who had wrapped the regimental colour round his waist, and a few privates, were taken prisoners. The rest were all massacred at Gundamuck.‡

A few, however, had pushed on from Soorkhab, which lies between Jugdulluck and Gundamuck, in advance of the column. One by one they fell by the way, until the number was reduced to six. Captains

* *Captain Johnson's Journal.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ The officers known to have perished at Gundamuck were Captain Grant, Assistant-Adjutant-General, who had been severely wounded at Jugdulluck; Lieutenant Stewart, Horse Artillery; Captain Hamilton, 5th Cavalry; Captain Collins, Lieutenants Hogg, Cumberland, and Swinton, and Assistant-Surgeon Primrose, of H.M.'s 44th; Lieutenant Horsburgh and Dr. Metcalfe, of the 5th N.I.; Captain Reid and Lieutenant Hawtry, of the 37th N.I.; Lieutenants Weaver, Morrison, and Cunningham, of the 54th N.I.; Lieutenant Hobhouse, of H.M.'s 13th; Captain Hay, Lieutenant Green (Artillery); and Lieutenant Macartney, of the Shah's service.

Bellew, Collyer, and Hopkins, Lieutenant Bird, and Drs. Harpur and Brydon, reached Futtehabad alive. They were then only sixteen miles from Jellalabad. A prospect of salvation opened out before them all; but only one was suffered to escape. Some peasants in the vicinity of Futtehabad came out, spoke to the fugitives, and offered them bread to eat. They thought that a little food would strenghten them to toil on to the end of their painful journey; and the agonies of hunger were hard to endure. But again was there death in delay. Whilst our officers tarried for a few minutes to satisfy the cravings of nature, some of the armed inhabitants of the place sallied out and attacked them. Bellew and Bird were cut down. The others rode off; but were pursued and overtaken; and three of the remaining number were slain. Dr. Brydon alone escaped to Jellalabad. Wounded, and worn out by famine and fatigue, he had struggled onward, borne by a jaded pony, till the walls of the fort appeared in sight; and a party came out to succour him.

So perished the last remnant of a force which had left Caubul numbering 4,500 fighting men and 12,000 camp-followers. The frost and the snow had destroyed more than the jezails and the knives of the Afghans. It was not a human enemy alone with which those miserable men had to contend. It was theirs to war against a climate more perilous in its hostility than the inexorable foe. But neither the cruel cold nor the malignant Afghans would have consigned the British army to destruction, if the curse which had so long brooded over the councils of our military chiefs, and turned everything into folly and imbecility, had not followed them on their exode from the Caubul cantonments, and crowned the catalogue of disaster and disgrace. It is probable that, if greater energy had been exhibited at the commencement of the retreat—if

nothing had been thought of but the best means of accomplishing the march through the snow with the utmost possible rapidity—a large portion of the force would have been saved. But the delays which were suffered to arise at the commencement of the retreat sealed the fate of the army. They threw the game into the hands of the enemy. We waited, indeed, whilst the gates were being closed upon us, and then there was no outlet of escape. Whilst our wretched people were halting and perishing in the snow, the enemy were gathering in advance of them and lining the passes, intent on their destruction. The events of that miserable week in January afforded a fitting climax to the series of disasters which had darkened the two preceding months. There is nothing, indeed, more remarkable in the history of the world than the awful completeness—the sublime unity—of this Caubul tragedy.

It would be unprofitable to enter into an inquiry regarding all the minute details of misdirection and mismanagement, making up the great sum of human folly, which was the permitted means of our overthrow. In the pages of a heathen writer over such a story as this would be cast the shadow of a tremendous Nemesis. The Christian historian uses other words, but the same prevailing idea runs, like a great river, through his narrative; and the reader recognises the one great truth, that the wisdom of our statesmen is but foolishness, and the might of our armies is but weakness, when the curse of God is sitting heavily upon an unholy cause. "For the Lord God of recompenses shall surely requite."

CHAPTER III.

[1841—1842.]

Efforts at Retrieval—Close of Lord Auckland's Administration—Embarrassments of his Position—Opinions of Sir Jasper Nicolls—Efforts of Mr. George Clerk—Despatch of the First Brigade—Appointment of General Pollock—Despatch of the Second Brigade—Expected Arrival of Lord Ellenborough—Further Embarrassments.

At this time the Governor-General and his family were resident at Calcutta. The period of Lord Auckland's tenure of the vice-regal office was drawing to a close. He was awaiting the arrival of his successor. It had seemed to him, as the heavy periodical rains began slowly to give place to the cool weather of the early winter, that there was nothing to overshadow the closing scenes of his administration, and to vex his spirit with misgivings and regrets during the monotonous months of the homeward voyage. The three first weeks of October brought him only cheering intelligence from the countries beyond the Indus. The Envoy continued to report, with confidence, the increasing tranquillity of Afghanistan. The Douranee insurrection seemed to have been suppressed, and there was nothing stirring in the neighbourhood of Caubul to create anxiety and alarm.*

* On the 22nd of October, Lord Auckland wrote to Sir Jasper Nicolls, that Macgregor's expedition had ended prosperously. "The Douranee insurrection," he added, "has also been completely put down without more fighting. Griffin's affair seems to have expelled their pugnacious propensities."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

But November set in gloomy and threatening. The clouds were gathering in the distance. It now seemed to Lord Auckland that his administration was doomed to close in storm and convulsion. Intelligence of the Ghilzye outbreak arrived. It was plain that the passes were sealed, for there were no tidings from Caubul. There might be rebellion and disaster at the capital; our communications were in the hands of the enemy; and all that was known at Calcutta was that Sale's brigade had been fighting its way downwards, and had lost many men and some officers in skirmishes with the Ghilzye tribes, which had seemingly been productive of no important results. There was something in all this very perplexing and embarrassing. Painful doubts and apprehensions began to disturb the mind of the Governor-General. It seemed to be the beginning of the end.

Never was authentic intelligence from Caubul looked for with so much eager anxiety as throughout the month of November. When tidings came at last—only too faithful in their details of disaster—they came in a dubious, unauthoritative shape, and, for a time, were received with incredulity. At the end of the third week of November, letters from Meerut, Kurnaul, and other stations in the upper provinces of Hindostan, announced that reports had crossed the frontier to the effect that there had been a general rising at Caubul, that the city had been fired, and that Sir Alexander Burnes had been killed. Letters to this effect reached the offices of the public journals, but no intelligence had been received at Government House, and a hope was expressed in official quarters that the stories in circulation were exaggerated native rumours. But, a day or two afterwards, the same stories were repeated in letters from Mr. George Clerk, the Governor-General's agent on the north-

western frontier, and from Captain Mackeson at Peshawur; and the intelligence came coupled with urgent requisitions for the despatch of reinforcements to Afghanistan. Though no authentic tidings had been received from Caubul, the advices from our political functionaries, on the intermediate line of country, were of a character not to be questioned; and Lord Auckland, who a day or two before had received letters from Sir William Macnaghten, assuring him that the disturbances were at an end, awoke to the startling truth that all Caubul was in a blaze, and the supremacy of the Suddozye Princes and their foreign supporters threatened by a general outburst of national indignation. Afghanistan—serene and prosperous Afghanistan—with its popular government and its grateful people, was in arms against its deliverers. Suddenly the tranquillity of that doomed country, boasted of in Caubul and credited in Calcutta, was found to be a great delusion. Across the whole length and breadth of the land the history of that gigantic lie was written in characters of blood. It was now too deplorably manifest that, although a British army had crossed the Indus and cantoned itself at Caubul and Candahar, the Afghans were Afghans still—still a nation of fierce Mahomedans, of hardy warriors, of independent mountaineers; still a people not to be dragooned into peace, or awed into submission, by a scattering of foreign bayonets and the pageantry of a puppet king.

The blow fell heavily upon Lord Auckland. An amiable gentleman and a well-intentioned statesman he had made for himself many friends; and, perhaps, there was not in all Calcutta at that time, even amongst the most strenuous opponents of the policy which had resulted in so much misery and disgrace, one who did not now grieve for the sufferings of him whose errors had been so

severely visited. Had it fallen at any other time it would not have been so acutely felt. But it came upon him at the close of his reign, when he could do nothing to restore the brilliancy of his tarnished reputation. He had expected to embark for England a happy man and a successful ruler. He had, as he thought, conquered and tranquillised Afghanistan. For the former exploit he had been created an earl; and the latter would have entitled him to the honour. It is true that he had drained the treasury of India; but he belived that he was about to hand over no embryo war to his successor, and that, therefore, the treasury would soon replenish itself. The prospect was sufficiently cheering, and he was eager to depart; but the old year wore to a close, and found Lord Auckland pacing, with a troubled countenance, the spacious apartments of Government House—found him the most luckless of rulers and the most miserable of men.

Never was statesman so cast down—never was statesman so perplexed and bewildered. The month of December was one of painful anxiety—of boding fear—of embarrassing uncertainty. There was no official information from Caubul. The private accounts received from Jellalabad and Peshawur, always brief, often vague and conflicting, excited the worst apprehensions without dispelling much of the public ignorance. In this conjuncture, government were helpless. The Caubul force, cut off from all support, could by no possibility be rescued. The utmost vigour and determination—the highest wisdom and sagacity—could avail nothing at such a time. The scales had fallen from the eyes of the Governor-General only to show him the utter hopelessness of the case. In this terrible emergency he seems to have perceived, for the first time, the madness of posting a detached force in a foreign country, hundreds of miles from our own frontier, cut off from all support by rugged

mountains and impenetrable defiles. Before a single brigade could be pushed on to the relief of the beleaguered force the whole army might be annihilated. Clearly Lord Auckland now beheld the inherent viciousness of the original policy of the war, and, in sorrow and humiliation, began to bethink himself of the propriety of abandoning it.

What Lord Auckland now wrote publicly on this subject is on record; what he wrote privately is known to a few. That the Governor-General, in this terrible conjuncture, succumbed to the blow which had fallen upon him—that his energies did not rise with the occasion, but that the feebleness of paralysis was conspicuous in all that he did, has often been asserted and never confidently denied. But it may be doubted whether his feelings or his conduct at this time have ever been fairly judged or clearly understood. The truth is, that he had originally committed himself to a course of policy which never had his cordial approbation, and his after-efforts to uphold which he inwardly regarded as so many attempts to make the worse appear the better reason. It is plain that very soon after the occupation of Caubul had for a time brought the Afghan campaign to a close, the Governor-General began to entertain very painful doubts and misgivings; and that, although he by no means anticipated the sudden and disastrous fall of the whole edifice he had raised, he had, long before the close of 1841, repented of his own infirmity of purpose, in giving way to the counsels of others; and began to doubt whether we had succeeded in the great object of the war—the establishment of such a friendly power in Afghanistan as would secure us against western aggression. He must have seen, too—for he was, in the main, a just and an honest man—that the policy, which he had sanctioned, cradled in injustice as

it was, was continually perpetuating injustice; and he must have heard the wrongs of the Afghan chiefs and the Afghan nation eternally crying out to him for redress. Macnaghten complained that Lord Auckland and Mr. Colvin were too ready to believe all the stories of the unpopularity of the government and discontent of the chiefs and the people, which reached them through obscure channels of information; though those channels of information were the local newspapers, whose informants were generally officers of rank and character. But in spite of the Envoy's assurances and denials, Lord Auckland had begun to suspect that there was something rotten at the core of our Afghan policy; and something pre-eminently defective in the administrative conduct of those to whom its working out had been entrusted. He did not, in the autumn of 1841, believe that any sudden and overwhelming storm would cloud the last days of his Indian government; but he had begun to encourage the belief that he had made a fatal mistake, and that, sooner or later, the real character of his Afghan policy would be revealed to the world.

But there was something more than his own doubts and misgivings to be considered. Lord Auckland knew that the connexion he had established in Afghanistan was distasteful in the extreme to the East India Company. He knew that the Court of Directors were desirous that he should avail himself of the earliest possible opportunity of severing that connexion for ever. On the 31st of December, 1840, the Court of Directors had written out to the Supreme Government: "We pronounce our decided opinion that for many years to come the restored monarchy will have need of a British force in order to maintain peace in its own territory, and prevent aggression from without. We must add, that to attempt to accomplish this by a small force, or by the mere influence

of British Residents, will, in our opinion, be most unwise and frivolous, and that we should prefer the entire abandonment of the country, and a frank confession of complete failure, to any such policy. Even financial considerations justify this view, inasmuch as a strong and adequate military establishment, costly as it must be, will hardly entail so much expense upon you as those repeated revolts and disorders which must arise in an ill-governed, half-subdued country; and which will compel you to make great and sudden efforts to maintain your character and recover predominance. To whatever quarter we direct our attention, we behold the restored monarchy menaced by dangers, which cannot possibly be encountered by the military means at the disposal of the minister at the court of Shah Soojah; and we again desire you seriously to consider which of the two alternatives (a speedy retreat from Afghanistan or a considerable increase of the military force in that country) you may feel it your duty to adopt. We are convinced that you have no middle course to pursue with safety or with honour."* And six months afterwards the court again wrote (June 2, 1841): "The surrender of Dost Mahomed does not alter the views contained in our late letters; and we hope that advantage will be taken of it to settle affairs in Afghanistan according to those views."†

Such, as Lord Auckland knew them to be, were the views of the East India Company. There was very good reason for all this. The necessity of sustaining Shah Soojah on the throne of Caubul had drained the financial resources of the Company to the dregs, and was entailing upon them liabilities which, if not speedily retrenched, they might have found it impossible to discharge. The injustice of the occupation of Afghanistan was not confined to the people of that country. A grievous injus-

* *MS. Records.* † *Ibid.*

tice was being inflicted upon the people of Hindostan. No man knew this better, or deplored it more deeply, than Lord Auckland himself. The opinions of the East India Company had, at all events, been clearly expressed, and Lord Auckland, not taking into consideration the fact that peculiar circumstances might warrant, or even dictate, a departure from the general policy inculcated by the Court, deemed that the opportunity had now arrived for our withdrawal from the difficulties and embarrassments which had beset our unfortunate career in Afghanistan.

And when he turned his thoughts from Leadenhall-street to Downing-street, it appeared to him that there were still weightier reasons for the abandonment of our ill-omened connexion with the countries beyond the Indus. The Whigs had sent him to India; the Conservatives were now in office. At the end of August the Melbourne ministry had resigned; and Peel was now at the head of the cabinet. It was known that the Conservative party either were, or made a show of being, radically opposed to the Afghan policy of the government which they had displaced. It was natural, therefore, that Lord Auckland, who was now awaiting the arrival of his successor, should have shrunk from committing him to any extensive measures for the recovery of our position in Afghanistan, which, in all probability, he would not be disposed to carry out. Whatever amount of energy the old ruler might now throw into the work before him, it was certain that he would only be able to commence what he must leave to his successor to complete. To have handed over to the new Governor-General the outline of a political scheme, just sufficiently worked out in its details to render its abandonment impossible, would have been to embarrass and hamper him at the outset of his career in a manner that would

have perplexed the new ruler in the extreme, and jeopardised the interests of the empire. He believed that the policy of the Conservatives was nearly identical with that of the East India Company, and that they would eagerly take advantage of the present crisis to sever our connexion with the countries beyond the Indus, and to declare the failure of the original scheme propounded in the Simlah manifesto of 1838.

It is right that Lord Auckland should have ample credit for suffering these important considerations to exercise their due influence over his counsels. It is right, too, that it should be clearly recognised how great was the moral courage it demanded, either practically to declare by himself, or to leave to others to declare, the utter failure of a great political scheme for which he was responsible to his country, and with which, from generation to generation, his name will be indissolubly associated in the page of history. But when all this has been said, there still remains to be recorded the humiliating fact that a great crisis suddenly arose, and Lord Auckland was not equal to it. He had begun himself to doubt the justice and expediency of the policy of 1838. He knew that the East India Company were desirous that he should not persevere in a course which had brought them to the verge of bankruptcy, and was inflicting grievous injuries upon the people of Hindostan. He knew that the Tory government heartily disapproved of the occupation of Afghanistan, and had only been waiting for an opportunity to reverse the policy of the Whigs; and he believed, therefore, that it was his duty to direct all his efforts to the one object of withdrawing our beleaguered garrisons in safety to Hindostan. But he seems, in the bewilderment and perplexity which followed the stunning blow that had descended so suddenly upon him, to have forgotten that there are in the lives of nations, as of men, great and

imminent conjunctures, which not only sanction, but demand, a departure from ordinary rules of conduct and principles of statesmanship. Such a conjuncture had now arisen; and, important as were all the considerations recapitulated above, they should have given place in his mind to the one paramount desire of demonstrating to all the nations of the East the invincibility of British arms. Neither the wishes of the East India Company nor the opinions of the Conservative government had been declared in the face of a great disaster. The withdrawal of the British army from Afghanistan might, and I believe would, have been a measure of sound policy; but only if the time and manner of withdrawal had been well chosen. It could never have been sound policy to withdraw under the pressure of an overwhelming defeat. To retire from Afghanistan was one thing; to be driven out of it was another. A frank avowal of error, calmly and deliberately enunciated, under no pressure of immediate danger or insurmountable difficulty, would have denoted only conscious strength. It would have been the dignified self-negation of a powerful state daring to be just to others and true to itself. But to abandon the country, precipitately and confusedly, under the pressure of disaster and defeat, would have been a miserable confession of weakness that might have shaken to its very foundation the British Empire in the East.

And such a confession of weakness Lord Auckland was inclined to make. He seemed to reel and stagger under the blow—to be paralysed and enfeebled by the disasters that had overtaken him. His correspondence at this time betokened such painful prostration, that some to whom he wrote destroyed, in pity, all traces of these humiliating revelations. It was vaguely rumoured, too, how, in bitterness of spirit, he spent long hours pacing by day the spacious verandahs of Government House;

or, by night, cooling his fevered brow on the grass-plots in front of it, accompanied by some member of his household endeared to him by ties of blood. The curse brooded over him, as it was brooding over Elphinstone and Macnaghten, darkening his vision, clouding his judgment, prostrating his energies—turning everything to feebleness and folly. New tidings of disaster—misfortune treading on the heels of misfortune—came flooding in from beyond the Indus; and the chief ruler of the land, with a great army at his call, thought only of extrication and retreat—thought of bringing back, instead of pushing forward, our troops; of abandoning, instead of regaining, our position. Fascinated, as it were, by the great calamity, his eyes were rivetted on the little line of country between Caubul and Peshawur; and he did not see, in his eagerness to rescue small detachments from danger, and to escape the immediate recurrence of new disasters in Afghanistan, that the question now to be solved was one of far greater scope and significance—that it was not so much whether Afghanistan were to be occupied, as whether India were to be retained. But there were old and experienced politicians, well acquainted with the temper of the chiefs and the people of India and the countries beyond, who believed that any manifestation of weakness, in this conjuncture, would have endangered the security of our position in India; and that, therefore, cost what it might, a blow must be struck for the recovery of our military supremacy in the countries beyond the Indus.

But from the very first Lord Auckland began to despond, and steadfastly set his face against any measures of military re-establishment. When, on the 25th of November, he received from Mr. Clerk and Captain Mackeson intelligence which confirmed the newspaper accounts received two days before, and read the pressing requisitions of those officers for the despatch of more

troops to the frontier, he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, who was then journeying through the Upper Provinces of India: "It is not clear to me how the march of a brigade can by possibility have any influence upon the events which it is supposed may be passing at Caubul. . . . They may be at Jellalabad in February, and could not march onwards to Caubul before April. . . . It may be well, perhaps, that two or three regiments should be assembled at Peshawur. . . I wish the requisition had been made with less trepidation." Again, on the 1st of December, he wrote to the same officer: "It seems to me that we are not to think of marching fresh armies for the re-conquest of that which we are likely to lose. . . The difficulty will not be one of fighting and gaining victories, but of supplies, of movements, and of carriage. . . . The troops in Afghanistan are sufficiently numerous. They would but be encumbered by greater numbers, and reinforcements could not arrive before the crisis will have passed. If the end is to be disastrous, they would but increase the extent of the disaster." On the following day he again wrote to Sir Jasper Nicolls, setting forth the views of government, to the effect—"1st. That we should not fit out large armaments for re-conquest—such an enterprise would be beyond our means. 2nd. That even for succours the season is unfavourable and impracticable, and months must pass before it could be attempted. 3rdly. That if aid can be given, the officer in command should not be prohibited from seizing the opportunity of affording it. I fear," added the Governor-General in this letter, "that safety to the force at Caubul can only come from itself." On the 5th he wrote to the same correspondent, that "we should stand fast and gather strength at Peshawur"—on the Sutlej, and on the Indus. "Our power," he said, "of giving succour is extremely limited, and if it come at all, it can only *come* tardily. . . . We must look on an advance from

Jellalabad for some months as utterly out of the question. An advance even to Jellalabad could only be to give security to Sale, and with the aid of the Sikhs, one brigade, with artillery, should be sufficient. If all should be lost at Caubul we will not encounter new hazards for re-conquest."* On the 9th of December he wrote, still more emphatically: "The present state of affairs, whether its issue be fortunate or disastrous, is more likely to lead within a few months to the withdrawal of troops to our frontiers than to the employment of larger means beyond it." A week afterwards he wrote, still to the Commander-in-Chief: "We must know more before we can decide anything, or lay down any large scheme of measures. . . . There are already more regiments beyond the frontier than we can feed or easily pay. . . . You know I would not be too profuse in sending strength forward."† What Lord Auckland's intentions were at this time may be gathered from these letters. He thought only of saving all that could be saved; and of escaping out of Afghanistan with the least possible delay.

The Commander-in-Chief to whom these letters were addressed was, as has been said, at this time on his way through the Upper Provinces of India. Sir Jasper Nicolls had been consistently opposed to the entire scheme of Afghan invasion, and had with rare prescience and sagacity foretold the disastrous downfal of a policy based upon a foundation of such complicated error. He had spent his life in the camp; but his public minutes, as well as his private letters and journals, written throughout the years 1840-41, indicate a larger amount of political sagacity than we find displayed in the expressed

* About the same time Lord Auckland wrote to Sir W. Macnaghten: "I would have you share in the feeling which is growing strongly upon me that the maintenance of the position, which we have attempted to establish in Afghanistan, is no longer to be looked to. It will be for you and for this government to consider in what manner all that belongs to India may be most immediately and most honourably withdrawn from the country."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

† *MS. Correspondence.*

opinions of his official cotemporaries, to whom statesmanship was the profession and practice of their lives. He had all along protested against the withdrawal of our troops from their legitimate uses in the British Provinces, and urged that it was necessary either so to increase the Indian army as to enable the government to keep up an adequate force in Afghanistan without weakening the defences of Hindostan, or to withdraw the British troops altogether from the countries beyond the Indus. It was now his opinion—an opinion in which the Governor-General participated—that, inasmuch as the Indian army, largely indented upon as it was for service beyond the frontier, was greatly below the right athletic strength, it would be impossible to pour strong reinforcements into Afghanistan without weakening the British Provinces in such a manner as to provoke both external aggression and internal revolt. But supineness, in such a conjuncture, was more likely to have provoked aggression than activity, although the latter might have denuded India of some of its best troops. Macnaghten told Runjeet Singh, in the summer of 1838, that the military resources of the British-Indian Government were such that 200,000 soldiers might at any time be brought into the field to resist simultaneous aggression from all the four sides of India;* and although this may have been only an approximation to the sober truth, it is certain that, if the despatch of a couple of brigades to Jellalabad, and subsequently to Caubul, would have jeopardised the security of India, the military resources of the government must have been in a very depressed state. When Sir Jasper Nicolls, meeting the flood of intelligence from beyond the Indus, as he advanced through the Upper Provinces of India, recorded, in letters to the Governor-General, his belief that it would be unwise to prosecute another war in

* *Ante, vol. I., page* 314.

support of the Suddozye provinces,* he expressed only the sound opinion of a sagacious politician. But he seems to have forgotten that there was something more than the restoration of the Suddozye dynasty to be accomplished—there was the restoration of the military supremacy of Great Britain in Central Asia to be achieved; and whatever may have been the scruples of the statesman, in such a crisis as this, the soldier ought not to have hesitated for a moment.

But whilst such were the opinions of the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief, there were other functionaries nearer to the scene of action at the time, whose feelings prompted, and whose judgment dictated, a more energetic course of procedure. Among these were Mr. Robertson, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, and Mr. George Clerk, the Governor-General's Agent on the North-Western Frontier. Both of these able and experienced officers recognised the paramount necessity of pushing on troops to Peshawur with the utmost possible despatch. On the latter devolved, in the first instance, the responsibility of moving forward the regiments which were in readiness to proceed for the periodical relief of the troops in Afghanistan,†

* On the 27th of November he wrote to Lord Auckland from Mynpoorie: "If it be decided that we are to support Shah Soojah under all circumstances and difficulties, I must entreat your Lordship's early attention to the means of effecting this object, which may be a more arduous undertaking than the occupation of the country in 1839." And again, in the same letter: "There is a dark, perhaps a random hint, in one of these letters that the rebellion is instigated by the royal family at Caubul. If so, I would advise the early abandonment of them, their country, and their cause." On the 28th he again wrote: "I really would not advise our forcing either him or ourselves upon a nation so distant, and in all respects so dissimilar both to our Sepoys and ourselves, at an expense so decidedly ruinous." And on the 30th, in still more emphatic language, he said: "My opinion regarding a renewal of our efforts to support Shah Soojah on his throne, and to establish a permanent influence in Afghanistan, is without change or modification. That we have no base of operations has been always clear; but now, were we to march a reinforcement on the best horses, we could not be sure of carrying the Khybur Pass, and if snow has fallen, the road to Caubul would still be closed."—[*MS. Correspondence of Sir J. Nicolls.*]

† The 53rd and 64th Native Infantry.

as well as a regiment which was in orders for Sindh.* On the 16th of November, he addressed letters to Colonel Wild, the commanding officer at Ferozepore, and Colonel Rich, who commanded at Loodhianah, urging them to send on to Peshawur, as speedily as possible, the regiments named in the margin.† In compliance with these requisitions, the 64th Regiment crossed the Sutlej on the 18th of November, and the 60th on the 20th of November. The 53rd, which was accompanied by the 30th Regiment,‡ crossed the river on the 26th.

Having expedited the movement of these regiments, Mr. Clerk began to make preparations for the despatch of another brigade to Peshawur, and addressed General Boyd, who at that time commanded the Sirhind division, on the subject. At the same time, he addressed urgent letters to the Court of Lahore, apprising them of the intended march of the regiments through the Punjaub—calling on them to supply boats for the passage of the river—and suggesting to the Maharajah that he should "cause the immediate march of his son, Koonwur Pertab Singh, on Peshawur, with 5000 of their best troops from the neighbouring district of Chuch Huzara." Captain Mackeson had before applied to the Sikh authorities at Peshawur for 6000 men to march on Jellalabad; but had been told by General Avitabile that he had few troops at Peshawur, and

* The 60th Native Infantry.

† Two days before, Captain (now Sir Henry) Lawrence, Assistant to Mr. Clerk, whose later career has justified the high expectations which were formed of him during his connexion with the North-Western Agency, on his way out after a dacoity party, met the intelligence of the Caubul outbreak, and immediately after forwarding it on to Mr. Clerk went to Colonel Wild, to urge him to push on the 60th and 64th Regiments, and to warn the Light Infantry Battalion and some details of the 10th Cavalry, for service beyond the frontier.—[*Capt. Lawrence to Mr. George Clerk: Nov.* 14, 1841. *MS. Records.*]

‡ Mr. Clerk sent forward the 30th, which was Wild's regiment, in order that the colonel might take command of the brigade, General Boyd having thrown out a hint that he was a more efficient officer than the colonels of the other regiments.

that he required them all for the protection of the Sikh territory.

Lord Auckland, however, was strongly of opinion that the second brigade, which was to comprise her Majesty's 9th Foot, the 10th Light (Native) Cavalry, and a troop of Horse Artillery, ought not to be moved forward. "We do not now," wrote the Governor-General in Council, on the 3rd of December, "desire to send a second brigade in advance, for we do not conceive it to be called for, for the objects of support and assistance which we contemplate; and we think it inexpedient to despatch any greater number of troops than be absolutely necessary from our own provinces." And two days afterwards he wrote privately to the Commander-in-Chief: "I heartily hope that the second brigade may not have been sent." He could not, he added, "see of what service it could be at present. One brigade, with the artillery which you purpose sending, should be sufficient to force the Khybur Pass; and ten brigades could not, at this season of the year, force the passes to Caubul."

But the "one brigade with artillery" never went to Peshawur. The Native Infantry crossed the Punjaub under the command of Brigadier Wild. Some artillerymen went with them;* but there were no artillery, for there were no guns. It was expected, however, that the Sikhs would supply the ordnance which the British had left out of the account. "You have not at present any guns," wrote the Head-Quarters' Staff to Brigadier Wild, "but you have artillerymen, sappers and miners, and officers of both corps. His Excellency is not aware of any difficulty likely to prevent your being accommodated by the Sikh Governor-General, Avitabile, with four or six pieces; and you will solicit such aid, when

* These artillerymen were on their way to Afghanistan to relieve the company then in the country, serving with Abbott's battery.

necessary, through Captain Mackeson." But when Brigadier Wild reached Peshawur, a day or two before the close of the year, he found that difficulties had arisen to prevent the preparation of the expected Sikh guns for service. The artillerymen were disinclined to hand them over to the British; and though great doubts were entertained as to whether they were in reality worth anything, it was hard to compass a loan of the suspected pieces. And so Brigadier Wild, urged as he was from all quarters to push on to Jellalabad, with the provisions, treasure, and ammunition he was to escort thither, sate down quietly at Peshawur, whilst Captains Mackeson and Lawrence were endeavouring to overcome the coyness of the Sikh artillerymen; and began to apprehend that his march would be delayed until some field-pieces were sent him from India.

His suspense, however, was of no very long duration. On the 3rd of January, four rickety guns were handed over to the British officers; but not without a show of resistance on the part of the Sikh artillerymen. On the following day one of the limbers went to pieces under trial; and then it had to be replaced. Other difficulties, too, met Wild at Peshawur. His camel men were playing the old game of desertion. The Afreedi Maliks had not yet been bribed into submission by Mackeson; and the loyalty of our Sikh allies was so doubtful, that they were just as likely, on Wild's brigade entering the Khybur, to attack him in rear as to keep the pass open for him. All these elements of delay were greatly to be lamented. There was a forward feeling among the Sepoys which might have been checked. They were eager to advance when they reached Peshawur; and their enthusiasm was little likely to be increased by days of inactivity in a sickly camp, exposed to the contaminating influences of the Sikh soldiery, who, always dreading the deep passes of the Khybur, now purposely exaggerated its

terrors, and endeavoured by other means to raise their fears, to excite their prejudices, and to shake their fidelity to the government which they served.

In the mean while active preparations for the despatch of further reinforcements to Peshawur were going on in the North-Western Provinces of India. Lord Auckland could not readily bring himself to recognise the expediency of sending forward a second brigade; but Mr. Clerk had taken the initiative, and the Governor-General was unwilling to disturb any arrangements which already were being brought into effect. The 9th Foot had been ordered to hold itself in readiness, and another regiment, the 26th Native Infantry, was to be sent with it, accompanied by some irregular horse, and a scanty supply of artillery.* The Commander-in-Chief was "not prepared" for this demand, and the Governor-General in Council thought it "undesirable" to send more troops in advance. But it was obvious to the authorities on the north-western frontier that the state of affairs in Afghanistan was becoming every day more critical; and that it was expedient to concentrate the utmost available strength on the frontier of Afghanistan. Towards the end of the year, the Governor-General having expressed a strong opinion regarding the necessity of attaching some regular horse to the brigade, the 10th Cavalry were ordered to proceed under Brigadier M'Caskill (of the 9th Foot), who, as senior officer, took command of the force; and on the 4th of January the brigade, consisting of 3034 fighting men, crossed the Sutlej on its way to Peshawur.

To command the body of troops now assembling for service beyond the frontier, it became necessary to select an officer of good military repute and unquestionable energy and activity, combined with a cool judgment

* Two nine-pounders and a howitzer.

and a sound discretion. Sir Jasper Nicolls had, in the month of November, when the despatch of a Queen's regiment to Peshawur was first contemplated, pointed to Sir Edmund Williams, as a general officer well fitted for such command.* But to the Governor-General it appeared expedient to place an experienced officer of the Company's service at the head of affairs, and Sir Edmund Williams was a general of the royal army, who had served but two years in India at the time of the Caubul outbreak, and who knew as little of the Sepoy army as he did of the politics of Afghanistan. Lord Auckland had made his election. In Major-General Lumley, the adjutant-general of the army, he thought that he saw all the qualifications which it behoved the commander of such an army to possess. But there was one thing that Lumley wanted; he wanted physical health and strength. When the Governor-General sent up the nomination to head-quarters, the Commander-in-Chief at once replied that Lumley could not take the command; and again Nicolls recommended the appointment of Sir Edmund Williams. Indeed, he had determined on sending for that officer to his camp, and arming him at once with instructions;† but

* On the 20th of November the Commander-in-Chief wrote to Lord Auckland: "I purpose that H.M.'s 9th should proceed with the second army. This corps is 900 and upwards strong, including sergeants and drummers. The Buffs are somewhat nearer, but they have been nineteen and a half years out of England, and should be moved towards Calcutta for early embarkation, especially as the 49th and 55th are so far out of reach. The Buffs have now nearly 200 men in hospital. The right to join, which the Court's order gives to Major-General Sir Edmund Williams, may be especially dispensed with by your Lordship, should you not choose to give him the command. Sir Edmund is in very good health, a hale, strong man—moreover, was Lieutenant-Colonel of a Light Infantry battalion of Portuguese in the Peninsular war."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

† On the 15th of December, Sir Jasper Nicolls wrote to Lord Auckland: "I very much regret that the state of Major-General Lumley's health entirely forbids the hope of his being able to undertake the command of the troops advancing to Peshawur. If, therefore, the force is raised to six regiments, I shall order the Major-General Sir Edmund Williams to join my camp by dawk, and push him forward, as soon as I shall have furnished him with instructions, and armed him with all the information and advice which the

subsequent letters from Calcutta made it only too plain that the appointment would be extremely distasteful to the Supreme Government; and so the intention was abandoned.* General Lumley was at head-quarters. The Commander-in-Chief sent for him to his tent, placed in his hand a letter his Excellency had just received from the Governor-General relative to Lumley's employment beyond the frontier, and called upon him for his final decision. The General was willing to cross the Indus; but, doubtful of his physical ability to undertake so onerous a duty, placed the decision of the question in the hands of his medical advisers, who at once declared that he was totally unequal to meet "the required exertion and exposure" demanded by such a campaign.†

known state of affairs at his departure may seem to require." — [*Papers relating to Military Operations in Afghanistan.*]

* In your Lordship's letter of the 8th, you have, I think, given a preference to General Nott, wherefore Sir E. Williams need not be disturbed. To send him to Cawnpore merely to force his way to Jellalabad and Caubul, and then return, giving over the command to a junior officer, would, I think, be unfair. As to his holding the chief command, it is a matter of no moment to me. The officer to command, if your Lordship could find such a man, should be also the Envoy—a Malcolm, Close, or Ochterlony."—[*Sir Jasper Nicolls to Lord Auckland: December* 19, 1841. *MS. Correspondence.*] "Twice I laid before the Governor-General the name of Major-General Sir Edmund Williams, and as a Light Infantry officer he was deemed most qualified to meet an enemy in a mountainous country; he was active, zealous, and in perfect health. In the command of a division he had shown a clear judgment, and given me satisfaction. . . . The Governor-General gave such an unwilling and discouraging reply to my second communication, that I clearly saw the whole onus of the appointment and its consequences would be mine."—[*Sir J. Nicolls to Lord Fitzroy Somerset: September* 2, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

† "In obedience to your Lordship's wishes, that Major-General Lumley should be placed in command of the force assembling at Peshawur, I requested his attendance at my tent, and placed the despatch now acknowledged (*Governor-General in Council to Sir J. Nicolls: December* 15, 1841) in his hands. The General is still very weak, though improved in health; he is willing to proceed, but requested that his medical adviser should be consulted as to his ability to undertake such a service. Assistant-Surgeon Turner decidedly assured me that his state of health would by no means admit of the required exertion and exposure." — [*Sir J. Nicolls to Government: December* 24, 1841. *Papers relating to Military Operations in Afghanistan.*]

The Commander-in-Chief then at once determined to nominate another Company's officer to the command of the troops proceeding to Peshawur. His choice fell upon General George Pollock, who then commanded the garrison of Agra.—Receiving his military education at the Woolwich Academy, he had entered the Indian army as a lieutenant of artillery in the year 1803—when Lake and Wellesley were in the field, and all India was watching, with eager expectancy, the movements of the grand armies which, by victory after victory, were breaking down the power of the Mahrattas. At the storm and capture of Dieg, in 1803, young Pollock was present; and in 1805, during the gallant but unsuccessful attempts of the British army to carry Bhurtpore by assault, he was busy in the trenches. At the close of the same year he was selected by Lord Lake to command the artillery with the detachment under Colonel Ball, sent in pursuit of Holkar. From this time he held different regimental staff appointments up to the year 1817, when, in command of the artillery with General Wood's force, he took part in the stirring scenes of the Nepaul war. In 1818 he was appointed Brigade-Major; and subsequently, on the creation of that appointment, held the Assistant-Adjutant-Generalship of Artillery up to the year 1824, when, having attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, he volunteered to join the army which was assembling for the prosecution of the Burmese war, and was nominated by Sir Edward Paget to command the Bengal Artillery attached to the force under Sir Archibald Campbell, proceeding to Rangoon. For his services during the war he received the decoration of the Companionship of the Bath. From this time, except during an interval of some three years spent in England for the recovery of his health, he held

different regimental and brigade commands, until, at the close of 1841, being then Major-General, in command of the garrison of Agra, he was selected by Sir Jasper Nicolls to take command of the troops proceeding to Peshawur, and ordered at once to proceed to the frontier by dawk.

The appointment of General Pollock gave the greatest satisfaction to the Supreme Government, and not even a murmur of disapprobation arose from the general body of the army. The nomination of this old and distinguished Company's officer was believed to be free from the corruption of aristocratic influence and the taint of personal favouritism. It was believed, that in this case at least, the selection had been made solely on the ground of individual merit. And the merit which was thus rewarded was of the most modest and unostentatious character. There was not, perhaps, in the whole Indian army a man of more unassuming manners and a more retiring disposition: there was not one less likely to have sought notoriety for its own sake, or to have put himself forward in an effort to obtain it. Pollock's merits did not lie upon the surface. He was not what is called a "dashing officer;" he shrunk from anything like personal display, and never appealed to the vulgar weaknesses of an unreflecting community. But beneath a most unassuming exterior there lay a fund of good sense, of innate sagacity, of quiet firmness and collectedness. He was equable and temperate. He was thoroughly conscientious. If he was looked upon by the Indian Government as a *safe* man, it was not merely because he always exercised a calm and dispassionate judgment, but because he was actuated in all that he did by the purest motives, and sustained by the highest principles. He was essentially an honest man.

There was a directness of purpose about him which won the confidence of all with whom he was associated. They saw that his one paramount desire was a desire to do his duty to his country by consulting, in every way, the welfare and the honour of the troops under his command; and they knew that they would never be sacrificed, either on the one hand by the rash ambition, or on the other by the feebleness and indecision, of their leader. The force now to be despatched to the frontier of Afghanistan required the superintendence and control of an officer equally cool and firm—temperate and decided—and, perhaps, in the whole range of the Indian army, the government could not have found one in whom these qualities were more eminently combined than in the character of General Pollock.

Hastening to place himself at the head of his men, Pollock left Agra, and proceeded by dawk to the frontier. The second brigade was then making its way through the Punjaub, under General M'Caskill; and the authorities in the North-Western Provinces were exerting themselves to push on further reinforcements to Peshawur.

On the 22nd of January, the Commander-in-Chief and Mr. George Clerk met at Thanesur, some two marches distant from Kurnaul. They had received the melancholy tidings of the destruction of the Caubul force; and they took counsel together regarding the measures to be pursued in consequence of this gigantic calamity. Very different were the views of these two functionaries. To Sir Jasper Nicolls it appeared that the destruction of the Caubul force afforded no reason for the advance of further reinforcements; but rather seemed to indicate the expediency of a retrograde movement on the part of all the remaining troops beyond the Indus. It was his

opinion—an opinion to some extent shared by the Supreme Government—that the retention of Jellalabad being no longer necessary, to support the Caubul army, or to assist its retreat, the withdrawal of the garrison to Peshawur had become primarily expedient; and that, as the re-conquest and re-occupation of Afghanistan were not under any circumstances to be recommended, it was desirable that, after the safety of Sale's brigade had been secured, the whole force should return to Hindostan. But Mr. Clerk was all for a forward movement. He argued that the safety and the honour of the British nation demanded that we should hold our own at Jellalabad, until the garrison, reinforced by fresh troops from the provinces of India, could march upon Caubul, in conjunction with the Candahar force moving from the westward, chastise the enemy on the theatre of their recent successes, and then withdraw altogether from Afghanistan "with dignity and undiminished honour."* It was gall and wormwood to George Clerk to think for a moment of leaving the Afghans, flushed with success, to revel in the humiliation of the British Government, and to boast of the destruction of a British army. Emphatically he dwelt on the disgrace of inactivity in such a crisis; and emphatically he dwelt upon the danger. Coolly and quietly, as one whose ordinary serenity was not to be disturbed by any accidental convulsions, Sir Jasper Nicolls set forth in reply that the return of so many regiments to the provinces, and the vast reduction of expenditure that would attend it, would place the government in such a position of strength as would enable it summarily to chastise any neighbouring state that might presume upon our recent misfortunes to show a hostile front against us. The demand for more troops he would have resisted altogether; but the urgency of George Clerk was

* *Sir Jasper Nicolls to Government: January 24th*, 1842.

not to be withstood, and two more regiments—the 6th and 55th Native Infantry—were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to proceed to Peshawur. But when Clerk asked for a detachment of British dragoons, Nicolls peremptorily resisted the demand, and referred the question to the Supreme Government.* Before the reference reached Calcutta, Lord Auckland had received intelligence of the massacre of Elphinstone's army; and he wrote back to the Commander-in-Chief that it was essentially necessary that a commanding force should assemble at Peshawur—that it was particularly important that the force should be effective in cavalry and artillery, and that at all events two squadrons of European dragoons should be pushed on to Peshawur.† The 1st

* "We have had a long conversation upon the affairs of Afghanistan, including the statement of Assistant-Surgeon Brydon; and Mr. Clerk has, by various and repeated arguments, endeavoured to convince me of the necessity of detaching another reinforcement to Peshawur, in order to support Jellalabad. My instructions and my opinion (expressed in my letter of yesterday) being widely different, I have demurred giving my consent to the proposal; but as your Lordship was not aware, on the date of your last orders of the 6th of January, of the murder of Sir Wm. Macnaghten, and probable fate of our troops, I have ordered the 6th and 55th Regiments of Native Infantry from Kurnaul to Ferozepore, which will enable me to detach two corps to Peshawur, should not your Lordship in Council's views and orders have been altered or modified by that event, and your resolution be made known to me. Being fully aware of the confidence enjoyed by Mr. Clerk, I have taken this preparatory step; but when he advised the addition of some portion of her Majesty's 3rd Dragoons, I felt myself unable to give him any hope of such a requisition being attended to."—[*Sir Jasper Nicolls to Government: January 23rd.*] "*Thanesur*, January 23rd.—Mr. C. joined us on the ground. He is anxiously in favour of our sending forward more troops, in view, I believe, to our undertaking the re-conquest of Caubul. To this I decidedly object. We have neither funds nor men available, without in the latter instance leaving India so bare as to risk its safety."—[*Private Journal of Sir Jasper Nicolls. MS. Records.*]

† "We regard it as absolutely essential to the maintenance of our interests at this crisis that a commanding force of all arms should be concentrated at or near Peshawur, in order to curb the violence of excitement which may be expected in that quarter, and to protect the Sikh territory from aggression. It is particularly important that this force should be effective in cavalry and light artillery, and we are disposed strongly to adhere to our recommendation that two squadrons of European dragoons should be employed on the service."—[*Governor-General in Council to Sir Jasper Nicolls: February 2nd*, 1842.]

Regiment of Native Cavalry and a troop of Horse-Artillery were subsequently added to the third brigade.

In the mean while increasing care and anxiety were brooding over Government House. Gloomily the new year dawned upon its inmates. And there was not in that great palaced city, or in any one of the smaller stations and cantonments of India, an Englishman whose heart did not beat, and whose hand did not tremble with anxiety for the fate of the Caubul force, when he opened the letters or papers which brought him intelligence from beyond the frontier. No one, who dwelt in any part of India during the early months of 1842, will ever forget the anxious faces and thick voices with which tidings were sought; questions and opinions interchanged; hopes and fears expressed; rumours sifted; probabilities weighed; and how, as the tragedy deepened in solemn interest, even the most timid and desponding felt that the ascertained reality far exceeded in misery and horror all that their excited imaginations had darkly foretold. There was a weight in the social atmosphere, as of dense superincumbent thunder-clouds. The festivities of the cold season were arrested; gaiety and hospitality were not. There were few families in the country which did not sicken with apprehension for the fate of some beloved relative or friend, whilst unconnected men, in whom the national overlaid the personal feeling, in this conjuncture, sighed over the tarnished reputation of their country, and burned to avenge the insults that had been heaped upon it.

It would be pleasant to record that, in this great and melancholy crisis, the public looked up with confidence and assurance to the statesman upon whom was now thrown the responsibility of extricating from the quickset of danger and difficulty that environed them, the imperilled affairs of the British Indian Empire.

But history can give currency to no such fiction. As time advanced it became more and more painfully evident that Lord Auckland was reeling and staggering beneath the blow that had descended upon him. He appeared to be unable to decide upon any consistent plan of action. At one time he seems to have contemplated the withdrawal of the Jellalabad garrison to Peshawur, leaving it to fight its own way through the pass; at another, he seems to have been fully impressed with the necessity of retaining the former post, if only for the protection of the Caubul force; then he talked of concentrating a large army at Peshawur, and almost immediately afterwards began to think that it would be more expedient to have our advanced post at Ferozepore. There was only one point on which he seems clearly to have made up his mind. He was resolute not to recommend a forward movement for the re-occupation of Caubul. He believed that any such attempt would be attended with disaster and disgrace; and he considered that it became him, on the eve of departure, as he was, not to embarrass his successor by inextricably pledging the government to measures which the new Viceroy might consider "rash, impolitic, and ruinous."*

* Lord Auckland's private letters to the Commander-in-Chief exhibit better than anything else the alternations in the Governor-General's opinions. On the 3rd of January he wrote: "It is melancholy to think how mighty interests may be compromised by such errors as seem to have been committed. Our officers are very wild in their requisitions. We have given all that we can prudently give — perhaps even more; and the chance of operations must be measured by those means."—On the 5th of January, after describing the tidings from Caubul as "inexplicable as they are appalling," and declaring that he "was prepared for everything but for such misdirection and misconduct as seem to have taken place," he proceeded to say, "I can make no further suggestions to you until I know more; but you may shortly have to consider what instructions should be given to General Sale, and as to whether it may not be better that he should fight down, than that Brigadier Wild or General Pollock should fight up, the pass. This must greatly depend on the manner in which matters may end at Caubul."—On the

On the 30th of January the worst fears of government were confirmed. An express arrived from Mr.

21st of the same month, he wrote, that he "still adhered to his opinion, that it would be madness with such force and means of carriage, as we could easily collect, to attempt a fresh advance upon Caubul; and that such a movement would only have been justified, if we had been led to it by objects of rescue. It would be my wish, if it could be done with safety, that Jellalabad should be retained for some weeks, and until the fate of the British troops in other parts of Afghanistan should be ascertained."—On the 26th he wrote: "I agree with you that, at least so long as the fate of the force at Caubul is uncertain, the post at Jellalabad must be maintained. I think it will be absolutely necessary, under any circumstances, to maintain for a time a strong force in Peshawur—also at Quettah and Sukkur. If our retirement carry with it a general appearance of defeat and of flight, it will bring on Peshawur and the Punjaub—on Beloochistan and Sindh—a tide of aggression and disaster which it may be difficult to stem, and against the chance of which we must endeavour to guard."—On the 28th, growing still more convinced of the expediency of doing something for the recovery of our lost honour, he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, speaking first with reference to the refusal of Sale and Macgregor to evacuate Jellalabad: "We approve of the determination taken at Jellalabad not to withdraw the troops as directed. Far from withdrawal under such circumstances, I am anxious to learn that Brigadier Wild has found it safe to advance to Jellalabad. . . . . Whatever happens beyond the passes, we should be strong for a time in Peshawur. . . . For the present, at least, Jellalabad should be firmly held;—General Elphinstone was not in a condition to make stipulations, except for his own troops at Caubul."—On the 3rd of February he expressed his opinion that Jellalabad should be held so long as there was a chance of assisting the escape of fugitives: "I apprehend," he added, "that its evacuation will, in a very short time, become absolutely necessary; if so, the movement should not be long delayed." He expressed a doubt, too, whether, with the "force that we can employ, the pass (Khybur) can be so occupied as to secure through it a safe passage of detachments and convoys. A descent through the Jugdulluck Passes to Caubul is beyond our present power. It would require vast exertions and months of preparation, and in the end would be an enterprise of no light danger. I almost conceive that it would be an impossible enterprise with any means that we could bring to bear upon it, unless some party should separate from the present combination, and then with what confidence should we render it? I have therefore, in dissent from many for whom I have the highest respect, earnestly wished that the force at Jellalabad could be safely and creditably withdrawn to Peshawur. . . . . I would not have it hastily retire beyond Peshawur, or any healthy spot near it. . . The post should be as forward as it safely can be; and my successor could then pursue the line of policy which he may think best. I would not have the government inextricably pledged to measures which my successor may regard as rash, impolitic, and ruinous." But he soon came to modify these opinions in favour of a forward position; and later on the same day wrote that the disaffection of the Sikhs might cause him to alter his views with regard to Peshawur: "I am coming fast to the opinion," he said, "that our furthest point of support in advance must be Ferozepore, and that we must bear the disgrace and disadvantage of retiring to this frontier with as little of loss as may now be ensured."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

Clerk, setting forth, on the authority of letters received from Macgregor at Jellalabad, that the Caubul force had been utterly destroyed. Some vague rumours of this crowning disaster had obtained currency in Calcutta a day or two before; and now the terrible apprehensions of the public were found to have been only the presages of actual truth. The immediate effect of this astounding intelligence upon the conduct of government was to rouse the Governor-General into something like a temporary demonstration of vigour. He issued a proclamation declaring that he considered the calamity that had overtaken the British arms only "as a new occasion for displaying the stability and vigour of the British power, and the admirable spirit and valour of the British-Indian army."* But it was little more than a spasm of energy. The ink with which this notification was written was hardly dry before the Governor-General in

* "Fort William, Jan. 31, 1842.

"Intelligence having been received which leaves no room to doubt that, after the British force at Caubul had maintained its position against overpowering numbers of insurgents for more than six weeks, the officer commanding had judged it necessary, in consequence of a failure of provisions, to agree to a convention of the enemy, and to retire, in reliance on the faith of that convention, towards Jellalabad, when the troops, exposed to the worst rigours of cold and privation, in the mountain defiles, and harassed by treacherous attacks, suffered extreme disasters—the Governor-General in Council deems it proper to notify that the most active measures have been adopted, and will be steadfastly persecuted, for expediting powerful reinforcements to the Afghan frontier, and for assisting such operations as may be required in that quarter, for the maintenance of the honour and interests of the British Government.

"The ample military means at the disposal of the British Government will be strenuously applied to these objects, so as at once to support external operations, and to cause efficient protection for its subjects and allies.

"A faithless enemy, stained by the foul crime of assassination, has, through a failure of supplies followed by consummate treachery, been able to overcome a body of British troops, in a country removed, by distance and difficulties of season, from the possibility of succour. But the Governor-General in Council, while he most deeply laments the loss of the brave officers and men, regards this partial reverse only as a new occasion for displaying the stability and vigour of the British power, and the admirable spirit and valour of the British-Indian army.

"By order of the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India in Council.

"T. H. Maddock."

Council wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, that Jellalabad was not a place which he desired to be kept at all hazards, and after succour should have been given to Sir R. Sale's brigade then, and relief should have been given to parties arriving from Caubul, the Governor-General in Council would wish General Pollock, rather than run extreme risks in that position, to arrange for the withdrawal of it, and the assembling of his force at or near Peshawur.*

As time advanced, the retrograde tendencies of Lord Auckland's determination became more and more apparent. On the 10th of February, the Governor-General in Council wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, instructing him to inform General Pollock that, "as the main inducement for the maintenance of a post at Jellalabad —namely, that of being a point of support to any of our troops escaping from Caubul—having now unhappily passed away, it is the object of the government that he should, unless any unforeseen contingency should give a decidedly favorable turn to affairs, confine himself to measures for withdrawing the Jellalabad garrison in safety to Peshawur, and there for the present, holding together all the troops under his orders in a secure position, removed from collision with the Sikh forces or subjects." And on the same day, Mr. Maddock, the chief secretary, under instructions from the Supreme Government, wrote to Mr. Clerk that "it would be highly desirable that when Jellalabad was no longer held by us, our detachments, which have been moved forward in support to meet a present emergency, should be brought gradually back to their cantonments, in order that any ulterior operations that may be determined upon for another advance beyond the Indus (and

* *Supreme Government to Sir Jasper Nicolls: January* 31, 1842.—[*Published Papers.*]

that towards the Khybur and Jellalabad is probably not the one to which preference would be given) may be undertaken after full preparation, with a complete equipment, and in fresh and well-organised strength."*

Lord Auckland had been startled by the astounding intelligence of the massacre of Elphinstone's army into an ebullition of energy by no means in accordance with the previous tenor of the measures which he had initiated, and not more in accordance with those which were about to emanate from him. After the first paroxysm of horror and indignation was over, he began again to settle down quietly in the conviction that it was best to do as little as possible on the other side of the Indus, lest worse misfortunes should descend upon us, and the attempt to recover our lost reputation should result only in further disgrace.

By this time the doubts of those who had speculated on the subject of the succession to the Governor-Generalship had been set at rest by the arrival of the Overland Mail. The despatches received in December announced that the choice of the home ministry had fallen upon one of their own body; and that the East India Company had ratified the choice. Lord Ellenborough, who had before filled and was now filling the office of President of the Board of Control, had been appointed Viceroy of India. The question of the succession had been canvassed with more than common eagerness, and its solution looked forward to with unusual interest. When the intelligence at last arrived it took the majority by

* *Papers relating to Military Operations in Afghanistan.* Lord Auckland's private letters were still more decided on these points. "I should be glad," he wrote to Sir Jasper Nicolls on the 10th of February, "to hear that Sir R. Sale has been able to withdraw his brigade from a position so perilous as to make me regard its possible fate with extreme anxiety." Two days afterwards he wrote to the same correspondent: "I have from the beginning believed a second conquest of Caubul with our present means to be absolutely impossible."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

surprise. The probability of the appointment of Lord Ellenborough had not been entertained. Sir James Graham, Lord Heytesbury, Lord Lichfield—nay, even Lord Lyndhurst, had been named; but speculation had not busied itself with the name of Lord Ellenborough.

But the intelligence, though unexpected, was not unwelcome. It was, indeed, received with universal satisfaction. The Press, with one accord, spoke of the appointment with approbation; and the Public confirmed the verdict of the Press. All parties were alike sanguine—all prepared to look for good in the new Governor-General. There is not a community on the face of the earth less influenced by the spirit of faction, than the community of British India. To support, or to oppose the measures of a Governor, simply because he is a Whig or a Tory, is an excess of active prejudice wholly unknown in India. There are no political parties, and there is no party Press to play out such a game as this. Public men are judged, not by what they belong to, but by what belongs to them—and thus was Lord Ellenborough judged. Whig and Tory alike hailed the appointment: for the new Governor-General was held in some degree of estimation as one who had made India his study, and cherished a laudable interest in its welfare. He was believed to be possessed of more than average talent; assiduous in his attention to business; and rather an able man of detail than a statesman of very brilliant promise. They, who thought most about the matter, anticipated that he would make a good, steady, peace-governor; that he would apply himself devotedly to the task of improving the internal administration of the country; and by a steady and consistent course of policy soon disengage the country from the pressure of financial embarrassment which had long sate so heavily upon it. They knew little and cared less

about the personal eccentricities which in England had been imputed to him. Neither the Press nor the Public concerned itself about these manifestations of the outer man. They thought of the newly-appointed Governor-General as an able and laborious man of business, with a more than common knowledge of the history of India and the details of its administration. They knew that not only had his occupancy, for many years, of the chief seat at the India Board, rendered him familiar with the workings of the Indian Government; but that, on every occasion, when Indian affairs had been discussed in the House of Lords, in power or out of power, he had taken a prominent part in the debates. In 1833, when the provisions of the existing charter were under the consideration of Parliament, he had distinguished himself as one of the ablest, but most moderate opponents of certain of its clauses, contending in favour of the diminution of the powers of Indian Governors by the imposition of the wholesome control of Council; and earnestly protesting against the perilous evil of leaving too much to the unbridled passions or the erratic caprice of a single man. In later days, he had denounced the war in Afghanistan, in fitting terms of severe censure; and all things combined to render the Indian public hopeful of a good, steady, peaceful administration. Conservative exchanged congratulations with Liberal on the cheering prospects, now opening out before them, of many years of peaceful government and financial prosperity. Lord Ellenborough was believed to be a moderate statesman—somewhat too liberal for the Tories of the ministerial camp, but not for the modified conservatism of India, where every man is more or less a Reformer—and as a moderate statesman all men were prepared to welcome him.

In October, 1841, he was elected to fill the office of

Governor-General; and on the 4th of the following month, he attended the usual complimentary dinner, given on such occasions by the Court of Directors. The report of that dinner, which reached India simultaneously with the intelligence of Lord Ellenborough's appointment, had a natural tendency to increase the confidence, engendered by his Lordship's previous history, in the judgment and moderation of the new Governor-General. On returning thanks, after his health had been drunk, Lord Ellenborough, at that farewell dinner, on the 4th of November, 1841, made a most emphatic declaration of his intentions to govern India upon peace principles; he abjured all thoughts of a warlike, aggressive policy; and declared his settled determination, on assuming the reins of government, to direct all the energies of his mind towards the due cultivation of the arts of peace; to emulate the magnificent benevolence of the Mahomedan conquerors; to elevate and improve the condition of the generous and mighty people of India. He spoke, it is true, in ignorance of the terrible disasters which soon afterwards cast a pall over the land; but there was in the speech so clear and explicit an exposition of what were supposed to be fixed principles, that the Public could not but rejoice over a declaration which promised so much eventual benefit to the people of the soil. They looked forward to the advent of the new Governor-General as to that of a man who, at the earliest possible moment consistent with the dignity of our position, would sever at a blow our ill-fated connexion with Afghanistan, and devote the remaining years of his administration to the practical development of those high principles which he had so enthusiastically professed.*

It is probable that the nomination of Lord Ellen-

* *Calcutta Review.*

borough increased the embarrassments of Lord Auckland, and strengthened him in his resolution to suspend, as far as possible, all retributive measures until the arrival of his successor. There was no public man in England whose opinions, regarding the justice and policy of the war in Afghanistan, had been more emphatically expressed than those of the Governor-General elect. Lord Auckland knew that he was to be succeeded by a statesman who had pronounced the war to be a blunder and a crime; and there was a strong conviction within him that Lord Ellenborough would be eager to withdraw every British soldier from Afghanistan, and to sever at once a connexion which had been attended with so much disaster and disgrace. As the responsible author of the war, this demanded from him no small amount of moral courage. It was, indeed, to court a reversal of the policy which he had originated, and to place the power of a sweeping practical condemnation in the hands of a political rival. If the conduct of Lord Auckland, at this time, were wanting in energy and decision, it was by no means wanting in honesty. He saw that he had committed a blunder of enormous magnitude, and he left it to a statesman of a rival party, and an opposite faith, to pronounce sentence upon it.

But it was not permitted to Lord Auckland so to suspend the progress of events, as to enable him to hand over to his successor only the chart of a virgin campaign, to be accepted or rejected by the new ruler, as might seem fit to him, on taking up the reins of office. It was decreed that his administration should set amidst the clouds of continued disaster. There was nothing but failure to be written down in the concluding chapter of his unfortunate reign. Scarcely had he risen up from the prostration that followed the first stunning effects of the dire intelligence of the massacre in the Caubul

passes, when there came from Peshawur tidings that the brigade under Colonel Wild had been disastrously beaten in the Khybur Pass. The first scene of the new, like the last of the old campaign, was a great calamity; and Lord Auckland, now more than ever dispirited and dejected, earnestly longed for the day when it would be vouchsafed to him to close his portfolio, and to turn his back for ever upon a country where sloughs of difficulty and thickets of danger seemed to cover the whole expanse.*

* It should have been observed, with reference to the statement (*page* 264) of the unwillingness of Sir Jasper Nicolls to strip India of troops for the prosecution of a new campaign beyond the Indus, that Mr. George Clerk at that time entertained very similar opinions regarding the danger of sending more regiments away from the North-Western Provinces. "Whatever may take place," he wrote to Lord Auckland on the 25th of November, "in regard to Caubul, and in whatever degree our troops there may be reinforced, we should not weaken this frontier. Any reduction of our military strength causes some presumption or audacity in our native allies generally." And on the 29th he wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces (Mr. Robertson): "I really do not see how our muster-roll is to stand this draining of more troops—and probably many more, west—whilst reinforcements are also proceeding eastward. Undoubtedly the remainder will be inadequate to the due maintenance of our high supremacy in India." — [*MS. Correspondence.*] There was, unquestionably, a choice of evils at this time. But Sir Jasper Nicolls and Mr. George Clerk differed in opinion as to which was the greater of the two.

CHAPTER IV.

[January—April: 1842.]

The Halt at Peshawur—Position of Brigadier Wild—His Difficulties—Conduct of the Sikhs—Attempt on Ali-Musjid—Failure of the Brigade—Arrival of General Pollock—State of the Force—Affairs at Jellalabad—Correspondence between Sale and Pollock.

THE position of Brigadier Wild at Peshawur was not one to infuse into a military commander any very overflowing feelings of hope and exultation. He was called upon to encounter formidable difficulties with slender means. Everything, indeed, was against him. He had four Native infantry regiments, containing a large number of young soldiers. They had been exposed for some time to the deteriorating contact of the mutinous Sikh soldiery, who had done their best to fill our Sepoys with that horror of the Khybur to which they had always abandoned themselves. The only cavalry with the brigade was a troop of irregular horse. The only guns were four pieces of Sikh artillery, which had a bad habit of knocking their carriages to pieces whenever they were tried. There was a scarcity of ammunition. Carriage was beginning to fail altogether. It was believed that the camels had been

hired at Ferozepore to proceed as far as Jellalabad; but now the owners declared that they had entered into no such contract, and resolutely refused to proceed further than Peshawur. The most dispiriting intelligence was coming in from Afghanistan. Every day seemed to add some darker tints to the picture of our discomfiture, and to bring out in more prominent colours the triumphant successes of the Afghans. Sale and Macgregor were writing from Jellalabad to urge the immediate advance of the brigade; and General Avitabile was endeavouring, on the other hand, to persuade the Brigadier that it would be dangerous to enter the pass with the force which he then commanded.* The co-operation of the Sikh soldiery, in spite of Avitabile's exertions, seemed every day to become a fainter probability. They peremptorily refused at one time to proceed to Jumrood, from which point it was intended that the operations should commence, and declared that they would return to Lahore. Then threatening to kill Avitabile himself if he interfered with them, they intercepted one of the guns which were moving forward for our use, and carried it back to their lines. It was obvious, indeed, that they desired our discomfiture more than our success; and, in spite of the declared wishes of their Sovereign, whose sincerity at this time is not to be questioned,† and the efforts of

* It was, moreover, of great importance to accelerate the movement, because it was believed that any day might witness the appearance of the Barukzye horsemen on the road between Peshawur and Jellalabad. "Time is most precious to us," wrote Mackeson to Clerk; "a few days more may see a party of the Barukzye troops in the plains of Ningrahar, and then thousands will be required where hundreds would now do the work."

† Shere Singh despatched urgent purwannahs both to General Avitabile and to Raee Kishen Chund, calling upon them to aid the British by every means in their power. "You are a general of the Khalsa Government," he wrote to the former, "and noted for the confidence placed in you. This is the time to serve the two allied powers; and you will, therefore, unreservedly devote your attention to discharge your trust, so as to please the two friendly governments, and to earn such a name that the services performed shall be known in London." To the latter he wrote, "Orders have been issued to Koon-

the local governor, did everything that they could do, to render the latter the more probable contingency of the two. The negotiations with the Afreedi chiefs were not going on prosperously, and there was every prospect of heavy opposition in the pass. Under such circumstances, Brigadier Wild could only write that he was prepared to move forward whenever it was expedient to do so, but that he could not answer for the consequences of a precipitate advance.

It was not, however, permitted him to remain long in doubt and inactivity. The fortress of Ali-Musjid lies some five miles within the entrance of the Khybur Pass, and about twenty-five from Peshawur. It consists of two small forts, connected by a wall of little strength, and stands upon the summit of an isolated oblong rock, commanded on the southern and western sides by two lofty hills. It has always been regarded as the key to the Khybur Pass; and it was obvious, now that it was lying between the two positions of Sale and Wild, it was of immense importance that it should be held by British troops or their allies. It had recently been garrisoned by a small detachment of a local

wur Pertab Chund to march to Peshawur, and the zeal of the Durbar will at once make itself manifest to Mr. Clerk (as the sun suddenly shining forth from beneath a cloud) when he is informed of all by the letters of Captain Mackeson."—[*MS. Records.*] When Mackeson received from George Clerk a copy of the purwannah to Avitabile he was in conference at that officer's quarters with the Sikh general, Mehtab Singh, and the commandants of all the Sikh battalions. "I read out this purwannah," says Mackeson, "but was somewhat confounded to find at its conclusion that the Durbar limited the operations of General Avitabile and the Sikh troops to Futtehgurh—their own frontier post. It was fortunate that, before the arrival of this *purwannah*, the commandants of the auxiliary Mussulman troops had left the room, having previously engaged to march as far as Ali-Musjid in support of our troops, and to move on again with General Pollock's brigade."—[*Mackeson to Clerk: January*, 1842. *MS. Records.*] The passages referred to in the *purwannah* might bear this construction, but it is doubtful whether this was their intent. George Clerk, in a marginal note to Mackeson's letter, says: "The *purwannah* did not limit it; but directed them to move on to Futtehgurh and act in concert and by Captain Mackeson's advice."—[*MS. Records.*]

corps, composed of men of the Eusofzye tribe—some of whom, under Mr. Mackeson,* had been true to their employers, and, gallantly commanded, gallantly resisted the attacks of the Afreedi clan. But there was now every chance of its falling into the hands of the enemy. Nothing appeared to be of so much primary importance as the occupation of this post. It was resolved, therefore, that one-half of the brigade should be pushed forward, in the first instance, to seize and garrison Ali-Musjid.

Accordingly, on the 15th of January, Colonel Moseley, with the 53rd and 64th Sepoy regiments, prepared to commence the march to Ali-Musjid. They started under cover of the night, and reached their destination soon after daybreak. They met with little opposition on the way; but soon after their arrival under the rock of Ali-Musjid, Captain Mackeson, who had accompanied the force, discovered to his dismay that, instead of 350 supply-bullocks, for the advance of which he had made suitable arrangements, only fifty or sixty now were straggling in with the rear-guard. The remainder, by some mismanagement or miscomprehension of orders, had been left behind. Thus had the two regiments which, had the cattle come on to Ali-Musjid, might have held that place in security for a month, shut themselves up in an isolated fortress without provisions; and the plans which had been so anxiously debated by our political officers at Peshawur, utterly frustrated by an oversight of the most disastrous character, of which it is difficult to determine on whom we are to fix the blame.†

* A cousin of Captain, now Colonel Mackeson. Holding no recognised place in the armies either of the Crown or the Company, his services were neither fairly estimated nor adequately rewarded. But there were few more gallant episodes in the war than his defence of Ali-Musjid. Mr. Mackeson had been long disabled by extreme sickness, but was carried about in a litter to superintend the defence.

† See *Mackeson to Government: Jan. 27, 1842. Published papers.*

The only hope of extrication from this dilemma, without disaster and discredit, lay in the advance of the two other regiments, with the Sikh guns and the Sikh auxiliaries. But day after day passed, and Mackeson and Moseley gained no certain intelligence of the movements of their comrades. They were more than once under arms to support the coming reinforcements; but the reinforcements never appeared in sight. Wild, with the two regiments, had made an effort to throw supplies into Ali-Musjid, but had been disastrously beaten in the attempt.

Wild was to have moved forward with the Sikh auxiliaries on the morning of the 19th of January, but on the preceding evening, at eleven o'clock, the Sikh troops mutinied to a man, and refused to enter the pass. They were at this time with the British at Jumrood. But when Wild prepared to advance, they turned their faces in an opposite direction, and marched back upon Peshawur.* General Avitabile sent orders to his officers to close the city gates against the mutinous regiments; and then shut himself up in the fort.

At seven o'clock, the 30th and 60th regiments with the Sikh guns commenced their march to Ali-Musjid. The enemy appeared at the entrance of the pass and met the advancing column with a fire from their jezails. The Sepoys at the head of the column wavered, stood still, crowded upon each other, fired anywhere, aimless and

* "The *Nujeebs* struck their tents when we did, and moved back to Peshawur, and the Sikhs made no demonstration, though twice we wrote to General Avitabile during the night; and just before daylight I told him they were not moving, and again at sunrise."—[*Captain H. M. Lawrence to Mr. Clerk: 19th January*, 1842.] Lawrence adds: "I impute no blame to General Avitabile for the man not telling us what we might expect from his miscreant troops. His own intentions are kind and friendly to our government and ourselves." The misconduct of the Sikh troops was rendered more atrocious, and our own mortification more bitter, by the circumstance that Mackeson had advanced a lakh and a half of rupees to the Sikh authorities, for the payment of the men whose services we hoped to retain.

without effect. The officers moved forward, but the regiments did not follow them. In vain the Brigadier and his staff called upon them to advance; they only huddled together in confusion and dismay. The Sikh guns, when brought into action, broke down one after the other; and the Sepoys lost all heart. Lawrence exerted himself manfully to save the guns; but he could not induce the men to make an effort to carry them off; and one of the heavy pieces was finally abandoned.* There was nothing to be done after this but to fall back. The Brigadier himself was wounded in the face; several of our officers were injured; one killed.† The loss among the Sepoys was severe. It was plain that they would not advance; so the column fell back on Jumrood, and Ali-Musjid was not relieved.

How this disaster happened it is not easy to explain. Exaggerated native reports of the immense hordes of Khyburees, who were assembling in the pass, had been in circulation; and the regiments seem to have commenced their march, anticipating such formidable opposition as they were never doomed to encounter. The ominous intelligence from Caubul had alarmed them. The lies spread abroad by the Sikhs had probably alarmed them still more. The opposition was not strenuous.† Had the regiments been in good heart,

* "We have been disgracefully beaten back," wrote Captain Lawrence to Mr. Clerk. "Both our large guns broke down; one was on an elephant, but was taken down to put together when the other failed, but its carriage breaking too, the Sepoys lost all heart, and I grieve to say that I could not get men to bring one off, though I tried for an hour, and at last, finding we were only expending ammunition, we left it in their hands, but it was broken completely down and spiked."—[*MS. Records.*]

† "I confess," wrote Captain Lawrence to Mr. Clerk, "that I never heard any very heavy fire, or saw the enemy in any numbers. I was not with the advance, and therefore may be mistaken; but was afterwards within a hundred yards of the advanced gun for an hour or more, and could see into the pass, but observed no breast-work, and but very few of the enemy; certainly not above a thousand, and not half that number of fire-arms."—[*MS. Records.*]

they would not have been beaten back. But there was anything but a strong forward feeling among them when they commenced their march. The defection of the Sikhs had damped their ardour, and the breaking down of the guns now seemed to complete what the misconduct of our allies had commenced. The first attacks of the enemy threw the Sepoys at the head of the column into confusion; and all hope of success was at an end before a battle had been fought.

The two regiments that occupied Ali-Musjid might have held that post for any length of time against the Khyburees. But they had a lamentable scarcity of provisions. The water, too, seemed to poison them. The troops were put upon half-rations, but in a few days these supplies were nearly exhausted. Without bedding and without tents, kept ever on the alert, under a severe climate, the health of the Sepoys was giving way. They were crowding into hospital. There seemed to be no prospect of relief; so, on the 23rd of January, Colonel Moseley determined to evacuate the fortress of Ali-Musjid, and to cut his way back to Jumrood.

To Mackeson, who saw clearly the political evils that must result from the surrender of so important a position, this was a heavy blow. Anything seemed better than the total abandonment of such a post. A small party of resolute men might hold it; for a small party might be fed. There were at least two men in the garrison eager for the proud distinction of holding, in an imminent conjuncture, a dangerous isolated post against a multitudinous enemy. Captain Burt, of the 64th Native Infantry, volunteered to remain with a party of regular troops; but the Sepoys would not volunteer. Captain Thomas, of the same corps—the staff officer of the detachment—a man of a bold and fearless nature, and of large acquirements—stepped forward and volunteered to

hold the fortress with 150 men of the old Eusofzye garrison. The offer was accepted; arrangements were made for the defence; but the fidelity of the Eusofzyes, which had been long failing, now broke down altogether. They refused to occupy the dangerous post after the departure of the Sepoy regiments; and so, on the 24th, the entire force moved out of Ali-Musjid, and suffered it to fall into the hands of the Afreedis.

"The regiments are safe through—thank God!" was the emphatic announcement which Captain Lawrence, on the 24th of January, forwarded by express to Mr. George Clerk. It had been a time of intense and painful excitement. The communications between the two detachments were cut off, and anxious as they were to act in concert with each other, they had, up to the evening of the 22nd, failed to ascertain the intentions of each other, and to effect a combined movement.* On the 23rd, the two regiments which Wild had commanded, now, owing to the Brigadier's wound, under the charge of Colonel Tulloch, with the two serviceable Sikh guns, went forward to line the pass, and cover the march of Moseley's regiments; but no sound of an advancing column was heard, and about mid-day they returned to camp. On the following morning they moved out again. Moseley had quitted Ali-Musjid, and was making the best of his way to Jumrood. The Khyburees mustered strong; but the Sepoy corps in both detachments did their duty well, and the regiments made good their passage. Captain Wilson, of the 64th, was killed at the head of his men; and Captain Lock, of the 60th, fell also with his sword in his hand. There was some loss of baggage on the retreat—some of the sick and wounded were abandoned; and the general conduct of the affair is not to be dwelt upon

* The two detachments met at the mouth of the pass.

with pride or pleasure. But when the four regiments were once more assembled together at Jumrood, in spite of the disasters of the week, a general feeling of relief was experienced; and our officers congratulated one another, thankful that it was "no worse."

Nothing was to be done now but to wait patiently for the arrival of General Pollock and the reinforcements which were marching up through the Punjaub. It was obvious that, without cavalry and without guns, every effort to relieve Jellalabad must be a disastrous failure. The want of guns was now severely commented upon. Everybody had something to say about the remissness of those in high places, who had suffered the advanced brigade sent for the relief of our beleaguered troops to appear at the mouth of the Khybur Pass without a single piece of British artillery. Brigadier Wild lamented the want of artillery: Colonel Moseley lamented the want of artillery: Captain Mackeson lamented the want of artillery. All were certain that the first effort at retrieval would not have been a new calamity and a new disgrace if a proper complement of British guns had been sent on with the Sepoy regiments. The omission was a great one; but it appears to have been more the result of circumstances than of any culpable negligence on the part of the military authorities. The four Sepoy regiments, forming Wild's brigade, were sent forward by Mr. George Clerk, on a requisition from Captain Mackeson. Mackeson wrote for the immediate despatch of the troops which, before the outbreak at Caubul, had been warned for the ordinary relief. The regiments under orders for Afghanistan were therefore hurried forward, and another regiment, which was on the frontier, ordered to march with them. Expedition rather than efficiency was then sought; and to have got artillery ready for service would

have delayed the despatch of the infantry corps. Captain Lawrence, himself an artillery officer, saw the expediency of despatching artillery to Peshawur, and did not omit to throw out suggestions regarding the preparation of this important arm; but Mr. George Clerk, who was Captain Lawrence's official chief, and subject only to whose confirmation that officer had any authority to call for the despatch of troops, did not follow up the intimation of his subordinate. "Your Excellency will have observed," wrote Mr. Clerk to the Commander-in-Chief,* "that I have limited the requisitions, which I have presumed to make upon the commanding officers of Loodhianah and Ferozepore, to the three infantry regiments which were already preparing to march to Afghanistan. I consider that this is what Captain Mackeson means in his urgent request for the despatch of the brigade warned for the Caubul relief. I therefore have not followed up the intimation made by Captain Lawrence to the commanding officer at Ferozepore regarding artillery and cavalry, by requesting that a detachment of either should move forward."†

It appears, therefore, that Captain Mackeson, at Peshawur, limited his requisitions to the troops actually under orders to proceed, in ordinary routine, to Afghan-

* *Mr. G. Clerk to Sir Jasper Nicolls: November* 17, 1841. I have taken this passage from a MS. copy. It is quoted, however, in the Blue Book, but, with the usual fatality attending such compilations, there are two errors in these few lines. Mr. Clerk is made to say that he had called upon "the commanding officer of *Lahore* and Ferozepore" to send forward the regiments.

† It is not very clear, however, that Captain Lawrence actually made any written requisition to the commanding officer at Ferozepore (Colonel Wild) for the despatch of artillery details. He wrote a private letter to Mr. Clerk, saying: "If four guns can be made effective, they also shall be got ready." In this letter he says that he was about to call upon Colonel Wild, and may orally have broached the subject of the guns; but in his official letter, written on the same day (November 14), there is no mention of artillery, although he suggests the expediency of sending forward the 10th Cavalry without delay.

istan—that Captain Lawrence, at Ferozepore, suggested the expediency of sending forward some guns, if they could be got ready; and that Mr. Clerk, at Loodhianah, declined to endorse the suggestion, and left it to the Commander-in-Chief to decide whether any artillery should be sent forward with the Sepoy regiments.

But the power of decision was not in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief. The odium of having sent forward four Native infantry regiments, without cavalry and without guns, has been cast upon Sir Jasper Nicolls. But the truth is, that the regiments had crossed the Sutlej before he knew that they had been ordered forward. He was moving upwards towards the frontier when intelligence of the outbreak in Afghanistan, and the consequent measures of Mr. Clerk, met him as he advanced. On the 18th and 20th of November the two first regiments crossed the Sutlej; and the Commander-in-Chief received the notification of the demand for these regiments not before the 22nd. On the 26th of November the two other regiments crossed the Sutlej; and the Commander-in-Chief did not receive intelligence of their despatch before the 3rd of December.

Thus far it is plain that no discredit attaches to the Commander-in-Chief, or to any other authority, for not having sent forward any guns *with* Wild's brigade. But the question yet remains to be asked why guns were not sent *after* it. Though Mr. Clerk, in the first instance, anxious not to delay the advance of the infantry regiments, made no requisition for artillery, he directed General Boyd's attention to the subject soon after the despatch of those corps, and suggested that one of Wild's regiments should halt on the other side of the Sutlej, whilst the guns were proceeding to join it.* As

* "Though I have not yet heard that any artillery is ordered up to the frontier, I would beg leave to recommend, in anticipation of the speedy

there was no available artillery at Ferozepore, it was proposed that Captain Alexander's troop of Horse Artillery should move at once from Loodhianah to the former station on its way across the frontier; but on hearing that the Commander-in-Chief had ordered some details of a foot artillery battery to be warned for service, Mr. Clerk withdrew his requisition for the movement of the troop beyond the frontier, but still suggested that it should be pushed on to Ferozepore. This was on the 2nd of December.* On the 4th, having heard that some delay must attend the despatch of the details warned by orders of the Commander-in-Chief, Mr. Clerk wrote a letter to Captain Alexander, requesting him, as the means of more rapid movement were at his command, to push on across the Sutlej with all possible expedition.† But a few days afterwards he received a

arrival of reinforcements so necessary on the Sutlej, that artillery should move forward from hence. I shall transmit a copy of this letter to Lieutenant-Colonel Wild, in case he may think proper to halt one of the regiments under his command, until the arrival of such artillery as you consider can best be spared from Loodhianah or Ferozepore; but the latter is, I believe, for want of horses, incapable of moving; and this leaves an insufficiency for the due protection of this border, during an unsettled state of parties at Lahore." — [*Mr. George Clerk to Major-General Boyd: November 27th*, 1841. *MS. Records.*]

* "Having had the honour to receive from the acting Adjutant-General a statement of the reinforcements which his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has ordered to be put in motion for the purposing of forcing the Khybur, I beg leave to state to you that I would not now wish that the 3rd troop, 2nd Brigade of Horse Artillery, should move from the British frontier on my requisition, though I do not propose, in consequence of this information, to request Lieutenant-Colonel Rich to recall the order for the intended march hence of that troop to-morrow in progress to Ferozepore."—[*Mr. George Clerk to Major-General Boyd: Loodhianah December 2nd*, 1841. *MS. Records.*]

† "Having heard that it is possible the guns which his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has directed to move across the frontier may not be ready to move so immediately as the passage across the Sutlej of your troop may be effected, I deem it to be advisable, adverting to the emergency of the occasion, to recommend that you nevertheless proceed on, in anticipation of the sanction of his Excellency to your doing so, by orders of the Major-General commanding the division issued at my request, provided that you can do so without crippling the means of marching requisite for the artillery, which his Excellency has directed to be put in motion for

letter from Sir Jasper Nicolls, prohibiting the despatch of the Horse Artillery; and he accordingly apprised Captain Alexander that the request made to him on the 4th of December for the advance of the troop was withdrawn.* And so, instead of a troop of Horse Artillery being sent to overtake Wild's brigade, which reached Peshawur at the end of December, half of a foot artillery battery was warned to proceed with M'Caskill's brigade, which did not arrive before the beginning of February. In the interval, Wild had been disastrously beaten in the Khybur Pass, and Ali-Musjid had fallen into the hands of the Afreedis.

Whatever may have been the causes of this first failure, and to whomsoever its responsibility may attach, it is certain that its results were of a very dispiriting and deteriorating character. The regiments remained inactive in the vicinity of Peshawur; and the usual consequences of inactivity, under such circumstances were soon painfully apparent in the camp of Brigadier Wild. The Sepoys fell sick; crowded into hospital; seemed to have lost all heart, and, without any of the audacity of open mutiny, broke out into language only a little way removed from it. Exposed to the alarming hints and the alluring temptations of the mutinous Sikh soldiery, some began to desert their colours, whilst others openly declared that nothing would induce them

the frontier, and which should follow as expeditiously as possible."—[*Mr. George Clerk to Captain Alexander, commanding 3rd troop, 2nd Brigade of Horse Artillery: Dec.* 4, 1841. *MS. Records.*]

* "I do myself the honour to inform your Excellency that, in consequence of my receipt of your Excellency's letter of the 2nd instant, prohibiting the advance of horse artillery as a reinforcement to proceed to Afghanistan, I have apprised Captain Alexander, commanding the 3rd troop, 2nd brigade, now on its way to Ferozepore, and Major Huish, commanding that station, that they are to consider the request made by me, for the advance of that troop, to be withdrawn."—[*Mr. George Clerk to Sir Jasper Nicolls: Dec.* 7, 1841.]

again to face the horrors of the Khybur Pass. As General Pollock advanced through the Punjaub, the worst reports continued to meet him from Peshawur. Not only was he informed that the Sepoys of Wild's brigade were enfeebled by disease and paralysed by terror; but that even the officers of the force were using, in an unguarded and unworthy manner, the language of disheartenment and alarm.*

On the 5th of February, General Pollock reached Peshawur; and found that the stories, which had met him on the road, had by no means exaggerated the condition of the troops under Brigadier Wild. There were then 1000 men in hospital; and the number was alarmingly increasing. In a few days it had increased to 1800; so that even with the new brigade, which marched in a day or two after the General's arrival, he had, exclusive of cavalry, scarcely more troops fit for service than Wild had commanded a month before.

An immediate advance on Jellalabad was not, under such circumstances, to be contemplated for a moment. General Pollock had much to do before he could think of forcing the Khybur Pass and relieving Jellalabad. The duties of a General are not limited to operations in the field. When Pollock reached Peshawur he found that the least difficult part of the labour before him was the subjugation of the Afreedi tribes. "Any precipi-

* On the 29th of January, Sir Jasper Nicolls wrote to General Pollock: "My dear General,—In some late letters Captain Lawrence has expressed himself in a very decided manner touching the disheartened and unguarded language held by officers belonging to the corps which were beaten back in the Khybur Pass on the 19th instant. God forbid that they should feel any panic, or even alarm; but if you observe it, I rely on your addressing yourself to them in a very forcible manner, and shaming them out of such very unbecoming, unmilitary, and dangerous conduct. Their duty is obedience—prompt and energetic obedience—such as executes without expression of doubt. If more has been said than the case seemed to require, take no notice of this further than to warn Captain L., if you think proper to do so.—Always yours faithfully,

"J. Nicolls."

[*MS. Correspondence.*]

tancy," wrote the Commander-in-Chief some time afterwards, "on the part of a general officer panting for fame might have had the worst effect."* To have advanced on Jellalabad in that month of February would have been to precipitate a strangling failure. Instead of flinging himself headlong into the pass, Pollock made his way to the hospitals. On the day after his arrival he visited the sick of the different regiments, inquired into their wants, conversed with their medical attendants, endeavoured to ascertain the causes of the prevalent sickness, and encouraged by every means at his command, by animating words and assuring promises, the dispirited and desponding invalids.

Nor was there less to do out of the hospitals. The *morale* of the troops was in the lowest possible state. It seemed, indeed, as though all their soldierly qualities were at the last gasp. The disaffection of the Sepoys broke out openly, and four out of the five regiments refused to advance. Nightly meetings of delegates from the different regiments of Wild's brigade were held in camp; and the 26th Regiment of Native Infantry, which had come up with M'Caskill's brigade, was soon brought into the confederacy. In less than forty-eight hours after the arrival of that corps, active emissaries from the disaffected regiments were busy among the men, not only working upon their fears, but appealing to their religious feelings.† The taint seems to have reached

* *Sir Jasper Nicolls to Lord Hill: Simlah, September 2nd, 1842.—[MS. Correspondence.]* In this letter, which will be found entire in the Appendix, the Commander-in-Chief says: "When Major-General Pollock arrived at Peshawur he found 1800 men of the four regiments in hospital; the Sepoys declaring that they would not again advance through the Khybur Pass; the Sikh troops spreading alarm, and in all ways encouraging and screening their desertion, which was considerable. It was well that a cautious, cool officer of the Company's army should have to deal with them in such a temper 363 miles from our frontier. General Pollock managed them extremely well."

† An intelligent and trustworthy officer of the 26th Native Infantry, whose letter is now before me, writes:

even to some of the officers of Wild's brigade, who did not hesitate openly to express at the mess-table the strongest opinions against a second attempt to force the Khybur, or to declare their belief that very few would ever return to Peshawur. One officer publicly asserted that it would be better to sacrifice Sale's brigade than to risk the loss of 12,000 men on the march to Jellalabad; and another said that, if an advance were ordered, he would do his best to dissuade every Sepoy of his corps from again entering the pass.*

To instil new courage and confidence into the waverers was no easy task; but coolly and sagaciously, as one who understood the causes of their disheartenment, and could make some allowances for their misconduct, Pollock addressed himself to the work of reanimating and reassuring them. He made them feel that they had been placed under the care of one who was mindful of their welfare and jealous of their honour—one who overlooked nothing that contributed to the health and comfort of his men, and who would never call upon them to make sacrifices which he himself was not prepared to make. There was, in all that he did, such an union of kindness and firmness—he was so mild, so considerate, and yet so decided—that the Sepoys came in time to regard him with that childlike faith which,

"In less than forty-eight hours after our (the 9th Foot and 26th Native Infantry) arrival, active emissaries, particularly from the 53rd and 60th Regiments, were in our camp, using every effort to induce our men to desert, and to refuse to enter the Khybur; and had actually gone the length of sending Brahmins with the Gunga Jul to swear them in not to advance; and did not desist until orders were given to seize the first man caught in the lines under suspicious circumstances. This information was several times communicated to me by old Sepoys and non-commissioned officers, and the fact of the attempts made to reduce the men from their allegiance is too well known to the officers of the 26th to admit of a moment's doubt."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

* *MS. Correspondence.* I need not say that these statements would not be made except upon the testimony of officers who heard the speeches to which I have referred.

under prosperous circumstances, is one of their most noticeable characteristics; and when the hour of trial came they were not found wanting.

All through the months of February and March, Pollock and his regiments remained inactive in the neighbourhood of Peshawur. Mortifying as it was to the General to be compelled to halt so long at the entrance of the Khybur Pass, no other course was open to him, at the time, that did not threaten renewed disaster. Pollock's position was, doubtless, painful, but it was not perplexing. His duty in this conjuncture was plain. The eyes of all India were turned upon him. The safety of the gallant garrison of Jellalabad was to be secured by his advance. Sale and Macgregor were writing urgent letters, calling upon him to push on without delay; but it was still his duty to halt. The Sepoys were gradually recovering both their health and their spirits. But reinforcements were coming across the Punjaub, with British dragoons and horse artillery among them; and nothing did more to animate and reassure those, who had been discouraged by previous failure, than the knowledge that when they readvanced they would be supported by fresh troops strong in every branch, and numbering among them a good proportion of stout European soldiers. Had the advance been ordered before the arrival of these reinforcements, it is at least a probable contingency that some of the Native regiments would have stood fast, and, by open mutiny almost in the face of the enemy, have heaped up before us a mountain of difficulty, such as no prudence and no energy on the part of a commander could ever suffice to overcome.

Still it required much firmness to resist the pressing appeals made to Pollock by his comrades at the other end of the Khybur Pass. He had not been many days

at Peshawur before he received the following communication from General Sale, setting forth the exigencies of the Jellalabad garrison, and urging him to advance to their relief. The letter, written partly in English and partly in French, is at once curious and important:

Jellalabad, February 14th, 1842.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

Captain Macgregor's cossids yesterday brought me the information of your arrival at Peshawur, and of full military and political powers in Afghanistan being vested in you. I lose no time in sending such a view of the state of this garrison as may enable you to form your own opinion on the necessity of moving to its relief. Nous avons des provisionnemens pour les soldats Britanniques pour soixante-dix jours, pour les Sipahis et les autres natifs demi-provisionnemens pour le même temps, et pour les chevaux de la cavalerie et l'artillerie de large pour vingt-cinq jours. Autant que nous pouvons renvoyer nos parties pour la fourrage, nous ne manquerons cela pour la cavalerie, mais nous serons entièrement privé de cette ressource après le premier jour d'investissement. A présent nous n'avons de fourrage que pour trente jours pour tous les animaux. Les chevaux d'artillerie et les yaboos des sapeurs sont de ce pays et mangent seulement boozeut kurlise. Nous manquons beaucoup aussi des munitions de guerre, plomb, &c.

When our animals can no longer be sustained by corn or forage only, we must of course destroy them. The hospitals are ill supplied with medicines, and much sickness may be apprehended when the weather grows hot. At present the health of the garrison is excellent. We have no prospect of adding to our resources above detailed even if we had money, which we have not. The country possesses abundance of supplies, of which the presence of a force would give us command.

Mahomed Akbar is at Cherbyl, in the Lughman district, and threatens an attack; and we may, in about fifteen days, though I think not sooner, be invested by a large force from Caubul, with a considerable artillery.

Believe me to be, my dear General,

Yours very truly,

RT. SALE, M.-G.

P.S.—I shall view la perte of my cavalry, should such occur, with much sorrow, as from their successes against the enemy they have acquired a confidence in themselves and contempt for their enemies, which feeling is equally participated in by the rest of the troops. As I cannot now get an opportunity to send you a return, I give a memorandum:—Cavalry, effective, deux cents quarante-un; malade, vingt-un. Artillerie, effective, un cent soixante-onze; malade, quarante-onze. Sapeurs, effective, trois cents quatre; malade, quarante-cinq. Infanterie Britannique, effective, sept cents dix-neuf; malade, trente. Sipahis, effective, huit cents trente-huit; malade, quarante-huit.

February 16.—Hier Mahomed Akbar a passé la rivière, et a pris position sur ce côté près de dix milles de cette ville. On dit qu'il a des soldats de tous armés et quatre pièces de canon. On peut voir son camp d'ici.

R. SALE.

February 16.—I have received this morning yours of the 9th instant. S'ils n'envoyent pas des canons de siège de Caubul, *peut-être* je puis maintenir ma position dans cette ville pour le temps que vous avez écrit; mais si une force avec les pièces (que nous avons perdu) arriveront ici, ce sera impossible, et avant cette époque nos chevaux moureront de faim. Il sera bien difficile et incertain de vous donner avis de mon intention de retirer, parce qu'à ce moment Mahomed Akbar est près avec une force de deux milles hommes (qui s'augmente jour par jour), et à présent ses patrouilles et videttes parcourent tout le pays.

RT. SALE, M.-G.*

A few days afterwards Sale again wrote to urge Pollock's advance. A great calamity had befallen the Jellalabad garrison. On the morning of the 19th of February the men were busied with their accustomed

* *MS. Records.* It will, doubtless, occur to the reader that in this letter Sale adopted the French disguise to very little purpose. The object of corresponding in this hybrid language was to prevent the meaning of the letters from transpiring in the event of their falling into the hands of the enemy, who had people in their employ capable of translating English. But Sale, in this letter, seems to have blurted out, in the plainest English, all that it was most expedient to conceal. He was too old a soldier to be very clever in such devices; and he had been too long fighting the battles of his country in India to write very unexceptionable French.

labour. With their arms piled within reach, they were plying axe and shovel, toiling with their wonted cheerfulness and activity at the defences, which they had begun to look upon with the satisfied air of men who had long seen their work growing under their hands, and now recognised the near approach of its completion. They had worked, indeed, to good purpose. Very different were the fortifications of Jellalabad from what they had been when Sale entered the place in November.* They were now real, not nominal defences. The unremitting toil of nearly three months had not been without its visible and appreciable results. It seemed, too, as though the work were about to be completed just at the time when the defences were most needed. Akbar Khan was in the neighbourhood of Jellalabad, and every day Sale expected that he would have to meet the flower of the Barukzye horse on the plain. But on this 19th of February, when the garrison were flushed with joy at the thought of the near completion of their work, a fearful visitation of Providence, suddenly and astoundingly, turned all their labour to very nothingness. There was an awful and mysterious sound, as of thunder beneath their feet; then the earth shook; the houses of the town trembled and fell; the ramparts of the fort seemed to reel and totter, and presently came down with a crash.† On the first

* The work of the Jellalabad garrison was not confined to the strengthening of their own defences. The destruction of all the adjoining cover for the enemy was no small part of their labour. With reference to these works, General Sale says, in his official report: "Generally I may state that they consisted in the destruction of an immense quantity of cover for the enemy, extending to the demolition of forts and old walls, filling up ravines and destroying gardens, and cutting down groves, raising the parapets to six or seven feet high, repairing and widening the ramparts, extending the bastions, retrenching three of the gates, covering the fourth with an outwork, and excavating a ditch ten feet in depth and twelve feet in width round the whole of the walls. The place was thus secure against the attacks of any Asiatic army not provided with siege artillery."

† "But it pleased Providence, on the 19th of February, to remove in an instant this ground of confidence. A

sound of the threatened convulsion the men had instinctively rushed to their arms, and the greater number had escaped the coming ruin; but it is still among those recollections of the defence which are dwelt upon by the "illustrious garrison" in the liveliest spirit of jocularity, how the field-officer of the day—a gallant and good soldier—but one who had more regard for external proprieties than was generally appreciated in those days, was buried beneath a heap of rubbish, and how he was extricated from his perilous position by some men of the 13th, under circumstances which even now they enjoy in the retrospect with a relish which years have not impaired.

Sale and Macgregor were both writing to Pollock when the earthquake threw down the walls of Jellalabad, and in a minute wrought more irreparable mischief than a bombarding army could have done in a month. Sale, still writing in French, reported the state of the garrison; whilst Macgregor described the incidents of the fearful visitation which had just descended upon them:

Jellalabad, February 19th, 1842.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

* * * A l'egard à mon pouvoir de maintenir ma position ici, j'ai déjà vous donné avis de tous mes moyens et

tremendous earthquake shook down all our parapets, built up with so much labour, injured several of our bastions, cast to the ground all our guard-houses, demolished a third of the town, made a considerable breach in the rampart of a curtain in the Peshawur face, and reduced the Caubul gate to a shapeless mass of ruins. It savours of romance, but is a sober fact, that the city was thrown into alarm, within the space of little more than one month, by the repetition of full one hundred shocks of this terrific phenomenon of nature."—[*Report of General Sale: Jellalabad, April* 16, 1842.] "On the 19th of February, an earthquake, which nearly destroyed the town, threw down the greater part of the parapets, the Caubul gate with two adjoining bastions, and a part of the new bastion which flanked it. Three other bastions were also nearly destroyed, whilst several large breaches were made in the curtain, and the Peshawur side, eighty feet long, was quite practicable, the ditch being filled, and the descent easy. Thus in one moment the labours of three months were in a great measure destroyed."—[*Report of Capt. Broadfoot, Garrison Engineer.*]

resource. Je n'ai pas rien de craindre de la force à present avec Akbar Khan, même si il est joint par tous les colors de Ningraher; mais je veux bien que vous vous comprenez que nos parapets ne sont pas assez forts pour resister les bouts de canon, et il est sujet de doubte si nous pouvons resister une siege pour peu de temps si l'enemi envoyent des pieces de siege de Cabul; et en aucune cas les chevaux de la cavalerie et de l'artillérie comme les yaboos et les chameaux après vingt-cinq jours periront. Cette epoque le rendre impossible pour nous à vous ajouter dans aucun plan de retraite que vous voudrais; et de plus il sera impossible communiquer avec vous au moment que je me trouverais au point d'être écrassé (overwhelmed) par une force irresistible. En perdant las yaboos et les chameaux, que sont absoluement necessaire pour les travaux de la fortification, je perd aussi tous mes moyens de transporter mes malades et les munitions de guerre, sans laquelle il ne faut pas contemple une retraite. J'ai extreme . . . . Soixante-huite chameaux et *cinq* trente neuf* yaboos. Ces circonstances me semble de demander que votre avance à notre secours sera prompt—the only means of securing the avowed object of government, *i.e.*, the relief of the troops who have so long defended Jellalabad. After writing the above, the dreadful earthquake of this day a fait tomber deux bastions, et plusieurs autres sont culles—une breche de cote de Peshawur dans les murs et beaucoup des maisons (casèmees) aussi. Sans doute l'enemi prend avantage de cet calamité. Nous travaillons sans cesse de reparer le dedommage.

Believe me to be, my dear General, yours, very truly,

R. SALE, M.-Genrl.†

* So worded in the original.

† *MS. Records.*—I give the postscript to this letter in a note, though of no historical importance, as I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting a tribute to the worth of one whom I am proud to recognise as a fellow-labourer in the field of Afghan history: "P.S.—Understanding from the 3rd para. of the letter from the Adjutant-Gen. that the authority of Major-Gen. Elphinstone has ceased, I venture to mention to you that Captain Havelock, 13th L.I., was appointed in general orders Persian Interpreter to the M. General so long as he continued to command in Afghanistan. He was by his permission, however, attached to me from the period of my force leaving Caubul, and I have received from him very valuable assistance in every way throughout our operations, as I have already intimated in public despatches. I trust you will pardon my undertaking to say, that if you would be pleased to re-appoint him to the same situation under yourself, I feel persuaded that his local experience would render him most useful to you. In the mean time I have nominated him Per. Intr. to myself, subject to confirmation, as I cannot, under present circumstances, dispense with his services. Be good enough to make this known also to H. E. the C. in C."

Jellalabad, February 19th, 1842.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

* * * Since I commenced writing to you, we have been visited by a very severe earthquake, which has in a great measure demolished two or three of our bastions, and nearly the whole of the parapet of the ramparts, to raise which cost the troops more than a couple of months of hard labour. A number of houses in the town have been thrown down by the shock, and the small court-yard attached to the house in which the General and myself reside, is filled with the rubbish of a number of out-offices which fell crashing at our feet, we having sought the centre of the yard as a place of safety. It was with difficulty we could preserve our footing, so great was the undulating motion of the ground we stood upon. Our dwelling-house seemed to heave to and fro as if it would topple on us. I have not heard of more than two or three persons who have been killed by the falling houses or walls. Colonel Monteith was buried up to the neck; but he has not, I believe, sustained any serious injury. If this town had been seriously bombarded for a month, I don't think it could have suffered more than at present. God grant that we may not have to witness anything so fearful again. I feel still giddy, although the earthquake took place a couple of hours ago. It is to be expected that on the enemy discovering the damage which our defences have sustained, they will be encouraged to attack us.

Gold mohurs and bootkees would be of use to us, but I fear that Mackeson would find it impracticable to send them to us in safety.

Captain Bygrave is alive and with Mahomed Akbar Khan. Captain Souter, 44th Regiment, is also there. He saved the Queen's colour of his regiment by rolling it round his waist, and he writes that a shot struck him there, and the colour saved his life. Believe me, very truly yours,

G. H. MACGREGOR.

But, in nowise disheartened by this calamity, the Jellalabad garrison again took the spade and the pic-axe into their hands, and toiled to repair the mischief. "No time," says Captain Broadfoot, "was lost. The shocks had scarcely ceased when the whole garrison was told off into working parties, and before night the

breaches were scarped, the rubbish below cleared away, and the ditches before them dug out, whilst the great one on the Peshawur side was surrounded by a good gabion parapet. A parapet was erected on the remains of the north-west bastion, with an embrasure allowing the guns to flank the approach of the ruined Caubul gate; the parapet of the new bastion was restored, so as to give a flanking fire to the north-west bastion, whilst the ruined gate was rendered inaccessible by a trench in front of it, and in every bastion round the place a temporary parapet was raised. From the following day all the troops off duty were continually at work, and such was their energy and perseverance, that by the end of the month the parapets were entirely restored, or the curtain filled in where restoration was impracticable, and every battery re-established. The breaches have been built up, with the rampart doubled in thickness, and the whole of the gates retrenched." —Such, indeed, was the extraordinary vigour thrown into the work of restoration—such the rapidity with which the re-establishment of the defences was completed, that the enemy, seeing soon afterwards no traces of the great earthquake-shock of the 19th of February, declared that the phenomenon must have been the result of English witchcraft, for that Jellalabad was the only place that had escaped.

If Akbar Khan, who at this time was within a few miles of Sale's position, knew the extent to which the defences of Jellalabad had been weakened, he committed a strange oversight in not taking advantage of such a casualty. The garrison felt assured that the Barukzyes would not throw away such a chance; and they made up their minds resolutely for the encounter. Intelligence had just been received of the publication of the government manifesto of the 31st of January; and this spasmodic burst of energy and indignation, wel-

comed as an indication of the intention of the Supreme Government to wipe out at all hazards the stains that had been fixed upon the national honour, fortified and reassured the heroes of Jellalabad, who had been grieving over the apparent feebleness and apathy of the official magnates at Calcutta.*

They had felt, with some acuteness of mortification, the neglect to which they had seemingly been subjected;† but all personal feeling was soon drowned in an overwhelming sense of what was due to their insulted country. Now, therefore, that Lord Auckland had declared that he regarded the disasters that had befallen us merely as so many new opportunities of demonstrating the military power of the British Empire in the East, the hearts of the brave men, who had been so long defying the enemy that had destroyed Elphinstone's army, again began to leap up with hope and exultation; and as they saw their defences rising again, almost as it were by supernatural agency, before their eyes, they began rather to regret the caution of the Barukzye chief which seemed to restrain him from venturing under the walls of Jellalabad.

There seems, indeed, to have been in the Afghan

* "The officers of the garrison," wrote Macgregor to Pollock on the 21st of February, "came upon rations to-day. They are willing to brave all difficulties and dangers, now that they feel certain that government will resent the insult offered to our national honour by these rascally Afghans." And again, on the same day, writing to the same correspondent, he said: "I am glad to find that government intend to uphold the national honour by resenting the insults which have been offered to it by the rascally Afghans; and I feel assured that this garrison will continue to perform the part which has devolved upon them at this crisis with credit to themselves and advantage to the state. General Sale intends to publish in to-day's garrison orders the proclamation of the Indian Government, a copy of which you kindly sent to me by Torabaz's Sowars."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

† The rescue of the Jellalabad garrison had in reality been the primary—indeed, the sole acknowledged reason of the movement in advance; but the Supreme Government, whilst by no means unmindful of the claims of the Jellalabad garrison, long omitted to communicate with Sale or Macgregor—to convey to them directly any instructions for their guidance, or any expressions of approbation of their conduct.

camp a strange shrinking from anything like a hand-to-hand encounter with the intrepid soldiers of Sale's brigade. The reluctance of Akbar Khan to near the walls of Jellalabad is a painful commentary upon the arrogance and audacity of the Afghans, who a few weeks before had been bearding Elphinstone and Shelton under the shadow of the Caubul cantonments. Akbar Khan now seemed resolute to risk nothing by any dashing movement, that might decide, at once, the fate of the Jellalabad garrison. Instead of assaulting the place he blockaded it.

He seemed to trust to the efficacy of a close investment; and so moved in his troops nearer and nearer to our walls, hoping to effect that by starvation which he could not effect by hard fighting in the field. And so, for some time, he continued, drawing in more and more closely—harassing our foraging parties, and occasionally coming into contact with the horsemen who were sent out to protect the grass-cutters. Not, however, before the 11th of March was there any skirmishing worthy of record. Then it was reported that the enemy were about to mine the place. *Sungahs* had been thrown up on the night of the 10th, and the enemy were firing briskly from behind them. It was plain that some mischief was brewing; so on the morning of the 11th, Sale, keeping his artillery at the guns on the ramparts, sent out a strong party of infantry and cavalry, with two hundred of Broadfoot's sappers. Dennie commanded the sortie. As they streamed out of the Peshawur gate of the city, Akbar Khan seemed inclined to give them battle. But ever as the enemy advanced the hot fire from our guns drove them back. They could not advance upon our works, nor protect the *sungahs* which our skirmishers were rapidly destroying. It was soon ascertained that the story of the mine was a mere fable; ammunition was

too scarce to be expended on any but necessary service; so there was nothing more to be done. Dennie sounded the recall. The British troops began to fall back upon their works; and then the enemy, emboldened by the retrograde movement, fell upon our retiring column; and though, no sooner had our people halted and reformed, than the Afghans turned and fled, they wrought us some mischief, for they wounded Broadfoot; and those were days when an accident to the garrison engineer was, indeed, a grievous calamity. Not a man, however, of Sale's brigade was killed. The carnage was all among the enemy.

The remainder of the month passed quietly away—but the anxieties of the garrison were steadily increasing. Provisions had become scarce; ammunition was scarce; fodder for the horses was not to be obtained. It was obviously the design of the enemy to reduce the garrison by a strict blockade. It would be difficult to exaggerate the eagerness with which, under such circumstances, they looked for the arrival of succours from Peshawur. Excellent as were Pollock's reasons for not proceeding to the relief of Jellalabad until his force was strengthened by the arrival of the European regiments on their way to Peshawur, it is easy to understand, and impossible to condemn, the eagerness with which Sale and Macgregor continued to exhort him to advance for their succour. The correspondence, brief but emphatic, which passed between the two Generals at this time, better than anything else unfolds the real nature of their respective positions. On the 8th of March Sale despatched this letter to Pollock:

Jellalabad, March 8th, 1842, 9 P.M.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I had the pleasure of receiving a few hours ago yours of the 26th ultimo. I must confess that its contents have deeply

disappointed me, since I gather from it that it is not your intention to advance to my succour until you shall have been reinforced by the brigade which you expect to reach Peshawur on the 22nd instant. Now, independently of other considerations, Macgregor will inform you that he yesterday got a Dust-i-Khat from the Shah's Durbar at Caubul, demanding categorically our evacuation of this place. He referred the King and his councillors to you, and their next measure will probably be to march an overwhelming force against us, aided by our captured iron nine-pounders. I have reiterated in several letters the fact that mes mains ne sont pas assez forts pour resister tel artillerie, and therefore desire to make you once more fully aware of the risk, if not certainty, of our being overpowered if your advance to our support is not sufficiently prompt to anticipate this movement of our enemies. The responsibility, therefore, of such a result, will now rest entirely upon you, and not on me. Money is not now of the slightest use to me, Mahomed Akbar having established a most rigid blockade, which effectually prevents all supplies from reaching us. Our foraging parties are also daily attacked.

Believe me to be, my dear General, yours sincerely,

ROBERT SALE, M.-G.

P.S.—As I remark that your letter does not contain any distinct avowal of an intention of advancing even when your reinforcements reach you, I shall be obliged, for the sake of this garrison, if you will specifically inform me when it is probable I may calculate on its being relieved.*

At the same time Macgregor despatched another letter of a similar tendency, and to this letter Pollock replied:

March 12th, 1842.

MY DEAR MACGREGOR,

I will write you a very short note with reference to yours and Sale's of the 8th. It must no doubt appear to you and Sale most extraordinary that, with the force I have here, I do not at once move on. God knows it has been my anxious wish to do so, but I have been helpless. I came on ahead to Peshawur to

* *MS. Correspondence.*

arrange for an advance, but was saluted with a report of 1900 sick, and a bad feeling among the Sepoys. I visited the hospitals, and endeavoured to encourage by talking to them, but they *had no heart*. I hoped that when the time came they would go. This, however, I could not write to you or Sale in *ink*, either in English or French. On the 1st instant the feeling on the part of the Sepoys broke out; and I had the mortification of knowing that the Hindoos, of four out of five native corps, refused to advance. I immediately took measures to sift the evil, and gradually a reaction has taken place, in the belief that I will wait for reinforcements. This has caused me the utmost anxiety on your account. Your situation is never out of my thoughts; but having told you what I have, you and Sale will at once see that necessity alone has kept me here.

I have sent five expresses to hurry on the first division of the next brigade. It consists of the 3rd Dragoons, a troop of Horse Artillery, 1st Light Cavalry, the 33rd N.I., and two companies of the 6th N.I., all fresh and without a taint. I really believe that if I were to attempt to move on now without the reinforcement, the four regiments implicated would, as far as the Hindoos are concerned, stand fast. Pray, therefore, tell me, without the least reserve, the latest day you can hold out. If I could, I would tell you the day when I expect reinforcements, but I cannot. I may, however, I believe with safety say, that they will arrive by the end of this month.

The case, therefore, now stands thus:—Whether I am to attempt with my present materials to advance, and to risk the appearance of disaffection or cowardice, which in such a case could not again be got over, or wait the arrival of a reinforcement, which will make all sure. This is the real state of the case. If I attempted now, it might risk you altogether; but if you can hold out, the reinforcements would make your relief as certain as any earthly thing can be.

Our only object in going to Jellalabad is to relieve you and bring you back with us to this; but it is necessary that this should be kept a profound secret.

I am, &c. &c.

GEORGE POLLOCK.*

* This letter is given in the published papers.

To this Sale replied:

Jellalabad, 23rd March, 1842.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

Yesterday arrived yours of the 12th instant, addressed jointly to Captain Macgregor and myself. I have only, in reply thereto, to say that in my last I informed you definitively that I would, by God's blessing, hold this place to the 31st instant, by which time you acquainted me that you could arrive at Jallalabad with the dragoons. You now state to me your expectation that they will only reach your present encampment by that date. Our European soldiers are now on two-thirds of their rations of salt meat, and this the commissariat supply; on the 4th proximo that part of the force will then be without meat, notwithstanding every arrangement to lessen the consumption. I have this day directed all the camels to be destroyed, with the view of preserving the *boosa* for the horses of the cavalry and artillery; and these valuable animals cannot receive any rations of grain whatever after the 1st proximo, but must be subsisted entirely on *boosa* and grass, if the latter can be procured.

Believe me to be, yours sincerely,

R. SALE.*

Pollock had expected the dragoons would reach Peshawur by the 20th of March; but on the 27th they had not arrived; and the General wrote to Jellalabad, explaining the causes of delay, but still hoping that he would be able to commence his march on the last day of the month. "There appears," he wrote, "to be nothing but accidents to impede the advance of the dragoons. They were five days crossing the Ravee. I have sent out 300 camels to help them in; and I hope nothing will prevent my moving on the 31st. God knows I am most anxious to move on, for I know that delay will subject us to be exposed to very hot weather. But my situation has been most embarrassing. Any attempt at a forward movement in the early part of this month I do not think would have succeeded, for at one time

* *MS. Correspondence.*

the Hindoos did not hesitate to say that they would *not* go forward. I hope the horror they had has somewhat subsided; but without more white faces I question even now if they would go. Since the 1st we have been doing all to recover a proper tone; but you may suppose what my feelings have been, wishing to relieve you, and knowing that my men would not go. However desirable it is that I should be joined by the 31st Regiment, your late letters compel me to move, and I hope, therefore, to be with you by about the 7th. I cannot say the day exactly, because I want to take Ali-Musjid. When that is taken, your situation may, perhaps, become better."* The dragoons reached Pollock's camp on the 30th, and on the following day he began to move forward.

* *General Pollock to General Sale: March 27th*, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.* Pollock did not exaggerate the backwardness of the Native regiments, or the importance of associating with them a larger body of Europeans. Even the new corps which were moving up from the provinces, and which the General believed to be "without a taint," were openly expressing their disinclination to advance. Shere Singh mentioned this to Mr. Clerk. "Yesterday, early," wrote the latter, "the Maharajah, Rajah Dhyan Singh, and myself being together for a short time, quite unattended, they told me that Commandant Cheyt Singh, who had come into Lahore for a day from Colonel Bolton's camp, to escort which from Ferozepore to Peshawur the Durbar had appointed him, had mentioned that our Sepoys in that brigade did not like going to the westward, and were sometimes grouped eight or ten together, expressing their dissatisfaction; but that on the other hand the Europeans (her Majesty's 31st and artillery) were much delighted at the prospect of fighting with the Afghans. The Maharajah added, 'If you could send two or three more European corps, they would penetrate the Khybur or anywhere else so successfully against the Afghans, that the Hindoos, who are now alarmed, would, after one action, all take heart again.'"—[*Mr. Clerk to Government: Lahore, March 19th*, 1842. *MS. Records.*]

CHAPTER V.

[April, 1842.]

The Forcing of the Khybur Pass—State of the Sikh Troops—Mr. Clerk at the Court of Lahore—Views of the Lahore Durbar—Efforts of Shere Singh—Assemblage of the Army at Jumrood—Advance to Ali-Musjid—Affairs at Jellalabad—Defeat of Akbar Khan—Junction of Pollock and Sale.

WHATEVER embarrassments may have lain in the way of General Pollock during these months of February and March, and compelled him, eager as he was to advance to the relief of Jellalabad, to remain inactive at Peshawur, it is certain that they were greatly increased by the reluctance of our Sikh allies to face the passes of the Khybur. The conduct of the Nujeeb battalions, which had mutinied on the very eve of Wild's movement into the pass, left no room to hope for any effectual co-operation from that source. All the efforts of Captain Lawrence to obtain any assistance from the Sikh troops at Peshawur, through General Mehtab Singh,* had failed;

* Shere Singh was at this time a confirmed drunkard, and he thought more of potations than of politics. When the first intelligence of our Caubul disasters reached him, Mr. Clerk wrote: "The effect which these events in Caubul will have on Lahore, will, I imagine, be as follows. The Rajahs will inwardly rejoice thereat; the Khalsa will be vexed at any Mahomedan exultation; and Shere Singh will congratulate himself on the prospect this may open to him of drawing closer his relations with us as a means of procuring good champagne."—[*Mr. Clerk to Mr. Robertson: Nov.* 29, 1841. *MS. Records.*]

and Lawrence was of opinion that the General's conduct, in admitting the Afreedis into his camp, had established such a clear case of hostility, that he and his traitorous followers ought to be dismissed with disgrace. But now that Rajah Gholab Singh, accompanied by the Crown Prince of Lahore, was advancing with his regiments to Peshawur, as those regiments were composed of a different class of men, and the influence of the Rajah over these hill-levies was great, it was hoped, that on his junction with General Pollock's camp, a new order of things would be established. But it soon became painfully evident to the General that very little cordial co-operation was to be looked for from the Jummoo Rajah and his troops.

When, early in February, Pollock, on his way to Peshawur, reached the Attock, he found the left bank of the river occupied by the Sikh troops under Gholab Singh, whilst the Nujeeb battalions, which had disgraced themselves a few weeks before, were posted on the opposite side.* Captain Lawrence, who had left Peshawur to expedite the Rajah's movements, was then in the Sikh camp; and M'Caskill's brigade was a few marches in the rear. There appeared every likelihood, therefore, of a collision that would impede the progress of the British troops; but the exertions of Pollock and

* Their design was to arrest the progress of Gholab Singh's force; and some of our officers thought that the Rajah ought to have attacked them. But Mr. Clerk was of opinion that his forbearance was a proof of his friendship towards us. "In the same manner," he wrote, "that the reluctance of Rajah Gholab Sing to have recourse to measures of open hostility towards the Mussulman battalions, when arrayed against him across the Attock, was, I believe, in a great measure caused by his apprehension of embarrassing the British brigade coming up and near at hand, should he be found making of the high road an unseemly and uncertain field of battle for the coercion of mutinous battalions, so I conceive that he may very naturally feel disinclined hastily to pledge himself to take as far as Jellalabad, or into any arduous service, troops which for fourteen months past have generally assumed a tone of defiance of the control of their appointed officers."—[*Mr. George Clerk to Government: February* 13, 1842. *MS. Records.*]

Lawrence were crowned with success; and the Sikh force moved off before M'Caskill's brigade arrived on the banks of the river. On the 14th, Gholab Singh and the Prince reached Peshawur. On the 20th, Pollock held a conference with the Rajah—Lawrence and Mackeson being present — and a day or two afterwards, forwarding an abstract of the conversation that had taken place between them, wrote to the Supreme Government: "I confess that I have no expectation of any assistance from the Sikh troops."

On the conduct of Gholab Singh at this time, some suspicion has been cast. It has been said that he not only instigated, through the agency of an influential messenger, the Nujeeb battalions to rebel, but carried on a friendly correspondence with our Afghan enemies at Caubul. That there was no hearty co-operation, is true; but hearty co-operation was not to be expected. Gholab Singh had other work on hand at that time; and, whilst he was playing and losing a great game in Thibet, it would have been strange, indeed, if he had thrown his heart into the work which he was called upon to perform for others at the mouth of the Khybur Pass. He had no confidence in his troops. He had no inducement to exert himself.* The latter obstacle, it was thought, might be removed; and Lawrence and Mackeson were of opinion that it would be well to bribe him into activity by the

* Gholab Singh was employed in the Hazareh country in operations against Poyndah Khan and a rebel force when he was summoned to proceed to Peshawur. At this time, too, the Jummoo Rajah had an army in Ladakh and Thibet engaged in active warfare with the Chinese, and it was sustaining serious reverses at the time that Gholab Singh was called upon to aid the British Government. "What with this reverse on the eastern frontier of his possessions," wrote Mr. Clerk to government, "and the apprehension that in his absence his lately victorious troops will lose ground in the Hazareh country, Rajah Gholab Singh evinces little ardour to co-operate with the Sikh troops at Peshawur. It is also probable that the Jummoo Rajah would rather contemplate the difficulties of the British Government in that quarter, than be instrumental in removing them."—[*Mr. Clerk to Government: January* 20, 1842.]

offer of Jellalabad, to be held by him independently of the Sikh ruler; but Mr. Clerk was of opinion that such a measure would be neither politic nor honest.* It would, indeed, at that time, have been an injustice done by the British Government against both the other parties to the Tripartite treaty. It would have injuriously affected both Shah Soojah and Shere Singh; and would have involved the Jummoo Rajah in difficulties and perplexities from which he would have found it difficult to extricate himself. Indeed, Captain Mackeson himself very soon came to the opinion that, if we desired to bribe Gholab Singh into co-operation by promises of territorial aggrandisement, it was necessary that we should lay our finger on some other part of the map than that which represented Jellalabad; and he asked whether Shikarpoor,

* On the 10th of February Mr. Clerk wrote to the Government Secretary: "There seems to have been no good reason for the delay of Rajah Gholab Singh in crossing the Attock, unless he really feared a collision with the Nujeeb battalions, encamped on the other side. But for the Rajah's apparent reluctance immediately to undertake to co-operate in the Khybur Pass, there may be better grounds. These may be either an apprehension of his inability to oppose the enemy there; or, as supposed by Captain Lawrence, a want of incentive to exertion — or both these causes may retard his movements. In regard to the former, the presence of the large body of British troops assembling at Peshawur will encourage him. With respect to the latter, I should be glad to be provided with the instructions of government." —[*MS. Records.*]

Writing again, on the 13th of February, he says: "In regard to the means of inducing zealous co-operation on the part of the Sikh troops, I do not think that the expectations of Captains Mackeson and Lawrence are quite reasonable, or the almost indefinite extent of proposed reward judicious, or the direct negotiation with the Jummoo Rajahs for their immediate aggrandisement honourable. . . . It would not be compatible with the friendship long subsisting between the British Government and the Lahore Government, now to assign suddenly and directly to the Jummoo Rajahs any territories as a compensation for services demanded of the Sikh Durbar. This would be precipitating the decline of a power which it may be soon expedient to prop, both against Afghans and Jummooees."—[*MS. Records.*] But though Mr. Clerk thought, at this time, that it would not be honourable openly to treat with the Jummoo Rajahs for the transfer of Jellalabad, he was not unwilling to place it permanently in their hands by a stroke of *finesse*. I confess that I cannot see very distinctly how the course suggested by Mr. Clerk is so much more "honourable," and "compatible with friendship," than that suggested by Captains Mackeson and Lawrence.

which Runjeet Singh had coveted, and which the Tripartite treaty had snatched from him, "would not do better."*

In the mean while, it appeared to Mr. Clerk that his presence at the Court of the Sikh ruler, would have the effect of cementing the alliance between the two states, and enable him the better to obtain from the Lahore Government the military assistance that was so greatly needed. He had never doubted the good faith of the Maharajah himself. Whatever selfish motives he may have attributed to him, it was not to be doubted that at this time his feeling and his conduct alike were those of a friend. Clerk declared that no native state had ever taken such great pains to accelerate the movement of our troops by preventing plunder, supplying boats at the ferries, and furnishing food for the use of our army. He had given us the best aid and the best advice, and in the opinion of the British agent was willing to act up to the spirit of the Tripartite treaty. He was, indeed, the only man in the Punjaub who really desired our success.

On the 2nd of March, Clerk, arrived at Umritsur, resolute to "get what he could out of the Sikhs."† Early on the following morning he waited on Shere Singh. The first visit was a visit of condolence on the deaths of Kurruck Singh and his son. The attendance

* "Lawrence is making out a digest of our conversation with the Rajah yesterday. I should say that not even with Sultan Mahomed Khan would the Sikhs hold Jellalabad with any advantage to themselves. If we would bribe them with offers of territory, it must be in some other direction. Would Shikarpoor do better?" —[*Mackeson to Clerk: Feb.* 21, 1842. *MS. Records.*]

† "My course, I think, is clear—to get what I can out of the Sikhs, and, if to my mind that is anything like substantial co-operation in advancing or even securing support in the rear, to accept it for General Pollock if he will use it, and officially to recommend to him that, if it proves serviceable, he should, contrary to the orders of government, continue to maintain Jellalabad, whilst awaiting further orders from government on the subject." — [*Mr. Clerk to Mr. Robertson: Umritsur, March* 4, 1842.]

at the Durbar was small. No troops were in waiting beyond a single wing of a battalion drawn up to salute the arrival and departure of the British Mission. The Court were in mourning of white. Everything about the Durbar was quiet and subdued. It was a meeting of condolence on both sides. Clerk's expressions of regret were reciprocated by those which the Sikh ruler freely uttered with reference to the death of Sir William Macnaghten. Dhyan Singh and the Fakir Azizoodeen were both loud in their praises of the envoy; and expressed a lively hope that the treacherous Afghans would be duly punished for their offences. After other complimentary interchanges, the Mission departed; and on the following morning proceeded to pay a visit of congratulation to the new ruler. The Court now wore a different aspect. Along the garden-walks stretched walls of crimson broad-cloth, and lines of armed Goorcherrahs, in new appointments, glittered along the paths. Everything was bright and joyous. The courtiers shone in splendid apparel. The Maharajah himself was bright with jewels, of which the *Koh-i-noor* was the lustrous chief. The young Rajah Heera Singh, old Runjeet's minion, radiant with emeralds and pearls, sate beside Shere Singh, whilst his father, the minister, stood behind the regal chair. The officers of the British Mission sate on a row of chairs opposite; and the old Fakir Azizoodeen was seated on the floor beside the chair of the British chief. The conversation was of a general and complimentary character. The *Khelat* of accession was presented to the new ruler; the fidelity of the Sikh Government and the character of its administration were belauded; and then the Mission took its departure.

On the 5th, Clerk, having intimated his desire to wait on the Maharajah, to discuss matters of business, was invited to attend at his own time. He went in the after-

noon; and at once solicited the honour of a private audience. Heera Singh was sitting beside him, and other courtiers were in attendance. A motion of the hand dismissed them all; and Clerk was invited to seat himself in Heera Singh's chair. But the British minister, not wishing that the conversation should be carried on without any witnesses, suggested the recall of Dhyan Singh and the Fakir, who, with Heera Singh and one or two others, were present at the interview. Clerk had a difficult game to play at this time. He had to obtain the most effectual co-operation of the Sikh Government that could be elicited in this hour of trial; and yet he was unwilling to lay bare to the Sikh Durbar the real designs of his own government. He had been directed to disclose those designs to the Sikhs—to intimate that it was the intention of the British government, after rescuing the Jellalabad garrison, to withdraw the army to the British frontier; but inwardly indignant at the feebleness of the policy which was favoured at Calcutta, he shrunk from avowing these intentions of withdrawal, and endeavoured rather to elicit the views of the Lahore Cabinet than to expose the designs of his own. But Shere Singh was not inclined to be less cautious than the British envoy. When Clerk asked what he intended to do to rescue Sale's garrison from destruction, the Maharajah replied that the Sikhs were very desirous to aid the British Government, but that the matter called for consideration. Bristling up at the coolness of this reply, Clerk said that the whole question of the alliance between the two states might call for future consideration, but that the present moment, when the safety of a beleaguered garrison was at stake, was no time for consideration. Qualifying then his former remark, the Sikh ruler said that he meant only that the mode of procedure called for consideration, and he

began to talk about the advantage of erecting sungahs and crowning the heights of the Khybur Pass*—to all of which Clerk readily assented. Then Dhyan Singh, who all this time had been sitting silent, with a dejected air and drooping head, now looked up, and with a cheerful countenance began to take part in the conversation. He had before seemed to think that the purport of the discussion was to consign his brother, Gholab Singh, to inevitable destruction; but he now said that he was certain the troops under the command of that chief would willingly co-operate with the British; but that "an iron lock required an iron key." He then abruptly asked why more British troops were not sent?† —and the Fakir Azizoodeen whispered the same question. Clerk could have blurted out an answer to this —but it was one which would have opened the eyes of the Sikh Durbar, more than it was desirable to open them, to the true nature of British policy at this time, and the true character of our rulers. He, therefore, answered in general terms that the British Government were collecting troops; but that, nevertheless, the co-operation of the Sikh Government was much desired; and, whilst he added that an intimation would be sent to General Pollock regarding the manner in which the Durbar recommended the war in the Khybur to be carried on, Shere Singh promised to send the desired instructions to Gholab Singh; and so the conference ended.

True to his word, the Maharajah at once despatched instructions to Gholab Singh to co-operate heartily and steadily with General Pollock and Captain Mackeson; and it is believed that at the same time Dhyan Singh

* This was merely an echo of what Gholab Singh had been recommending by letter to the Maharajah.

† There were more than enough, the minister said, to beat all Afghanistan on the plains, but it was a different thing to convey supplies through the defiles of the Khybur.

wrote privately to his brother in a similar strain of exhortation and encouragement. But it was plain to Mr. Clerk that both the Sovereign and his minister regarded, with feelings of painful anxiety, the necessity of avoiding an open rupture with the British Government by aiding in the perilous work that lay before the troops posted at Peshawur. Mr. Clerk remained at the Maharajah's Court, which had removed itself from Umritsur to Lahore, and exerted himself to keep up the fidelity of our ally to the right point of effective co-operation. But as time advanced, Shere Singh became more and more uneasy and apprehensive. It appeared to him that a failure in the Khybur Pass would bring down such a weight of unpopularity upon him that his very throne would be jeopardised by the disaster. One day—it was the 4th of April—holding Durbar in the Huzooree-Bagh, Shere Singh appeared ill at ease. Having conversed a little while on general topics, but with an abstracted air, he ordered the intelligence forwarded to him by the Peshawur news-writers to be read to the British envoy; then took him by the hand and led him to another seat in the garden. Alone with the English gentleman, the Sikh ruler opened out his heart to him. He was concerned, he said, to learn that the British authorities at Peshawur were making no progress in their negotiations for the purchase of a safe passage through the Khybur, and were disinclined to accept the offers of the old Barukzye Governor of Peshawur, Sultan Mahomed, who had declared his willingness to "divide, scatter, and make terms with" our enemies. He apprehended that there would be much fighting and much slaughter; and it was only too probable that the Sikh troops at Peshawur, seeing clearly the danger of the movement, and not by any means understanding the advantages that would accrue to them from it, would

refuse to enter the pass. Or if they entered it, it was probable that they would suffer severely at the hands of the Afghans—and in either case, as he had been continually writing to Peshawur to impress upon the officers there the necessity of effective co-operation with the British, the odium would descend upon him, and perhaps cost him his throne. It was easier to listen to all this than to reply to it. Clerk saw as plainly as the Maharajah himself, that as the Sikh troops had always evinced an insuperable repugnance to enter the Khybur Pass, even when the glory of the Khalsa was to be advanced by the movement, and the dominions of the Lahore Government to be extended, it was hardly reasonable to expect them to show greater alacrity in the advancement of the objects of another nation whom they cordially detested, and whose disasters they regarded with secret delight.*

But whilst Shere Singh was thus expressing his misgivings at Lahore, and the British agent was inwardly acknowledging the reasonable character of the Maharajah's doubts, the Sikh troops at Peshawur were settling down into a state of quiet obedience, and making up their minds to penetrate the Khybur Pass. The letters despatched by Shere Singh and his minister to Avitabile and Gholab Singh had not been without their effect. A confidential friend and adviser of the

* "The aversion which the Sikhs have to penetrate the Khybur is not more inconvenient to the British Government than it is alarming to the Maharajah; for their resentment against the government, which has imposed upon them the arduous duty, will be enhanced, should they suffer from the swords of the Afghans. Nor can any thinking person in this Durbar fail to apprehend that by proceeding to invade Afghanistan in support of its ally, whilst deprived by the circumstances of the alliance of all latitude of securing parties among the Afghans, such as it would create and turn to advantage in aid of its encroachments, if acting on its own account, it may be raising a hornet's nest which may involve the Khalsa in long wars for the preservation of its territories on the Indus." —[*Mr. George Clerk to Government: Lahore, April 5, 1842. MS. Records.*]

Sikh ruler — Boodh Singh—had arrived at Peshawur, charged with messages from the King and the minister, which were supposed to have had an effect upon the Jummoo Rajah, sudden and great. Lawrence, too, had been busy in the Sikh camp, and little anticipating the circumstances under which it was decreed that they should one day meet in that lovely province of the old Douranee Empire over which the Jummoo Rajah now exercises undisputed dominion, had been holding long conferences with Gholab Singh. The good tact, good temper, and quiet firmness of General Pollock, had been exercised with the best results, and the arrival of further reinforcements of European troops had done much to give new confidence to the Khalsa. And so it happened, that when General Pollock prepared to enter the Khybur Pass, the Sikh troops had resolved not to suffer their faces to be blackened before all India; and really, when the hour for exertion came, did more for the honour of their own arms and the support of the British Government than the most sanguine of our officers had ventured to expect.

The dragoons and the horse artillery reached Peshawur on the 29th of March, and Pollock at once made his preparations to enter the Khybur Pass. On the 31st he pitched his camp at Jumrood, in the expectation of advancing on the following morning; but new elements of delay arose. The camel-drivers were deserting. Gholab Singh had not moved up his camp. And, above all, the rain was descending in floods. It would have dispirited the troops to have moved them forward at such a time, and rendered more difficult the advance of the baggage. Pollock had done his best to diminish to the least possible amount the number of carriage-cattle that were to move with him into the Khybur Pass. But an Indian commander has no more

difficult duty than this. Under no circumstances is the general addition to much baggage very easily overcome. Men are not readily persuaded to leave their comforts behind them. A fine soldierly appeal was issued to the army;* and men of all ranks felt that it came from an officer who was not less ready to make sacrifices himself than to call upon others to make them.† Circumstances, too, at this time, tended to reduce the amount of the baggage. The camel-drivers had deserted in such numbers, that there was not even sufficient carriage for the ammunition. The 33rd Regiment, which had just arrived at Peshawur, could not come up to the encamping-ground for want of cattle; and another day's halt was the result of the delay.‡ In the mean while, the

* After alluding to the defence of Jellalabad, and the probability that the Peshawur force would immediately advance to its relief, General Pollock said: "Success in relieving these troops will raise for this force the admiration and gratitude of all India, and the Major-General commanding feels assured that officers and men will cheerfully make any sacrifices to attain so noble an object. He therefore now calls upon the Brigadiers to assemble the commanding officers under their orders, and determine on the least quantity of baggage and the smallest number of camp-followers with which their regiments can advance. The success of this enterprise will greatly depend upon the quantity of baggage taken, as from the nature of the country between Peshawur and Jellalabad, the line most consistent with safety must be as little encumbered as possible. The Major-General commanding trusts that the confidence he feels in the troops will be repaid by their confidence in him. The soldiers may rest assured that his thoughts are constantly engaged in ensuring their provisions and securing their comforts, and they may be convinced they will never be called upon by him to make useless sacrifices, or to undergo unnecessary hardships. Arrangements will be made for placing such baggage as may be left behind, in perfect security at Peshawur."

† He had reduced his own baggage-cattle to one camel and two mules.

‡ "My detention here has been most annoying. We have had heavy rain, and the Sikhs begged that I would wait till to-morrow. I have consented to this, because the troops of both powers advancing simultaneously for the same purpose ought to produce a good effect. I should have been better pleased had Mahomed Akbar not sent the last reinforcement—save the guns, which I hope we shall be able to give a good account of. The pluck of the Sepoys is doubtful; but I hope when we carry the mouth of the pass, they will feel confidence. The 9th are most anxious to be let loose, and—please God! by to-morrow, we shall be well into the pass . . . I still much regret that I have not the 31st; but after Sir Robert Sale's letter received some time back, I consider that he has put it out of my power to wait

Sepoys were deserting from Wild's brigade; and no satisfactory progress was making in the negotiations which Mackeson had been carrying on for the purchase of a free passage through the Khybur from the Afreedi Maliks.* But there was one advantage in the delay. It gave time for the Sikh troops to prepare themselves, after their own fashion, to co-operate with our army, and General Pollock felt that whatever might be the amount of active assistance to be derived from the efforts of our allies, a combined movement would have a good moral effect.

Early on the morning of the 5th of April, General Pollock struck his camp, and began to move upon Ali-Musjid.

Before leaving their encamping-ground at Kawulsur, and marching to Jumrood, the order of march had been laid down, and had been well studied by commanding officers. Brigadier Wild was to command the advance guard, and General M'Caskill the rear. At the head of the column were to march the grenadier company of the 9th Queen's Regiment, one company of the 26th Native Infantry, three companies of the 30th Native

longer, although I am quite sure that the addition of 900 Europeans would have operated very favorably for the prisoners. I, however, hope that you will be able, through the Ghilzyes, to pave the way for their release when we reach you."—[*General Pollock to Captain Macgregor: Jumrood, April* 3, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

* The negotiations, indeed, failed altogether. The chiefs had given hostages, and were to have received 50,000 rupees, for the safe conduct of the force from Jumrood to Dhaka—one moiety to be paid in advance, and the other on the army reaching the latter place. "They were to clear the pass for us to Dhaka, and make arrangements for guarding it afterwards. They engaged to remove all hostile Afreedis from the pass, as far as Ali-Musjid, and then we were to repel any troops of Mahomed Akbar Khan sent to oppose us."—[*Captain Mackeson to General Pollock: April* 2, 1842. *MS. Records.*] Mackeson adds: "Yesterday the Afreedis in our pay proposed to seize on the mouth of the pass; but as the Sikhs were not ready to move on, and they promised to be ready on the following day, the movement was postponed. To-day the Afreedis of our party have pleaded that Mahomed Akbar's troops have come down to the mouth of the pass, and that they can no longer perform their agreement. They offer to return the money that has been given to them."—[*MS. Records.*]

Infantry, and two companies of the 33rd Native Infantry, under Major Barnewell, of the 9th. Then were to follow the Sappers and Miners, nine pieces of artillery,* and two squadrons of the 3rd Dragoons. After these, the camels, laden with all the treasure of the force and a large portion of the ammunition, were to move on, followed by a squadron of the 1st Native Cavalry. Then the Commissariat stores, protected by two companies of the 53rd Native Infantry, were to advance, and a squadron of the 1st Cavalry were to follow. Then the baggage and camp-followers, covered by a Ressalah of Irregular Horse, and a squadron of the 1st Native Cavalry, were to move forward, with a further supply of ammunition, and litters, and camel-panniers for the sick.

The rear-guard was to consist of three foot-artillery guns—the 10th Light Cavalry—two Ressalahs of Irregular Horse—two squadrons of the 3rd Dragoons—two horse-artillery guns — three companies of the 60th Native Infantry; one company of the 6th Native Infantry; and one company of her Majesty's 9th Foot.

These details formed the centre column which was to make its way through the pass. Two other columns, composed entirely of infantry, were told off into parties, and instructed to crown the heights on either side of the pass. Two companies of her Majesty's 9th Foot, four companies of the 26th Native Infantry, with 400 jezailchees, were placed under the command of Colonel Taylor, of the 9th Foot; seven companies of the 30th Native Infantry, under Major Payne; three companies of the 60th Native Infantry, under Captain Riddle; four companies of the 64th Native Infantry, under Major Anderson, with some details of Broadfoot's sappers, and a company and a half of her Majesty's 9th Foot; the

* Four horse-artillery guns, two guns of the mountain-train, and three foot-artillery guns.

party being commanded by Major Davis, of the 9th, made up the right crowning column.

The left crowning column was to consist of two companies of her Majesty's 9th Foot, four companies of the 26th Native Infantry, and 200 jezailchees, under Major Huish, of the 26th Native Infantry; seven companies of the 53rd Native Infantry, under Major Hoggan, of that corps; three companies of the 60th Native Infantry, under Captain Napleton, of that regiment; and four and a half companies of the 64th Native Infantry, and one and a half companies of her Majesty's 9th Foot, under Colonel Moseley, of the 64th. With these last were to go some auxiliaries, supplied by Torabaz Khan, the loyal chief of Lalpoorah. The flanking parties were to advance in successive detachments of two companies, at intervals of 500 yards.

After the order of the march was thus described, the following rules were laid down for the guidance of commanding officers:

2. A bugler or trumpeter to be attached to each commanding-officer of a party or detachment of the several columns.

3. Whenever an obstacle presents itself, or accident occurs, of a nature to impede the march of any part of either of the columns, and occasions a break in its continuity, the officer in command nearest to the spot will order the halt to be sounded, which will be immediately repeated by the other buglers, and the whole will halt till the removal of the difficulty enables the columns to proceed in their established order, when the signal to advance will be given.

4. The baggage-master will superintend the placing of the baggage, &c., in the order prescribed, and the Major-General commanding requests that commanding officers will use their best exertions to facilitate this important object. The quarter-master of each corps will see that the baggage of his regiment is placed in its proper position in the column, and an officer from each is to be appointed to the duty.

5. No private guards are to be allowed. The parties of cavalry

and infantry, allotted at intervals in the line of march, are to be the only troops attending it.

6. The officers entrusted with the command of the parties which are to flank the rear-guard on the heights, must give their most vigilant attention to the important duty of preventing their men from hurrying in advance of it; its rear must never be left exposed to fire from the heights.

7. The troops to be told off on their regimental parades, as above detailed, and marched at the appointed hour to their respective posts.

8. The force will march to Jumrood to-morrow morning, in the order above prescribed. The general to beat at four, and the assembly at five o'clock.

9. The baggage and camp-followers of each corps are to be kept with their respective regiments till notice is given by the baggage-master that they are required to take their places in the column.*

These orders had been issued before the force marched to Jumrood. On the 4th of April, whilst the troops were encamped at that place, Pollock issued further and more specific orders to regulate the movements of the following morning:

Camp Jumrood, 4th April, 1842.

The force to be under arms to-morrow morning at half-past three o'clock, ready to move forward, at which time all the treasure, ammunition, baggage, &c., will be moved to the low ground to the right front of the hills now occupied by picquets. No fires are to be lighted on any account; no drums to beat, or bugles to be sounded. The six companies of the 60th Regiment, and six companies of the 33rd Regiment, will remain with the baggage in the vicinity of the treasure and ammunition. The parties for crowning the heights, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor and Major Anderson, will move forward to the hill on the right of the pass. The parties for the same duty, under the command of Major Huish and Lieutenant-Colonel Moseley, will in like manner move forward to the hill on the left.

* *MS. Records.*

Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor's party will be accompanied by the Irregulars who lately garrisoned Ali-Musjid.

Captain Ferris's jezailchees will accompany the left advancing party.

When the heights have been crowned on both hills, four companies of the 9th Foot, the eight companies of the 26th, under Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor and Major Huish, also the jezailchees, under Captain Ferris, will descend the hills to be in readiness to enter the pass.

Six horse-artillery guns, four from the foot-artillery, with the two mountain guns, will be drawn up in battery opposite the pass.

The advance guard, seven companies of the 30th, and seven companies of the 53rd, will accompany the guns.

The whole of the cavalry will be so placed by Brigadier White, that any attempt at an attack from the low hills on the right may be frustrated. When the baggage, &c., is directed to advance, the same order of march will be preserved as was formerly prescribed, with the following alteration: Six companies of the 60th N.I. will be together on the right, and six companies of the 33rd, now arrived, will follow the 53rd N.I. When the rear of the column is entering the pass, the two rear companies of Lieutenant-Colonel Moseley's and Major Anderson's parties should descend the hills.

G. PONSONBY, Capt., A. A. General.*

That evening the General went round to all his commanding officers to ascertain that they thoroughly understood the orders that had been issued for their guidance; and to learn from them what was the temper of their men. There did not seem to be much cause for inquietude on this score. The *morale* of the Sepoys had greatly improved.

At three o'clock on the morning of the 5th of April the army commenced its march. It moved off in the dim twilight, without beat of drum or sound of bugle. Quietly the crowning columns prepared to ascend. The heights on either side were covered with the enemy, but

* *MS. Records.*

so little was the mode of attack, which the British General had determined upon, expected by the enemy, that it was not until our flankers had achieved a considerable ascent that the Khyburees were aware of their advance. Then, as the morning dawned, the position of the two forces were clearly revealed to each other; and the struggle commenced.

Across the mouth of the pass the enemy had thrown up a formidable barrier. It was made of mud, and huge stones, and heavy branches of trees. The Khyburees had not wanted time to mature their defensive operations; and they had thrown up a barricade of considerable strength. It was not a work upon which our guns could play with any good effect; but it was a small matter effectually to destroy the barrier when once our light infantry had swept the hills. And that work was soon going on gallantly and successfully on both sides, whilst the centre column, drawn up in battle array, was waiting the issue of the contest. Nothing could have proved better than the arrangements of the General; and no General could have wished his plan of attack to be carried out with better effect. On the left, the crowning column was soon in vigorous and successful action. On the right, the precipitous nature of the ground was such that it seemed to defy the eager activity of Taylor and his men. But he stole round the base of the mountain unseen, and found a more practicable ascent than that which he had first tried. Then on both sides the British infantry were soon hotly engaged with the mountaineers, clambering up the precipitous peaks, and pouring down a hot and destructive fire upon the surprised and disconcerted Khyburees. They had not expected that our disciplined troops, who had, as it were, been looking at the Khybur for some months, would be more than a match for them upon their native hills. But so it was. Our British

infantry were beating them in every direction, and everywhere the white dresses of the Khyburees were seen flying across the hills. The Duke of Wellington had said, some time before, that he "had never heard that our troops were not equal, as well in their personal activity as by their arms, to contend with and overcome any natives of hills whatever."* And now our British infantry and our Bengal Sepoys were showing how well able they were to meet the Khyburees on their native hills. The mountain-rangers, whom Macnaghten wished to raise, because Sale's brigade had been harassed by the Ghilzyes, could not have clambered over the hills with greater activity than our British troops, and would not have been half as steady or half as faithful.

It was now time for Pollock to advance. The centre column did not attempt to move forward until the flankers had fought their way to the rear of the mouth of the pass. But when he had fairly turned the enemy's position, he began to destroy the barrier, and prepared to advance into the pass. The enemy had assembled in large numbers at the mouth, but finding themselves outflanked—finding that they had to deal with different men and a different system from that which they had seen a few months before, they gradually withdrew, and, without opposition, Pollock now cleared his way through the barricade, and pushed into the pass with his long string of baggage. The difficulties of the remainder of the march were now mainly occasioned by the great extent of this convoy. Pollock was conveying both ammunition and provisions to Sale's garrison; and there were many more beasts of burden, therefore, than were used by his own force. But skilfully was the march conducted. Encumbered as he was, the General was

* See Appendix, vol. i.

compelled to move slowly forward. The march to Ali-Musjid occupied the greater part of the day. The heat was intense. The troops suffered greatly from thirst. But they all did their duty well. Whatever doubts may have lingered to the last in Pollock's mind, were now wholly dispersed; and when he reached Ali-Musjid in safety, and had time to think over the events of the day, nothing refreshed him more than the thought that the Sepoys had fairly won back the reputation they had lately lost.*

The enemy had evacuated Ali-Musjid in the morning; and now Ferris's jezailchees were sent in to garrison the place. A part of Pollock's force, with the head-quarters, bivouacked near the fortress. The night was bitterly cold; but the command of the heights was maintained, and the men, both Europeans and Natives, who had been under arms since three o'clock in the morning, did not utter a complaint. They appeared to feel that they had done a great work; but that the utmost vigilance was necessary to secure the advantage they had gained. The enemy were still hovering about, and all night long firing upon our people. It was necessary to be on the alert.

It was a great thing to have accomplished such a march with so little loss of life, and no loss of baggage. Avitabile said that Pollock and his force were going to certain destruction. Had he moved precipitately with his main column into the pass, he would probably have

* "The Sepoys behaved nobly," wrote General Pollock, on the day after the action. "They merely required a trial in which they should find that they were not sacrificed. There were, however, many desertions before we advanced. Now they are in the highest spirits, and have a thorough contempt for the enemy. This is a great point gained. You are aware that Mahomed Akbar sent a party, about 800, with one or two guns, to oppose us; but they thought better of it, and abandoned the fort of Ali-Musjid this morning. I have accordingly taken possession. The Sikhs are encamped near us, and are much more respectful and civil since our operations of yesterday."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

been driven back with great slaughter; but the precaution he took in crowning the heights and turning the enemy's position, secured him, though not without some fighting the whole way, a safe passage. The enemy are said to have lost about 300 men killed, and 600 or 800 wounded.

The Sikh troops moved up by another pass to Ali-Musjid. Pollock, still doubtful of their fidelity, and not desiring to have them too near his own troops, suggested, that when he pushed forward by the Shadee-Bagiaree Pass, they should take the other, known as the Jubogee.* Pollock had entered into a covenant with Gholab Singh for the occupation of the pass by the Sikh troops until the 5th of June. It was necessary that he should keep open his communications with the rear; and the Sikhs undertook to do it. But when Pollock marched to Jellalabad, they began to bargain with certain Afreedi chiefs, hostile to our interests, to keep open the pass for the stipulated time, for a certain sum of money, thus making known to the tribes the time for which they had covenanted to hold it.† Early in May the Sikhs suddenly quitted their position at Ali-Musjid and returned to Jumrood, seizing some of our baggage-cattle

* Pollock saw nothing of the Sikhs till the afternoon of the 6th. They doubted his success, and held discreetly back until they found that he had made good his way to Ali-Musjid.

† "I have been given to understand that, on the advance of our army to Jellalabad, the Sikh authorities at Peshawur, without intimating their intentions to Captain Lawrence, and without reference to any engagements between the Afreedis and ourselves, entered into arrangements with the Afreedis to purchase, for the sum of 6000 rupees or 4000 rupees, the security of that portion of the pass they have engaged to protect for a period of two months. The parties they agreed to pay were Abdul Rahman Khan, Kooki Kheil, Mahomed Jalim Sipa, and Alla Dad Malik, Din Kheil, son of Khan Bahadur, all of whom were at that time hostile to us, although Abdul Rahman Khan has since come over. There could have been no objection to the Sikhs entering into an arrangement with the Afreedis; but it should have been done in communication with us, and without imparting to the Afreedis the term for which the Sikhs were bound to hold the pass."—[*Mackeson to Pollock: May* 6, 1842. *MS. Records.*]

on the way, throwing their loads on the ground, and employing the animals to carry their baggage.*

In the mean while, Pollock had reached Jellalabad. "We found the fort strong," he wrote to a friend; "the garrison healthy; and, except for wine and beer, better off than we are. They were, of course, delighted to see us. We gave three cheers as we passed the colours; and the band of each regiment played as it came up. It was a sight worth seeing. All appeared happy."† It was, indeed, a happy meeting. Sale's little garrison had been shut up for five months in Jellalabad. They had long been surrounded with perils, lessened only by their own daring. They had looked in vain for succours, until they had become so familiar with danger that they had begun to feel secure in the midst of it. But they were weary of their isolation, and were eager to see their countrymen again. Welcome, therefore, was the arrival of Pollock's force; and happy the day on which it appeared with streaming colours and gay music. But the prospects of the garrison had brightened; and if

* "I regret to have to report that the Sikh regiments posted at Ali-Musjid, yesterday left their post, and returned to Jumrood; on their way throwing the loads off some of our mules and bullocks that they met, and employing the animals to carry their own baggage. My letter to Koonwur Pertab Singh, and his answer, are herewith enclosed. You will observe that the whole Sikh regiment was actually recalled by order, without notice being given to me, or without their being relieved, although four regiments were within a mile of them." —[*Captain Lawrence to Mr. Clerk: May* 9, 1849. *MS. Records.*]

"I waited on Koonwur Pertab Singh yesterday. I spoke strongly on the outrage of the morning, and on the necessity of a severe example being made of the offenders. . . . . I repeatedly returned to the subject, declaring the necessity of punishing the offenders, whom, I said, there could be no difficulty in recognising, as they were there for hours in the heart of the town, and had been seen by General Avitabile himself, as well as by Captains Lane and Johnstone, and by many of the Commissariat agents. It was not denied that the men could be recognised; but I much fear that no punishment will be inflicted on them."—[*Lawrence to Pollock: May* 8, 1849. *MS. Records.*]

† Mr. Gleig says that the band of the 13th went out to play them in; and that the relieving force marched the two or three last miles to the tune, "Oh, but ye've been lang o' coming."

Pollock had to speak of his victories, Sale, too, had his to narrate.

Pollock, before he entered the pass, had received intelligence of the gallant sortie made by the garrison on the 1st of April, when they swept away from the covering parties of the enemy a flock of 500 sheep and goats, which had secured them a further ten days' supply of meat.* Writing of this to General Pollock, Macgregor had said: "Our troops of all arms are in the highest pluck, and they seem never so happy as when fighting with the enemy. I verily believe we could capture Mahomed Akbar's camp, even with our present means, were it our game to incur the risk of an attempt of the kind."† This was lightly spoken; a mere outburst of the abundant animal spirits of the writer; but Pollock was scarcely on the other side of Ali-Musjid, when he received tidings which made it clear to him that now the light word had become a grave fact, and the capture of Mahomed Akbar's camp had been actually accomplished.

And now that they had reached Jellalabad, every one in Pollock's camp was eager for details of this great victory. It was, indeed, a dashing exploit. On the 5th of April, Macgregor's spies brought in tidings from Akbar Khan's camp that Pollock had been beaten back, with great slaughter, in the Khybur Pass. On the morning of the 6th, the Sirdar's guns broke out into

* Mr. Gleig says: "On the 2nd, Sir Robert Sale proceeded to distribute the captured sheep among the corps and departments composing his garrison. The 35th declined to accept the boon. They sent a deputation to the General, which respectfully acquainted him that animal food was less necessary for them than for Europeans, and besought him to give their portion of the booty to their gallant comrades of the 13th. No wonder that between these two corps there should have sprung up a romantic friendship, which, though the accidents of service have parted them, probably for ever, neither is likely to forget, at all events as a tradition, while they keep their places respectively in the armies of the Queen and of the East India Company."

† *MS. Correspondence.*

a royal salute, in honour of the supposed victory. Other reports then came welling in to Jellalabad. It was said that there was another revolution at Caubul, and that the Sirdar was about to break up his camp and hasten to the capital. In either case, it seemed that the time had come to strike a blow at Akbar Khan's army; so a council of war was held, and the question gravely debated. It is said that councils of war "never fight." But the council which now assembled to determine whether the Sirdar's camp should be attacked on the following morning, decided the question in the affirmative. They looked at it in all its bearings, and then determined that at daybreak they would go out and fight, "in the hope of relieving the place from blockade, and facilitating Pollock's advance to their succour."

Sale issued directions for the formation of three columns of infantry, the centre consisting of her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry, mustering 500 bayonets, under Colonel Dennie; the left one, under Lieutenant-Colonel Monteith, C.B.; and the right, composed of one company of the 13th Light Infantry and one of the 35th Native Infantry, and the detachment of Sappers, under Lieutenant Orr (the severity of Captain Broadfoot's wound still rendering him non-effective), the whole amounting to 360 men, commanded by Captain Havelock, of her Majesty's 13th Light Infantry. These were to be supported by the fire of the guns of No. 6, Light Field Battery, under Captain Abbott, to which Captain Backhouse, of Shah Soojah's Artillery, was attached, and by the whole of my small cavalry force under Captain Oldfield and Lieutenant Mayne.* Such were the components of the little force that was to attack the camp of the Sirdar.

At daybreak they moved out of the fort. Akbar

* *General Sale's Public Despatch.*

Khan was ready to receive them. He had drawn out his troops before the camp, with his right resting on a fort, and his left on the Caubul river. He had not less than 6000 men. Havelock commenced the fight by an attack on the enemy's left; whilst Dennie, with the centre column, moved against a fort which was vigorously defended by the enemy. Gallantly, at the head of his men, advanced Dennie to the attack—a brave and chivalrous soldier ever in the advance—but an Afghan marksman covered him with his piece, and the ball passed through Dennie's body.* A better soldier never fell on the field of battle.† The victory was dearly purchased by the death of such a man. And yet it was a brilliant one. Sale gave his orders for a general attack on the Sirdar's camp; and his orders were carried into effect with an impetuosity and success worthy of the defenders of Jellalabad. In the forcible language of Sale's despatch, on which I cannot improve,

* Mr. Gleig gives the following account of Dennie's end: "With undaunted resolution the 13th rushed at the fort, Colonel Dennie nobly leading; and finding the aperture sufficiently large to admit of it, they rushed through the outer wall—only to find themselves exposed to a murderous fire from the untouched defences of the inner keep. Here Dennie received, just as he approached the breach, his mortal wound. A ball entered the side, passing through the sword-belt; and he bent forward upon his horse. Lieutenant and Adjutant (now Captain) Wood instantly rode up to him, and expressed a hope that the hurt was not serious. But it was more than serious; it was fatal. A couple of orderlies, by Captain Wood's direction, turned his horse's head homewards, and leading it by the bridle, endeavoured to guide him to the town. But he never reached it alive. He died with the sound of battle in his ears, hoping, but not living to be assured, that it would end triumphantly."

† I rejoice in the opportunity thus afforded me of laying on Dennie's grave my humble tribute of praise; the more so, that, when living, I incurred his anger by the freedom of my remarks on some moot points connected with his military career. Dennie's services were not duly recognised or adequately rewarded. He was a man of strong feeling, and he expressed himself strongly; and some friends, not wisely regardful of his memory, published, under his name, some hasty letters, more than one of the dashes or asterisks in which point to the writer of these volumes. I do not now mind saying that I think it very probable that I was wrong. But Dennie was equally wrong when he attributed what I wrote to feelings of personal animosity.

"The artillery advanced at the gallop, and directed a heavy fire upon the Afghan centre, whilst two of the columns of infantry penetrated the line near the same point, and the third forced back its left from its support on the river, into the stream of which some of his horse and foot were driven. The Afghans made repeated attempts to check our advance by a smart fire of musketry, by throwing forward heavy bodies of horse, which twice threatened the detachments of foot under Captain Havelock, and by opening upon us three guns from a battery screened by a garden wall, and said to have been served under the personal superintendence of the Sirdar. But in a short time they were dislodged from every point of their position, their cannon taken, and their camp involved in a general conflagration. The battle was over—and the enemy in full retreat in the direction of Lughman by about 7 A.M. We have made ourselves masters of two cavalry standards, recaptured four guns lost by the Caubul and Gundamuck forces, the restoration of which, to our government, is matter of much honest exultation among our troops, seized and destroyed a great quantity of material and ordnance stores, and burnt the whole of the enemy's tents. In short, the defeat of Mahomed Akbar in open field, by the troops whom he had boasted of blockading, has been complete, and signal." The enemy's loss was severe. "The field of battle was strewed with the bodies of men and horses, and the richness of the trappings of some of the latter seemed to attest that persons of distinction had been among the casualties." The loss on our side was small. Eight privates of the 13th Native Infantry, and two of the 35th Native Infantry, were killed. Three officers and about fifty men were wounded.

Great was the joy which the intelligence of the victories of Pollock and Sale diffused throughout all India; and in no one breast did so much of gladness bubble up as in that of Lord Ellenborough. He wrote, that although it was his misfortune not to be a soldier by profession, he knew how to appreciate soldierly qualities and soldierly acts. It was then that, being at Benares at the time, he issued that well-known notification which conferred on Sale's brigade the honourable title by which it has since been so well-known—the title of the "Illustrious Garrison:"

Secret Department, Benares, 21st April.

The Governor-General feels assured that every subject of the British Government will peruse with the deepest interest and satisfaction the report he now communicates of the entire defeat of the Afghan troops, under Mahomed Akbar Khan, by the garrison of Jellalabad.

That illustrious garrison, which, by its constancy in enduring privation, and by its valour in action, has already obtained for itself the sympathy and respect of every true soldier, has now, sallying forth from its walls, under the command of its gallant leader, Major-General Sir Robert Sale, thoroughly beaten in open field an enemy of more than three times its numbers, taken the standards of their boasted cavalry, destroyed their camp, and recaptured four guns, which, under circumstances which can never again occur, had during the last winter fallen into their hands.

The Governor-General cordially congratulates the army upon the return of victory to its ranks. He is convinced that there, as in all former times, it will be found, while, as at Jellalabad, the European and Native troops mutually supporting each other, and evincing equal discipline and valour, are led into action by officers in whom they justly confide.

The Governor-General directs that the substance of this notification, and of Major-General Sir Robert Sale's report, be carefully made known to all troops, and that a salute of twenty-one guns be fired at every principal station of the army.

The "Illustrious Garrison" had now become history. Sale ceased to command at Jellalabad; and soon letters from Lord Ellenborough set aside the political functions of Macgregor. In Pollock and Nott, on either side of Afghanistan, had been vested supreme political authority; and Macgregor soon took his place beside the General, simply as his *aide-de-camp*. By Pollock's side, too, holding the office of his military secretary, was Shakespear, who had done such good service in liberating the Russian slaves at Khiva; who had won his spurs by this Central-Asian exploit, and returned to India Sir Richmond Shakespear. Pollock knew the worth of these men, and turned their experience to account. But the reign of the "Politicals" was at an end. Lord Ellenborough had determined to dethrone them.

The Governor-General knew his men. He did well in trusting Pollock and Nott. But after the melancholy illustration of the trustworthiness of military officers of high rank displayed in the conduct of affairs at Caubul, the time hardly seemed a happy one for opening out the question of political and military responsibilities, and their relative effects upon the interests of the state. It is right, however, now that it has been stated how the whole system, which exercised so great an influence over events in Afghanistan, was abolished by the Governor-General, that something should be said upon the general character of the diplomatic functionaries employed on the great field of Central Asia.

There is no single controversial topic which has eliminated so many sparks of bad feeling—so much personality, so much bitter invective, and I fear it must be added, so much reckless mendacity, as this question of political agency. At one time a "Political" was, by many writers, considered fair game. To hunt him

down with all conceivable calumny and vituperation, was regarded as a laudable achievement. Every one had a stone to throw at him—every one howled at him with execration, or shouted at him in derision. Temperate men on this topic, became intemperate; charitable men, uncharitable; sagacity ceased to be sagacious; discrimination ceased to discriminate. All alike lifted up their voices to swell the chorus of popular indignation.

The Caubul outburst, with its attendant horrors, filled this cup of bitter feeling to the brim. It would be difficult to embody, in a page of mere description, the popular notion of an Afghan "Political." He was believed to be a very conceited, a very arrogant, a very ignorant, and a very unfeeling personage; a pretender, who, on the strength of a little smattering of Persian and some interest, perhaps petticoat interest, in high places, had obtained an appointment, the duties of which he was not capable of performing, and the trust involved in which he was well-nigh certain to abuse. He was looked upon as a creature whose blunders were as mischievous as his pretensions were ridiculous; one, whose ideas of diplomacy were limited to the cultivation of a moustache and the faculty of sitting cross-legged on the ground; who talked largely about Durbar, rode out with a number of Sowars at his heels; and was always on the point of putting salt upon the tail of some fugitive chief, and never achieving it after all. But this was only the more favorable aspect of the picture. There was another and a darker side. He was sometimes represented as a roaring lion, going about seeking whom he should devour; unveiling Afghan ladies and pulling Afghan gentlemen by the beard; inviting chiefs to a conference and then betraying them; blowing Sirdars from guns; conniving at wholesale massacre; bribing brothers to betray brothers, fathers their sons;

keeping fierce dogs to hound them at innocent countrymen; desecrating mosques, insulting Moollahs, trampling on the Koran—in a word, committing every conceivable outrage that cruelty and lust could devise. There was no amount of baseness, indeed, of which these men were not supposed to be capable; no licentiousness to which they were not addicted; no crimes which they did not commit. This was the popular notion of an "Afghan Political." It was constantly illustrated in oral conversation and in the local literature of the day. Men talked and wrote upon the subject as though the question—if ever question there were—had long ago been settled by common consent; and it was not until the war had been brought to a close, that a doubt was raised respecting the validity of the charges so generally brought against the Ishmaels of diplomacy in the East.

Very much of this is now mere exploded slander. I cannot say that the political officers, who distinguished themselves throughout the Afghanistan campaign, have *lived down* the calumny of which they were the victims. Very few of the number survive. But a reaction, in public opinion, has commenced; and there is discernible a growing disposition to do justice, at least to the memories of the dead. Men speak and write more temperately on the subject. Exaggeration no longer overstrides all our utterances on this topic; and, in some cases, full justice has been done to the noble qualities of head and heart which have adorned, perhaps do adorn men amongst us, under the great "Political" reproach.

It would serve no good purpose to run from one extreme into the other. It is the evil of sudden reactions of popular feeling, that men escape from one error only to be precipitated into another of an opposite class. The system of political agency is not one of unmixed good; nor are political agents exempt from the

common frailties of humanity. Many mistakes were unquestionably committed; sometimes a stronger word might without exaggeration have been applied to the things that were done in Afghanistan by our diplomatic agents. Diplomacy is, at all times, a dangerous game. It has seldom, if ever, been played in any part of the world, without some loss of purity, some departure from integrity. In Europe, the diplomatist treads a tortuous path. Guile is met with guile. Fraud is often counteracted by fraud. Minister overreaches minister. One state jockeys another. And, in the affairs of nations, arts are resorted to which, in the concerns of private life, would stamp the wily plotter with infamy not to be escaped. But, in the East, in the midst of the worst contagion, tempted on every side, stimulated by the fear of failure, irritated by the duplicity of others, far greater is the difficulty of preserving intact the diplomatic integrity which is exposed to so many corrupting influences. I am not asserting the propriety of fighting all men with their own weapons. I have no faith whatever in the worldly wisdom, apart from all considerations of right and wrong, of playing off wile against wile—meeting treachery with treachery—lie with lie. Such tactics may succeed for a season; but, in the long run, truth and honesty will be found the most effective weapons. All I desire to plead in behalf of our Oriental diplomatists is the extraordinary temptations to which they have been exposed. Many of them were necessarily without experience in the difficult game; and, therefore, apprehensive of failure—little confident in themselves, when called upon to encounter, perhaps for the first time, the deep duplicity of Eastern intrigue. Fearful of being drawn into a snare, and deeply impressed with a sense of the responsibilities resting upon them, they have sometimes, in their eager-

ness to bring negotiations to a successful issue, departed from that strict line of integrity, which we could wish our countrymen ever to maintain. This much at least must be admitted—but who has ever gained a reputation as a skilful diplomatist without some deviation from the straight path of open and truthful manliness of conduct?

Among the bitterest assailants of the political system was General Nott. In the summer of 1841, he wrote:

When we arrived here, the natives had an idea that an Englishman's word, once given, was *sacred*, never to be broken. That beautiful charm is gone, and every pledge and every guarantee trampled under foot. The day of retribution and deep revenge *will come*. *Come*, did I say?—it is in some measure here—already the sword is sharpened, and the wild Afghan song echoes upon the mountains and in the villages—the forerunner of massacre and blood. I like these people, and would trust myself alone in their wildest mountains. When I was in Ghilzye, they soon found out who protected them from plunder and oppression, and who did not. My tent was always crowded with these people, begging to do *something*—asking *what* I wanted—that they were ready to do whatever I ordered them; yet not a man could be prevailed upon to go near the Prince or the political agent; and when a few workpeople were required for a public purpose, not one could be had. A chief came to my tent and boldly said: "After the cruel treatment we experienced before you arrived here, how can it be expected that the people will assist in building barracks? You have been just to us; say what you want for your own comfort, and we will fly to perform it." If a man is too stupid or too lazy to drill his company, he often turns sycophant, cringes to the heads of departments, and is often made a Political, and of course puts the government to an enormous expense, and disgraces the character of his country; this has been the scene before my eyes many times since I left Hindostan. The troops I sent out to-day will put the government to a great expense, and the poor officers and men will have the thermometer at one hundred and eight

degrees in *their tents*, and, if exposed to the sun, one hundred and twenty and one hundred and thirty degrees, and all because a foolish Political destroyed a small village containing *twenty-three* inhabitants. And why, think you? Because he *thought—thought, mind you*—he *thought* that they looked insultingly at him, as he passed with his two hundred cavalry as an escort! Had I been on the spot, he would have had eight troopers for his protection; he would have *then* been civil to the inhabitants, or perhaps not cruel. Fancy a young Political, with two hundred troopers at his heels—why, I am in the habit of riding eight or ten miles into the country, often without a single orderly, or even my syce [groom]; I enter their gardens and their villages, and meet with nothing but civility. Again, I say, that I am ashamed of my countrymen, and I prefer the much-abused Beluchi. This very morning, on the march, I heard two Englishmen, calling themselves honourable men and gentlemen, declaring that they thought every native of the country should have his throat cut! And why? Because these poor, wretched people sometimes shoot our people in defence of their *wives, children*, and property."*

That there was some mismanagement in Western Afganistan I have shown. But I protest against the bitterness poured out upon the general body of diplomatic *employés* in Afghanistan—the taunting insinuation that being incapable of making good soldiers they became parasites and "Politicals." "If a man is too stupid or too lazy to drill his company," wrote General Nott, "he often turns sycophant, cringes to the heads of departments, and is made a 'Political,' and of course puts the government to an enormous expense, and disgraces the character of his country." Nothing was ever more unlike the truth. The Afghan "Politicals" were among the best soldiers in the country. Many of them, as Todd, Rawlinson, Nicolson, &c., were practised drill-instructors—had shown an especial fitness for this particular duty in disciplining foreign troops or raw levies. And no

* *Correspondence of General Nott, quoted in the Quarterly Review.*

one, who takes account of the most honourable incidents of the Afghan War, will overlook the military services rendered by Pottinger, Macgregor, H. M. Lawrence, Mackeson, Broadfoot, Outram, and others, who are known to us as Political Agents. There are no finer soldiers in the Indian Army than many of those who distinguished themselves during the war in Afghanistan, under the unpopular designation of "Politicals."*

* Author, in the *Calcutta Review.*

BOOK VII.

[1842.]

CHAPTER I.

[January—April: 1842.]

The Last Days of Shah Soojah—State of Parties at Caubul—Condition of the Hostages—the Newab Zemaun Khan—Letters of Shah Soojah—His Death—Question of his Fidelity—His Character and Conduct considered.

It is time that I should pause in the narration of the retributory measures of the British-Indian Government, to dwell, for a little space, upon the events at Caubul which succeeded the departure of Elphinstone's army. It had been rumoured throughout India—and the rumour had created no little astonishment in the minds of those who had believed that the Caubul insurrection was a movement against the Feringhees and their King—that ever since the departure of the former Shah Soojah had continued to occupy the Balla Hissar, and had been recognised as the supreme authority by the very men who had recently been in arms against him. And the rumour was a perfect echo of the truth. Ever since the departure of the British army Shah Soojah had reigned at Caubul.

He had reigned at Caubul, but he had not ruled. His power was merely nominal. The chiefs wanted a pup-

pet; and in the unhappy Shah they found the only one who was ever likely to stand between them and the vengeance of the British nation. Day after day they made their salaam to him in the Balla Hissar; but so imperfect even was their outward recognition of his regal dignity, that money was still coined in the name of the Newab Zemaun Khan. The Newab, who had been raised to the sovereignty by the voice of the chiefs soon after the first outbreak of the insurrection, had cheerfully resigned the honour that had been thrust upon him, and accepted the office of Wuzeer. Ameen-oollah Khan was appointed Naib, or deputy. For a little time there was some outward show of harmony; but there was no real union between the King and the chiefs. The Barukzyes spoke scornfully of the King; and the King could not refrain from expressing his mistrust of the whole tribe of Barukzyes. Ameen-oollah Khan, openly swearing allegiance to both, seems to have held the balance between the two opposing factions, and was in reality the most influential man in the state. He had amassed, by fraud and violence, large sums of money, which the other chiefs, straitened as they were by an empty treasury, and unable to carry out any great national measure, would fain have made him disgorge. From the Shah himself they contrived to extort some three or four lakhs of rupees; but when Akbar Khan wrote pressing letters to Caubul for guns and ammunition, that he might lay siege to Jellalabad, no one would move without pay, and money was not forthcoming for the purpose.

All parties were jealous of each other; and especially jealous of the rising power of Akbar Khan. The young Barukzye was in Lughman; and the elder chiefs at Caubul, even if they had possessed the money to enable them to answer these emergent indents upon their military resources, would have been little inclined to

send him the reinforcements and munitions for which he was continually writing. They talked about raising an army of their own, and opposing the retributory march of the British through the Khybur Pass; but the want of money presented an insuperable obstacle to any military movement on a scale that would afford a prospect of success. The Shah himself talked openly in Durbar about standing forward as defender of the faith, and declaring a religious war against the Kaffirs; but he privately assured Conolly that he was heart and soul with the British, and he wrote long letters to the Governor-General, Clerk, Macgregor, and others, declaring his inviolable fidelity, and eagerly clamouring for money.*

* The letters of John Conolly written at this time afford a sufficiently clear insight into the state of parties at Caubul. On the 17th of January he wrote to Macgregor: "The accounts of our most ill-fated force become more distressing every day. Hundreds of Sepoys, wounded, frostbitten, starving, and naked, come into the city. The Oosbegs buy many, and some find their way to us, and are relieved in the hospital, which is now crowded to excess; and the poor wretches are dying off fast. That villain, Ameen-oollah, is evidently anxious that the sick should die, for he will not assist them in any way, nor attend in the least to our repeated requests for assistance. The Newab is so completely in the hands of the Naib that he cannot afford us any relief. The Afghans are very sanguine in the expectation of assistance and co-operation of the Sikhs, and talk in court of Sultan Mahomed having received instructions from the Durbar to do our force as much injury as possible, and that Shere Singh has an understanding with them to prevent our force re-entering the country. You must be aware whether there is any foundation for these reports. . . . . This morning the Newab, attended by Ameen-oollah and all the chiefs, went to pay their respects to the King in the Balla Hissar. The King has paid two lakhs of rupees already, and has promised one more in ten days. The Newab is Minister —Ameen-oollah, Naib; and oaths and protestations have been taken on the Koran that they are to be friends to each other, and supporters of the true faith. The Newab abuses the King most loudly and openly. The King does the same with the whole family of the Barukzyes. Ameen-oollah Khan has sworn eternal faith to the cause of his Majesty—bares his head and swears most solemn oaths in the Musjids to uphold the Newab's dignity against the King and all the royal family. His Majesty has sent me several messages, saying that he submits to the extortion of the three lakhs because he is not strong enough to oppose the demand; but that, *Inshallah!* when he has received the salaam of the chiefs, he will gain power daily, and be able, should our troops come on, to play his own game with advantage to himself and ourselves. I believe that he is heart and soul in our interest; and it appears

In the mean while the English hostages remained under the protection of Mahomed Zemaun Khan. Nothing could exceed the kindness of the good old man. Faithful among the faithless, he was resolute to defend the Christian strangers at all risks; and never, when the popular clamour ran highest, and other men of note were thirsting for the blood of the captives, did he waver for an instant in his determination to shield the helpless Feringhees from the malice of his remorseless countrymen. He was a Barukzye chief—a near relative of Dost Mahomed Khan; and there was not among the Sirdars of all the tribes one in whom the spirit of nationality glowed more strongly and more purely. But whilst the independence of his country was as dear to him as to any of his brethren, he did not burn with that fierce hatred against the English which broke out in other places, nor did he ever, in the advancement of the most cherished objects of his heart, stain his patriotism with those foul crimes from which elsewhere there was little shrinking. Regarding with abhorrence the conduct of those who had betrayed our unhappy

contrary to all reason to suppose otherwise. The measures which obliged the Newab to resign his throne are, I believe—1st. The dread of our vengeance, which the people think the King can in some way avert, if a force is sent strong enough to shut out all hope of opposition. 2nd. The dread of Akbar's rising power. 3rd. The suspicions of the fidelity of their own party, who had shown symptoms of disaffection, and some of whom had openly espoused the cause of his Majesty. Such a condition cannot, I should think, last long between such Yorks and Lancasters. There is one thing very certain, that unless a very large force is sent up, which will preclude all hope of opposition, every man in the country will rise against us; and the people in the vicinity of Caubul have so compromised themselves, and dread our vengeance so much, that they will strain every nerve to oppose us, and maybe his Majesty will feel that his safest plan is to join his countrymen against us. He said at the Durbar this morning that he was glad that affairs had taken such a turn, and that he was now able to call himself defender of the faith. This much could not have been avoided under the circumstances. . . . . We are amused all day long by abuse and scurrilous verses about the Kaffirs. Books are being sold by the weight. I have not yet been able to get hold of the children—most exorbitant prices are demanded. The Newab promises, but has not the power to fulfil. Salutes are being fired, and there is a general rejoicing in honour of the coalition between the two Kings. Artillerymen are being sent to Akbar."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

people, he himself did all that, single-handed, he could do, to atone for the cruelty of his countrymen; and no father could have treated his children more kindly than the good Newab cherished and protected the English hostages who found a sanctuary in his house.*

But it was necessary, whilst the excitement ran so high at Caubul, and there was a prospect of violent contention among the chiefs, to do something more than this. Ameen-oollah Khan never slackened in his exertions to obtain possession of the persons of the hostages. Having tried every kind of stratagem, and failed to

* On the 24th of January, John Conolly wrote: "The King holds Durbar regularly, at which all the chiefs attend. He pretends to have shaken off all connexion with our government, but secretly sends me messages, professing all sincerity and attachment. There is much talk of a large force being sent to oppose the army which is said to be advancing from Hindostan; but money is wanting; the religious feeling against us continues very strong, and the chiefs have compromised themselves so much, that they will rise to a man, unless an overpowering force is sent. The Newab's kindness is beyond description, and he professes, and I believe sincerely feels, great anxiety to secure the friendship of our government. He is most deeply distressed at the treacherous conduct of the chiefs. We are quite ignorant of the intentions of government. Mohamed Akbar is continually writing for guns and ammunition; but not a man can be induced to march without pay, and every one is jealous of Akbar Khan's rising power. The Barukzye faction of his party view each other with great suspicion. Ameen-oollah is the go-between. Akbar Khan is procuring all the money he can by extortion from Sourkars and others."—[*MS. Correspondence.*] This was interlined invisibly on the advice of a bill drawn by Major Pottinger on the Ferozepore treasury, and was produced on the application of iodyne to the paper. On the same day Lieutenant Conolly wrote to Mr. Clerk: "The King is obliged to talk of sending troops to oppose us at the Khybur; but he declares secretly to me his sincerity for the British Government. The chiefs talk of collecting an army, but the sinews of war are wanting. . . . . Thanks to the Newab, we are safe; but it has more than once been proposed that we should be killed. . . . Since our troops left this, the King has been recognised by the Newab and the rebel chiefs on the payment of three lakhs of rupees to the Newab and Ameen-oollah Khan. The former is Vizier; the latter deputy. The Newab is most anxious to serve our government. He has not been in any way concerned in the treacherous conduct to our troops. His kindness and attention to us is great, and he is sincerely anxious to establish a friendship with the British Government—being afraid of the King and Mohamed Akbar, and disgusted with the conduct of the chiefs, who deceived him with oaths and protestations. Great excitement prevails in the town; the feeling against us continues very strong, and every man will oppose our re-entering the country, unless a force is sent which will preclude all hope of successful opposition."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

secure them by fraud, he would have resorted to open violence. It was necessary, therefore, to oppose force to force; so the Newab raised an army of his own. His pecuniary resources were limited; but he did not hesitate to spend his little stores freely in entertaining followers. Mainly for the protection of the English gentlemen he raised a body of 1000 footmen, whom he armed with English bayonets; another body of 1000 horse, and some Jezailchees—in all, about 3000 men. The English guns, too, were in his possession, and he refused to yield them up to the Shah.*

* On the 15th of February Conolly wrote to Macgregor: "Since my former notes, the latest of which was dated the 10th, affairs have assumed a very different aspect. Naib Ameen-oollah, having given up the guns entrusted to his charge, has shaken the confidence of the Barukzye party in his (the Naib's) sincerity, and exposed the King's ultimate designs of making himself strong and independent of, if not inimical to, the Newab's clique. Yesterday the Naib called on the Newab, on the part of his Majesty, to send his guns to the Balla Hissar. His demand was directly refused; and the Newab declared his determination of not again attending the Durbar until his Majesty gave proofs of confidence and honesty. This morning Fuzil-i-Almud, son of Kasee Hussun, brought an order from his Majesty that I should wait upon him; but I declined the honour in this instance, as I had done before, feeling that no good could come from an interview, ignorant as I am of the intentions of government and of your wishes, and having been, moreover, frequently warned against moving out of our present residence. I gathered from the Kasee's son that his Majesty was forming a party in opposition to the Barukzye faction, the principal characters being Ameen-oollah, the Populzye, many of the Kuzzilbash, and some of the Caubul chiefs. You will perceive among his partisans the chief conspirators in the late rebellion, Ameen-oollah, Abdool Salam, and Sekundur,—men who have nothing to hope for at our hands. I presume the first demand made by our government will be the persons of these chiefs, who planned and were most conspicuous in the late revolution; and if the information I have alluded to be correct, his Majesty may object to give up the chiefs. But these are matters for future consideration; and should his Majesty be disinclined to use his utmost endeavours for the furtherance of the wishes of government, such unwillingness must, of course, be regarded as hostility. It is generally believed and asserted throughout the town that his Majesty instigated the late rebellion. I have never been able to prove the accusation, though I cannot but think that his Majesty was, directly or indirectly, the cause of the revolution. When you know the intentions of government, you will be able to see your way more clearly. I would, however, suggest that his Majesty be made to understand, either from yourself or through me, that he must either meet our wishes or go his own road. Things are so very unsettled here just now that the most learned cannot foretel the events of the morrow. All eyes are

The King regarded his proceedings with mistrust. There was no sort of cordiality between them. The

turned upon you. The evacuation of Jellalabad will have the worst possible effect. Every one here has turned soldier, and the people are in a high state of excitement, and hungering after pay, which is not forthcoming. Our host has assembled a regiment of 1000 bayonets, 1000 horsemen, some Jezailchees, and a park of twelve guns, the ammunition for which, by the Meerza's return yesterday, amounted to about thirty shot, and no cartridges. There must be some serious disturbance ere long. We are very anxious about the sick, which we fear will be sacrificed in any popular tumult. For ourselves, we must trust to Providence; should things come to the worst, we shall try and escape to your stronghold.—P.S. We have just heard that a change of ministry has been proposed by his Majesty, and likely to be effected, Oosman Khan to be acting premier, and the Newab to be a sleeping partner.

"15th, P.M., 10 o'clock.—To-day there has been a noisy debate between the Newab and Ameen-oollah, the former abusing the latter in rather round terms. The Naib left the room in a huff, and things are as unsettled as can be. The Newab says he won't give up his guns, or go to the Durbar: and insists upon . . . . . his Majesty pursuing the non-interference system to which he is bound by the terms of his treaty. There is nothing but Nifag: everybody suspects his neighbour; everything is in capital trim for us if our army advances: I only wait your authority to spend a little money, and above all a guarantee to our host of a handsome provision if he sides with us, or stands neutral—for he is a most worthy and honest old gentleman, and had no hand in the late melancholy occurrences. Ghoolam Mahomed Khan has also kept aloof from the late rebellion. There is a report that Palmer has broken up the treaty, and is again besieged in the Balla Hissar. He writes for orders, which kindly send with all expedition. For God's sake beware of Mahomed Akbar."

In a letter of March 5 the same writer says: "Futteh Jung (Shah Soojah's son) has gone out yesterday to join Akbar. Things are very unsettled here still, and the Kohistanees are fighting amongst themselves. The Newab is still treating us with the greatest kindness. He has enlisted about 3000 men, principally for our protection, and is determined to fight rather than give us up. The Naib here has been trying to get us, and has a strong party of Sepoys enlisted also. The Newab asked me yesterday if, when his money is out, we shall be able to assist him, as he only has sufficient ready cash to pay his men for one month and a half more. Can you authorise me to make him an advance when his money fails? for, as I said before, his entertaining troops is almost entirely on our account. He would be safe enough were we not his guests. In the mean time he has bought ammunition and got his guns ready in case of an attack."

And in another letter of the same date: "The bearer will be able to tell you all the news. I have written to you several times, but have received no acknowledgment of my letters. Always try solution of iodyne on my notes. . . . We are very kindly treated by the Newab, but close prisoners. Ameen-oollah has tried stratagem and threats to get us out of the Newab's hands, with a view of screwing us; but, thanks to the Newab, we are as yet safe, though our situation is an unpleasant one. The King is sitting in the Balla Hissar; but his authority is only nominal, all power being in the hands of Ameen-oollah. Prince Futteh Jung has started with

old Suddozye and Barukzye strife seemed about to be renewed with all its pristine vigour. At last the Shah, about the middle of the month of March, corrupted the commandant of the Newab's army, who went over with all his followers to the Balla Hissar. This event, which threatened entirely to change the state of parties at the capital, threw all Caubul into a ferment. The shops were closed; the people began to arm themselves. The Newab demanded the restoration of his troops; but the King only yielded a conditional assent. He appears at this time to have been entirely in the hands of Ameen-oollah Khan; and he replied, that if the hostages were sent to the house of the Logur chief, the recreant commandant should be sent there at the same time. The Newab, however, resolutely refused to give up the English gentlemen. The proposal seems to have strengthened Conolly's suspicions of the fidelity of Shah Soojah. It nearly cost the hostages their lives.*

a few horsemen towards Jellalabad, and will probably halt for some days at Bootkak. The King sends me occasionally messages professing sincerity for the British Government; but he does not, in his present circumstances, do anything which would lead his subjects to suspect his attachment to us, or the whole population would rise up against him."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

* A letter to General Pollock, written on the 18th of March, says: "Affairs here are as unsettled as they can possibly be. The day before yesterday the commandant of the Newab's regiment was bribed by his Majesty to desert to the Balla Hissar with all his soldiers. The Newab demanded their restoration, but was refused. Yesterday, after much dispute, his Majesty sent a message to our host, saying that the commandant should be sent to Ameen-oollah's house if we were delivered over to the same authority. Fortunately for us the Newab refused to give us up. This proposition was made through jealousy of the Newab, and with the view to conciliate Ameen-oollah, by whom it had been represented to his Majesty that we were supplying our host with money, &c. Ameen-oollah had been for many days trying to get possession of our persons with a view to try and extort money from us. His Majesty's proposition nearly cost us our lives. . . . Since the desertion of the commandant the whole city has been in an uproar. The shops are all closed, and every man has armed himself. The feeling against us is reawakened. The gates of the Balla Hissar are half shut; and each chief has collected his followers. Three or four thousand men have flocked round our host. The Barukzye's and Suddozye's party-spirit bids fair to be renewed with all its rancour. . . . The King has, however, now but few friends, and his

It now seemed that Caubul was about to become the theatre of internecine strife. The gates of the Balla Hissar were half closed, and the Shah never ventured beyond them. The chiefs were all mustering retainers. The King was endeavouring to cast suspicion on the nationality of the Newab; and the Newab's party were doubting the fidelity of the King. The Populzye leaders of the insurrection clustered round the monarch, but he had neither popularity nor power. Money he had; but making an outward show of poverty, he resolutely refused to produce it; and the people began to abuse him for his parsimony. In this conjuncture he continued to write to the British authorities, declaring that he could do anything for them if they would only send him money; but the British authorities were deaf to his entreaties, and only sent him advice.

Containing the King's version of the causes and circumstances of our disasters at Caubul, and throwing some light upon his own character and conduct, the letters of Shah Soojah are sufficiently curious and interesting to induce me to insert a few of them in this place:

FROM SHAH SOOJAH TO CAPTAIN MACGREGOR.

(*Received January 21st*, 1842.)

Let it be known to Captain Macgregor: you are aware of all that has occurred here. Notwithstanding all I said regarding the treachery of these men, they (the British) did not understand, but were guided by the advice of my enemies—that is, the Barukzyes—until arrived at this pitch. The clans of the Barukzyes had this object, that suspicion and ill-will should exist between the British and me. To the British they said, that I had instigated the rebellion; and to the Mahomedans they said, that I and

parsimony is as a proverb; and his suspected connexion with us adds to his unpopularity. . . . The Naib has written for the Kohistanees to accompany him on a crusade, and unless some accommodation is made with his Majesty, the Balla Hissar will in all probability be the first point of attack. It will be a popular cause, as there are hopes of plunder."

the Feringhees were one, until they made me generally unpopular. Well; such was fated! It has caused me much grief and regret. God grant this wish of my heart, that the fate of Sir William Macnaghten and Mr. Trevor and the other gentlemen may befal my enemies! I frequently desired them, on the first outbreak of the rebellion, to bring everything into the Balla Hissar, which is a place of strength. They did not listen to my advice. I then begged them to endeavour to gain time—that when I could arrange matters with these men (Afghans) all would be well. During the time that I was besieged, I expended all that I had collected with so much labour, until I brought every one of influence over to my side by payment. Please God they may remain faithful to me!

No one but myself could manage these people (Afghans) and carry on the government. My sincerity and friendship to the East India Company was formerly well known: at present it is as evident to all the world as the light of day. If I had only some treasure, that during the two or three remaining months of winter I might strengthen myself, please God there is no one in this country who could displace me, and, by the blessing of God, everything would be arranged according to my desire. The men here are not to be won without money. God grant this wish of my heart! Before this I spent four lakhs of rupees in this affair, and I also gave two lakhs more; I have nothing else left. If some money could be received that I might win over these men, please God everything could be arranged according to my desire. It is to be hoped, as you will see, that in a few months I could collect horse and foot so that no one could stir. God grant this wish of my heart!

The bearer of this will verbally inform you of all other circumstances. It is advisable that you should send this paper to Peshawur, or even to the Governor-General. And send me an answer to this speedily. Whenever you hear of the arrival of this paper at Peshawur, be good enough to let me know, that I may feel sure of its having passed out of this country; because the evil-disposed are spreading reports that I am united to the Feringhees. Until I have gained my proper footing, it is necessary that, for some time, money should be sent to enable me to manage matters. When I have succeeded in establishing my power, I shall not require assistance from any one. Everything will be easy. Don't

let the men of this country know these things. Afterwards, whatever may be desirable for my good and for yours, God will grant. And God grant this wish of my heart! The bearer will tell you how matters stand. Whenever money has been received and I have reinstated myself, I shall have these people so much under my control, that if I order it they will carry the shoes of the Sahibs on their own heads.*

FREE TRANSLATION OF A LETTER FROM SHAH SOOJAH TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA.

(*Without date, brought on the 2nd of February, by a messenger fifteen days from Caubul.*)

Be it known to my friend that I am King, and know the people well. It is right to treat people according to their deserts; some by kindness, others by severity.

Some evil-disposed persons, from fear of me, took refuge with Sir W. Macnaghten and Sir A. Burnes, and I could say nothing to them: they stirred up strife.

During the last two or three years I considered the Sahibs, and especially the Envoy, whom I valued more than my life, as my equals; without their pleasure I did nothing.

It was God's will I should see what I would have wished not to have seen. May no other have such experiences.

Could it have been my wish to see my enemies and their families in the place of my friends?

Once or twice I wrote to you to send a person to inquire and inform you of the state of things in this country; but it was not done.

For two or three years I consoled the people, who told me if I was not King, they should understand it was the Feringhee; and they (the former) told me that when I came they expelled Dost Mahomed, but that I had disappointed them; that now their women left them, their country was lost; and, although at first they received pay, even that was stopped. I could not console the people, but I spoke of them to the Envoy, and told him that, sooner or later, there would be a disturbance; but he listened not to me. I told him they were deceiving him; but he believed me not, and desired me to be at ease, for that he would settle the country with two Pultuns (regiments).

* *MS. Records.*

He further told me to confine and expel some evil-disposed persons. I did so; but they got access to Nizam-oo-dowlah, and through him to the Envoy, who asked me to release them. I did so. Now I am distressed by those very people.

When the Envoy was going away I asked him to take me with him; for that I was in an extremity; I told him of what was going on, and was not listened to. I told him that complaints were daily made to me of Afghan women being taken to Burnes's Moonshee, and of their drinking wine at his house, and of women being taken to the Chaonee (cantonments) on horseback, and of my having myself witnessed it. When people complained to me of such things, I asked who did so, that I might inquire; and told them not to defame the Sahibs. I first comforted and then reproved them; and said, if any person uses violence to your women, tell me, and inquiry shall be made.

The people have often before acted as they have now; they confined my brother Mahmood in the Balla Hissar; the conspirators then were Mooktear-oo-dowlah and Ahmed Khan, Noorzye, &c. They pretended it was a quarrel between the Sheeahs and Soonees; but it proved a great matter, and they saw that without me they could not settle matters. I was then among the Kakurs. The Khans sent for me, and all obeyed me.

In the present instance people said, "There are crores of rupees in the Chaonee; let us strengthen Islam." Such are the people. Three or four dogs are gone (dead); as many remain.

Nizam-oo-dowlah was a dog and ruined all. I begged the Envoy not to ruin the people. Nizam-oo-dowlah said to the Douranees, the King and Envoy will destroy you. I will help you, but Captain Trevor will not let me. The people were thus stirred up. I was annoyed, but could not help myself; now, please God and by the help of friends, much may be done.

All were against me on account of you. They sent to me to separate myself from you, and for the sake of the faith to be King myself (some Sahibs were then in the Balla Hissar). I did not give a reply at the time, but sent word to the Envoy, who told me to turn them away. I did so, saying I owed everything to the Sahibs. They told me I would repent.

For some days there was fighting near the Chaonee and Balla Hissar and Balla Boorj; at which time I sent word to the Envoy to come with all his baggage to the Balla Hissar, where the

troops could hold out for a year or two, telling him that three or four thousand of the inhabitants might be turned out, and guns and stores brought. After much debate, no answer was given. I said, "Very good! Please yourselves."

Some days after I sent to the Chaonee, and warned them not to abandon it; that I knew the designs of the enemy, who intended to attack them; and by expending five or six lakhs of rupees I endeavoured to bring the people from the common enemy towards myself; but they told me to separate myself from you. On this account three or four Barukzyes separated themselves from me; but though I could not trust people, I managed matters by first paying three or four lakhs, and afterwards two or three, which they asked of me, thinking I would refuse, and they would have an excuse for separating from me; but I gave all I had, and now am moneyless. If, however, I had money, I could openly do much; but nothing is to be done without money (they are dogs). If I had money I could raise troops, and many of my old (Hindostanee) ones who returned naked are anxious to serve me; but I have no money. In heart I am yours, though all the world are separated from me.

Nizam-oo-dowlah knew a night before it occurred what was to happen, but did not tell me or the Envoy that we might prevent it.

The conspirators told the people that I was with them; and when the Prince went out with the troops, they (the traitors) said, "They are with us."

I sent Mahomed Sherreef to settle matters, but he was not attended to; and he, as well as many of my troops, was killed, which event opened the eyes of the people of Caubul; so the conspirators, to implicate the people, attacked Sir A. Burnes.

If my counsel is taken much may yet be done; or, if not, I will go to Mecca. Here the people are confirmed traitors, or I could easily settle the whole country, and Persia and Khorassan.

What was fated has happened. I have not seen it in my sleep, but have actually witnessed it. May God remove the sorrow, that my enemies and their families should be in the place of my friends. Is there any in the world who gave their enemies the means to kill them? The dog Akbar came as a beggar from Toorkistan. His enmity to the Sahib-Log and myself was apparent; but lakhs of rupees were given him to escort the troops

in their retreat; and what was the consequence? In the midst of the discussions I sent several times to the Envoy, and asked him why he nourished his enemy; but I was not attended to.

All Mussulmans turned from me on account of you; and for three months, for your sake, I experienced trouble and distress, and then the Envoy agreed to give the country to Mahomed Akbar, and to allow me a lakh of rupees a year, or four lakhs in Hindostan; but I knew and said, that as soon as they left the Chaonee they would be destroyed; and so it has proved.

Between us there were no differences, and there will not be.

When I saw how things were going, I expended money to draw the people from Mahomed Akbar; but now I can do nothing. I sent news to Macgregor, and to Ghuznee, and to Candahar.

The road is unsafe, so I cannot write aright.*

FROM SHAH SOOJAH TO CAPTAIN MACGREGOR (WRITTEN IN SECRET BY HIS MAJESTY'S OWN HAND).

(*Received February 6th.*)

Let it be known to Captain Macgregor what misfortunes have befallen me! Everything occurs contrary to expectation. I wrote, that after labouring from earliest morning to nightfall, I had by a thousand schemes satisfied these men and made them swear fidelity. One came and another went; but all saying, "Be not united to the Feringhees." This is what the Barukzyes are spreading among the people. I said in reply to them, "You yourselves have said that they (the Feringhees) have done nothing for the Sirkar, and have not fulfilled their promises; then how should the Sirkar be well disposed towards them? During the time that I was with them I felt that my name suffered, and I felt this disgrace—that it was known to all the world. I continued with them until the time when Sir William Macnaghten purposely told me to cast them (the Feringhees) off.† I then dismissed them, and you yourselves informed me that they (the Feringhees) had come to an understanding with Mahomed Akbar. How then could I still preserve any understanding with them? Rest

* *MS. Records.*

† Alluding to his Majesty's dismissing the troops at Sir William Macnaghten's request from the Balla Hissar.

perfectly satisfied. At present I have no understanding with the Feringhees." At length, by every means in my power, I pacified them. These men at present, whether Barukzyes or other Afghans or Parsewans, are all obedient to me. Without my orders they do nothing. However, I place no trust in them. God grant that I may obtain the wish of my heart! I have no other desire. I cannot think that you are possessed of a proper sense of honour, since Dost Mahomed and his family remain there with honour. Should Akbar fall into my power, if I am a Mussulman or a man, what treatment he shall receive! Dost Mahomed and his wives and children, in revenge for the Sahibs who have fallen in this country, should be seen wandering in destitution through the bazaars and streets, that it should be known to all the world. What has been your treatment of that dog (Dost Mahomed)? So much wealth! And what return have you received from this faithless wretch (Mahomed Akbar)? May God accomplish this desire of my heart! It is now some days since they (the Afghans) have requested me to send Shumshoodeen Khan to Ghuznee. Until to-day I have delayed. I have also made delays in the direction of the Khybur. At length I am helpless, and if I do not consent I shall be suspected. And from Khybur intelligence has come that 200 men have been killed, and two loads of treasure and two guns abandoned to the enemy, and that Mackeson Sahib is shut up in Ali-Musjid requiring succour. If this is true, what management! How often have I said that if I possessed money I might collect some thousands of troops of my own! I should not require assistance from any one. I could do anything I liked. But I have nothing whatever. At this moment there is only remaining two or three thousand ducats. These men, who are my own servants, have remained with me; but, poor wretches, how many months are they in arrears! The other Afghans I have ordered to be mustered daily in my presence. Such as I may select I shall continue in service. I never have had and never can have any interest separate from yours. Alas! that you should not have known my worth! I will delay the despatch of the men some days longer. I shall be suspected. If I could know the truth I would arrange accordingly. If you think that this affair will succeed, and that an army will come, let me know the truth; and if it is unlikely, write to me that I may make such arrangements as shall fully satisfy you that not a cat belonging to you

shall be injured. The retreat of the Caubul Pass was quite a different affair. All were then our mortal enemies. If I had money I should not require assistance from any one. Since I have no money, if the Lord (Auckland) does not think it advisable to send it, I must go somewhere else. There is not another person but myself who could manage this affair. I know these men well; and I have not seen a man who could do anything without my permission. Write these circumstances to the Governor-General, and tear up this paper. What misfortunes have befallen! Write explicitly, that arrangements may be made accordingly. They (the Afghans) have made many petitions regarding Candahar, that an order may be sent to the prince. It has been written and sent, carefully worded, to the best of my ability.

About this affair of Mackeson, I cannot understand what management this is. If it is true, you are destroying yourselves. I don't know whether there is an understanding between you and Shere Singh that your troops should have a free passage (through the Punjaub). I wrote to Shere Singh that it was a religious war, that he might understand. Tear up this paper; and remove from about your person the men of this country.*

FROM SHAH SOOJAH TO CAPTAIN MACGREGOR.

(*Received February 8th.*)

Let it be known to Captain Macgregor, I have no certain intelligence about affairs. I don't know what perverseness is this, that up to the present time you will not appreciate my worth, nor understand your own position or interests. You do not correctly explain things to me; and if there is a prospect of your being supported from the rear, and you have, or are likely to have, a good understanding with Shere Singh, so that an army may come, then I would act here as such a state of circumstances would render expedient; but if there be no prospect of this, and you determine on any other course, I will then take such measures as may be desirable. May God grant the wish of my heart! I have prayed God to grant this prayer. God is omnipotent. Write to the Governor-General. I am not happy in this country; but if

* *MS. Records.*

my friends desire it, I cannot oppose myself to their wishes. The settlement of that country can be satisfactorily managed; but the country could never have been settled in the manner in which you were making arrangements.*

FROM H. M. SHAH SOOJAH TO CAPTAIN MACGREGOR.

Let it be known to Mr. Macgregor, to the General, and to the other gentlemen, that which I did not wish to see, and which never entered into my imagination, it has been my lot to see. What I have already suffered, and am suffering, is known only to God.

Although I frequently remonstrated, they paid no attention to my words. These men have made fraud and deceit their trade. . . . . During the time they were committing these excesses, and would not come in for some days, they continued plundering the shops and exciting disturbances in the city; and in this business all the Sirdars were concerned, and on this account the lower orders became like hungry dogs: but God shamed them for they got nothing. What has happened was fated, and was owing to our own neglect. However much I said, "Come up above; the fort is strong; for one year no one can be brought within it; with my servants, and from 500 to 1000 others, the fort would be strong; and 2000 or 3000 others, with guns, sallying out might collect grain"—[it was in vain.] However, it has passed—such was our fate. I sent messages to cantonments, begging them not to defer their coming from to-day to to-morrow, from to-morrow to next day—that, please God, all would be right.

I had collected five or six lakhs of rupees in gold mohurs, knowing that these people, except for money, would not act honestly, even with God. I spent three or four lakhs of rupees amongst them. Every tribe made oath, wrote on the Koran, and sealed; but they still said, "The king and the Feringhees are one." However, I have managed to bring them thus far, and given two lakhs more. It is a pity that I have no more money. If I had any more, and could raise 2000 or 3000 sowars, and 2000 foot-soldiers of my own, I would defy any one to stir. The

* *MS. Records.*

foot-soldiers, too, who returned from the army, I collected—300 or 400—that they might be with my regiment. Oh! that God had never let me see this day! Although, if money reaches me, God will prosper everything. To give money to an enemy to collect troops, and to come and kill you—did ever any one so trust an enemy? Even now have nothing to say to that dog.* This, too, I have said to you, even as I warned you before. I am night and day absorbed in this one thought; it has occurred to my mind that it would be better if the few ladies and gentlemen should be brought here, in order that they might be released from the hands of that dog. This entered my mind, and I consulted with the Sirdars, and brought them to agree; before this, I had sent a paper to this effect to that dog. It struck me that that dog would not release and send them here. I then decided that it would be judicious that Jubbar Khan should be sent. I hope that he will bring them to this place in safety. By the blessing of God, my mind will be at ease. No one will have power to say anything to them; they will remain in safety. If this is approved of by you, I will take this course; but inform me if you do not approve of it, and can suggest anything else, that it may be arranged. Now, men of all ranks are flocking to me. . . . . I have asked of God—if some money could be obtained all would go well, by God's assistance. * * * At present, my subjects make petition to me to send money, and one of the princes with guns and an army to Candahar. * * * I had sent for Mr. Conolly, and other gentlemen, to consult with them, as they had themselves asked the Sirdar to send for them; but some one said to them, "If you go to the king he will kill you." It was their (the Sirdars) intention that the king should kill them. They had sent me word secretly beforehand. I replied, that if the world was upset, and every one my enemy, I would not do so. They then said, that it was really true what Jubbar Khan and Oosman Khan had said—that the king was not separate from the Feringhees. If he is, they said, give these (English gentlemen) to the king, that he may kill them. I heard this, and gave them answer. They understood their position, and repented of the step they had taken. Since this occurrence they come and go; and I have re-assured them. They now swear and protest that they will do

* Mahomed Akbar.

nothing whatever without my wishes. If you think it can be done, God will shame my enemies.*

FROM SHAH SOOJAH TO CAPTAIN MACGREGOR.

(Written in secret by the Shah himself. Received at Jellalabad on the 7th of March.)

This is the state of affairs—that night and day I am disturbed about you. God help us! I did not wish to see such a day as this. All day I am thinking of this. The evil-disposed Mahomed Akbar, from the day he went to Lughman, has managed matters by the means of the money which was given to him. From that quarter letters arrived here (Caubul), and money was given to men who went to join him: at length it was put a stop to, some men were even stripped (on their way to join) in Bootkhak. At last, people went under the plea of Gazza (religious war); by these means only a few now go. It is nearly one month that I have delayed (sending troops to Jellalabad): no accounts have been received (from you). I have made myself unpopular with all Mahomedans on your account, and you have not comprehended it. This is an affair affecting life. Up to this time nothing is known (of your intentions). I know not upon what misfortunes I have fallen; and these men are displeased with me, (saying) "It is not the Shah's wish that we should go to Jellalabad; he wishes to destroy the true faith." God help us! There is no saying when those men (British troops) will arrive. If things are thus managed, what may be expected in Hindoostan?

I am altogether devoted to you—may God protect me! If they (British troops) arrive within the next ten or fifteen days, it is well; but if not, what ought to be done? Whatever you think advisable, write to me plainly, that it may be well understood and arrangements made. I am always thinking how I can obtain possession of those gentlemen and ladies, that they may be in safety, and that this villain (Mahomed Akbar) may not injure them.

I sent a message to Mahomed Shah (Ghilzye) that, if any injury happened to them (the English prisoners), I would revenge it on him and his family, and root out his race, and that I would

* *MS. Records.*

seize him. God will prosper this matter, though it is very difficult and complicated.

These rascals (Afghans) make numerous oaths, and in their hearts there is villany. May God put them to shame!

The true state of the case is this; if you think it will succeed, and that they (British troops) will arrive, the sooner the better. This is not a matter to be trifled with.

Shumshoodeen Khan, who went to Ghuznee, I ordered not to press the garrison hard until I had completed an engagement with you.

I have forgotten my own sorrows, and am grieving for yours. Neither day nor night can I rest, nor think of anything else.

If I came myself (to Jellalabad), I could arrange the affair as I wished. It has two advantages and one objection. I am puzzled. God deliver me! All that has happened has been caused by want of forethought. Now may God give me assistance!

I always said to Sir William Macnaghten that this affair would end badly.

The day that he made arrangements for leaving (Caubul for Bombay) I was ready to precede him, saying that I did not like the appearance of things here. He did not listen to me. The bearer will inform you of other particulars. What can I do? These men are the greatest curse in the world. If I had any money I could collect my army—then "could it be in the power of any one to injure even a dog that belonged to you?"*

FROM SHAH SOOJAH TO MR. GEORGE CLERK.

(Received on the 25th March at Lahore.)

Be it known to my friend that I am King, and know the people well; had every one been treated according to his deserts, a good foundation would have been secured in the country.

It is known to all the world how I have behaved to Sir W. Macnaghten and the rest of the Sahiban during the last three years. I have considered all of them as dear to me as my life, and especially Sir William Macnaghten, who was still dearer to me. It was God's will that I should see what I would have wished to

* *MS. Records.*

have avoided in a dream; may no other have such experience. I wish to God to see my enemies and their families in the place of my friends, and no other wish would then remain in my heart. What shall I inform you of? Whatever has happened is owing to our own carelessness. Once or twice I wrote to you to send a person to inquire and inform you of the state of affairs in this country, but it was not done. I consulted the people, and they told me, that had I not been concerned, the "Feringhees" would have seen the state of things; that when I came they expelled Dost Mahomed, anticipating every happiness under their old master; that had it been the cause of the "Feringhees," would anybody have dared to enter this country? or would such a day as this, exhibiting the loss of their honour, country, and their pay, have happened to them? They further observed that they were liable to be killed or apprehended by the British, and given up by the King without any investigation; not ever to sanction their requests for the increase of five rupees to their pay—the King had no authority. I again consulted them, told the Envoy of it; and frequently I sent for the Envoy in the garden, and brought the subject to his notice in the presence of Mr. Lawrence, who generally accompanied him; acquainted him of the rascality of the people, who would at last create some disturbance. But I was not listened to, and the information of their treacherous character, and the advice not to place confidence in them, was of no avail. I was therefore quite disgusted with these people, and proposed to return with the Envoy, seeing the state of the feelings of the people, and a disregard to my suggestions by him. I told him that complaints were daily made to me of Afghan women being taken to Burnes's Moonshee; of their drinking wine at his house; of women being taken to the cantonments on horseback, and of my having witnessed it, and observing how likely it was to create a disturbance; but all was in vain. I reproached the people for their own shamelessness, desired them to take care of these women, and not to defame the Sahibs; and said that if any person used violence towards them, to tell me, and inquiry should be made.

A Nizam-oo-doulah was appointed who corrupted the minds of the people. I told the Envoy that he was impressing on the minds of the Douranees, that the King and the Envoy were destroying them, and that he had saved them. I was anxious to

see some stipend fixed for them, but that Trevor would not consent to it, and he thus disappointed the people. All this produced no effect, until the insurrection broke out, and the insurgents told every one that the King was concerned in it. I sent Shah-zadah Futteh Jung with a few guns and troops to the town; the insurgents reported he was coming to assist them, and on his approach a skirmish took place, in which Mahomed Sherreef Khan, who was sent to restrain the people, received a wound and was killed. It then became apparent that an insurrection had taken place; 300 more were killed and wounded up to the evening of that day; the Shah-zadah narrowly escaped by the preservation of God. The insurgents then thought of another expedient to defame all the people. They went round Sir A. Burnes's house, and did what was written in his lot. These people have often before acted as they have now; they confined my brother, Shah Mahmood, in the Balla Hissar. The conspirators were then Mooktear-oo-dowlah and Ahmed Khan, &c., and they pretended it was a quarrel between the Sheeahs and the Soonees; they saw that I alone could settle matters. I was then among the Kakurs; the Khans sent for me, and on my arrival at Caubul they all obeyed me and returned to their respective avocations. In the present instance people said there were crores of rupees to be obtained and lakhs to be shared, while the Mussulmanee cause could be strengthened, and the wishes of God come to pass. A few insurgents have been removed from the way, and the remainder will be removed by God. I am quite displeased and annoyed at these people, from whom every wicked act may be expected; but through the kindness of my friends it does not appear difficult to me to settle this country, or even to conquer Persia and Teheran. All were against me on account of you; requested me to separate from you, as being inconsistent with my feelings of religion. I wrote to the Envoy, and he told me to give them a straightforward reply, which I did, saying I owed everything to the Sahibs; but they told me I should repent. I told them their lives and property were bound to the British, and they returned disappointed; but the same night they attacked the cantonment and the Balla Hissar, but to no purpose; they continued their attacks without intermission for some days, and I wrote to the Envoy to come with all his baggage and troops to the Balla Hissar, where they could hold

out for a year or two (even if no assistance arrived), and that I would detach parties to furnish supplies to avoid any scarcity. This I urged several times, but finding he was opposed to my views, I abided by his opinion. The insurrection was, however, discontinued, and the Envoy informed me that he had entered into a convention with the insurgents; that Mahomed Akbar should be the ruler of this country, that the British should retire to Hindostan, and that if I accompanied them it would be better, otherwise I should be consigned to the proposed ruler, and receive a lakh of rupees per year. I was annoyed at this treaty, and anticipated some treachery when the Sahiban and the guns left the Balla Hissar for cantonments; but it was diverted in a very brave manner by my orderly troops. I asked how a treaty could be entered into with the enemy without the sanction of one who had linked his fate with the British; but in vain. After the troops had entered the cantonment, I cautioned them not to stir out, but to pass their days there, knowing the plundering habits of the people. I was watching for the least intermission to bring the people round, and accomplished the business as formerly. I therefore spent five or six lakhs in rupees and ducats, and acceded to every wish of the people; and after working night and day I reclaimed them by presents. They promised to obey me, and to behave inimically to the disloyal; against every exertion of the Barukzyes to persuade the people of my attachment to the British. On the contrary, the Envoy entrusted lakhs of rupees, artillery, and other things to the enemy, and thus increased their power with his own hands, without in the least listening to me, until what was predestined came to pass. May no one again see such a day; and the desire I have is, that I may in this world be able to retaliate with my own hands. On their coming out of the cantonment the enemy began to plunder, and discontinued their treachery on the payment of two lakhs of rupees more. Ameen-oollah having already been gained over, I delayed the payment of the sum for a time, and the insurgents then began to reproach him, and were going to drag him away from me, when I was forced to pay them money. These people are such avaricious dogs for worldly riches, that had I possessed some lakhs of rupees now, I could have arranged every matter, and quelled the rebellion. I am entertaining all the "Tillungas" and Sowars that return in distress with the loss of their property, although I am quite disgusted and disheartened with these people,

and would have gone to Mecca, had there been no impediment. The management of this country and people is easily accomplished. The arrangements of other foreign affairs, such as those of Persia, Teheran, and Khorassan, are also simple, but they cannot be effected only by the way I point out. Whatever was destined in this case has come to pass. I never wished to see such a day. May God fulfil all my hopes. The news of my welfare is being sent to Candahar and Ghuznee, and to Captain Macgregor at Jellalabad, and you ought to remain satisfied. If you send us assistance to uphold the case, the better; otherwise there are other ways that may be followed agreeable to the advice of friends. There is nothing wanting; you can do as you like, and no one can stir without orders. The road is very unsafe.

On a slip of paper which the Cossid carried, separately concealed, was written this postscript:

Be it known to my friend that the road is very unsafe; this paper is sent to you (my friends), and it must be speedily transmitted and replied to, in order that he may act accordingly. Whatever has passed is known to God only; such as was never expected to be seen, even in a dream, has actually taken place. If I could manage to see you, everything would be right, and no wish remain ungratified. The bearer will give you every information. The sign is, "We have met before the grape, 'Tatties.'"*

These letters produced little more than general assurances from the British authorities that an army was on its way to Caubul. The letters that Macgregor wrote to the Shah were very brief, and intended to convey as little meaning as possible. One or two specimens will suffice:

CAPTAIN MACGREGOR TO HIS MAJESTY SHAH SOOJAH.

Your Majesty's letter was received by me on the 21st of January, and I feel much honoured. The fact is, that what has occurred was fated. It is true that they (the British) made a mistake in not following your Majesty's advice.

Please God, you may rest at ease regarding affairs here. In this quarter there is no enemy except Mahomed Akbar, who is at

* *MS. Records.*

Lughman, and is the foe both of your Majesty and the British Government. The rabble of Ghilzyes who were with him have carried away to their homes what they were able to steal. With the exception of 200 or 300 Barukzyes there is no one else with him. And please God, if he comes, he will meet with a warm reception.

A copy of your Majesty's letter was immediately forwarded to Peshawur, requesting that it might be sent with all possible haste to the Governor-General, and that an answer might be received, which may be soon expected. Rest at ease, that while I breathe I will not fail to assist your Majesty to the utmost of my ability. The army with the artillery may be considered to have arrived near this; indeed, they will be here as soon as the distance can be crossed.

FROM CAPTAIN MACGREGOR TO HIS MAJESTY SHAH SOOJAH.

March 9th.

Your Majesty's letter, which was sent by the hands of a trustworthy person, has been received. Please God, if you can only cause delay for one month, whatever may be your wish can be arranged. Rest at ease, since the army under General Pollock, together with the Sikh force, has arrived at Peshawur, and may be considered as having arrived near this. Whatever the bearer of this may say is worthy of belief.*

But the difficulties of the Shah were now drawing to a close; his days were numbered. Whilst he was awaiting the receipt of answers to these letters, the excitement in Caubul was increasing—the division among the chiefs was becoming more and more irreconcilable. Horribly perplexed and bewildered, anxious at once to appear in the eyes of his countrymen true to the national cause, and to retain the good-will of the English by some show of fidelity to them, he fell into every kind of inconsistency, was suspected by both parties, and either way was rushing on destruction. At last the chiefs called upon him to prove his sincerity by placing himself at the head

* *MS. Records.*

of all the available troops, and marching down upon Jellalabad. The Shah yielded a reluctant consent; and, on the 29th of March sent round his criers to proclaim that he was about to march southward on the 31st; that the chiefs were to accompany him, and to send out their tents on the preceding day. The summons was scantily obeyed. The Kuzzilbash chief declared that as neither the King nor the minister had supplied him with money, he could not move. The King said that he had no confidence in the chiefs, and that, therefore, he would not go, but that Ameen-oollah might go for him. And so the expedition was postponed. In the mean while, Akbar Khan was writing urgent letters to Caubul clamouring for reinforcements, and urging that it was wretched policy to be eternally at variance with one another—quarrelling for money and quarrelling for rank—instead of making common cause against the hated Feringhees.*

After a pause of a few days the King again consented to march. His suspicion of the Barukyzes, however, was not easily to be allayed. Nor was it wholly without reason. Even impartial lookers-on prophesied that if he left Caubul he would either be murdered or blinded by

* On the 2nd of April Mohun Lal wrote from Caubul: "A letter has been received by Mahomed Akbar Khan, which was carried by Ameen-oollah Khan and read by the Shah. It also passed under my sight through the kindness of the Persian chiefs. It contained that Mahomed Akbar has been always writing to send the troops to assist him against Jellalabad, but nobody has heard him. Now he has been informed by his trusty men at Peshawur that five battalions of the English have reached Hussna Abdal, and when they join the forces at Peshawur they, in company with the battalions of the Najeebs of the Sikhs, will force their march through Khaibur, though he has sent Sultan Jan with a few hundred men to reinforce the people of Khaibur; but if the English enter and pass the Khaibur once, no one shall be able to oppose them. Therefore the chiefs, as well as the Shah, at Caubul, should not quarrel for the distribution of the money and ranks, but exert themselves to come down immediately to Jellalabad and reduce it before the English should pass Khaibur; otherwise he (Akbar) is risking and ending his life for the faith of Mahomed, and will continue to exert himself as long as he lives." —[*MS. Correspondence.*]

the Barukyzes.* Aware of these suspicions, the Newab sent his wife to Shah Soojah with a sealed Koran, assuring the King with a solemn oath that the Barukyzes and other chiefs would be true to him. Fortified by this assurance, the Shah moved out of the Balla Hissar on the 4th of April, but before nightfall returned to the palace, determined on the following morning to review his troops and then to start for Jellalabad. Rising early on the morning of the 5th, he arrayed himself in royal apparel, and, accompanied by a small party of Hindostanees, proceeded under a salute, in a chair of state, towards his camp, which had been pitched at Seeah-Sungh. But Soojah-ool-dowlah, the son of the Newab, had gone out before him, and placed in ambush a party of Jezailchees. As the Shah and his followers were making their way towards the regal tent the marksmen fired upon them. The volley took murderous effect. Several of the bearers and of the escort were struck down; and the King himself killed on the spot. A ball had entered his brain. Soojah-ool-dowlah then rode up; and as he contemplated his bloody work, the body of the unhappy King, vain and pompous as he was to the very last, was stripped of all the jewels about it—the jewelled dagger, the jewelled girdle, the jewelled head-dress; and it was then cast into a ditch.

The news of the King's murder spread like wildfire. Great was the consternation. Futteh Jung, the second son of the Shah, on receiving the sad tidings of his father's death, made with all speed towards the Balla Hissar; but the gates were guarded; so he turned back and sought refuge in the fort of Mahomed Khan, Bayat. That night however, Mahomed Khan, in concert with

* "The Shah, I am told, has made up his mind again to proceed in person to Jellalabad; but I scarcely believe that he will ever march, and if he does he will either be murdered or made blind by the Barukzyes."—[*Letter of Mohun Lal: MS. Correspondence.*]

Ameen-oollah, who held the Balla Hissar, restored the Prince to the palace; and they agreed to proclaim him King. The body of Shah Soojah was recovered, and for some days it lay in state. The royal family declared that until sentence had been passed upon the murderer it should not be buried. The Moollahs were assembled to expound the punishment due to so atrocious an offender; and they pronounced, on the authority of their religious books, that the murderer of the King should be stoned to death. But Ameen-oollah Khan interposed. He said that it was not a time to carry out such a sentence; all parties were bound to league themselves together to fight against the Feringhees; and intestine animosities ought therefore to be forgot.

To no one were the circumstances of the Shah's death a source of deeper horror and regret than to the good old Newab, the father of the murderer. He is said to have sworn an oath never again to see his son beneath his roof, or to suffer him to be named in his presence.* Various circumstances have been assigned as the proximate causes of the murder of the unfortunate Shah. It was said that he had drawn down upon himself the increased animosity of the Barukzyes, by appointing to the command of the army a son of Ameen-oollah Khan. Akbar Khan, too, had recently been wounded by an accidental shot from a Pesh-Khidmut, or attendant, which was said to have been designed to take the life of the Sirdar; and it had been rumoured that Shah Soojah had bribed the man to make the murderous attempt. That the Newab Zemaun Khan was not implicated in

* "I ought to have mentioned, in justice to that kind-hearted and really good man, Mahomed Zemaun Khan, whose character is esteemed by all who know him, whether Afghan, Hindostanee, or European, that he was so much horrified on hearing of the atrocious murder by his son of the late unfortunate King, that he swore never again to see him inside his house, and that henceforth his name should never be mentioned in his presence." — [*Captain Johnson's Narrative of his Captivity: MS.*]

the foul transaction, all men are willing to believe; but it was intended to strengthen the party of which he was then the acknowledged chief. It was the consummation of the great strife which for forty years had been raging between Shah Soojah and the Barukzye Sirdars. Indeed, it would have been little in accordance with the general tenor of Afghan history if this unfortunate Prince had not died a violent death. After so eventful a life, it would have been strange indeed if he had sunk to rest peaceably on his bed.

Among the obscurer points of Afghan history, there is not one more obscure than that which involves the question of the fidelity of Shah Soojah. That doubts were cast upon his sincerity has been already shown. Conscious of this, he entered upon a defence of his conduct in a series of letters to the British authorities which I have now given to the world. Written hastily, and under the influence of strong excitement, they carry very little conviction with them. The main object of these letters appears to have been the extraction of money from the British treasury. The Shah continued to assert, that having no money he had no power, but that if money were sent to him he would be able to do great things for his late allies. Death makes many revelations. The death of Shah Soojah revealed the mendacity and the avarice of the man. Some twenty lakhs of rupees, besides jewels of large value, were found to have been in his possession when he died.* This disagreeable circumstance, though by no means

* Mohun Lal, in a letter to Captain Mackeson, Caubul, April 10, 1842, says: "Prince Futteh Jung was taken prisoner in the fort of Mahomed Khan, Bayat, and at even released by force of Ameen-oollah and the Populzyes. As soon as he reached the palace he opened the treasury hoarded up with great pains by his father, the King. He spends a good deal of it, to employ the people and make his party strong. . . . It is estimated to be twenty lakhs in cash and a considerable quantity of jewels."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

conclusive against the general fidelity of the Shah, certainly will not predispose the inquirer to take an unduly favorable view of his conduct.

It must, however, be always kept steadily in view, that the circumstances of Shah Soojah's position were such as to surround him with an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion. That the chiefs made use of the King's name at the outset of the insurrection, and produced an inflammatory document said to bear the royal seal, is one of the most notorious facts in the entire history of the war. The seal was genuine, but the document was a supposititious one. Nothing is more common, in times of popular excitement, than for the Afghans to endeavour to injure one another by giving currency to forged instruments. It is to the last degree improbable that, at this time, Shah Soojah would have committed himself by putting his seal to any documents which might have fallen into the hands of his European allies, and laid bare the blackness of his treachery. But that he would have been glad to have cast off the Feringhee alliance and to have ruled without the restraint of our superintendence and interference, is not to be questioned. He may, therefore, have regarded with inward satisfaction the progress of the insurrectionary movement, and rejoiced in its ultimate success; but he does not appear to have been more than a passive instrument in the hands of others. It was obviously his policy to appear all things to all people. He could not venture to take any decided course. He never in the prime of life had been conspicuous for manliness of character; and now, in his old age, he was more than ever a waverer and a waiter upon fortune. Perhaps, I should not err if I were to say that he was true neither to his own countrymen nor to his British allies. He was prepared to side with either the one or the other, according to the direc-

tion in which the tide of success might be seen to flow. He had no affection for the English; but he dearly loved English money. He knew the value of British aid; but he would fain have had it from a distance. From the very first he had disliked the obtrusive manner in which it had been forced upon him. He wanted the *prestige* of British support without the encumbrance of British control. To retain our friendship, and yet to rid himself of our presence, was unquestionably the desire of the Shah; but it is doubtful whether his desire would ever have shaped itself into any overt acts of hostility against the government which had restored him to the throne of his fathers. He was not capable of gratitude, even if there had been anything to call it forth;* but he had sufficient sagacity to know that his political existence was dependent upon the will of the British Government. And he was cautious not to do anything to provoke its vengeance. The chiefs believed at the commencement of the November outbreak, that though the insurrection would soon be crushed, such a manifestation of popular feeling would in all probability cause the British authorities to tremble for the safety of their position, and induce them to evacuate the country in the ensuing spring. Encouraging a similar belief, Shah Soojah may have regarded with inward satisfaction the outbreak of the revolution. But he was surprised and alarmed by the rapidity of its progress; and was wholly unprepared for the sanguinary termination of his connexion with his Christian allies. That he was in a state of painful depression and prostration throughout the entire period of the insurrection is not to be ques-

* I utterly repudiate the cant which fixes the stigma of ingratitude on the character of Shah Soojah. No one knew better than the Shah that we had carried him back to Caubul, and kept him there, not for his purposes but for our own.

tioned; and it is scarcely less certain that he never wholly recovered from the terror which then bewildered him. The irruption culminated somewhat too violently for a man of Shah Soojah's temperament; and when he found what a convulsion had been raised around him, he shrunk back in dismay. On either side dangers and difficulties started up in his path. He strove to save himself by doing little, and being to all outward seeming the friend both of the Afghan insurgents and their European foes. Duplicity is never long successful. Doubted by both parties, the King became an object of general contempt. He trimmed between the two contending hosts, and escaped the rocks on neither side of the vessel.

On such a question as this, it is right that the opinions of the leading political officers, who were best acquainted with the character and the conduct of the Shah, and had the best opportunities of investigating the circumstances of the Caubul insurrection, should be summarily recorded. "To my mind," wrote Captain Mackeson to Mr. Clerk, "there has ever appeared but little doubt that his Majesty Shah Soojah was, in the commencement, the instigator of the Caubul insurrection. Had the first blow struck by the rebels been effectual, his Majesty might, perhaps, have thrown off the mask earlier; but our troops in cantonments held their position though surrounded by foes without number, whilst those in the Balla Hissar held his Majesty in check. Nay, the chances were at one time so much in favour of our success, that his Majesty discarded his own instruments, refusing all their solicitations to place himself at their head. To such an extent did he carry his reluctant adherence to us, that at length the rebels, in their turn, were obliged to seek for a leader among

the Barukzyes. His Majesty then husbanded his own resources, allowing the Barukzyes and our people to fight out the battle. Sir William Macnaghten would not have treated with Mahomed Akbar Khan had he not been convinced of the treachery towards us of Shah Soojah"*

Captain Macgregor's opinion coincides, but with some amount of qualification, with that of the last witness. "I agree with you" (Mackeson), he wrote, "in thinking that the Shah was more or less implicated in the insurrection; but when he saw that it took such a serious turn, I really believe that he repented—even so soon as he heard of Burnes's assassination, and of the massacre of the other officers in the city. His Majesty pressed Sir William to remove all the British troops into the Balla Hissar, which in itself looked like a friendly feeling towards us."†

The opinion of Major Rawlinson sets in an opposite direction. It throws a side-light from Candahar on the conduct of the Shah at this time. "From everything I can learn, I should say that the Shah was certainly well inclined to us; and if assured of our again placing confidence in him, would cordially support our advance. He has certainly done as little as he could, keeping up appearances with the Mussulman party, to complicate our position at this place, and I learn that for some time past the prevalent opinion in the Douranee camp has been that the Shah desired our success."‡

* *MS. Correspondence.*

† Macgregor was of opinion that after the departure of the British from Caubul, the conduct of the Shah indicated a friendly feeling towards us. "The Shah is, I believe, acting in a friendly manner towards us," he wrote to General Pollock, "and will, if he has the power, prevent the march of an army from Caubul. He knows that whilst Dost Mahomed is in our possession we can make use of him as a powerful weapon against his Majesty, and this is the great hold we have upon his friendship."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

‡ *MS. Correspondence.*

But of all the officers connected with the British Mission, John Conolly was the one who enjoyed the best opportunities of arriving at a correct estimate of the conduct of the Shah. During the insurrection he was in attendance on the King at the Balla Hissar, and he was at Caubul up to the time of his death. Conolly's opinions are on record. He seems at one time to have entertained the strongest possible conviction that the Shah was true to his British allies. "I believe," he wrote on the 17th of January, "that he is heart and soul in our interest; and it is contrary to all reason to suppose otherwise." But by the 15th of February his belief in the fidelity of the Shah seems to have been shaken; for he wrote to Macgregor: "It is generally believed and asserted throughout the town that his Majesty instigated the late rebellion. I have never been able to prove the accusation, though I cannot but think that he was, directly or indirectly, the cause of the revolution." A month afterwards, writing still more distinctly to General Pollock, he cast further doubts on the fidelity of the Shah. "I would suggest," he said, "that some direct understanding be come to with his Majesty. It is generally believed that he caused the late rebellion; and his conduct lately has been strange, to say the least of it. He tried to raise a popular tumult against us, hoping thereby to ruin the Newab. He did not interest himself in any way about our sick when their wretched, helpless condition was formally represented to him in a petition from me—added to the circumstance alluded to of his telling our host to send us to Ameen-oolah, who is our most bitter enemy. He is, moreover, surrounded by the Populzye leaders of the late insurrection, whose persons, I presume, our government will demand. I have not received a letter from him for a month; but

the fear of being suspected of being in communication with us may be the cause of his disregard of us." And again, at the end of the month, writing to Major Rawlinson, he said: "The King is generally abused and reported as the instigator of the late rebellion. He has proved himself, I think, unworthy of our friendship. If we are not able to prove his villany, his cunning will, no doubt, prompt him to side with us on the near approach of our troops, for he is well aware that his subjects would seize him if he ventured out of the Balla Hissar. He is, as the Afghans say, like grain between two mill-stones."*

Many more passages might be cited from the correspondence of our political officers to show the opinions entertained at this time by those most competent to determine the question of the Shah's fidelity. But, after all, the question remains an open one. The future historian may still lose himself in a sea of conjecture. From the facts before us, and from all that is known of the character of Shah Soojah, the inference is, as I have said, that the King was faithful neither to his own countrymen nor to his British allies. He was at best a poor creature. He had few good qualities. But it should in justice be remembered, that he was surrounded by circumstances against which an abler and a better man might have struggled in vain. He had long been greatly perplexed and embarrassed by the anomalies of his position. He was tired of playing the part of the puppet; and had begun to long for an opportunity either of becoming King indeed, or of throwing down the trappings and the cares of royalty, and ending his days in the calm security of his old asylum at Loodhianah. He used to say that Macnaghten did all the good that was done in Afghanistan—and all the evil too; for that he himself did

* *MS. Correspondence.*

nothing. Unpopular measures of which he was not the author were executed in his name; he was compelled outwardly to sanction much of which he inwardly disapproved; he saw dangers thickening around him without the power of averting them, and painfully felt that he had always been a cypher, and had now become a hissing and a reproach.

Under the directorship which we had forced upon him, Shah Soojah was not happy. He was altogether a disappointed man. He did not find the sweets of restored dominion what he expected them to be. He was an isolated being. The sympathies neither of the Afghans nor the English were with him. All men suspected him. None loved him. When, therefore, he talked about leaving Caubul he was probably not insincere; but he may have thought sometimes that if the English would leave Caubul he might enjoy his sovereignty more. If to have desired to rid himself of an incubus, which sate so heavily upon him, was to be faithless to the British, Shah Soojah was unquestionably faithless; but this is a kind of infidelity so common to humanity of all ranks and in all places, that to record it against the Shah is only to say that he was a man.

But as regards the actions of the King, it is to be observed that Shah Soojah was not a man of action. His early life had been one rather of strenuous passiveness than of genuine activity. He had always been courting suffering—having much done to him, and for him, rather than doing much for himself. Since the British had taken him in hand he had actually done nothing. When the insurrection burst over Caubul, he sate down and waited. After the departure of the British he sate down and waited. He was afraid of both parties; and unwilling to declare himself openly until he could clearly see how the contest would end. He had not strength of mind suffi-

cient to keep him faithful to any one. He was not even true to himself. The question is less a question of fact than of character. The solution of the difficulty is to be found in the idiosyncracy of the man. He had led a very eventful life; but the vicissitudes of his career had not strengthened his character. Anything decided, active, or energetic, was not to be expected from him. The infirmity of age was now superadded to the infirmity of purpose which had characterised his greener manhood; and if he had taken any decided part in the great contest which followed the outburst of the Caubul insurrection, it would have been an inconsistency at variance with the whole tenor of his past life. As it was, the conduct of the man in this crisis was in keeping with all that was known of his character and his antecedents. Shah Soojah was not a hero; and he did not play a heroic part. The British Government had picked him out of the dust of Loodhianah, simply as a matter of convenience to themselves; and they had no reason to complain that, in a great and imminent conjuncture, he thought less of their convenience than his own. He proved himself at the last to be very much what we had helped to make him. We could not expect him to be an active workman, when we had so long used him as a tool.

CHAPTER II.

[November, 1841—April, 1842.]

Affairs at Candahar—Evil Tidings from Caubul—Maclaren's Brigade—Spread of the Insurrection—Arrival of Atta Mahmed—Flight of Sufdur Jung—Attack on the Douranee Camp—Continued Hostilities—Attack upon the City—Action in the Valley of the Urghundab—Fall of Ghuznee—Defence of Khelat-i-Ghilzye—Movements of England's Brigade.

THE attention of the reader ought now no longer to be withheld from that part of the country where General Nott and Major Rawlinson were gallantly and successfully holding out against the insurgent Douranees, and maintaining the character of the British nation before the tribes of Western Afghanistan. At the beginning of November, wrote Rawlinson, in a summary of events, drawn up with such masterly distinctness and comprehensiveness, that the historian has little to do, in this place, but to submit himself to its guidance,* "affairs wore a more tranquil and promising appearance in the Candahar province than I had ever witnessed since my assumption of the charge of the agency. Akram Khan, the leader of the Derawat rebellion, captured by Lieu-

* *Major Rawlinson to Government: March* 6, 1842. This important despatch was published by Lord Ellenborough in the Government Gazette, and subsequently appeared in the Blue Book. To an unpublished letter, written by Major Rawlinson to Mr. Colvin, on the 13th of December, I am indebted for the information contained in the earlier portion of this chapter.

tenant Conolly, had been executed at this place by his Majesty's orders. Eight of the most influential of his colleagues had been sent by me, according to the orders of the Envoy, under the charge of Lieutenant Crawford, to Caubul; that officer having my written instructions to destroy his prisoners in the event of an attempt at rescue. The Hazareh and the Belooch tribes had been effectually conciliated; the Douranees of the northern and western districts had been humbled and overawed."

The troops then at Candahar consisted of her Majesty's 40th Regiment; the 2nd, 16th, 38th, 40th, and 43rd Regiments of Bengal Native Infantry; Captain Blood's battery (Bombay Artillery); the Shah's Horse Artillery, under Captain Anderson; some regiments of the Shah's infantry, and some detachments of Irregular Horse (Shah's and Skinner's), the weakness of the force lying in this arm. The tranquillity of the country seemed to authorise the diminution of this force, and a brigade, comprising the 16th, 42nd, and 43rd Regiments of Bengal Native Infantry, was about to proceed, under Colonel Maclaren, to the provinces of Hindostan. On the 7th of November it commenced its march; but on the evening of that day some startling intelligence was brought into Candahar. A detachment of 130 men under Captain Woodburn—that officer who, in the month of July, had so distinguished himself on the banks of the Helmund, in action with the Douranee rebels under Akhtar Khan—was proceeding from Candahar to Caubul, when, on the 2nd of November, after they had passed Ghuznee, they were attacked by swarms of Afghans, through whom, with consummate gallantry and skill, Woodburn fought his way to the little fort of Syedabad. The place was occupied by a man supposed to be friendly to us;* and the English officer, surrounded as

* He was connected with our postal establishment.

he was by the enemy, gladly accepted his offer of protection. But there was no safety within the fort. For a day and a night he held his position against a besieging enemy, and nobly he defended himself. But his ammunition fell short; and then there came tidings of the success of the insurgents at Caubul. On this, the chief admitted parties of the enemy into the towers of his own Harem, which overlooked the court-yard in which the Sepoys were quartered. Then the massacre commenced. Many of the Sepoys were killed on the spot. Others threw themselves over the walls, and were shot down outside the fort. Woodburn himself, with a few of his men, took post in a tower of their own court, and for some hours they gallantly defended themselves. But they fell at last. The enemy burnt them out; and massacred them almost to a man.

On receipt of this intelligence Rawlinson at once recommended the General to halt Maclaren's brigade. It was accordingly brought back to Candahar. It was plain that some mischief was brewing in the country to the North. A week of doubt and anxiety passed; and then letters came from Macnaghten and Elphinstone, announcing that Caubul was in a state of insurrection, and ordering Maclaren's brigade to be despatched at once to the capital. These letters came on with endorsements from Colonel Palmer at Ghuznee, and Major Leech at Khelat-i-Ghilzye, which showed that in the intervening country there were signs of the coming storm.* On the 17th of November, accompanied by a

* The letter to General Nott was worded as follows:

"Assistant Quarter-Master-General's Office, Head Quarters, Caubul, November 3, 1841.

"SIR,—I have the honour, by direction of Major-General Elphinstone, commanding in Afghanistan, to request that you will immediately direct the whole of the troops under orders to return to Hindostan from Candahar to march upon Caubul instead of Shikarpore, excepting any that shall have got beyond the Khojuck Pass, and that you will instruct the officers

troop of horse artillery, the three regiments commenced their march to the northward.

Anticipating that some evil might arise from the presence of the Prince, Sufder Jung, in the province, after his supercession by his elder and better disposed brother, Rawlinson had invited him to come in from Zemindawer, and he now suggested the expediency of his proceeding to Caubul, with Captain Hart's Janbaz

who may command to use the utmost practicable expedition. You are requested to attach a troop of his Majesty the Shah's Horse Artillery to the above force, and likewise half the first regiment of cavalry.

"I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"J. PATON, Capt. A. Q. M. G.

"To Major-General Nott,
Commanding at Candahar."

This letter was sent, under a flying seal, through Colonel Palmer, at Ghuznee, and Major Leech, at Khelat-i-Ghilzye—Palmer sent it on with this endorsement: "The country getting more disturbed every day. Burnett came in yesterday after being attacked on the road. He was pursued, when he fortunately fell in with some horsemen I had sent after the fifty-two camels from Candahar, which have been taken off. No tidings of Crawford." Leech wrote:—

"Khelat, Nov. 12, 1841.

"The whole of the Ghilzye prisoners escaped from Caubul, and the family of Husan Khan from this neighbourhood. Khaker Khan and Munsoor Khan in custody, and all the other families expected by this evening to be safe at this place. —— What are we to say to the appearance *en route* to Candahar at this crisis of Saifadeen, nephew of Atta Mahomed Khan. He was here on the evening of the 8th."

Macnaghten's letter was addressed to Rawlinson, and it ran in the following words:—

"Caubul, Nov. 3, 1842.

"MY DEAR RAWLINSON,—We have a very serious insurrection in the city just now, and from the elements of which it is composed, I apprehend much disturbance in the surrounding country for some time to come. It would be only prudent, therefore, that the 16th, 42nd, and 43rd, with a troop of Horse Artillery and some cavalry, should come here immediately. General Nott will be written to officially in this respect. We have been shelling the city all day, but apparently with little effect. I hope there will be no difficulty about supplies. Your writing to Leech will obviate this. On second thoughts I shall forward this letter under a flying seal through Palmer and Leech. Unless you send up this reinforcement there will be a probability of our supplies being cut off.

"W. H. MACNAGHTEN."

A line from Captain Lawrence to Colonel Palmer requested him to send on the letter express through Leech. Leech forwarded it with a few words to Rawlinson, saying, "What think you of a Prince and some treasure with the brigade? Please reinforce this post (Khelat-i-Ghilzye) by 160, or if possible, 200 men—infantry." Another endorsement stated, "There are nearly 100 maunds of atta here, belonging to the Bengal commissariat disposable for the brigade proceeding towards Caubul. We have six months supply for the garrison.

"H. MILNE."

—[*MS. Records.*]

regiment, which was to follow in the rear of Maclaren's brigade. The Prince yielded to the suggestion, and went. The fidelity of the Afghan horse was doubtful, and Rawlinson was glad to rid himself of the presence both of a discontented Prince and a body of treacherous Afghan horsemen—soldiers raised, mounted, armed, equipped and disciplined by Shah Soojah and his British supporters, seemingly for the one sole purpose of drawing their swords against the very power to which they owed their military existence.

All through the month of November Candahar remained tranquil. But it was obvious that the course of insurrection was setting towards the West. Tidings came in from the country about Ghuznee, which showed that the road to the capital was infested by the insurgents. Lieutenant Crawford, who was escorting the Douranee prisoners to Caubul had been attacked by overwhelming numbers near Ghuznee; and had suffered his prisoners to escape; or rather, had lost them with all his baggage, and a considerable number of his horses and men.* Soon afterwards Guddoo Khan, an Afghan

* It does not appear that the conduct of Lieutenant Crawford was, in any way, open to censure. He was the bearer, as has been shown, of written instructions, authorising him to destroy the prisoners if they attempted to escape, but there seems to have been no connivance between them and the party who attacked the escort. Crawford himself says, in a narrative which he drew up, and which was subsequently published in a Bombay paper: "One prisoner was cut down by a horseman of the enemy (plainly showing there was no collusion between them), two others rolled over in a ditch, where, with their horse a top of them, and their legs chained under his belly, I left them; indeed, I now found it was impossible I could ever get my charge into Ghuznee alive, and I had only to decide on putting them to death or setting them at liberty. My instructions would have justified my pursuing the former course, but the poor wretches had clearly made no attempt to escape; they were in no way answerable for the attack made on my party, as was evident from one of their number falling by the sword of our adversaries; and I conceived then, and do now conceive, that in letting these men go with their lives, I was not only acting according to the strict letter of my instructions, but that justice and humanity required I should not slay them in cold blood. Had I put them to death, then Shumshoodeen or Mahomed Akbar would have been equally justified in taking our lives (the lives of all their prisoners) on the advance

officer in the service of the Shah and his British supporters, who had accompanied Crawford's detachment—a man of unimpeachable integrity and unquestionable gallantry and good conduct—was on his return from Ghuznee to Candahar "overpowered by numbers and slain, with seventeen of his best men, losing at the same time forty-five horses, and all the arms and baggage of the Ressaleh." These incidents seemed to portend the near approach of the thunder-clouds that were breaking over Caubul. Candahar was as yet only beneath the skirts of the storm.

On the 8th of December Maclaren's brigade returned to Candahar. How it happened that these regiments had failed to make good their march to Caubul is not to be satisfactorily explained. It is still stated by officers who accompanied the detachment, that the difficulties of the march have been greatly exaggerated; and that, at all events, they might have been overcome. Nott sent the brigade with a reluctance which he took no care to conceal. It was his wish to retain the three regiments at Candahar; and he was not a man to shrink from the utterance of his feelings on such a subject as this. "Remember," he said to Maclaren and his staff, when they presented themselves at the General's quarters to take leave of their old commandant, "the despatch of this brigade to Caubul is not my doing. I am compelled to defer to superior authority; but in my own private opinion I am sending you all to destruction." The brigade marched; but, starting under such auspices, there was little likelihood of its reaching its destination. There were few officers in the force who did not know that, on the first colourable pretext, it would be turned back.

of Pollock and Nott on Caubul. I may add that the Court of Inquiry, which I called for, after investigation all the circumstances, decided that I had acted perfectly right." These escaped prisoners, however, subsequently became the most active of our enemies.

A pretext very soon presented itself. Two marches beyond Khelat-i-Ghilzye there was a light fall of snow. On the following day there was more snow, and some of the commissariat donkeys died upon the road. On the next, Maclaren halted the brigade, and ordered a committee to assemble and report upon the state of the commissariat cattle, with reference to their fitness for the continuance of the march to Caubul. The committee assembled; registered the number of deaths among the carriage-cattle during the two preceding days; and reported that as winter had now set in, and as the loss of cattle would increase every march that was made to the northward, it would be impracticable for the force to reach Caubul at all in an efficient state. On this, about the end of November, Maclaren ordered the brigade to retrace its steps.

But the snow had now ceased. The little that had fallen soon melted away, and for weeks not another flake fell throughout the entire country. The weather was remarkably fine and open; and there is not a doubt that the brigade might easily have made good its way to Caubul. But it does not appear ever to have been seriously intended that the force should reach its destination. Maclaren and his officers knew well that the return of the brigade to Candahar would be welcome to General Nott, and that there was not likely to be a very close inquiry into the circumstances attending the retrograde movement. There was in reality little more than a show of proceeding to the relief of Caubul. The regiments were wanted at Candahar; and to Candahar they returned. How far their arrival might have helped to save Elphinstone's force from destruction can only be conjectured; but it is right to admit the belief, that if Nott had known to what straits the Caubul army would soon be reduced, he would not have uttered a word to encourage the return of the relieving brigade to Candahar.

But whatever may have been the causes of the failure, soon after the retrograde movement of Maclaren's brigade became known, unmistakeable signs of inquietude were discernible in the neighbourhood of Candahar. Mahomed Atta Khan had been detached by the Caubul party to raise an insurrection in that province. No sooner had the chief reached the frontier than such unequivocal symptoms of popular excitement began to manifest themselves that Major Rawlinson at once perceived the necessity of adopting active measures for the suppression of disorder and the maintenance of the tranquillity of the surrounding country. His efforts in the first instance were directed to the avoidance of any actual collision with the people, and the preservation of outward smoothness and regularity in the administration of affairs. With this primal object, he withdrew from the outlying districts all the detached troops, and concentrated them at Candahar. A single party of Janbaz, protected by the Hazarehs from the possibility of attack, were left in Tezeen, whilst all the other troops, Hindostanee and Afghan, were posted in and around the city of Candahar. But this was not enough. The safety of our military position might be provided for; but it was not sufficient to feel confident of our ability to overcome any enemy that might venture to attack us. It was obviously expedient to strike rather at the root than at the branches; to prevent the growth of rebellion rather than to beat it down full-grown. At all events, it was politic to secure such a division of parties as would annihilate even the possibility of a powerful coalition against us. Relying upon the general unpopularity of the Barukzyes with the Douranee tribes, whom the Sirdars had so long and so severely oppressed, Major Rawlinson exerted himself to get up a Douranee movement in our favour. He bound the chiefs, by all the most solemn oaths that Mahomedanism affords, to stand

firm in their allegiance to Shah Soojah and the Shazadah Timour. The priesthood ratified the bond; and the families of the Douranee chiefs were placed as hostages for their fidelity in the hands of the British officers. The chiefs themselves, with Prince Timour's eldest son at their head, and accompanied by Meerza Ahmed, the Revenue-manager of Candahar, a man of considerable talents and unsuspected fidelity, to whom Major Rawlinson had entrusted a lakh of rupees for the management of the movement, were despatched to the eastern frontier to raise the tribes against the Barukzyes and their Ghilzye allies. In the mean while the British, at Candahar, remained apparently unconcerned spectators of the contest, which, it was hoped, would resolve itself into a question of Suddozye or Barukzye supremacy in the Douranee Empire.

The objects contemplated by Major Rawlinson were, however, only partially attained. He succeeded in gaining time, and in removing the Douranee chiefs from the neighbourhood of our camp. "The Douranees quitted Candahar in the middle of December, delayed for a considerable time the advance of Mahomed Atta Khan, and prevented to the utmost of their power the spread of religious fanaticism among their tribes." But the good faith so apparent at the outset was destined soon to be overclouded. As long as the Douranees believed that to carry out the wishes of the British was really to fight the battle of the Suddozyes, they were true to our cause; but they soon began to give credit to the report that Shah Soojah himself was in the ranks of our enemies, and then they fell away from us. Even Meerza Ahmed, in whom so much confidence had been reposed, turned his fine talents against us, and became the mainspring of a hostile Douranee movement.

But they did not at once declare themselves. For a while the Douranees quietly watched the progress of

affairs. Those events as they developed themselves, seemed more and more favourable to the spread of insurrection in western Afghanistan. As the old year wore to a close, it seemed that our difficulties were thickening, and the new year came in with a crowd of fresh embarrassments. Sufder Jung had returned to Candahar. On the retrogression of Maclaren's brigade he had declared that he could not trust the Janbaz to escort him to Caubul, and again set his face towards the south. The presence of these traitorous horsemen at Candahar had always been a source of considerable anxiety to Major Rawlinson. The 1st Regiment of Afghan horse had been in Zemindawer; and when the political agent recalled the other troops from that part of the country, it was his intention that the Janbaz should remain at Ghirisk. Their enmity to the surrounding tribes was so well known that there was less chance of their uniting with the rebels in that part of the country than in any other. Owing, however, to the miscarriage of a letter, Rawlinson's intentions were defeated. The Janbaz returned to Candahar with the other details of the Zemindawer detachment, on the 9th of December. But Rawlinson was determined to remove them. He suspected their treachery; but sooner than he anticipated, they threw off all disguise, and openly arrayed themselves against us.

Before daybreak on the 27th of December the men of the Janbaz regiments were to have commenced their march to Ghirisk. There were 250 men of the 1st Regiment under Lieutenant Golding, and 150 of the 2nd under Lieutenant Wilson. Lieutenant Pattinson was to accompany them in political charge. The object of the movement was two-fold—to escort treasure and ammunition to Ghirisk, and to remove from Candahar a body of men whose fidelity was more than suspected. Two

hours after midnight the party was to have moved and made a double march, for the purpose of clearing the villages on the Urghundab, which had been greatly excited during the few preceding days. Golding was ready at the appointed hour; but, through some misconception of orders, Wilson's men were not prepared to march. So the movement was countermanded. Golding and Pattinson, therefore, returned to the tent of the former, and laid themselves down again to sleep. The 1st Janbaz regiment had been drawn up ready for the march with their cattle loaded, and the postponement of the movement now took them by surprise. They had laid a plot to mutiny and desert upon the march, and they believed that the conspiracy had been detected. After waiting for half an hour, drawn up in the chill air of early morning, they determined at once to throw off the mask; so they streamed into Golding's tent with their drawn swords, and attacked the two officers in their beds. When they thought that their bloody work was complete, they rushed confusedly out of the tent, mounted their horses, and fled. The treasure was plundered, and some horses belonging to Golding and Pattinson were carried off; but nothing else was touched by the assassins. Pattinson was stunned by a blow on the head, but recovering his senses, he made his way out of the tent, wounded as he was in seven places, mounted a horse which his Meerza had saddled on the spot, and effected his escape.* Golding was less fortunate. He rushed out of his tent, and fled on foot towards the cantonments; but the Janbaz followed and cut him down when within a short distance of our camp.†

A party of the Shah's horse under Captain Leeson, and a detachment of Captain Wilson's Janbaz, who had

* He died, after much suffering, in March.
† *Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*

remained true to us in the face of strong temptation, were sent out against the mutineers. The detachment came up with the rebels about twelve miles from Candahar. There was a brief, but sturdy conflict. The mutineers charged in a body, but were gallantly met by Leeson's men; and after a hand-to-hand struggle, were broken and dispersed.* Thirty of their number were killed by our cavalry, who followed up their advantage; many more were wounded, and the remainder fled in confusion to the camp of Atta Mahomed.

Two days after the defection of the Janbaz, Prince Sufder Jung fled from Candahar and joined the camp of Atta Mahomed. The Sirdar had fixed his head-quarters at Dehli, about forty miles from Candahar; and there, early in January, Rawlinson was eager to attack him. The political agent saw clearly the expediency of crushing the insurrection in the bud. Every day was adding to the importance of the movement, and swelling the number of the insurgents. Some of the tribes were standing aloof, unwilling to declare themselves against us, yet in hourly expectation of being compelled to secure their own safety by ranging themselves under the banners of the Prince. But the General was unwilling to divide his force; and refused to send a brigade to Dehli. Whilst Rawlinson urged

* "The mutineers moved down to the Barukzye villages in apparent expectation of being joined by the Ooloos, but wherever they went they received neither support nor encouragement, notwithstanding that they gave out our troops were on the march to destroy the Douranee villages. The Janbaz at last took up a position at Chuplanee, a village about twelve miles off, where our cavalry came up with them; Captain Leeson had to file his men across a difficult canal, and had only just formed line when the enemy charged in a body. Our men charged at the same time in line, and the flanks swept round the Janbaz horse, who were probably not above 150 strong—numbers having left the rebel standard before reaching Chuplanee. For about five minutes a splendid fight took place, hand-to-hand, when the Janbaz broke and fled, pursued by our cavalry. Of the enemy, about thirty were killed and fifty wounded in the flight and pursuit. Our loss was trifling."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

strong political considerations in favour of promptitude of action, Nott, with equal firmness, took his stand upon military grounds, and argued that it would be inexpedient, at such a season of the year, to send a portion of his force a distance of forty miles from Candahar to beat up the quarters of a fugitive Prince. "Sufder Jung," wrote Rawlinson, "has fixed his abode at Dehli, and has declared himself the leader of an insurrection, aiming at our expulsion from the country. Up to the present time no very considerable number of men have joined his standard, and the only chiefs in attendance of any note, are those who have accompanied Mahomed Atta Khan from Caubul, together with the Ghilzye leaders, Sumud Khan, Meer Alim Khan, and the Gooroo. It would thus be an easy matter by the detachment of a brigade to Dehli to break up the insurgent force, and whether the rebels fought or fled, the consequences would be almost of equal benefit with regard to the restoration of tranquillity. But I anticipate a very serious aggravation of affairs if we allow the Prince to remain unmolested for any length of time at Dehli, or to move from that place in the direction of Candahar with the avowed purpose of attacking us. Our inactivity would not fail to be ascribed by the great body of the Ooloos to an inability to act on the offensive, and an impression of this sort having once gained ground, the natural consequences, in the present highly excited state of religious feeling, would be a general rise of the population against us."*

Reason and experience were both on the side of this argument, and Rawlinson stated the case clearly and well. But Nott took a soldier's view of the question. He argued, that to send out a brigade at such a season

* *Major Rawlinson to Major-General Nott: January 7th*, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*

of the year, so far from its supports, would be to destroy his men in the field, and to expose the city to the attacks of the enemy. "I conceive," he wrote in reply to Rawlinson's letter, "that the whole country is in a state of rebellion, and that nothing but the speedy concentration of the troops at this place has saved the different detachments from being destroyed in detail, and the city of Candahar from being besieged. . . . Because this young Prince is said to have assembled 1000 or 1500 followers at a distance of forty miles from Candahar, it would, indeed, be truly absurd were I, in the very depth of winter, to send a detachment wandering about the country in search of the rebel fugitive, destroying my men amidst frost and snow, killing the few carriage-cattle we have left, and thus be totally disabled at the proper season from moving ten miles in any direction from the city, or even have the means of falling back, should that unfortunately ever become necessary."*

The movements of the rebel army soon settled the question between them. No attempt having been made to dislodge the insurgent chiefs, they quietly moved down the valley of the Urghundab, and on the 12th of January took post on the river, about five miles to the west of the city of Candahar.

General Nott lost no time in moving out to attack them. Taking with him five and a half regiments of infantry, the Shah's 1st Cavalry, a party of Skinner's Horse, and sixteen guns,† a formidable body of troops,

* *General Nott to Major Rawlinson: January* 8, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.* There is a characteristic passage in this letter which is worthy of quotation. "I have no right to interfere with the affairs of the government of this country, and I never do—but in reference to that part of your note where you speak of political influence, I will candidly tell you that these are not times for mere ceremony, and that under present circumstances, and at a distance of 2000 miles from the seat of the Supreme Government, I throw responsibility to the winds, and tell you that, in my opinion, you have not had for some time past, nor have you at present, one particle of political influence in this country."

† Her Majesty's 40th Regiment; the 2nd, 16th, 38th, and a wing of the

weak only in the mounted branch—he made a four hours' march over a few miles of country, and came upon the enemy,* posted near the fortified village of Killa-chuk, on the right bank of the Urghundab. The British troops crossed the river, and at once advanced in column of battalions, flanked by the artillery and cavalry, to the attack. The action was of brief duration. At the end of twenty minutes, during which our guns and musketry, telling with deadly effect upon the heavy masses of the enemy, were answered by a wild and ineffective fire from their ranks, the rebel army was in confusion and flight. The Ghilzyes fled in one direction; the Janbaz in another; the people from the villages† hastened to their own homes. Atta Mahomed attempted to make a stand; but our troops moved forward—carried the village by storm—and slaughtered every man, woman, and child, within its walls. The British line was then re-formed, and Atta Mahomed prepared to meet a second attack. But the cavalry, with two horse-artillery guns, were now slipped upon the enemy, who

42nd Native Infantry; the Shah's 5th Infantry; Anderson's two troops of Horse Artillery (Shah's); Blood's Battery (Bombay Artillery); Leeson's and Haldane's Horse.

* The number of the enemy has been variously stated at all sorts of amounts, from 5000 to 20,000. General Nott, in his official despatch addressed to the Military Secretary, says: "After a march of four hours over a very difficult country, I came in sight of the rebel army, from fifteen to twenty thousand men, drawn up in a strong position on the right bank of the Urghundab." Major Rawlinson says: "From what I myself saw, as well as from information I have received from parties in the enemy's camp, I should estimate their entire force at 5000—3000 of which accompanied the chiefs from Sir-a-bund, whilst the other 2000 joined from the Alekozye villages."—[*MS. Journal.*] There is nothing of which the historian ought to speak with less confidence than the "number of the enemy." There is nothing more difficult to determine than the fact; and nothing more likely to draw upon him a large amount of acrimonious criticism, than his manner of stating it. As a general proposition, I think it may be laid down that military commanders seldom under-state the number of the enemy they have beaten.

† "Two canals in advance of the village were lined by matchlock men —the horse crowded the slope of the tuppa upon which Killa-chuk is built, and occupied the entire space intervening between that village and Kohuck, the hillocks adjoining which latter place were covered by large masses of footmen collected from the neighbouring villages to witness rather than to participate in the combat."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

broke and fled in dismay; and the humiliation of Atta Mahomed and his princely ally was complete.*

The Douranee chiefs now began to throw off the mask. They moved down to the assistance of the rebel army, but the battle had been fought before they could arrive upon the field, and they only came up in time to see their countrymen in panic flight.† Sufder Jung, Atta Mahomed, and the other rebel chiefs found an honourable refuge in the Douranee camp; and from that time, they who had left Candahar as our friends, presented a front of open hostility to our authority.‡

Meerza Ahmed was the head-piece of the Douranee party. Nott had pronounced him a traitor.§ Rawlinson

* Major Rawlinson, in his despatch of the 6th of March, describes this affair as a "brief skirmish." General Nott has described the action in a few pregnant sentences. A graphic account of it is to be found in Captain Neill's *Recollections of Four Years' Service in the East.* Captain Neill was present as Adjutant of her Majesty's 40th Regiment. He speaks of the affair as the "Battle of Urghundab"—"the first success after our recent disasters at Caubul," as it was. He adds: "The victory having been obtained over a force so immensely superior to that which was opposed to it by the British, most effectually damped the spirit of our enemies in that part of the country." As Nott's force had sixteen guns, it can hardly be said that the enemy's force was immensely superior.

† The Prince seems to have been inclined to desert to the British in the course of the action. He and Tej Mahomed (the Sirdar of the recreant Janbaz, who had been forced to accompany the mutineers after their attack on their British officers) had been in consultation in the morning about going over to the British camp. The chiefs had some suspicion of this, and "when they saw Tej Mahomed detach himself, they immediately accused the Prince of treachery. They talked, indeed, of seizing him; upon which the boy, with his immediate followers, galloped off the field."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*] Tej Mahomed would have come in; but an inopportune shower of grape from Blood's battery kept him at a discreet distance.

‡ The Douranee chiefs were irritated against Atta Mahomed for precipitating the conflict with the British. They had been anxious to stand aloof until the issue of the Caubul contest could be more clearly seen by them. They were unwilling to commit themselves at so early a stage.

§ On the 8th of January the General wrote to Rawlinson: "I am sorry that I have not the same confidence in Meerza Ahmed which you appear to have. The force under this man has been in the immediate vicinity of Candahar for the last month. Why this has been permitted I know not. He has a very considerable body of men with him, both horse and foot; and my information tells me that they are increasing daily and hourly. . . . . You ought to be the best judge of this man's fidelity; but I believe him to be a traitor; and I should not be surprised to hear of his

had now ceased to believe in his fidelity; but he had never ceased to respect his talents. He knew him to be an Afghan of rare ability, and he believed that the sagacity of the Meerza would not suffer him to doubt the difference between the power of his countrymen and that of the British Government. But the Meerza had sounded the depth of the difficulties which surrounded us with no little accuracy, and had estimated aright the nature of the crisis. He saw in the distance our compulsory abandonment of Afghanistan, and doubted the wisdom of leaguing himself with a declining cause.

From the 20th of January to the last day of February the Douranees remained encamped in the neighbourhood of Candahar. Nothing but the genius of Meerza Ahmed could have kept together, throughout so long a season of comparative inactivity, all the discordant elements of that Douranee force. The winter had set in with its snowy accessories. Nott was unwilling to expose his troops to the severities of the winter season; and the enemy seemed equally disinclined for war whilst the snow was on the ground. But during this period of suspended hostilities very different were the occupations of the two contending forces—very different the feelings with which they contemplated the renewal of the struggle. The attitude of the British at this time denoted a consciousness of strength. There was no despondency —there was no excitement. Our officers and men, having nothing to do in the field, fell back again into the ordinary routine of cantonment life, as though the country had never been convulsed or disturbed. They rode

being joined by his expected confederates, and before twenty-four hours marching off and forcing the young Prince Sekunder to accompany him. Yet he is on the watch, and will play his game according to circumstances." —[*General Nott to Major Rawlinson: January 8th*, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*] The position of Meerza Ahmed, and the near prospect of his defection, were among the reasons urged by the General in support of his refusal to quit the near neighbourhood of Candahar.

steeple-chases; they played at rackets; they pelted one another with snow-balls. The dreadful snow which had destroyed the Caubul army was only a plaything in the hands of their brethren at Candahar.* The enemy, on the other hand, were kept continually in a state of restless and absorbing activity. Meerza Ahmed saw the danger of suffering the Douranee chiefs, disunited and jealous of each other as they were, to dwell too intently upon the embarrassments of their own positions. He gave their thoughts an outward direction; and, by skilful management, kept them both from risking prematurely a general engagement with the British, and from breaking out into internal dissensions.† "Meerza Ahmed alone," says Major Rawlinson, in the able despatch I have already quoted, "could have so long preserved union among the discordant elements of which this camp was composed; he alone could have managed, by the most careful revenue arrangements, to have supported the concourse which was assembled round the standard of Sufder Jung; he alone, perhaps, could have prevented the Douranees from risking an action in which they were sure to be defeated; his measures throughout have been most skilful and well sustained. The chiefs were, in the first place, sent to recruit in the different districts where their influence chiefly prevailed; revenue was raised in the usual form for the support of the troops in anticipation of the coming harvest, the ryots receiving an acquittance from Meerza Ahmed in case the management should continue in his hands, and

* *Neill's Recollections.* There was, however, comparatively little snow at Candahar; and it seldom lies there long upon the ground.

† He was not, however, completely successful. It would have been a miracle if he had been. "*February* 4.—There have been several squabbles in the Douranee camp already: 1stly. A quarrel took place between the Janbaz and Populzyes regarding *bhoosa*; 2ndly. Sufder Jung fell out with Meerza Ahmed, and abused him for not spending his money freely on the Ghazees; and 3rdly. The Janbaz have regularly cleaned out an Ishakzye Khail in another dispute about supplies."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

being assured that if our power prevailed we were too just to subject the cultivators to a double exaction; statements of the Shah's connivance in the Caubul revolution were industriously circulated; incessant attempts were made to tamper with our Hindostanee troops (not altogether without success), and letters were designedly thrown into our hands to render us suspicious of such chiefs as adhered to us, whilst the most stringent measures were adopted to deter the villagers around the city from bringing supplies into Candahar. Such was the line of policy pursued by Meerza Ahmed from the 20th of January to the 20th of February. In this interim General Nott had laid in five months' supplies for the troops; he had repaired the fortifications to a certain extent; and intending on the 12th of February to march out and attack the enemy, he had concurred in the advisability of disarming the population preparatory to the movement of our troops.* Severe weather, however, rendered a march impracticable at the time he meditated; and before it became sufficiently mild to enable him to take the field, the tactics of the enemy had undergone a total alteration in consequence of advices from Caubul."

But there were many circumstances at this time to create uneasiness in the minds of those to whom was entrusted the direction of affairs at Candahar. The garrison was not threatened with a scarcity of provisions; but fodder for the cattle was very scarce. The horses were becoming unserviceable from lack of nourishment; the sheep were so miserably lean as to be scarcely worth killing for food. It was intensely cold; and fuel was so

* Major Rawlinson, preparatory to the commencement of the work of disarming, took a census of the inhabitants of the city, which greatly alarmed the people, as it was believed to be our intention to expel them. When it was found that they were only to be disarmed, they recovered their serenity, and submitted very patiently to the ordeal.

scarce, that the luxury of a winter fire was denied even to the sick. The hospitals had their inmates; but there were no medicines. And above all, money was becoming so scarce, that the most serious apprehensions were entertained by Major Rawlinson, who knew that there was no weapon of war so serviceable as the money-bag in such a country as Afghanistan.* Under such circumstances, it may readily be supposed how anxiously the arrival of a convoy from the southward was looked for, and how necessary it seemed that the communications with Sindh should be opened in such a manner as to secure the arrival of treasure and supplies.

But whilst the hopes of the garrison were directed towards the country to the southward, their thoughts, with fear and trembling, turned themselves towards the North. On the 21st of February a messenger arrived at Candahar, bringing a letter from General Elphinstone and Major Pottinger, ordering the evacuation of Candahar and Khelat-i-Ghilzye.† The original had been

* "*February* 11.—I am becoming seriously alarmed about money. A lakh is the utmost that I shall be able to raise from the Candahar merchants, and with the most rigid economy this will hardly last us to the end of March —the godowns at the same time being opened to supply the troops. It seems, therefore, absolutely indispensable that the road should be opened from the south, either by Outram or ourselves." — [*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

† "*February* 21. — Two Cossids reached me to-day from Leech, one with letters of the 13th and 15th, the other with letters of the 17th. Enclosed was a copy of a letter addressed to me by Major-General Elphinstone and Major Pottinger, requesting me to intimate to Major-General Nott their wish that he would evacuate Candahar and Khelat-i-Ghilzye, in pursuance of the agreement entered into at Caubul for the return of our troops to India. This letter appears to be genuine, but I cannot consider it in any way binding on us; and for the reasons stated in my letter to General Nott of the 1st instant, I still conceive that we are best consulting the interests of government in maintaining our position pending the receipt of further instructions from Calcutta. . . . . The question regarding Shah Soojah is very perplexing. He is certainly nominally at the head of the government, and we can no longer be supposed to be here in support of his authority. Still, however, a month sooner or later in retiring can make little difference, and it seems to me indispensable that some definite ar-

written nearly two months before; and that which now reached Major Rawlinson was a copy forwarded by Leech from Khelat-i-Ghilzye.* There was no doubt in Rawlinson's mind about the genuine character of the document; but he could not bring himself to recognise for a moment the obligations which it was intended to impose upon him. He could not, however, help perceiving that the turn which political affairs had taken in Caubul placed him in a strange and anomalous position. Shah Soojah was now the recognised sovereign of Afghanistan, ruling by the consent and with the aid of the Barukzye chiefs; and it could no longer be said that the presence of the British troops was necessary to the support of the Suddozye Kings. The Douranee chiefs saw this as plainly as Rawlinson; and they did not fail to take advantage of the circumstance. They now endeavoured to reason the British out of Candahar when they found it difficult to expel them; and Rawlinson and Nott found it less easy to rebut their arguments than to repel their assaults.

On the 23rd of February, Rawlinson received a packet of letters from the Douranee camp, the contents of which supplied much food for earnest reflection. Sufder Jung

rangements, approved of by government, should be entered into for the future administration of the province before we withdraw our troops."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

* It ran thus: "*Caubul, 25th December*, 1841.—SIR,—It having been found necessary to conclude an arrangement, founded on that of the late Sir W. H. Macnaghten, for the evacuation of Afghanistan by our troops, we have the honour to request that you will intimate to the officer commanding at Candahar our wish that the troops now at that place and at Khelat-i-Ghilzye, together with the British authorities and troops within your jurisdiction, should return to India at the earliest convenient season. Newab Jubbar Khan, who is the bearer of this letter, will render you all the assistance in his power. He has been appointed Governor of Candahar on the part of the existing government.

"E. POTTINGER.

"W. K. ELPHINSTONE, M.-G.

"P.S.—If you require two or three days to make your preparations, you must not remain in the city, but proceed to your cantonment. Whatever you are obliged to leave behind, you will make over to the Newab Jubbar Khan."

and the Douranee chiefs wrote to the British agent, setting forth that, as it had always been declared that the British merely occupied the country in support of Shah Soojah, and as the Shah was now recognised by the chiefs and the people, and had no longer any need of our support, it was incumbent upon us to withdraw from the country. If, it was added, the British would now consent to retire from Candahar, an unmolested passage to Quettah would be guaranteed to them; but that, if they insisted on maintaining their position, they must expect that the fate of the Caubul army would be theirs. Meerza Ahmed, in a private letter to Rawlinson, besought him to retire before the whole Douranee nation rose against the British. But perhaps the most important of the letters brought in that morning, was one from Shah Soojah to Prince Timour, to the following effect: "You must understand that the disturbances which you have, no doubt, heard of at Caubul, have been a contest between the followers of Islam and the unbelievers. Now that the affair is decided, all the Afghans have tendered their allegiance to me, and recognised me as King. It is necessary that you should keep me duly informed of all proceedings in your government; and rest assured of my favour and affection." When Rawlinson took this letter to the Shah-zadah Timour, the Prince at once declared it to be a forgery; but the British officer knew how to decypher stranger characters than those of a Persian *Dust-Khut*, and to decide upon the authenticity of far more perplexing scriptures than this. Rawlinson's practised eye saw at once that the document was a genuine one.

The letter from the chiefs demanded an answer; and Rawlinson now took counsel with the General. The hour for decision had arrived. It became them to look their position boldly in the face, and to shape their

course for the future. Nott was not a man to listen patiently to the language of insolent dictation from the Afghan chiefs. He had already made up his mind to maintain his position at all risks, pending the receipt of instructions from government issued subsequently to the receipt by government of intelligence of the Envoy's murder.* Rawlinson was of the same opinion. So he drew up a letter to the Douranee chiefs, setting forth that, as there was every reason to believe that Shah Soojah was acting under compulsion, and that he in reality, in spite of existing appearances, desired the support of the British, it would not become the latter to withdraw from Afghanistan before entering into a final explanation with the King. He drew the attention of the chiefs to the difference of our positions at Caubul and Candahar—said that any attempt to expel us by force must inevitably fail—and recommended the Douranees to refrain from engaging in unprofitable hostility. But he added, that the British had no desire to conquer the country for themselves—that the Candahar army was only waiting for instructions from government—and he believed it was the desire of that government to restore to Shah Soojah the uncontrolled exercise of his authority, and to be guided by the provisions of a new treaty which would probably be negotiated between the two states.† On the following day,‡ the despatch of the letter having been delayed by the difficulty of finding a trustworthy messenger, Rawlinson

* "I have only to repeat," wrote General Nott, on the 23rd of February, in reply to Major Rawlinson's official letter on the subject of the evacuation orders received from Caubul, "that I will not treat with any person whatever for the retirement of the British troops from Afghanistan, until I shall have received instructions from the Supreme Government. The letter signed 'Eldred Pottinger' and 'W. K. Elphinstone' may, or may not, be a forgery. I conceive that these officers were not free agents at Caubul; and therefore their letter or order can have no weight with me."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

† *Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*

‡ February 28.

added a postscript, setting forth that intelligence had since been received, which clearly demonstrated that the Shah was little more than a prisoner in the hands of the Barukzyes; and he added, that forces were on their way from India to avenge the murder of the Envoy.

The activity of Rawlinson, at this time, was unceasing. He exerted himself, and often with good success, to detach different tribes from the rebel cause; and was continually corresponding both with the chiefs in the Douranee camp and in the neighbouring villages. It was his policy to draw off the Barukzyes from the Douranee confederacy, and to stimulate the Douranees against the Barukzyes, by declaring that the Shah was a mere instrument in the hands of the latter. It was debated, indeed, whether the Douranees could not be induced to move off to Caubul for the rescue of the King.*

But, in spite of these and other favorable indications, it appeared, both to the military and political chief at Candahar, that it was necessary now to strike some vigorous blow for the suppression of the insurrection and the maintenance of our own security. So Nott determined to attack the enemy; and Rawlinson, after many misgivings, to expel the Afghans from the city. This movement he had been painfully contemplating all

* "I have been for some days past in communication with the Barukzye tribe, and have, I believe, succeeded in detaching them from the Douranee confederacy. They had deserted their villages and gone off to the desert; but, on a promise of protection, have now returned, and bound themselves to admit none of the enemy's horse within their borders. The Alekozyes of the Urghundab also propose to enter into the same engagements; and if we can fairly detach these two powerful tribes, the Douranee cause must, I should think, expire of an atrophy. . . . Timour suggests that he should endeavour to get the Douranee chiefs to march on Caubul, in order to release the Shah from the Barukzyes, feigning that he has received his father's instructions to this effect; and I see no objection to such an attempt being made. I also hear that the Caubul Janbaz insist on proceeding to the north, and that Meerza Ahmed has the greatest difficulty in restraining them."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

through the month of February; and now, at the beginning of March, he believed that he could no longer postpone, with safety, the accomplishment of this harsh, but necessary, measure of defence.* All doubts regarding the wishes of the Indian Government had been, by this time, set at rest by the receipt of a copy of a letter, addressed by the Supreme Government to the Commander-in-Chief on the 28th of January, in which letter the continued occupation of Candahar was spoken of as an event which the British-Indian Government believed would be conducive to the interests of the state; and it afforded no small pleasure to Nott and Rawlinson to find how completely they had anticipated the wishes of the Governor-General and his Council.

On the 3rd of March, Rawlinson began to clear the city of its Afghan inhabitants.† Inspecting the census he had made, and selecting a few who were to be permitted

* "*March* 1.—The General now has made up his mind to take the field; and, after considering the case fully, I have determined that the Afghans must be turned out of the city. It is not as if the present affair were a mere transient disturbance. We are engaged in a regular national war, and Outram does not anticipate that we shall be able to take the field in sufficient force to put down all opposition before next winter. We must, therefore, look forward to a protracted struggle at Candahar all through the summer; and the security of the city appears to me, under such circumstances, indispensable."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

† A week before, a strong conviction of the necessity of the measure had forced itself upon his mind. But he was only too willing to postpone the execution of it. On the 22nd of February he wrote: "The Moollahs are now again stirring themselves, and I have very good grounds for supposing a large quantity of arms to be concealed. I almost fear that affairs are approaching that state when, for our immediate safety, we shall be obliged to incur the odium of expelling the Moollahs and Afghans from the city. It is not that these people can do us any serious injury within the city; but the probability of an insurrection inside the walls simultaneously with the disturbances outside, gives confidence to Meerza Ahmed's party and dispirits our Parsewan adherents. It is to be considered, however, that if we expel the Afghans and retain the Parsewans, we shall embitter the national feeling against us with the rumour of sectarian animosity, and shall, moreover, sacrifice the Sheeah party in the event of our retirement. The most obvious necessity of self-preservation could alone, I think, warrant such a course, and I cannot doubt but that it is my duty to temporise as long as prudence will admit."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

to remain—peaceful citizens, as merchants, followers of useful trades, and a few members of the priesthood, he expelled the remainder of the Afghan inhabitants—in all, about 1000 families. No resistance was offered. The work was not completed before the close of the 6th. The municipal authorities performed their duties so remissly, that it was necessary to tell off an officer and a party of Sepoys to each district, to see that the clearance was more effectually performed. Some 5000 or 6000 people were driven out of the city. Every exertion was made to render the measure as little oppressive as possible; but the expulsion of so many citizens from their homes could not be altogether free from cruelty and injustice.*

The city having thus been cleared of all its suspected inhabitants, Nott, on the 7th of March, took the field, with the main body of his troops. The 40th Queen's—the 16th, 38th, 42nd, and 43rd regiments of Native Infantry—a wing of one of the Shah's regiments—all the cavalry in the force, and sixteen guns, went out against the enemy. The 2nd regiment of Native Infantry, with two regiments and a wing of the Shah's foot, remained behind for the protection of the city. All the gates of the city, but the Herat and a part of the Shikarpoor gate, were blocked up, and Candahar was believed to be secure against the assaults of the whole Douranee force.

As Nott advanced, the enemy, who had been hovering about the neighbourhood of Candahar, retired before him. He crossed the Turnuk and advanced upon the

* "No doubt much property has been sacrificed in carrying the measure into effect; but we have done all in our power to alleviate the evil. Valuable property, which the people were unable to take away with them, has been transferred to the safe keeping of the Hindoos and merchants who have remained, and the grain is to be all taken charge of by the commissariat, receipts in money being granted by us to the owners."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

Urghundab in pursuit of them; but they shrank from meeting our bayonets; and it was long before they even ventured to come within reach of our guns. The artillery then told with such good effect on the dense masses of the enemy, that they were more than ever disinclined to approach us. On the 9th, however, there seemed some prospect of a general action. The enemy's footmen were posted on a range of hills, and, as our column advanced, they saluted us with a volley from their matchlocks. The light companies of the 40th Queen's and 16th Native Infantry, under Captain F. White, of the former regiment, were sent forward to storm the hills on the right; and the grenadiers of the 40th, under Lieutenant Wakefield, performed the same good service on the ascents to the left. The hills were soon cleared; and the enemy's cavalry were then seen drawn up in front of our columns. Their line extended across the plain; their right resting upon a range of high ground, and their left on a ruined fort, built on a high scarped mound.* Hoping to draw them within his reach, the General now kept his guns quiet. But they were not inclined to meet us in the field. They were planning another game.

Whether it had been the original design of the Douranee chiefs to draw Nott's army out of Candahar, and to strip the city of its defences; or whether, despairing of success against such a body of troops as the General had taken out with him, was not at first very apparent.† But it subsequently became known to the British authorities that the stratagem was planned by the

* *Captain Neill's Recollections of Service in the East.*

† "The plan of enticing the General to Telookham, delaying him there by keeping a body of horse in his vicinity, and then doubling back on the town, was all preconcerted by Meerza Ahmed; and on the night of the attack every chief in the country was present except the Noorzyes."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

subtle understanding of Meerza Ahmed. The enemy, after the skirmish of the 9th instant, retired before our advancing battalions, and, industriously spreading a report that they purposed to attack Nott's camp during the night, recrossed the river and doubled back upon Candahar. Up to this time the city had remained perfectly quiet; and the minds of the British authorities had not been disturbed by any thoughts of coming danger. But on the morning of the 10th it was seen that a number of Afghan footmen had come down during the preceding night and taken possession of old Candahar. Rawlinson at once despatched three messengers to Nott's camp, to inform him that the enemy had doubled back in his rear, and that it was apparently their intention to attack the city. His suspicions were soon confirmed. His scouts brought in intelligence to the effect that the Douranee army was to concentrate during the day, before Candahar, and to attack it in the course of the night. All day long the numbers of the enemy continued to increase, and at sunset Sufder Jung and Meerza Ahmed arrived and posted themselves in the cantonments. Night came on with pitchy darkness; and the garrison could not trace the movements of the enemy. They had no blue lights—no fire-balls—no means of casting a light beyond the defences of the city. The Ghazees were swarming close to the walls; and at eight o'clock they commenced the attack. They had heaped up some faggots at the Herat gate; and now they fired the pile. They had poured oil on the brushwood, and now it blazed up with sudden fury.* The

* The gate had been closed for the night. Lieutenant Cooke was on guard, and was endeavouring to trace the movements of the enemy in the distance, when a villager drove his donkey, loaded with brushwood, over the bridge and demanded admission. He was told the gate would be opened for no one; upon which he growled out a malediction, and tossing the brushwood on the ground, said he would leave it there for the night, and take it into the town in the morning. The villager, having recrossed the bridge with his donkey, dived among the ruined huts opposite

gate itself ignited as readily as tinder, and the flames now lit up the mass of white turbans, the gleaming arms, and the coloured standards, which had before been only seen, in scattered glimpses, by the momentary light of the kindled match of the Afghan jezails.*

Desperate was the attack of the Ghazees, and steady the resistance of the garrison. A gun upon the bastion poured in its deadly shower of grape among the besiegers; and the guard kept up a heavy fire from the ramparts. But the Ghazees pressed on with desperate resolution. The success of their first movement had given them confidence and courage; and now they were tearing down the blazing planks with intrepid hands, fearless of the red-hot bars and hinges of the falling gate. Many of them, intoxicated with bang, were sending up the fearful yell of the Afghan fanatic, and rushing upon death with the eagerness of the martyr. Others were calling upon Prince Timour to come out and win Paradise by aiding the cause of the true believers. At one time it seemed that victory would declare itself on the side of the infuriated multitude that was surging round the city walls. But there were men within the city as resolute, and far more steady and collected in their resolution, than the excited crowds beyond it, who were hungering after our destruction. Major Lane commanded the garrison. Rawlinson was there to counsel and to aid him. They brought down the gun from the bastion and planted it in the gateway. They brought another from the citadel to its support. They strengthened the point of attack with fresh bodies of infantry, and called out all the water-carriers to endeavour to extinguish the flames.

the Herat gate, and was out of shot in a moment. At the same instant flames burst forth from the brushwood, and the gate was fired.

* See the letter-press to Lieut. Rattray's admirable drawings of the Scenery and Costumes of Afghanistan.

But more serviceable even than these movements was one which opposed a solid obstacle to the entrance of the besieging multitude. They brought down from the Commissariat godowns a number of grain-bags, and piled them up at the burning gate. About nine o'clock the gate fell outwards, and then a party of Ghazees climbed the lofty barricade of grain-bags as men weary of their lives. Many fell dead or desperately wounded beneath the heavy fire of our musketry. Spirited was the attack—spirited the defence. The fate of Candahar seemed to tremble in the balance. For three more hours the Ghazees renewed, at intervals, the assault upon the gateway; but they could not make good their entrance to the city; and at midnight they drew off in despair.

Whilst this desperate struggle was going on at the Herat gate of the city, attempts had been made upon the Shikarpoor and Caubul gates. But the enemy could not fire the brushwood they had collected. The garrison were too prompt and alert. It appears that Meerza Ahmed, confident of the success of the attack upon the Herat gate, had arranged that a given signal should announce this success, and that then he should proceed to the assault of the Eedgah gate leading to the citadel. But when at midnight the attack was finally repulsed, a council of war was held. Baffled in their attempts on the city, the angry fanatics levelled the most violent reproaches against Meerza Ahmed, and were with difficulty restrained from laying violent hands on the man, who, they declared, had betrayed them into an attempt which had sacrificed the lives of hundreds of true believers, and ended only in failure and disgrace. It is said that the Ghazees lost six hundred men in the attempt. They were busy until day-break in carrying off the dead.

It is not to be doubted that, during that night of the 10th of March, Candahar was in imminent danger. Had the city fallen into the hands of the enemy at this time, it is doubtful whether Nott's force, on its return, would have succeeded in recapturing it. The troops had gone out without tents, and were insufficiently supplied with ammunition. Everything, indeed, was against them; and even if the courage and constancy of the force had prevailed at last, success could have been achieved only after an immense sacrifice of life. That the General was out-manœuvred, is plain. But it may be doubted whether he is fairly chargeable with the amount of indiscretion which has been imputed to him. It has been said that he left the city unprotected. But as he was to have engaged the enemy himself in the open country, and all sources of internal danger had been removed by the expulsion of the Afghans and the disarming of the other inhabitants, it was confidently believed that the troops left in the city were more than sufficient for its defence. It must, however, be acknowledged that Nott was lamentably ignorant of the movements of the enemy, who doubled back in his rear without raising a suspicion of their designs in the British camp. But this is no new thing in Indian warfare. To be ignorant of the intentions of the enemy is the rule, not the exception, of Indian generalship. Our intelligence-department is always so miserably defective, that we lose the enemy often as suddenly as we find him, and are either running ourselves unexpectedly upon him, or suffering him to slip out of our hands.

General Nott re-entered Candahar on the 12th of March. The repulse which the insurgents had received at the city gate gave a heavy blow to their cause. It brought disunion into the Douranee camp, and made the Ghazees denounce the chiefs who had plunged them

into disaster, and resolve to forswear the perilous trade of fanaticism which brought so much suffering upon them. The ryots, who had joined the standard of the true believers, now returned in numbers to their peaceful avocations; and Major Rawlinson exerted himself to the utmost to reassure the public mind, and restore peace and prosperity to the surrounding villages.* As the month advanced there were many encouraging signs of the approaching dissolution of the Douranee camp. Some of its components were already talking of moving off to Caubul; and it was said that Meerza Ahmed had sent his family to the capital preparatory to a retreat in that direction himself.

But there is never anything sustained and consistent in Afghan politics. The appearances of to-day differ from the appearances of yesterday, and are again succeeded by different symptoms to-morrow. The Douranee chiefs at one time seemed to be on the point of a general disruption; and then, after the lapse of a few days, they met in council, and cooling down under a shower of mutual reproaches, swore solemn oaths to be true to each other, and to league themselves together for another attack upon the Feringhees. At the end of the third week of March they were again upon the move. Upon the 24th, they were within a short distance of Killa-chuk, where Nott had attacked them before. On this day the Parsewan Janbaz attempted to renew certain negotiations which they had initiated a few days before; but which had been coldly received. They offered to quit the Douranee camp and to move off to Caubul, if a month's pay were given them to defray

* The Ghazees had so damaged the canal banks, that the irrigation was destroyed, and there was every prospect of a failure of the crops; but through Rawlinson's agency the people of the Urghundab were induced to labour at their repair, and in a short time the waters began again to flow in their accustomed course.

their expenses on the march. But Nott indignantly rejected the proposal. "I will never give them," he wrote to Rawlinson, "one rupee; and if I can ever get near them I will destroy them to a man. It is my wish that no communications shall be held with them. They have murdered our people, and plundered the country."*

On the following day, our troops again encountered the enemy in the field. A brigade under Colonel Wymer had been sent out, partly to clear the country on the Candahar side of the Urghundab from the Douranee horse, who were threatening our position, and partly to relieve the garrison, which was straitened for forage, by sending out the camels to graze in the open country. Wymer took with him three regiments of infantry, a troop of horse artillery, and a party of some four hundred mounted men. In the neighbourhood of Baba-Wallee the Douranee horse crossed the river—3000 strong—to attack him. Having sent a messenger to Candahar to inform the General of his position, Wymer prepared to defend himself. He had to guard his cattle as well as to fight the enemy; and the former necessity greatly crippled his movements. Weak, as the Candahar detachments always were, in the mounted branch, he found himself at a disadvantage opposed to the large bodies of the enemy's horse, who now appeared in his front. Our Hindostanee cavalry were driven in by the Douranees under Saloo Khan, who gallantly charged our squares.† But the fire of our guns and the volleys

* *General Nott to Major Rawlinson: March* 25, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*

† "In the charge of the horse under Saloo Khan, when after driving back our cavalry they were stopped by the fire of the guns and the light company of the 38th, which had been thrown out in advance, Yar Mahomed of Dehrawat, who was Saloo's nephew, fell, and in another part of the field, Hubeeb-oollah, Akhondzadeh, and Mahomed Raheen, Noorzye, were wounded. The total loss of the enemy in killed and wounded I estimate, from all I could learn on the field and from the villagers, at about 150. We had a few men killed and some forty wounded. Amongst

of our musketry soon checked the audacity of the Afghan horsemen; and the affair became one of distant skirmishes. But, in the mean while, the roar of our artillery had been distinctly heard at Candahar, and Nott had moved out to the support of Wymer's brigade. The Douranees were still surrounding our camp, when the General, with the reinforcing brigade, entered the valley. What the men who followed Nott then saw, is described as "a beautiful spectacle," which will not readily be forgotten.* The bright afternoon sun shed its slant rays upon the sabres of the enemy, and lit them up like a burning forest. Our infantry were drawn up in a hollow square covering a crowd of camels; the horse-artillery guns, which had done such good service before, were playing gloriously, under Turner's direction, upon the dense bodies of the enemy's horse, whom their heavy fire kept at a cautious distance. "And just as General Nott," adds an eye-witness,† "with the reinforcements came in sight, Lieutenant Chamberlaine, of the Bengal service, an officer in the Shah's cavalry, who at the head of a small party had charged the enemy, was driven back, and, emerging from a cloud of dust, formed in rear of the infantry, with the loss of a few men killed, himself and many of his party wounded—but not without having given very satisfactory proofs of his power as a swordsman, albeit his treacherous weapon had broken in his hand." As our

the latter are two cavalry officers, Chamberlaine, and Travers of the 2nd. The Douranee horse came on more boldly on this occasion than they had ever been seen to do before. Some of the 38th Sepoys, indeed, received sabre-cuts from our horsemen; but they cannot stand our artillery or musketry fire. They had been so taunted with cowardice, that they resolved to have one conflict with us before they quitted the vicinity of Candahar, and had not reinforcements gone out, they would have sustained, I doubt not, a much heavier loss, by making repeated charges on different parts of the camp during the afternoon."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

* *Captain Neill's Recollections of Service.*

† Captain Neill.

reinforcing regiments approached, the enemy retired; and our cavalry were quite useless.* The Douranee camp had been left standing, and Nott, though the day was far advanced, was eager to cross the river and attack it; but the guns could not be brought down to the bank without great labour, and the fords were well-nigh impracticable. So Nott determined to withdraw the brigade to Candahar for the night, leaving Wymer in position, and to return on the following morning to disperse the Douranee horse.

On the morning of the 26th Nott went out again, with the brigade that had accompanied him on the preceding day, to the banks of the Urghundab; but the enemy had struck their camp during the night; and as soon as day broke, the Douranee horse had moved off and dispersed themselves in different bodies. So the General returned to Candahar; and Colonel Wymer remained in the valley to graze his cattle, unmolested and secure. Rawlinson remained in the valley throughout the day, "visiting the different villages, conversing with the Moollahs and head-men, and endeavouring to restore confidence. Imprecations against the Ghazees were general in every village, and the damage which had been caused by their depredations was evidently very great."†

The result of this affair was a growth of fresh disunion in the Douranee camp. The chiefs accused each other of cowardice, and all assailed Meerza Ahmed with measureless abuse. But tidings were now coming in,

* "A few squadrons of dragoons," wrote Rawlinson in his journal, "would have swept the Douranee horse from the field; as it was, they were permitted to re-cross the river almost unmolested."

† *Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.* Rawlinson adds: "Our own camp-followers, I also found, had committed extensive ravages; and when I endeavoured to persuade the people that our troops were there for their protection, they uniformly answered that they knew not whether they had most to fear from their friends or their enemies."

both from the north and the south, which went some way to comfort and reassure them. It was currently reported in their camp that Ghuznee had capitulated. This intelligence had been received some days before by the British officers at Candahar, and had not been disbelieved. On the 31st of March, a letter from Major Leech, at Kelat-i-Ghilzye, was received by Nott at Candahar, and though it announced the fall of Ghuznee only on native authority, it seemed to divest the fact entirely of all atmosphere of doubt. It appeared, from the statements that reached Candahar, that Ghuznee had been invested by an overwhelming force, and that, after holding out for some weeks, the garrison had been reduced more by a want of water than by the attacks of the enemy. It was reported, that before the arrival of orders from Caubul for the evacuation of the place, the town of Ghuznee had been taken by the surrounding tribes—"that the Hindoos of the Bazaar were all killed, fighting on our side—that Palmer, during the two months he was in the Balla Hissar, paid a daily sum for his provisions, water, and wood—that Shumshoodeen was the bearer of orders from the British at Caubul to give up the fortress—that the failure of water was the reason that made him agree to vacate the upper citadel on the 8th instant—that the mass of Ghazees did not respect the treaty formed, with a guarantee given to Palmer by Shumshoodeen, but attacked our garrison, and they only 400 strong, on their leaving the citadel, killing 100 and losing many themselves—that Palmer now wanted a guarantee for the safety of the officers, and that this being given, they surrendered themselves with two or three European females."* At the same time, Leech reported that he was in possession of a letter, bearing the seal of Shumshoodeen Khan,

* *Major Leech to General Nott: Khelat-i-Ghilzye, March* 9, 1842. *MS.*

and addressed to the Shamalzye chiefs, exhorting them to assemble and march on Khelat-i-Ghilzye, and holding out to them hopes of honour and wealth to be conferred upon them by the King and Ameen-oollah Khan, if they succeeded in capturing the place; and promising himself, upon the breaking up of the snow, to march down upon it "with fort-destroying guns and an army crowned with victory."

The tidings of the fall of Ghuznee were most calamitously true. The fortress, which the English had taken with so much difficulty, and the capture of which had been proclaimed with so much pomp, was now in the hands of the enemy. The slight outline of the melancholy events which had ended in the destruction of the garrison and the captivity of the surviving officers, which Leech had sent from Khelat-i-Ghilzye, was substantially correct. The enemy appeared before Ghuznee on the 20th of November. On the same day snow began to fall. Maclaren's brigade was then advancing from Candahar, and the enemy, expecting its appearance in their neighbourhood, drew off their investing force; but they soon re-appeared again. Maclaren's retirement gave them new heart; and on the 7th of December they collected again, in increased numbers, around the walls. The garrison were now completely enlaced. The city was in their possession, but they could not stir beyond it. Soon, however, they lost even that. The inhabitants undermined the walls, and admitted the enemy from without. On the 16th of December, through the subterranean aperture which the townspeople had made, the enemy streamed in by thousands. The city was now no longer tenable. The garrison shut themselves up in the citadel.

The winter now set in with appalling severity. The Sepoys, kept constantly on the alert, sunk beneath the

paralysing cold. Bravely as they tried to bear up against it, the trial was beyond their physical capacity to endure. The deep snow was lying on the ground; it was often falling heavily when the Sepoys were on their cold night-watch. The mercury in the thermometer had fallen many degrees below zero. Men, who had spent all their lives on the burning plains of Hindostan, and drunk their tepid water out of vessels scorched by the fierce rays of the Indian sun, were now compelled to break the ice in the wells before they could allay their thirst. Fuel was so scarce, that a single seer* of wood was all that each man received in the day to cook his dinner and keep off the assaults of the mysterious enemy that was destroying them. They were on half-rations; and the scanty provisions that were served out to them were of such a quality that only severe hunger could reconcile them to it. Numbers of them were carried into hospital miserably frost-bitten. The northern climate was doing its work.

The Afghans, in the mean while, in possession of the city, continued to harass the garrison in the citadel, by firing upon them whenever they showed their heads above the walls. This continued till the middle of the month of January, when, it appears, that some suspension of hostilities supervened. It was believed that the English at Caubul had entered into a treaty with the Afghan Sirdars; and that Shumshoodeen Khan would shortly arrive with orders from the existing government to assume possession of the place. Weeks, however, passed away, and the new governor did not make his appearance.† About the middle of February he arrived, and summoned Palmer to surrender. Unwilling to submit to the humiliating demand, and yet hopeless of the

* Two pounds.

† Shah Soojah claimed credit for having delayed his march.

efficacy of resistance, the English officer contrived to amuse the Sirdar until the beginning of March. Then the patience of Shumshoodeen Khan and the other chiefs was exhausted; and they swore that they would re-commence hostilities with unsparing ferocity if the citadel were not instantly surrendered. So, on the 6th of March, Palmer and his men marched out of the citadel. The enemy had solemnly sworn to conduct them in safety to Peshawur, with their colours, arms, and baggage, and fifty rounds of ammunition in the pouches of each of our fighting men.*

But it soon became only too miserably apparent that the enemy had sworn falsely to protect Palmer and his men. The British troops had scarcely taken up their abode in the quarter of the town which had been assigned to them, when the Afghan chiefs threw off the mask. On the day after their departure from the citadel, when the Sepoys were cooking their dinner, the Ghazees rushed with sudden fury on their lines. Three days of terror followed. House after house in which the English officers and their suffering Hindostanee followers endeavoured manfully to defend themselves, was attacked by the infuriated enemy. Fire, famine, and slaughter were all working together to destroy our unhappy men. At last, on the morning of the 20th, the survivors were huddled together in two houses which had been assigned to the head-quarters of the force—soldiers and camp-followers, men, women, and children, crammed to suffocation in every room, all hourly expecting death. The enemy were swarming around. The citadel guns, which had been useless in our hands, but were now most

* Palmer reported that want of water had driven him to surrender; but it is believed that he might have retained possession of the great well by running a covered way down the mound. Among the officers of Nott's army the loss of Ghuznee was considered even less creditable than the loss of Caubul.

effective in those of the enemy, were sending their round-shot "crashing through and through the walls."* Hour after hour, and still the enemy seemed to pause, as though unwilling to shorten, by a last annihilating attack, the sufferings of their victims.† But Shumshoodeen Khan had begun to relent. He was in council with the other Sirdars; and it was determined that the wretched men, who were now so wholly at their mercy, should be admitted to terms. The Ghazees were still crying aloud for their blood. But the chiefs assured the officers of their safety, if they would lay down their arms and place themselves in their hands. The Sepoys had by this time thrown off all authority, and determined to make their own way to Peshawur.‡ So the British officers, under a solemn

* If there had been any one in Ghuznee acquainted with the use and practice of artillery, the garrison might have held out till April.

† "On the morning of the 10th Poett and Davis were obliged to retire from their posts, and the survivors here now assembled in the two houses held by Colonel Palmer and the head-quarters of the corps. You cannot picture to yourself the scene these two houses presented; every room was crammed not only with Sepoys, but camp-followers, men, women, and children, and it is astonishing the slaughter among them was not greater, seeing that the guns of the citadel sent round-shot crashing through and through the walls. I saw high-caste men groping in the mud, endeavouring to discover pieces of unmelted ice, that by sucking them they might relieve the thirst that tormented them. Certainly, when that morning dawned, I thought it was the last I should see on this earth, and so did we all, and proceeded to make a few little arrangements ere the final attack on us took place. The regimental colours were burned, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy; I destroyed my watch, and flung it, and what money I had, over the wall of the ditch; I also burnt my poor wife's miniature, first cramming the gold frame of it into a musket, being determined that one of the Ghazees should have his bellyful of gold ere I died. Hour after hour passed on, and still we sate expecting every minute to hear the shout of the final attack; but it came not. From our loopholes we saw the enemy swarming all around us—in every lane and house, and on the hill of the citadel—the place was black with their masses; and as they themselves afterwards told us, there were not less than ten thousand men thirsting for our blood."—[*Lieutenant Crawford's Narrative.*]

‡ Lieutenant Crawford says:—"During the three preceding days' fighting, Shumshoodeen had repeatedly offered us terms; but they were such as we could not accede to, inasmuch as they commenced by desiring we would surrender ourselves to him and abandon the Sepoys to the fury of the Ghazees. The Sepoys, it appears, had held a consultation among themselves, and believ-

oath from the chiefs that they should be honourably treated and conducted in safety to Caubul, laid down their arms, and trusted to the good faith of the Afghan Sirdars.* The Sepoys, in the mean while, were endeavouring to prosecute their insane scheme of escaping across the open country to Peshawur. Snow began to fall heavily. They wandered about the fields helpless and bewildered. Many of them were cut down or made prisoners by the enemy; and to all who survived, officers and men alike, a time of suffering now commenced, all the circumstances of which are burnt into the memories of men as with a brand of iron.

In the mean while, Khelat-i-Ghilzye was gallantly holding out against the enemy. Situated between Ghuznee and Candahar, about eighty miles from the latter city, this isolated fortress stands upon a barren eminence, exposed to the wintry winds and driving dust-storms — one of the dreariest and bleakest spots in all the country of Afghanistan. It had been originally garrisoned by the Shah's 3rd infantry regiment, a party of forty European artillerymen, and some sappers and miners; but Maclaren's brigade, on its return towards Candahar, had dropped some 250 Sepoys of the 43rd Regiment at Khelat-i-Ghilzye to strengthen the garrison; and now, commanded by Captain Craigie, of the Shah's service, this little party prepared to resist the assaults of the investing enemy and the cruel cold. For months the cold was far more irresistible than the

ing they had no chance of their lives, determined on forcing their way out of the town and endeavour to get to Peshawur. When we first heard of this mad design and spoke to the men about it, they denied it; but, on the 10th, two Native officers came forward and told us they had made up their minds to go off that night—that if we chose to accompany them they would be exceedingly glad, but, if otherwise, they would go alone."

* It is pleasant to record any act of individual heroism. "Nicholson, then quite a stripling, when the enemy entered Ghuznee, drove them thrice back beyond the walls at the point of the bayonet before he would listen to the order given him to make his company lay down their arms. He at length obeyed, gave up his sword with bitter tears, and accompanied his comrades to an almost hopeless imprisonment."—[*Rattray.*]

enemy. In that bleak, exposed situation, the icey winds were continually blowing from the north. "The lower the temperature sunk, the higher blew the north wind." The barracks were unfinished; there were neither doors nor windows to keep out the chilling blasts; and there was a scanty supply of firewood in store. How the Hindostanee soldiers bore up against it, it is difficult to say, for the European officers declare that they "never experienced a winter so continuously cold." There was an abundance of grain in store; but all the surrounding country was against them, and the wheat could not be ground. After more than two months of ineffectual labour they at last constructed serviceable hand-mills. The Europeans often lived for days together upon bread and water; but not a murmur arose. The winter passed wearily away. The enemy were inactive. But with spring came a renewal of active work on either side. The garrison were labouring to strengthen their defences, and the enemy, as the year advanced, began to draw more closely round the fortress, their numbers and their boldness increasing together. After a time, they began to dig trenches round the place, and, covered by the loopholed parapets, to keep up a hot fire upon the garrison, which it was impossible to return with good effect. But Craigie and his men had no thought of surrender. They held out, cheerfully and uncomplainingly, thankful if they could get a shot at the enemy when the parties in the trenches were being relieved.

Such was the condition of the garrisons of Ghuznee and Kelat-i-Ghilzye when disastrous intelligence from the southward reached Nott and Rawlinson at Candahar. They had been, for some time, looking forward with the greatest anxiety to the arrival of a convoy from Sindh, which was to throw treasure, ammunition, hospital stores, and other necessaries into the garrison,

and increase the number of their available troops. Brigadier England, who commanded the Sindh field force, was at Dadur towards the close of February, and there he received instructions to move on through the Bolan Pass, to assemble a strong body of troops at Quettah, and thence to push his succours through the Kojuck with all expedient despatch. Major Outram was then in Sindh, earnest amongst the earnest to retrieve our lost position in Afghanistan, and active amongst the active to carry out the work of throwing troops into the country which had witnessed our abasement.* "All my endeavours in this quarter," he wrote on the 15th of March, "have been to urge forward movements, and at last I have managed to send up every disposable man. Brigadier England marched from Dadur on the 7th (of March), and must be at Quettah by this time. The remainder of his troops intended for service above will march about the 23rd or 24th, so that he will have assembled at Quettah by the end of the month (including the garrison) one troop of European Horse Artillery, six guns; half a company of Bombay European

* How strongly Outram felt on the subject of the withdrawal policy may be gathered from the following passage in a letter to Sir Richmond Shakespear: "As this is not a time to mince matters, no sooner did I see the orders of government to General Pollock to withdraw the Jellalabad garrison, and to retire to India under any circumstances (except the Sikhs rising against us, which, by-the-by, that measure would have brought about most probably), than I wrote, in the most earnest manner I was capable of, pointing out that our bitterest foe could not have devised a more injurious measure, whether viewed politically or in a military light; but expressing my trust that Mr. Clerk would act on the responsibility vested in him to prevent so ruinous a step. My mind is now set at rest by General Pollock's determination, now gleaned from your letters. I honour the General, therefore; and should he be allowed to carry out his views, we shall have mainly to thank him, not only for retrieving our honour in Afghanistan, but for saving India to us, the loss of which would ultimately result from disgracefully succumbing to the Afghans now. . . . . Nothing is easier than to retrieve our honour in Afghanistan previously to finally withdrawing, should the government so determine; and I pray God, Lord Ellenborough may at once see the damnable consequences of shirking the undertaking, and order accordingly; otherwise the disaster of Caubul will be but the commencement of our misfortunes."—[*Major Outram to Sir Richmond Shakespear: March* 15, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

Artillery; Major Sotheby's company of Bengal European Artillery; her Majesty's 41st Foot; three regiments of Native Infantry and a flank battalion of the same; two squadrons of Native Regular Cavalry, and 200 Poonah Horse. Of the above, two regiments of Native Infantry and half a company of artillery will be required to garrison Quettah. All the remainder will be available to reinforce General Nott, and will march on Candahar with that view in the first week of April, I trust, with everything that is required by the Candahar garrison, namely, twenty lakhs of treasure, ammunition, and medicines. I hope, however, that Brigadier England will, in the mean while, push on a detachment with a portion of these supplies to meet a brigade at the Kojuck, which General Nott talks of sending out to receive what can be afforded."*

On the 16th of March, Brigadier England arrived at Quettah. On the following day, he wrote to Lieutenant Hammersley, the political agent at that place: "The 22nd is at length fixed as the day of my departure from hence, and in truth I do not see how it could advantageously be hastened, owing to the numerous demands made on my small means. I propose, unless other intervening events should change such purpose, to move as far as Hykulzye on the 24th, and there await intelligence from the northern extremity of the Kojuck Pass. This you must manage for me. I could move at once to Killa-Abdoollah; but it seems to me advisable to try the influence of our presence in the Pisheen valley, in the matter of supplies and camels. The amount of treasure I take to Candahar will not exceed four lakhs, and about one-third of a lakh of musket ammunition; we have not carriage or protection for more at a time." On

* *Major Outram to Sir Richmond Shakespear: March* 15, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*

the following day he wrote again to Lieutenant Hammersley, stating that he was determined to halt in the Pisheen valley, unless General Nott had actually sent two or three regiments to the Kojuck to meet the treasure; and Hammersley, when he forwarded a copy of this letter to Outram, wrote that there were officers in England's brigade who openly prophesied that the detachment would be sacrificed between Quettah and the Kojuck Pass.*

On the 26th of March, the Brigadier moved forward on the Pisheen valley, taking with him five companies of her Majesty's 41st Regiment, six companies of Bombay Native Infantry, a troop of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry, fifty men of the Poonah Horse, and four Horse-Artillery guns. Early on the 28th he "arrived at the entrance of a defile which leads to the village of Hykulzye," at which place he "had intended to await the remainder of the brigade now in progress to this place through the Bolan Pass."† It was plain that General Nott had no intention to send any troops to the southward to co-operate with England's detachment;‡ and it soon became apparent that the latter

* "There are some officers in camp who think that Brigadier England's detachment will be sacrificed between this and the Kojuck; but with such fine examples as those set by Woodburn on the Helmund, Anderson at Tazee, and Wymer at Assyab, surely there ought to be no doubt of success between this and the Kojuck, when no natural obstacles to signify intervene." — [*Lieutenant Hammersley to Major Outram: March* 18, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

† *Major-General England to Government*: *April* 2, 1842. *Published Papers.*

‡ Nott had resolutely refused to send any troops to meet England's detachment, though earnestly pressed by Rawlinson to do so. The General urged that he could not afford to send troops to the Kojuck, whilst he was liable at any time to be called upon to proceed to the relief of Khelat-i-Ghilzye. Rawlinson pointed out the immense evils attending a total deprivation of treasure, and said that even the compulsory abandonment of Candahar might follow the failure of General England to effect the passage of the Kojuck. Nott, however, was obdurate. The detachment was not sent. Wymer's brigade, however, was then out to the southward of Candahar, and it was believed that the object of the movement was to support the party advancing through the Kojuck. Nott withdrew the brigade to Candahar, and an impression gained ground among the enemy that we had endeavoured to open our communications with the troops below, but had drawn back in despair.

would have done well to have retained his position at Quettah until reinforced by the troops moving up from the southward. England found himself near the village of Hykulzye, knowing nothing about the country, and nothing about the movements of the enemy. Colonel Stacy accompanied the force as its political director. He had, some days before, informed the General that he might expect to meet the enemy at Hykulzye; but as they approached that place no intelligence of their position was to be obtained, and not before England was close upon them had he any knowledge that they were in his front. Mahomed Sadig had come down determined to dispute our progress, and was now posted, with his troops, behind some *sungahs* on the Hykulzye heights.

England halted the column, and rode forward with his staff to reconnoitre the enemy's position. After the lapse of about a quarter of an hour he returned, and the force was ordered to advance. The horse-artillery guns were now opened on the hills to the left, whilst Major Apthorp, with the light battalion, was instructed to storm the hills to the right. Leslie's battery played with good effect, throwing its shrapnel among the enemy; but the infantry column was disastrously beaten back. The enemy rose up suddenly from behind their sungahs and poured in such a destructive fire upon our columns that the light companies fell back. Captain May, of the 41st, was shot dead. Major Apthorp,* who commanded the light companies, was carried, desperately wounded, to the rear. A sabre-cut had laid open his skull, and another had nearly severed his right arm. Of a party of less

* Of the 20th Bombay Native Infantry. He was greatly esteemed as a gallant and good soldier. "They have a fine fellow at the head of the light battalion," wrote Hammersley to Outram, a few days before the brigade left Quettah, "and it is to be hoped that he will inspire the crestfallen with a little ardour."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

than 500 men nearly a hundred were killed or wounded. The enemy fought with uncommon gallantry, and many of them were bayoneted or shot on the hill. Among them were five or six of their chiefs. Mahomed Sadig himself, who had been behind the defences, but had quitted them on the advance of our light battalion, and joined the horsemen on the hill, received a bayonet-wound on the shoulder.

Our men, after their repulse, soon rallied, and were eager again to be led to the attack. But England had determined to retreat. Colonel Stacy volunteered to lead a party of a hundred men up the hill and carry the defences; but the gallant offer was declined.* Three times he pressed it upon the General, but with no effect. It was believed by the latter that the Hykulzye defences could be carried only by a strong brigade, and one, too, equipped with mortars. So he wrote to General Nott, urging him to send a force so equipped to meet him; and in the mean while fell back upon Quettah.† And there he began to entrench himself, as though he were about to be besieged by an overwhelming force.

No satisfactory reasons have yet been assigned for this

* "General England and his staff were dismounted, and standing in conversation not far from where the light companies had rallied. I joined them. It was useless to stand and lament over what could not be recalled. A retreat was determined upon. I observed to the General that the day might be retrieved, and offered to lead into the entrenched position with a hundred men properly supported; and I am confident that I should have succeeded. The men were in courage, and anxious to recover the bodies of their comrades. The General replied, he had not men. I proposed that the left hill should be attacked first, as it commanded the smaller one. The enemy were certainly in strength, and very bold, but our men burned with rage at seeing their comrades cut up before their eyes. I think I pressed my offer three times, the last time volunteering to lead with eighty men; but the General felt he had too few, and that the stake was too great."—[*Colonel Stacy's Narrative of Services in Beloochistan and Afghanistan in the Years* 1840, 1841, 1842.]

† It appears to have been England's intention, after the disaster on the 28th, to have commenced his retreat on the same evening; but Colonel Stacy persuaded him not to move until the following morning. On the 29th he struck his camp and marched to Hykerzye, halted at Kooch-lag on the 30th, and on the 31st reached Quettah.

unhappy miscarriage. But excuses have been urged in abundance. It was alleged that the defences at Hykulzye were impracticable—that they had been two months in course of erection—that the General had received no plan of them from the political authorities—that he was not, in fact, aware of their existence—that he had been deceived by false accounts of the number of the enemy—that strong reinforcements had come down from Candahar—and that the Sepoys did not support the European soldiers at Hykulyze. But upon a careful examination of all these charges and assertions, it does not appear that one can be maintained.

The defences at Hykulzye were not formidable. General England had not seen them at this time. Lieutenant Evans, of the 41st, did see them; and he said that there were "no breastworks, but merely a four-foot ditch filled with brushwood." The elevations were nothing more than those heaps of earth and stone known as *sungahs*, which may be, and often are, thrown up in a few hours. The best information that Hammersley could obtain went to show that these defences were thrown up by Mahomed Sadig when General England's force had reached Kooch-lag—not before. When the brigade advanced from Quettah a month afterwards, the Hykulzye defences were found to be so formidable that some of the officers rode over them, not knowing where they were.

The strength of the enemy at Hykulzye seems to have been exaggerated very much in the same manner as the strength of the defences. General England wrote to Hammersley on the 28th of March, after his unsuccessful engagement, that the enemy were "a hundred to one stronger than any one expected."* Hammersley and

* Hammersley complained that the General's letter was so very unsatisfactory, that if it had not been for some private letters, he would have

Stacy had both told the General that he might expect Mahomed Sadig to make a stand at Hykulzye. The former officer had computed the strength of the enemy at 1000 foot and 300 horse; and his subsequent inquiries went to show that he had rather overstated than understated the number actually engaged. England's own officers estimated the strength of the enemy at from 1000 to 1300 men; and native testimony went to show that they had overstated the number of horsemen in the field. The strong reinforcements which were said to have come down from Candahar before the 28th of March were purely fabulous. There had been some talk of such a movement, but not until after the affair with Colonel Wymer's brigade on the 25th of March. Then it was debated among the chiefs whether a party should not be sent down to the Kojuck to intercept the convoy advancing from the southward. An invitation

been left in ignorance of the real nature of the events that had occurred. The original letter, now before me, is worth quoting. England seems to have been so unwilling to state distinctly that he had been defeated, that even when writing officially to General Nott on the 1st instant, he shrunk from a plain statement of the circumstances of the case; so that Nott, writing to him on the 18th, could only say: "I have been favoured with your letter of the 1st instant, &c. . . . I have *also heard of the affair you had with the enemy on the 28th ult.*" The letter to Nott is, however, less obscure than the letter to Hammersley, which runs thus:

"Camp, three miles south of Hykulzye, 2 P.M.

"MY DEAR HAMMERSLEY,—I wish you would acquaint Colonel Marshall, that as the insurgent force has been much reinforced from Candahar, and have so strongly protected themselves with breastworks, &c., on the ground commanding our line of route this side of Hykulzye, I shall fall back to Hykerzye to-morrow, my presence here being now of no use, and inviting their insults; and it is probable that as the position at Hykerzye is not a good one, having much broken ground in its rear, that I shall further fall back on Cutchlak. I have had so many men killed and wounded by the enemy, that my baggage is increased whilst my means of defending it is lessened. If Colonel Marshall, through your information, thinks the Cutchlak Pass occupied, he may make such efforts as his numbers will enable him to keep it open and communicate with us; and as the enemy is a hundred to one stronger than any one imagined, I must wait for the reinforcements till I try them again. Meanwhile, the fortification of Quettah must be proceeded with vigorously. Show this to Colonel Marshall and Major Waddington.

"Sincerely yours (in haste),
"R. ENGLAND."

from Mahomed Sadig had arrived in their camp, and it had come at an opportune season. Greatly depressed by the failure of their efforts in the neighbourhood of Candahar, the Douranee chiefs were almost on the point of breaking up their camp, when intelligence of the fall of Ghuznee came to revive their spirits. They were then at Dehla. There the tidings of the advance of England's convoy reached them, and there they received an invitation from Mahomed Sadig to send troops to reinforce him. Expecting that their own camp would be strengthened by the arrival of Shumshoodeen Khan, they believed that they might safely detach a party to the southward. Accordingly, Saloo Khan and some other chiefs* set out towards the Kojuck. But they had hardly commenced their march when England was driven back at Hykulzye. The chiefs fell out on the road, and Saloo Khan alone made his way to the southern passes—but not a man even of his party had joined Mahomed Sadig on that disastrous 28th of March, when England sought to justify his failure by a reference to the reinforcements from Candahar.

Only one more point remains to be mentioned in connexion with a subject which the chronicler of these events is but too anxious to dismiss. General England insinuated that he had no reliance upon his Sepoy troops. He is said to have remarked, that although when his troops and those of General Nott were united they would have 15,000 men under their command, they could not oppose a whole nation with two

* "*April* 1.—The Douranees having received positive accounts from Mahomed Sadig of the advance of Brigadier England with treasure, have resolved to make an effort to intercept it. Saloo Khan accordingly, with Mahomed Azim (Noorzye), Fyz Tullub, Hubeeboollah, Sooltan Mahomed (Barukzye), &c., have gone off by the desert to the Kojuck Pass. The body of horse with the chiefs is about 1000; but they expect to raise some 4000 or 5000 of the Noorzye, Atchekzye, Barukzye, and Populzye Ooloos to assist in holding the pass."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

weak regiments.* He thought that her Majesty's two regiments, the 40th and 41st, were the only two corps that could be relied upon. Nott told a different story. "My Sepoys are behaving nobly," was his constant report. I can find no mention of any backwardness on the part of the Sepoys, in any of the letters written by the officers of either service after the affair at Hykulzye; and I believe, that if Colonel Stacy had been suffered to storm the works after the first repulse, a large number of Sepoys would have volunteered to follow him.

When all the circumstances of the case come to be considered, it appears that a disaster of a very discouraging character was sustained by the adoption of a course which had no object of importance commensurate with the risk that was incurred. General England had no intention of advancing upon Candahar. He ought, therefore, to have remained at Quettah. The advance into the Pisheen valley was a grave error. It was plainly England's duty, at this time, either to have cleared the pass with the treasure and stores which were so much needed by the Candahar garrison, or to have waited patiently for his reinforcements at Quettah. To advance from that place, and then to fall back upon it, was to do that which Nott said, in anticipation, would be more injurious to the position of the Candahar force than 20,000 of the enemy in the field.† Major Outram

* "You will understand the insinuation," wrote one of the most chivalrous of the many chivalrous officers who served beyond the Indus. "If he is ever heard to libel our Sepoys in that manner, surely it willbe noticed by our officers."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

† After adverting to the reported intention of England to leave Quettah with a small supply of money and ammunition, but not to push through the Kojuck, Nott goes on to say: "This I deeply regret; firstly, because I cannot send a force to the southern side of the pass; secondly, I require a large supply of ammunition, which I have for two years been endeavouring to get, but without success; thirdly, four lakhs of rupees will be of little use here—the troops and establishments are going on for four months in arrears; fourthly, your moving into Pisheen with a convoy, known by the whole country to be intended for Candahar, and then

also strongly advised General England to await at Quettah the arrival of the reinforcements from below—but England would go on to be beaten.*

To Nott, this failure was mortifying in the extreme. He was in no mood to brook delays and excuses. The disaster at Hykulzye was sufficiently annoying to him; but the seeming unwillingness of General England to redeem his character by a vigorous movement in advance, irritated him still more. He had been for some time complaining bitterly of the neglect to which he and his force had been subjected by the authorities below. "I know not the intentions of government regarding this country," he wrote to General England; "but this I know and feel—that it is now from four to five months since the outbreak at Caubul, and in all that time no aid whatever has been given to me. I have continually called for cavalry, for ammunition, treasure, stores, and medicines for the sick. I have called loudly, but I have called in vain. Had the least aid been sent—even a regiment of cavalry—I could have tranquillised or subdued the country. I have been tied to this important city, when a few additional troops for its garrison would have set me free; and I now would have moved on Ghuznee and Caubul. All I have now to do is to uphold the honour of my country in the best manner I can without the assistance above alluded to, and in ignorance of the

halting or retiring to Quettah, will have the very worst effects throughout Afghanistan, and will be more injurious to my present position than 20,000 of the enemy in the field. I sincerely hope that you have not moved, or that you have determined to push across the Kojuck with all the force you can muster."—[*General Nott to General England: April* 2, 1842. *MS. Records.*]

* "I strongly advised Brigadier England, through Lieutenant Hammersley, in letters I addressed to them both so long ago as the 10th ultimo (March), to await at Quettah the junction of the remainder of his brigade, unless very urgent circumstances should require his more immediate advance to meet an advance from Candahar. The latter, so far from being the case, General Nott requested might not be attempted."—[*Major Outram to Captain Durand: April* 3, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

intentions of government."* In this frame of mind, his patience well-nigh exhausted, his temper never of the most genial cast, now more than ever overclouded, he received intelligence, first of England's defeat, and then of his reluctance to move forward. England himself announced the latter, if not in so many plain words, in language equally unmistakeable. After setting forth all the dangers and difficulties of a forward movement, he concluded, on the 10th of April, a letter to Nott by saying: "Whenever it so happens that you retire bodily in this direction, and that I am informed of it, I feel assured that I shall be able to make an advantageous diversion in your favour."†

This was too much for Nott. Determined at once to settle the question of England's advance, he sate down and wrote the following letter to the General. There is so fine a soldierly flavour about it, that I am unwilling to omit a word:

Candahar, April 18, 1842.

SIR,

I have been favoured with your letters of the 1st and 10th instant. I have also heard of the affair you had with the enemy on the 28th ultimo, and deeply regret the result. I have attentively perused the government despatch of the 15th ultimo forwarded through you. I have looked at our position in Afghanistan in every point of view that my judgment, aided by three years' experience of its people, will admit of. I now deliberately note what I consider to be necessary to carry out the intention of the Supreme Government and to assert and uphold the honour of our country. Even should the government ultimately determine on withdrawing the British troops from the right of the Indus, it would be impossible to retire the troops below the passes before October. The troops at Candahar are four months in arrears, and we have not one rupee in the treasury. In the event of much field service we should run short of musket ammunition, and we

* *General Nott to General England: April* 2, 1842. *MS. Records.*

† *General England to General Nott: April* 10, 1842. *MS. Records.*

are without medicine for the sick and wounded. I think it absolutely necessary that a strong brigade of 2500 men should be immediately pushed from Quettah to Candahar with the supplies noted in the foregoing paragraph. I therefore have to acquaint you that I will direct a brigade of three regiments of infantry, a troop of horse artillery, with a body of cavalry, to march from Candahar on the morning of *the 25th instant.* This force will certainly be at Chummun, at the northern foot of the Kojuck, on the morning of the 1st of May, and possibly on the 30th of this month. I shall, therefore, fully rely on your marching a brigade from Quettah so that it may reach the southern side of the pass on the above-mentioned date. I believe there can be no difficulty whatever in accomplishing this, nor of crossing the Kojuck without loss, provided the heights are properly crowned on either side. I have crossed it three times in command of troops, and I know that what I now state is correct. There can be no danger in passing through Pisheen provided a careful and well-ordered march is preserved, and patroles and flanking parties of horse are thrown well out. The people of this country cannot withstand our troops in the open field. I am well aware that war cannot be made without loss, but yet, perhaps, the British troops can oppose Asiatic armies without defeat; and I feel and know that British officers should never despair of punishing the atrocious and treacherous conduct of a brutal enemy. You say you are not aware if I know the localities of Quettah. I know them well; and I hope I shall be excused when I express my surprise that the authorities at Quettah should for a moment have thought of throwing up breastworks and entrenching that straggling and wretched cantonment, when the town and its citadel is so well calculated for every purpose which can render a post at all desirable in Shawl, and I am quite certain may be well defended by 500 men. Did I command at Quettah, I would relinquish the cantonment—it is usless: Quettah is not a place for a large body of troops. I feel obliged to you for pointing out the many difficulties attending our position, but you are aware that it is our first and only duty to overcome difficulties when the national honour and military reputation is so deeply concerned—nothing can be accomplished without effort and perseverance. In the last para. of your letter of the 10th instant, I have only to observe that I have not yet contemplated falling back. Without money I can

neither pay the long arrears due to the troops, nor procure carriage for field operations. I deeply regret this state of things, which ought to have been attended to months ago. Had this been done, I should now have been on my march to Ghuznee. I shall fully rely on your brigade being at the Kojuck on the 1st of May or before. This letter I request may be forwarded to Major Outram.

W. NOTT, Major-General.

To Major-General England, commanding
S. F. Force.

P.S.—You will of course perceive that I intend your brigade should join and accompany the detachment sent from this to Candahar. I have no cattle for treasure or stores.

It was impossible to resist the urgency of this appeal. The orders from Candahar were not to be misunderstood. They were clear as the notes of a trumpet, and ought to have been as spirit-stirring. England's brigade now began to prepare for a forward movement. So little, however, had it been anticipated that the force would ever leave Quettah, that the officers of the brigade had been buying houses and settling down for cantonment life.* But on the 26th of April England broke ground; and on the 28th—precisely a month after the date of his disastrous failure—was again before Hykulzye. The enemy, emboldened by their previous success, were posted on the ground they had occupied before; but they soon found that they had not estimated aright the character of British troops, and that what they had regarded as a proof of their own superiority in the field, was an accident not likely to be repeated. The British troops were told off into three parties—one, under Major Simmons, to storm the hills to the left; another, under Captain Woodburn, to attack the hill on the right, where the disaster of the previous month had occurred; and a third, under Major Browne, was kept in reserve.

* *Colonel Stacy's Narrative.*

When they had taken up their position, the guns of Leslie's battery opened with good effect on the enemy; and then the infantry advanced with a loud "hurrah" to the attack. They are said to have moved forward "as steady as on parade."* The coolness and courage of the infantry soon completed what the admirable practice of the guns had commenced. The enemy turned and fled. Delamaine's cavalry were then slipped in pursuit; and there was an end of the defence of Hykulzye.

On the morning of the 30th, England's brigade entered the defile leading to the Kojuck Pass. Here, for some unaccountable reason, the General halted the column, dismounted from his horse, called for a chair, and sate himself down. In vain Colonel Stacy implored him to move on. In vain he urged that the Candahar troops were entering the pass from the other side, and that all the glory of the enterprise would be theirs. In vain Major Waddington, the engineer, pressed the same advice on the General. The Bombay force was locked-up at the entrance to the pass, whilst Wymer, with the Bengal regiments, was gallantly crowning the Kojuck, and reporting everything clear for the advance of the Quettah brigade. The Sepoys of those three noble regiments—the 2nd, the 16th, and 38th, who would have followed Wymer wherever he pleased to lead them —were now climbing the precipitous ascents, disencumbered of whatever might clog their movements,† and

* *Colonel Stacy's Narrative.*

† "These fine fellows had been led forward by Colonel Wymer, at daybreak, to occupy the heights commanding the pass from Chummemo to the western side, to secure General England's party a safe passage. I have never seen our Sepoys to such advantage. It was impossible to climb the precipitous hills in pantaloons; this part of their dress had, therefore, been discarded, and the men were in their doties. As they showed on every accessible point, they were the admiration of all. I can easily imagine how painful it must have been to the Bombay regiments to find the Candahar troops in full possession of the pass before they were allowed to enter it."—[*Colonel Stacy's Narrative.*]

every accessible height was bristling with the bayonets of the Candahar force. The Bombay troops were bitterly disappointed; but they cordially fraternised with their new comrades, and, if they felt any pangs of envy, they were too forbearing to express them.

It was with no common anxiety that Nott now awaited the return of his regiments. He had sent them reluctantly to the Kojuck, and was eager to commence operations in another direction—to march upon Ghuznee, and then onward to meet Pollock at the capital. In the letters which he addressed at this time to his brother General at Jellalabad, his feelings found vent. They are eminently characteristic:

Candahar, April 29th, 1842.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

My last news from your side was of the 5th instant. I regret I am not on my way to Ghuznee—I am tied to this place. My troops have had no pay since December, 1841. I am in want of almost everything. I have not carriage even for three regiments, and I have not a rupee to buy or to hire cattle. For five months I have been calling for aid from Sindh—none whatever has been sent. At last Major-General England moved with money and stores, but received a check in Pisheen, and then retired to Shawl! I have now been obliged to send the best part of my force to the Kojuck Pass, in hopes of getting the treasure and stores I have so long been expecting, and without which my small force is paralysed. It is dreadful to think of all this. I ought to have been on my way to extend my hand to you from Ghuznee, instead of which I am obliged to make a movement on the Kojuck. I have felt the want of cavalry. I have the Shah's first regiment, but I have never been able to *get them to charge.* My Sepoys have behaved nobly, and have licked the Afghans in every affair, even when five times their number. The moment my brigade returns from the Kojuck I move on Kelat-i-Ghilzye and Ghuznee, in hopes of saving some of our officers and men at the latter place. Instead of sending me cavalry, money, &c., the authority in Sindh coolly says, "When you retire bodily I

hope to render you some assistance." I believe I shall go mad! I have much to say, but am confined to a slip of paper.

Yours sincerely, W. NOTT.*

Candahar, May 6th, 1842.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I have this day received your letter of the 14th ultimo. I had before heard of your progress up to the 6th of April: this is the only note I have received from you. I enclose a copy of my note of the 29th of last month, which was sent *viâ* Kelat-i-Ghilzye, and by which you will perceive how much I have been disappointed, and the state of the force under my command. It drove me almost mad to be forced to send the best part of my force to the Kojuck Pass instead of marching towards Caubul; but I had not a rupee to pay the long arrears of the troops, or to purchase cattle. The people of this country unfortunately have an idea that we are to retire whether we are successful or not, and therefore they will part with nothing; and, as far as cattle are concerned, we are nearly helpless. God knows why such delay has occurred in sending me money and stores. This is dreadful. I shall move towards Caubul the moment I can get carriage. General England's retrograde movement has been a sad disappointment to me.

Yours sincerely, W. NOTT.†

P.S.—England has now, with the aid of my brigade, crossed the pass. He brings with him two twelve-pounder howitzers; but for these I should not have a single howitzer at command. Mortars I have none. I expect the troops here on the 10th. The Ghazehs still keep head within a few miles of us, not in great strength: the nucleus, however, exists. I have directed all camels within reach to be procured on any terms: want of money alone prevented me doing this earlier. The force I shall take from this must depend upon the available cattle. I trust it may amount to 5000 men. Rely on my making every effort to communicate with you; but from past experience I must regard this as extremely doubtful, and that we must not depend on mutual intelligence enabling us to make combined movements. No opportunity shall be lost; but if all attempts at correspondence fail, I will still hope that, as we have one object at heart, the

* *MS. Correspondence.* † *MS. Correspondence.*

similarity of our operations may in some measure supply the want of a concerted plan.

Without any opposition the two united brigades now marched on to Candahar, and entered the city on the 10th of May. The enemy had broken up and dispersed. Saloo Khan, who had come down to the assistance of Mahomed Sadig, had fallen out with that chief. He had never thrown his heart into the cause, and was, indeed, at any time, to be purchased by British gold. Rawlinson thought that a little money would be well expended on the purchase of his allegiance, but Nott objected to the measure.* In the mean while, however, Stacy had been exerting himself with good success below the Kojuck to obtain the co-operation of this man in the important work of keeping open the communication between Quettah and Candahar; and when he reached the latter place, he was able to report that Saloo Khan had promised all that was required of him; and that Atta-oollah Khan, the brother of the chief, was now accompanying him for the purpose of concluding the necessary arrangements.†

* "I have only," wrote Nott, "to repeat my sentiments—namely, that I will not sanction a rupee being given from the British treasury to these people. I have for three years viewed with deep regret the ruinous system of giving away large sums to the chiefs and Sirdars of Afghanistan, which I sincerely believe has brought upon us all our present difficulties in this country. I have offered to guarantee the personal safety of Saloo Khan if he returns to his allegiance by a certain day. If there are any other chiefs who can make it appear that they are worthy of the indulgence of my guarantee for their personal safety, I will take their wishes into consideration; but I will make them no other promises. This does not apply to Mahomed Atta or to Meerza Ahmed, as I will not receive these two men on any terms, without the order of higher authority."—[*General Nott to Major Rawlinson: April* 9, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

† See *Colonel Stacy's Narrative*, and his correspondence with Major Rawlinson. Rawlinson, however, doubted whether the negotiations with Saloo Khan would have a favorable result: "Had a long conference," he wrote on the 10th of May, "with Atta-oollah Khan, who has come in to treat for his brother, Saloo; and the latter, if his agent is to be believed, certainly desires to espouse our cause. Knowing, however, as I do, Saloo's ambition and avarice, I question very much whether we shall come to any satisfactory arrangement with him. We merely require Saloo Khan's co-operation, in order to facilitate the re-establishment of our dawk communication; but the Khan talks of rank, power, and pay, as the return he has a right to expect for joining us, and is not likely to be satisfied with any

In the mean while, the Douranee chiefs, though disunited, were not inactive. It was hard to determine with any distinctness what were their designs at this time—so contradictory were the accounts which reached our camp, and so inconsistent the movements of the enemy. But it seemed that our difficulties were very sensibly diminishing. As the spring advanced, the general aspect of affairs was brighter and more encouraging than it had been since the first outbreak of the revolution. The chiefs were scattered about in all directions—some wounded and dying—others eager to make terms with the British. Meerza Ahmed and Sufder Jung were contemplating a withdrawal across the frontier to Laush and Jowayn. The latter was corresponding with the British agent, and expressing his desire to return to our camp. The Caubul Janbaz had deserted in disgust. The principal men of the surrounding villages were sending messages into our camp, offering to withdraw all their people from the rebel standard if we would guarantee them against the depredations of our troops. The trade of the *Ghazee* was plainly at a discount. And whilst the elements of decay were thus discernible within, there were external influences at work to weaken the rebel cause. Glad tidings arrived from the eastward. General Pollock had advanced upon Jellalabad; had relieved the garrison of that place; and had, it was said, determined to march upon the capital. A royal salute was fired at Candahar; and as the tidings of our successes spread through the country the spirits of the insurgents became more and more depressed.

moderate measure of conciliation."—(*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*) Saloo Khan, however, in the sequel rendered good service and proved his fidelity in the face of strenuous opposition from some of the other chiefs: "His falling off from the cause of Islam," wrote Rawlinson in his Journal, "has plunged him into personal difficulties. He has been twice attacked by Mahomed Sadig and Meer Afzul, and has been wounded, together with his brother and his nephew."

Still it was obvious that whilst Meerza Ahmed and Atta Mahomed continued to flit about the neighbourhood of Candahar, there was no prospect of permanent tranquillity. Lesser chiefs might tender their submission, but whilst these, the main-springs of the great insurrectionary movement, were employing their talents and exercising their influence in hostility against us, there was little chance of any effective movement for the suppression of rebellion in Western Afghanistan. Armed with authority from the Shah himself, granted prior to the great outbreak, Meerza Ahmed was raising revenue in the name of the local government, and expending the money thus collected on the maintenance of the war. It appeared expedient, therefore, to Nott, to cause a proclamation to be issued, cautioning the inhabitants against paying revenue to the Meerza. This was a measure of unquestionable propriety; but Nott was disposed to go far beyond it. He was eager to offer a reward to any one who would bring in either Meerza Ahmed or Atta Mahomed to his camp; and on the 7th of April he wrote to Rawlinson on the subject: "I wish a proclamation to be immediately issued, prohibiting any person paying revenue to Meerza Ahmed or to Sufder Jung, and making them to understand, that whatever sums they pay to these chiefs will be their own loss, as the regular revenue due to his Majesty the Shah will be exacted from them by the authorities of Candahar. I will thank you in the proclamation to offer a reward of 5000 rupees to any person who will bring in either Meerza Ahmed or Mahomed Atta. The sooner this is done the better. Let me see the draft of the proclamation before it is issued."*

Startled at this bold and questionable proposition, Rawlinson, having asked in the first place whether the proclamation was to be issued in the General's own

* *MS. Correspondence.*

name, or in that of Prince Timour, and having suggested that on a question of such importance as that of the raising of revenue the wishes of the Prince should be previously ascertained, went on to speak in his letter, of the proposed rewards. "Is the reward of 5000 rupees," he asked, "also offered to any one bringing in Mahomed Atta or Meerza Ahmed, to apply to these people dead or alive, or is it merely to be given in the event of any of the Afghans bringing them in as prisoners? I do not think the Prince would have any objection to issue the proclamation about revenue, and to signify to all his subjects that he has appointed Meerza Wulee Mahomed Khan to the management of this department, notwithstanding he is aware that papers of an exactly opposite tenor, issued by his father, are in Meerza Ahmed's hands; but I greatly doubt his aquiescing in the subject of the reward, as, whatever may be the secret feelings of Mahomedans regarding betrayal or assassination, it is altogether repugnant to their habits to avow such objects in a public proclamation."*

To this Nott replied that, as a matter of course, he intended the proclamation regarding the revenue to be issued in the name of the Prince. "In regard," he added, "to the reward for the apprehension of Meerza Ahmed, that is a different thing; and if the Prince will not consent to include it in the proclamation regarding the revenue, where it ought to appear, I will issue a separate proclamation. Meerza Ahmed has murdered my camp-followers and Sepoys in the most cruel and atrocious manner, and it is my duty, merely as commander of the force, to offer a reward to any person who will bring him in. Mahomed Atta has, like a monster, murdered our officers in their houses, and cut to pieces our unarmed and inoffensive camp-followers. I will show no mercy to these men. My note said

* *MS. Correspondence.*

nothing about 'dead or alive,' and I thought clearly indicated bringing them in prisoners. Why you make use of the word 'assassination' I know not — but I do know that it ought not to be used by Englishmen in any public document, and therefore it could never enter into my mind when speaking of a proclamation. Meerza Ahmed is collecting what he is pleased to call revenue, to enable him to raise men to attack the force under my command. Such plunder ought to be put a stop to."*

Then Rawlinson answered, that he regretted that the unguarded use of the ugly word "assassination," which he only intended to convey the meaning which the Prince might put upon a general offer of reward for the persons of the proscribed chiefs, should have given any offence to the General; but that he trusted Nott would excuse him if he made a few remarks upon the subject of the proposed proclamation. "We are accused, and perhaps suspected," he wrote, "of having lately suborned people to attempt the life of Mahomed Akbar Khan; and Captain Nicolson is known to have offered a high reward on one occasion for the head of the Gooroo; and it would be very difficult, therefore, it appears to me, in our present proclamation, to get the Afghans to appreciate the difference between the offer of a reward for the betrayal of Meerza Ahmed and Mahomed Atta into our hands, to be executed by the Prince (as every one must know they would be) on their arrival at Candahar, and for anticipating this sentence by taking their lives on the spot, wherever a man might be found bold enough to attempt the deed. Now, if any misunderstanding on this subject existed, and we were believed by our proclamation to be aiming at the lives rather than at the liberty of Meerza Ahmed and Mahomed Atta, it would be only natural for them to retaliate, and, aided by religious enthusiasm, and with

* *MS. Correspondence.*

the voice of the country in their favour, they would be far more likely, I think, to succeed in bribing Ghazees to kill our officers, than we would be in tempting any of the Afghans to seize the persons of the proscribed individuals and hand them over to us for execution. I cannot help thinking also, that even supposing the proclamation to be expressly stated and understood to aim only at the liberty of the two heads of the Candahar rebellion, still it would operate rather to our detriment than our advantage, and would tend greatly to increase the inveteracy of our present contest with the Afghans. It would, probably, be met by the kidnapping of our own officers at this place, and I suspect it would be fraught with danger to our unfortunate countrymen in confinement at Lughman, at Caubul, and at Ghuznee. Should you still, however, desire to make the attempt to obtain possession of the persons of Meerza Ahmed and Mahomed Atta, I shall be happy to render literally into Persian any draft of a proclamation which you will send me, and to give the proclamation all possible publicity."

The arguments of Rawlinson prevailed. But soon another source of inquietude arose. The ex-chief of Candahar, Kohun-dil-Khan, appeared to be again turning his thoughts towards the government of his old principality.* He had, ever since his expulsion from

* "Letters are said to have been received from the ex-Sirdars announcing their intended journey to this place, according to Meerza Ahmed's invitation which was sent to them in January last. Mahomed Reza Khan of Seistan is also said to have promised to assist them with 100 camels, and to send horsemen to escort them to this frontier. This news appears to be *vraisemblable* in the extreme. If the ex-Sirdars can get away from Shuhur-i-Babek, either with or without the connivance of the Persian Government, nothing is more likely than that they should make an attempt to recover Candahar; and I should greatly dread their appearance on this frontier, for we are enabled to keep up the form, and something of the power of a local government, almost solely from the adherence to us of the old Barukzye retainers—people on whose fidelity we could not possibly depend if the Sirdars took the field against us."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal: April* 4, 1842.]

Afghanistan, been quietly domiciliated at Shuhur-i-Babek, in the Persian territories, between Shiraz and Kirman; but now it appeared that he had sent an agent into Seistan to communicate with his Candahar adherents; and was otherwise intriguing for the recovery of the dominion he had lost. Not without some difficulty had Rawlinson throughout this season of convulsion contrived to maintain a recognised system of government, in the name of Shah Soojah. The internal administration of the country had never been suspended; but it was only through the agency of some of the old Barukzye functionaries that the British political chief had succeeded, in the midst of such disturbing influences, in carrying on the government of Western Afghanistan. But there was little hope of his continuing to exercise this influence if the old Barukzye Sirdars again appeared on the stage. Already had Kohun-dil-Khan sent letters to Meerza Ahmed appointing him his Wakeel in all matters of revenue. It was even reported at one time that the ex-Sirdars were only a few marches from Candahar.* These anxieties, however, were but short-lived. After-intelligence from Persia encouraged the belief that the Persian Government would restrain the ex-Sirdars from crossing the frontier.† But other sources of inquietude and annoyance soon came to take their place. The heaviest blow of all was now about to descend upon them. It came from the Supreme Government itself.

* "A messenger from Shah Persund Khan of Laush reports that two of the horsemen sent down to Kohun-dil-Khan in January by Meerza Ahmed, returned lately and gave out that they were only a few days in advance of the Sirdars, who had left Shuhur-i-Babek secretly, and were coming here *viâ* Seistan."—[*Major Rawlinson to General Nott: April* 8, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

† Kohun-dil-Khan did not make his appearance in person in the Candahar territory till the beginning of 1843, when we had announced to the Persian Government that we had withdrawn behind the Sutlej, and were indifferent as to what became of the Sirdars or their country.

CHAPTER III.

[April—June: 1842.]

The Halt at Jellalabad—Positions of Pollock and Nott—Lord Ellenborough—Opening Measures of his Administration—Departure for Allahabad—His Indecision—The Withdrawal Orders—Their Effects—The "Missing Letter"—Negotiations for the Release of the Prisoners.

POLLOCK and Nott were now eager to advance. On both sides of Afghanistan a junction had been effected which enabled the two generals to maintain a bold front in the face of the enemy, to over-awe the surrounding country, and to inspire with new hopes and new courage the hearts of those whom the failures of Wild and England had filled with despondency and alarm. The English in India never doubted that the conduct of operations in Afghanistan was now in the hands of men equal to the duty which had been entrusted to them. They had full confidence in Pollock and Nott. There were now two fine forces of all arms, European and Native, in good health and good spirits, eager to advance on Caubul, and sure to carry victory before them. It seemed that the tide had now begun to turn in our favour. As the hot weather came on, the spirits of the Anglo-Indian community rose with the mercury in the thermometer; everybody said that we had seen the worst; and everybody looked for the speedy lustration

of the national honour which had been so hideously defiled.

But as the confidence of the public in the generals and their armies rose, the confidence of the public in the man upon whom had now devolved the great duty of shaping the counsels of the generals, and directing the movements of the armies, began rapidly to decline. On the 28th of February, Lord Ellenborough had landed at Calcutta and taken the oaths of office. The guns on the saluting battery of Fort William roared forth their welcome to the new Governor-General, and drowned the voices of those who were assembling in the Town-Hall to do honour to the departing ruler. The first intelligence of the disasters that had overtaken our arms in the countries beyond the Indus, had been telegraphed to him from Fort St. George, when standing on the deck of the *Cambrian* in the Madras Roads, he looked out upon the white surf, the low beach, and the dazzling houses of the southern presidency. He arrived, therefore, at the seat of the Supreme Government with little to learn beyond the measures which his predecessor had sanctioned for the extrication of the emperiled affairs of the British-Indian Empire from the thicket of difficulty that surrounded them.

What those measures were it is unnecessary to repeat. In the last letter written by Lord Auckland's administration to the secret committee—it bears date February 19, 1842—the Governor-General in Council said: "Since we have heard of the misfortunes in the Khybur Pass, and have been convinced that the difficulties at present opposed to us and in the actual state of our preparations we could not expect, at least in this year, to maintain a position in the Jellalabad districts for any effective purpose, we have made our directions in regard to withdrawal from Jellalabad clear and posi-

tive, and we shall rejoice to learn that Major-General Pollock will have anticipated these more express orders by confining his efforts to the same objects." And on the 24th of the same month—in one of the last public documents of any importance written under the instruction of Lord Auckland—a letter to General Pollock, that officer is distinctly informed that "the great present object of your proceedings at Peshawur is, beyond the safe withdrawal of the force at Jellalabad, that of watching events, of keeping up such communications as may be admissible with the several parties who may acquire power in the northern portion of Afghanistan, of committing yourself permanently with none of these parties, but also of declaring positively against none of them, while you are collecting the most accurate information of their relative strength and purposes for report to the government, and pursuing the measures which you may find in the powers for procuring the safe return of our troops and people detained beyond the Khybur Pass."* These were the parting instructions of the old Governor-General. Lord Ellenborough found matters in this state when he assumed the reins of office; and every one was now eager to ascertain what measures the new ruler would adopt.

The first public document of any importance to which he attached his name was a letter to the Commander-in-Chief. It was a letter from the Governor-General in Council, dated the 15th of March. It is a calm and able review of all the circumstances attending our position beyond the Indus, and is as free from feebleness and indecision on the one side, as it is from haste and intemperance on the other. Lord Ellenborough at once decided that the conduct of Shah Soojah was, at least,

* *Mr. Maddock to General Pollock: February* 24, 1842. *Published Papers.*

suspicious,* and that the British Government were no longer compelled "to peril its armies, and with its armies the Indian Empire," in support of the tripartite treaty. Therefore, he said, "Whatever course we may hereafter take must rest solely upon military considerations, and hence, in the first instance, regard to the safety of the detached bodies of our troops at Jellalabad, at Ghuznee, at Khelat-i-Ghilzye and Candahar; to the security of our troops, now in the field, from all unnecessary risk; and finally, to the re-establishment of our military reputation by the infliction of some signal and decisive blow upon the Afghans, which may make it appear to them, and to our own subjects and to our allies, that we have the power of inflicting punishment upon those who commit atrocities and violate their faith, and that we withdraw ultimately from Afghanistan, not from any deficiency of means to maintain our position, but because we are satisfied that the King we have set up has not, as we were erroneously led to imagine, the support of the nation over which he has been placed." Here, in a few sentences, was mapped out the policy recommended by such men as Mr. Robertson and Mr. Clerk, the policy which Pollock and Nott were eager to reduce to action, and which, with few exceptions, the entire community of British-India were clamorously expressing their desire to see brought into vigorous effect.

This letter to the Commander-in-Chief was written in Calcutta; and it bears the signatures of the different members of the Supreme Council of India—of Mr.

* "The information received with respect to the conduct of Shah Soojah during the late transactions is necessarily imperfect, and, moreover, of a somewhat contradictory character. It is not probable that the insurrection against our troops should have originated with him. It is most probable, and it is almost proved, that he has adopted it, and, powerless in himself, is prepared to side with either party, by which he may hope to be maintained upon his precarious throne."—[*Governor-General in Council to Sir Jasper Nicolls: March* 15, 1842. *Published Papers.*]

Wilberforce Bird, of General Casment, and Mr. H. T. Prinsep. Nothing like it was ever written afterwards. On the 6th of April Lord Ellenborough left Calcutta. It seemed desirable that he should be nearer the frontier —nearer the Commander-in-Chief. The movement, at all events, indicated an intention to act with promptitude and energy. Already had the new Governor-General startled the sober, slow-going functionaries of Calcutta by his restless, and, as they thought, obtrusive activity. He seemed resolved to see everything for himself—to do everything for himself. Almost everything had been done wrongly by others; and now he was going to do it rightly himself. All this created a great convulsion in the government offices; but out of doors, and especially in military circles, men said that the new Governor-General was a statesman of the right stamp—bold, vigorous, decided, thoroughly in earnest, no fearer of responsibility—quick to conceive, prompt to execute—just the man to meet with bold comprehensive measures such a crisis as had now arisen. A few sober-minded men of the old school shook their heads, and faltered out expressions of alarm lest the vigour of the new Governor-General should swell into extravagance, and energy get the better of discretion. But no one ever doubted that the leading ideas in the Governor-General's mind were the chastisement of the offending Afghans and the lustration of our national honour.

After a day or two spent at Barrackpore, Lord Ellenborough put himself in his palanquin and proceeded to Allahabad. Halting at Benares, he addressed the Secret Committee on the 21st of April. Much stirring intelligence had met him as he advanced. Good and evil were blended together in the tidings that reached him between Calcutta and Benares. Pollock had entered

the Khybur Pass and forced his way to Ali-Musjid. Sale had defeated Akbar Khan in a general action on the plains of Jellalabad. But England had been beaten back at Hykulzye, and withdrawn his brigade to Quettah. All these things the Governor-General now reported to the Secret Committee, in a despatch which can by no means be regarded as a model of historical truth. Writing again on the following day to the home authorities, he stated that he had "by no means altered his deliberate opinion that it is expedient to withdraw the troops under Major-General Pollock and those under Major-General Nott, at the earliest practicable period, into positions wherein they may have certain and easy communication with India." He had already written to General Nott, instructing him to take immediate measures to withdraw the garrison of Khelat-i-Ghilzye and evacuate Candahar. "You will evacuate," wrote the Chief Secretary, "the city of Candahar. . . . You will proceed to take up a position at Quettah, until the season may enable you to retire upon Sukkur. The object of the above-directed measure is to withdraw all our forces to Sukkur at the earliest period at which the season and other circumstances may permit you to take up a new position there. The manner of effecting this now necessary object is, however, left to your discretion."* And so the Governor-General, who in Calcutta had determined to "re-establish our military reputation by the infliction of some signal and decisive blow upon the Afghans," could now hardly write a sentence suggestive of anything else but withdrawal and evacuation.

How it happened that, within the space of little more than a month, so great a change had come over the

* *Mr. Maddock to General Nott: April* 19, 1842. *Published Papers.*

counsels of the Governor-General, it would be difficult to determine, if he himself had not furnished the necessary explanation. "The severe check," he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, "experienced by Brigadier England's small corps on the 28th ultimo—an event disastrous as it was unexpected—and of which we have not yet information to enable us to calculate all the results—has a tendency so to cripple the before limited means of movement and of action which were possessed by General Nott, as to render it expedient to take immediate measures for the ultimate safety of that officer's corps, by withdrawing it, at the earliest practicable period, from its advanced position into nearer communication with India."

On this same 19th of April the Governor-General addressed another letter to the Commander-in-Chief, relating to the position of General Pollock. "The only question," wrote the Chief Secretary, "will be, in which position will Major-General Pollock's force remain during the hot months, with most security to itself, and with the least pressure upon the health of the troops? its ultimate retirement within the Indus being a point determined upon, because the reasons for our first crossing the Indus have ceased to exist." The Commander-in-Chief was then directed to issue his own instructions to General Pollock; and another letter was immediately afterwards addressed to him (the third despatched to Sir Jasper Nicolls on this prolific 19th of April), in which, after speaking of the withdrawal orders addressed to Pollock and Nott, the Governor-General goes on to say: "It will, however, likewise be for consideration whether our troops, having been redeemed from the state of peril in which they have been placed in Afghanistan, and it may be still hoped not without

the infliction of some severe blow upon the Afghan army, it would be justifiable again to push them forward for no other object than that of revenging our losses, and of re-establishing, in all its original brilliancy, our military character."

It was Lord Ellenborough's often-declared opinion that "India was won by the sword, and must be maintained by the sword." In his despatch of the 15th of March he had written: "In war, reputation is strength." And yet we now find him questioning the expediency of undertaking operations beyond the Indus with "no other object than that of re-establishing our military character." If we hold India by the sword, and reputation is strength, a statesman need hardly look for any object beyond the establishment of that reputation, which is the strength by which alone our empire in India is maintained.

But England's miscarriage at Hykulzye had not only driven all the forward feeling out of Lord Ellenborough, but had blunted his logical acumen and deadened all his feelings of compassion. He seems to have forgotten that at this time there was a party of English prisoners in the hands of the Afghans—that the generals who had commanded our army at Caubul—the widow of the murdered Envoy—the brave-hearted wife of the commander of the illustrious garrison of Jellalabad—the man who had rescued Herat from the grasp of the Persian, and done the only thing that had yet been done to roll back from the gates of India the tide of Western invasion—with many more brave officers and tender women, were captives in the rude fortresses of the Afghan Sirdars. The Governor-General seems to have forgotten that there were prisoners to be rescued; and he doubted the expediency of undertaking operations merely for the

re-establishment of our military reputation—although upon that reputation, in his own opinion, our tenure of India depended.

The request conveyed to Sir Jasper Nicolls in the government letter of the 19th of April met with prompt compliance; and on the 29th, the Commander-in-Chief, who was then at Simlah, instructed General Pollock to withdraw every British soldier from Jellalabad to Peshawur. "The only circumstances," he added, "which can authorise delay in obeying this order, are: 1st. That you may have brought a negotiation for the release of the prisoners lately confined at Budeeabad to such a point that you might risk its happy accomplishment by withdrawing. 2ndly. That you may have attached a lightly equipped force to rescue them. 3rdly. That the enemy at Caubul may be moving a force to attack you. In this improbable case should any respectable number of troops have descended into the plain below Jugdulluck with that intent, it would be most advisable to inflict such a blow upon them as to make them long remember your parting effort." Of these instructions the Governor-General "entirely approved;" and on the 6th of May he wrote to General Pollock, saying: "They are in accordance with the general principles laid down by his Lordship for your guidance, and you will execute them to the best of your ability, having regard always to the health of your troops and to the efficiency of your army."

In the interval, however, between the 19th of April and the 6th of May, the Governor-General having somewhat shaken off the uneasy sensation which the disaster at Hykulzye seems to have engendered in his mind, and having arrived at the conclusion that the phantoms which had so intimidated him had not struck terror into the brave heart of General Pollock, had written to the

General, anticipating the possibility of his having advanced upon Caubul.

"The aspect of affairs in Upper Afghanistan," he wrote on the 28th of April, "appears to be such, according to the last advices received by the Governor-General, that his Lordship cannot but contemplate the possibility of your having been led, by the absence of serious opposition on the part of any army in the field, by the divisions amongst the Afghan chiefs, and by the natural desire you must, in common with every true soldier, have of displaying again the British flag in triumph upon the scene of our late disasters, to advance upon and occupy the city of Caubul. If that event should have occurred, you will understand that it will in no respect vary the view which the Governor-General previously took of the policy now to be pursued. The Governor-General will adhere to the opinion, that the only safe course is that of withdrawing the army under your command, at the earliest practicable period, into positions within the Khybur Pass, where it may possess easy and certain communications with India." Why Lord Ellenborough should have entertained a belief even of the possibility of Pollock advancing upon Caubul, in the face of positive instructions to the contrary and a known deficiency of carriage, it is not easy to conjecture. Probably, Lord Ellenborough himself could not have explained the source of this extraordinary buoyancy of expectation, for six days afterwards he declared that he had been led to expect "that you (Pollock) will have already decided upon withdrawing your troops within the Khybur Pass, into a position wherein you may have easy and certain communication with India, if considerations, having regard to the health of the army, should not have induced you to defer that movement." The idea of the advance upon Caubul seems only to have

been a temporary apprehension arising out of a not erroneous estimate of the military aspirations of General Pollock; and it very soon passed away. But it had one important result. It called forth from the General the following soldierly letter:

TO T. H. MADDOCK, ESQ., SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT, &c.

Jellalabad, May 13, 1842.

SIR,

I had the honour to forward with my letter No. 32, dated 12th instant, a copy of a letter from his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. I have now the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated 28th ultimo, which adverts to the present aspect of affairs in Afghanistan, and the probability of my having advanced towards Caubul; stating also, that in such an event, the views of the Governor-General as to the withdrawal of the troops will not be altered; and further, that whatever measures I may adopt I must have especial regard to the health of the troops. I trust that I am not wrong in considering this letter as leaving to me discretionary powers, and, coming as it does from the supreme power in India, I venture to delay, for some days, acting up to the instructions communicated in his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief's letter, dated 29th ult.

I regret much that a want of carriage-cattle has detained me here; if it had not been so, I should now be several marches in advance, and I am quite certain that such a move would have been highly beneficial. Affairs at Caubul are, at the present moment, in a very unsettled state; but a few days must decide in favour of one of the parties. Mahomed Akbar is at Caubul, exerting all his influence to overpower the Prince. He is without means; and if he cannot within a very short period obtain the ascendancy, he must give up the contest, in which case I have no doubt I shall hear from him again. With regard to our withdrawal at the present moment, I fear that it would have the very worst effect—it would be construed into a defeat, and our character as a powerful nation would be entirely lost in this part of the world.

It is true that the garrison of Jellalabad has been saved, which it would not have been, had a force not been sent to its relief. But the relief of that garrison is only one object; there still re-

main others which we cannot disregard—I allude to the release of the prisoners. I expect about nineteen Europeans from Budeeabad in a few days. The letters which have passed about other prisoners have already been forwarded for the information of his Lordship. If, while these communications were in progress, I were to retire, it would be supposed that a panic had seized us. I therefore think that our remaining in this vicinity (or perhaps a few marches in advance) is essential to uphold the character of the British nation; and in like manner General Nott might hold his post; at all events till a more favorable season.

I have no reason, yet, to complain that the troops are more unhealthy than they were at Agra. If I am to march to Peshawur, the climate is certainly not preferable; and here I can in one or two marches find a better climate, and I should be able to dictate better terms than I could at Peshawur.

I cannot imagine any force being sent from Caubul which I could not successfully oppose. But the advance on Caubul would require that General Nott should act in concert and advance also. I therefore cannot help regretting that he should be directed to retire, which, without some demonstration of our power, he will find some difficulty in doing. I have less hesitation in thus expressing my opinion, because I could not, under any circumstances, move in less than eighteen or twenty days; and your reply might reach me by express in about twenty-two days. The difference in point of time is not very material, but the importance of the subject is sufficient to justify the delay of a few days. In the mean time, I shall endeavour to procure carriage-cattle as fast as I can, to move either forward or backward, as I may be directed; or, if left to my discretion, as I may think judicious. Under any circumstances, I should not advocate the delay of the troops either at Candahar or on this side beyond the month of November; and in this arrangement advertence must be had to the safety of the Khybur, which I consider the Sikhs would gladly hold if they were allowed to take possession of Jellalabad.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

GEORGE POLLOCK, Major-Gen.*

Unwilling to return to the provinces without striking a signal blow at the Afghans, and doing something great

* This is not only a remarkable letter in itself. It is remarkable for its misadventures. Its outer history is somewhat curious. It never found

to re-establish the military reputation of Great Britain in the countries beyond the Indus, Pollock grasped eagerly at the faintest indication of willingness on the part of the Governor-General to place any discretionary power in his hands; and expressed his eagerness to traverse, with a victorious army, the scene of our recent humiliation. If he had had carriage he would have advanced at once; but the want of cattle paralysed the movements of the force, and kept Pollock inactive in the neighbourhood of Jellalabad. In one respect this want was a gain and an advantage. Mindful both of the honour of his country and of the safety of his captive country-men and country-women, Pollock adroitly turned the scarcity of carriage to good account, by declaring

its way into the published volume of correspondence, and its existence was only to be inferred from the fact of a reference to it in another letter. It was at last brought to light by the inquiries in Parliament of Lord Lansdowne and Lord Palmerston. It was to be found nowhere in England; but a copy was at last elicited from India. The Governor-General then declared that "the original despatch of the 13th of May never reached the office, and must have been lost in transit. The duplicate was received and acknowledged on the 11th of July. It is the practice of the Secretary's office to keep the unreported papers on all important subjects for each month together, and to forward copies of them to the Secret Committee by the monthly Overland Mail. The despatch in question was inadvertently put up in its proper place in the May bundle of reported papers, instead of being left for a time, as it should have been, among the unreported papers of July. Hence, when the July papers were copied for transmission to the Secret Committee, this despatch was omitted." Nothing less explanatory than this was ever offered in the way of explanation. It does not appear whether the original letter miscarried altogether on its way to Lord Ellenborough, or whether it miscarried only on its way to the office. There is an equal obscurity about the history of the duplicate which was "received and acknowledged on the 11th of July." It might be inferred from this that it was received on the 11th of July and acknowledged on the same day. But it happens that the duplicate was despatched on the 30th of May—and ought surely to have come not among the July, but among the June papers. In this letter of the 11th of July the Secretary says: "I am directed to state that the original letter has never reached me, and that the duplicate *has only lately been received* and laid before the Governor-General, whose previous instructions to you appeared to render any special reply to this communication unnecessary."—[*MS. Records.*] In the face of so distinct a denial as this, little can be said, except that in a letter from Pollock of May 20th, which was duly acknowledged, reference is made to the letter of the 13th. If that letter had not been received, some allusion certainly ought to have been made by government to its non-receipt.

that he had not the means of retiring to Peshawur. Thus gaining time for something to be written down in the chapter of accidents, he continued to maintain his advanced position, and exerted himself to secure by negotiation the release of the prisoners from the hands of Akbar Khan.*

In the mean while, the announcement of the Governor-General's determination to withdraw the troops from their advanced positions had reached Candahar. Nott had always consistently declared that he would not yield an inch of ground without the instructions of the Supreme Government, but that, fortified by such instructions, he was prepared to move either in one direction or the other—to abandon all the posts in Western Afghanistan, or to march victoriously on the capital. He had his own opinions on the subject of withdrawal; but the obedience of the soldier was paramount over all his words and actions; and when he received the instructions of which mention has been made, he wrote to the Chief Secretary on the 17th of May: "These measures shall be carried into effect, and the directions of his Lordship accomplished in the best manner circumstances will admit of." And again he wrote on the 21st to the same functionary: "I shall not lose a moment in making all necessary arrangements for carrying into

* There was no scarcity of provisions at Jellalabad at this time. But, to secure a continued supply, Pollock was sensible of the necessity of encouraging a belief throughout the country that the intentions of the British Government inclined towards a forward movement. "We are all quiet here," he wrote on the 6th of May to Mr. Clerk, "grain coming in in abundance; at least, in as great quantities as we could expect after the dreadful alarm into which this force seems to have put the whole country. Every village was deserted. I did my utmost to protect them from plunder, and in most cases succeeded; and the consequence is that we, in a measure, command the resources of the country." And on the 11th of the same month, writing again to Mr. Clerk, he said: "While I remain here I can command supplies, and I have no doubt that I shall be able to do so as long as the natives suppose that we intend remaining in the country; but if they thought otherwise, our supplies would be stopped."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

effect the orders I have received, without turning to the right or to the left, by the idle propositions and wild speculations daily and hourly heaped upon me from all parts of Afghanistan and Sindh, by persons who are, or fancy themselves to be, representatives of government West of the Indus. I know that it is my duty and their duty implicitly and zealously to carry into effect every order received, without inquiring into the reasons for the measures adopted, whatever our own opinions or wishes may be, and without troubling government with unnecessary references."* But it was plain that he read the orders of the Supreme Government not without acute mortification. He yielded in effect a prompt assent; but in spirit it was a grudging one. The orders for the evacuation of Candahar took Nott and Rawlinson by surprise, and filled them with as much pain as astonishment. What was really felt by the Candahar authorities is not to be learnt from the published papers; but in a letter written by Rawlinson to Outram on the 18th of May, not only are the real feelings of the military and political chiefs clearly revealed, but the probable effects of the evacuation of Candahar sketched out, with a free hand, by the latter:

Candahar, May 18th, 1842.

The peremptory order to retire has come upon us like a thunder-clap. No one at Candahar is aware of such an order having been received except the General and myself, and we must preserve a profound secrecy as long as possible. The withdrawal of the garrison from Kelat-i-Ghilzye and the destruction of the fortifications at that place must, I fancy however, expose our policy, and our situation will then be one of considerable embarrassment.

General Nott intends, I believe, to order all the carriage at Quettah to be sent on to Candahar. A regiment is to escort the

* *Published Correspondence relating to Military Operations in Afghanistan.*

camels laden with grain to Killah Abdoolah, where the troops will remain in charge of the depôt, and from whence a regiment or two regiments detached from this will bring on the camels empty to Candahar. It must be our object to collect carriage, on the pretext of an advance on Caubul; but how long the secret can be kept it is impossible to say. When our intended retirement is once known, we must expect to have the whole country up in arms, and to obtain no cattle except such as we can violently lay hands on.

If the worst comes to the worst, we must abandon all baggage and stores, and be content to march with sufficient food to convey us to Quettah, for which I believe the carriage now available will suffice.

It will be quite impossible to destroy the works of Candahar, as directed in the government letter; the worst that can be done is to blow up the gateways. I have hardly yet had time to reflect fully upon the effects, immediate and prospective, of our abrupt departure. There is no man at present on whom I can cast my eyes in all Candahar as likely to succeed to power. Sufder Jung will be a mere puppet of course, and will be liable to deposition at any moment. Should the Barukzyes triumph at Caubul, and should we no longer oppose the return of Kohundil, he will be the most likely chief to succeed; but the natural consequence of his return, and of our determined non-interference with the affair in this quarter, will be of course to render Persian influence paramount at Herat and Candahar; and with the prospect of a Russian fleet at Astrabad and a Persian army at Mervo, it is by no means impossible that the designs which threatened us in 1838 may at last be directly accomplished.

Strong measures of intimidation, both against Russia and Persia, will be our best protection.

I enclose you an extract from my last letter from Sir J. M'Neill, in case the copy formerly sent through Hammersley should not have reached you. Saloo Khan appears at last to have fairly adopted our cause, and I hope, therefore, for a time at any rate, that our communications will be less subject to interruption.

Yours, &c.,

H. C. RAWLINSON.*

* *MS. Correspondence.* In his journal, too, Rawlinson wrote: "The order to retire came upon us like a thunderbolt. We had not, from Lord

But however great may have been the mortification which Nott and Rawlinson were now condemned to experience, the orders of the Supreme Government were so explicit, that the General believed it to be his duty at once to begin to carry them into effect. A brigade had already been equipped for the relief of Khelat-i-Ghilzye and the rescue of the Ghuznee prisoners. It was now despatched, on the 19th of May, to bring off the garrison, and to destroy the works of the former place. Colonel Wymer commanded the force. It consisted of those three noble Sepoy regiments with which he had before done such good service;* her Majesty's 40th Regiment, Leslie's troop of Horse Artillery, four guns of Blood's battery, the Bombay cavalry details, and the Shah's 1st Regiment of Horse. Some troopers of Haldane's cavalry, some details of Bengal artillery, and of the Madras sappers, completed the components of the force.

Thus, in the later weeks of May, Pollock was holding his post at Jellalabad, eager to receive authority to march upon Caubul, and rejoicing in the pretext of a scarcity of carriage for delaying the withdrawal of his force; Nott, eager, too, for a forward movement, but unable to perceive in the instructions of government the least indication of an intention to place any discretionary power in his hands, was taking measures to secure, with all promptitude, the accomplishment of their wishes; and the Governor-General, from Allahabad, was writing strong letters to the Generals, impressing upon them the necessity of maintaining a discreet silence regarding the intentions of government and the future movements of the troops.

Ellenborough's former letter, thought such a measure possible until Caubul should be retaken. As there is no discretionary power, however, vested in General Nott by the late letter, he has only had to consider the best way of carrying the order into effect." —[*MS. Journal.*]

* The 2nd, 16th, and 38th.

There was nothing, in truth, more desirable than this. The intentions of the Governor-General were of such a character as to render these revelations, in the existing state of things, dangerous, if not fatal, to the interests of Great Britain in the countries beyond the Indus. But official secrets are not easily kept in a country where so many copies of every public letter are forwarded to different authorities, in distant parts of the country; where so many clerks are employed to copy, and so many staff-officers allowed to read them. Before the end of May, it was known not only in General Pollock's camp, but in all the cantonments of India, that the armies were to be withdrawn. The secret had welled out from the bureau of the Commander-in-Chief; and bets were made at the mess-tables of Jellalabad regarding the probable date of the withdrawal of the troops. No man knew better than Pollock the danger of such revelations,* and he did his best to counteract the evil tendency of the reports which were now the common gossip of his camp, and were soon likely to be current in all the Afghan bazaars. "I have taken steps," he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief, "to prevent any great mischief resulting, by ordering the deputy-quarter-master-general a few miles in advance, to mark out a new encamping-ground; and I shall have such inquiries made among the natives about bringing supplies there, that will make them believe that I shall move forward."

* "In a late letter to government," he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief on the 24th of May, "you will have seen how anxious I was that any proposed movement towards Peshawur should be communicated to no one from whom it could be withheld. The moment such a thing is known, it is probable supplies will cease to come in; we should be in difficulty about forage; all who are now friendly would be ready to oppose us; and if I had not time to secure the pass, the consequences might be serious indeed."—[*Published Papers relating to Military Operations in Afghanistan.*]

And Pollock still hoped that something might arise to wring from the Governor-General an order to march upon the Afghan capital. But the letters he received from Lord Ellenborough and Sir Jasper Nicolls were calculated not only to discourage but to embarrass him. There was no possibility of misunderstanding the wishes of the Commander-in-Chief; but the Governor-General, whilst imperatively directing the speediest possible withdrawal of Pollock's army, was every now and then throwing out a hint that a forward movement for the chastisement of the Afghans would not be ungrateful to him. And whilst the Governor-General was obviously intending to place some discretionary power in the General's hands, the Commander-in-Chief was writing to assure him that the orders of the Supreme Government all tended towards an immediate and unconditional withdrawal.

The letter of the 13th of May elicited no answer; but a letter written a week afterwards,* in which Pollock pointed out the evils and difficulties of an immediate withdrawal to Peshawur, found the Governor-General in one of his more forward and chivalrous moods. Pollock, in this letter of the 20th of May, had said: "I shall be glad if any letter from government may authorise my remaining till October or November;" and now, on the 1st of June, the Governor-General, through the Chief Secretary, replied: "It would be desirable, undoubtedly, that before finally quitting Afghanistan, you should have an opportunity of striking a blow at the enemy; and since circumstances seem to compel you to remain there till October, the Governor-

* In this letter of the 20th of May, Pollock says: "I have already, in my letter dated the 13th inst., entered on the subject (of withdrawing to Peshawur), and must receive a reply before I shall be able to move." If that letter of the 13th had not been received and read, surely this allusion to it would have called forth a remark to that effect.

General earnestly hopes that you may be enabled to draw the enemy into a position in which you may strike such a blow effectually." And again, in the same letter: "It will be for your consideration whether your large army, one half of which would beat, in open field, everything that could be brought against it in Afghanistan, should remain entirely inactive during the period which must now apparently elapse before it can finally retire. Although you may not have, or soon be able to procure, the means of moving your whole army, you may possibly be able to move a part of it rapidly against some portion of the enemy's force incautiously exposed, and of giving it a severe blow." This was, at all events, something gained. And the gain was a sudden one. Only three days before, the Governor-General, in a letter to Pollock, had resented the presumption of Mr. Clerk in drawing from a former letter an inference in favour of the continued occupation of Jellalabad, in the event of negotiations being on foot for the release of the prisoners, and had expressed a strong opinion that no negotiations had yet been entered upon of a nature to impede the backward movement of the force. The letter of the 1st of June was, therefore, doubly welcome. Pollock had now received a constructive permission to remain at Jellalabad until October;* and, as every effort was to be made in the interval to collect carriage-cattle in the provinces of Hindostan, ostensibly for the purpose of his withdrawal from Afghanistan, he determined to lose no opportunity of turning those means of withdrawal to the best possible

* It was outwardly only an acknowledgment of the General's inability to retire at an earlier period—but there was more meaning in it than this, for on the same day the Chief Secretary wrote to Nott: "I am directed to inform you that, in consequence of the very defective state of the means of movement possessed by Major-General Pollock, it appears to be out of his power to retire from Jellalabad until October, when his retirement will certainly take place."—[*Puplished Papers.*]

account. If there were carriage to enable him to fall back upon Peshawur, there would be carriage to enable him to advance upon Caubul, for the mistake of hiring cattle, with local limitations affixed to the engagements, was not to be perpetuated. So General Pollock looked forward with confidence to the coming autumn, as to a time when a vigorous and decisive blow might be struck at the nation which had humbled the pride and defiled the honour of the conquerors of Hindostan.

Patiently, therefore, biding his time, Pollock turned the halt at Jellalabad to the best possible account, by endeavouring to obtain by negotiation the ransom of the British prisoners. What those negotiations were, and what was their result, should be stated in this place. It was on the evening of the 25th of April that some excitement was created in Pollock's camp at Jellalabad, by rumours, presently confirmed, of the arrival of Captain Colin Mackenzie, one of the prisoners in the hands of Akbar Khan, with a letter from Major Pottinger, and overtures from the Sirdar. Pottinger's letter briefly shadowed forth the terms on which Akbar Khan and his Ghilzye confederates were prepared to release the prisoners—but the language employed was rather that of inquiry than dictation. "The Sirdar," wrote Pottinger, "wishes to know, in the first place, if we will consent to withdraw the greater part of our troops, and leave an agent with a small body of men to act with whomever the confederates may elect as chief, in which case they propose to be guided by the wishes of the two factions in Caubul, and wish us to release Dost Mahomed Khan. *Secondly;*—They propose, that if the British Government have determined on subjecting the country and continuing the war, that the prisoners at present in Afghanistan shall be exchanged for Dost Mahomed Khan, his family and attendants, and that the issue be dependent

on the sword. *Thirdly;*—In the event of neither of these propositions being approved of, they wish to know what terms will be granted to themselves individually; whether we, in the event of their submission, will confine them, send them to India, take hostages from them, reduce their pay, or, in short, what they have to expect from our clemency."*

To this General Pollock replied, that "kindness and good treatment of our prisoners would meet with due consideration at the hands of the British Government, and the release of them much more so; that if money were a consideration, he was prepared to pay into the hands of any one the Sirdar might depute to receive it the sum of two lakhs of rupees, whenever the prisoners might be delivered into his hands;" and that Mahomed Shah Khan and his brothers would be "suffered to enjoy the advantages arising from their hereditary dominions."†

With this letter Mackenzie left Jellalabad on the evening of the 28th of April. He had been instructed by the Sirdar to ascertain, if possible, from General

* *Major Pottinger to General Pollock: Tezeen, April* 20, 1842. *Published Papers.* Together with this letter from Pottinger came a paper from Akbar Khan himself. It was without seal and signature, for the Sirdar was fearful of compromising himself with his countrymen, and the document might have fallen into their hands. After some allusions to the painful past, and a declaration that he was unable to restrain the disorganised mob of Afghans from attacking the English army, the Sirdar went on to say: "If I allow the English, who are my guests, to depart according to your suggestion; or according to Pottinger Sahib's advice, if I allow the English ladies to depart before the gentlemen, in either case all Mahomedans will look upon me as their enemy, and the whole multitude will be opposed to me. Under these circumstances I beg you to reflect, that not having come to an understanding with you, and having made enemies of them, how can I exist? . . . . I prefer your friendship to the throne of Caubul, because, if I was to go to Caubul now, the men of Caubul would push me forward, and then it would be difficult to release my guests and to be on friendly terms with you. On this account I have written to show my friendship for your government. Please God my services shall exceed the injuries I have done you."

† *General Pollock to Major Pottinger: Jellalabad, April* 26, 1842. *Published Papers.*

Pollock whether there was any chance of the British Government admitting him to terms, on his own account, if he would detach himself from the national cause, and exert his influence to advance our interests in Afghanistan. But upon this Pollock could express no definite opinion. "His position," wrote the General to the Supreme Government, "is evidently different from the others. That he was the murderer of the Envoy there cannot be a question, and he evidently feels his guilt to be an insuperable bar to any terms from us; but he also feels that he has possession of the persons of our countrymen, and that circumstance seems to hold out to him a hope that his proffers of submission will meet with a favorable reception."*

The reply of General Pollock to the overtures of Akbar Khan disappointed the Sirdar; and Captain Mackenzie was again despatched to Jellalabad. This time he was the bearer of a string of proposals far more extravagant than those which had been conveyed by him on his first mission. The requests of the Barukzye chief, as set forth in Pottinger's letter to the General, were—

1stly. That a written promise of amnesty be given to himself, Mahomed Shah Khan, and the latter's family, for all past acts up to the date of delivery. 2ndly. That neither he nor any of the above-mentioned family shall be sent out of the Caubul and Jellalabad districts against their wishes. 3rdly. That they may not be obliged to pay their respects to you in our camp till they be assured against any danger. 4thly. If we merely intend to

* *General Pollock to Government: Jellalabad, April* 28, 1842. In reply to this letter, the Chief Secretary wrote: "It is not consistent with the honour of the British Government to enter into any terms for the making of a provision for so great a criminal. We might engage to spare his life if he were to fall into our hands, because it would be difficult so to bring him to trial as to protect the government from a colourable charge of violently prosecuting an unworthy revenge; but no more than this can be done, and this only if he should promptly do all he can to repair the crimes he has committed."—[*Published Papers.*]

revenge ourselves on the enemy, and then leave the country, he trusts its government will be conferred on him. 5thly. He wants a jaghire to support his family, and he names two lakhs as adequate. 6thly. He wants eight lakhs of rupees as a present to start him with. (His great fear, as it is of all Afghans, is of being removed from this country.) He also asks for his own women, who are in his father's *harem-serai.* They have asked for the money, if it is paid, to be given to Sir-Bolund Khan, who will remain as a hostage till the prisoners are delivered, or that you pay it to Hindoos, who can empower their agents in Caubul to pay it on delivery of the prisoners.*

To these proposals Pollock replied:

With regard to the first, it follows as a matter of course that, whenever we agree to any terms, amnesty for the past will result.

The second request, about residing at Caubul and Jellalabad, is out of place now; it must depend upon contingencies, and be discussed only after other and more important points have been agreed upon.

With reference to the third request, the Sirdar Mahomed Akbar may be assured that I would guarantee his personal safety whenever he may visit my camp; but his doing so would require some preliminary arrangement, unless he voluntarily claims our protection, in which case I could immediately arrange for his safety, and appeal to the government on his behalf.

The fourth request refers to matters entirely depending on future results, and which are known to God alone. It would therefore be vain to speculate on them at this stage of our negotiation.

With regard to the fifth and sixth requests, I have already told you that I suppose the Sirdar rests his claim to any present on his delivering up the prisoners, which, as I have before stated, will be the best evidence of good faith, and a sincere wish for

* *Major Pottinger to General Pollock: May* 3, 1842. I have quoted from the original in Pottinger's handwriting. But the letter is given among the published papers, with the usual official emendations. Thus the passage, "They have asked for the money, if it is paid, to be given to Sir-Bolund Khan" — is printed, "They have asked for the money, &c., to be given to *his Colund Khan.*" It may puzzle the future historian to discover who "his Colund Khan" may have been.

favorable terms with the British Government. I have accordingly already mentioned the sum of two lakhs of rupees. The Sirdar Mahomed Akbar must recollect that he is desirous of obtaining the females of his own family. The British Government will not require any money to be paid on their account; and I hereby guarantee that, on all the prisoners being delivered over to me, I will write to India for the women of the Sirdar Mahomed Akbar, and I have no doubt that my request will be complied with.

As to the payment of the money for the prisoners now with, or in the power of Mahomed Akbar, it shall be made to any person the Sirdar may appoint to receive it, or it shall be paid to Hindoos who can give bills on Caubul. The good faith and honour of the British nation is not doubted, and I therefore hereby pledge myself to pay the two lakhs of rupees on account of government whenever the prisoners are made over to me.*

Mackenzie took his departure with these replies. There was stirring work, at this time, for Akbar Khan at Caubul; and the negotiations had no result. But the

* *General Pollock to Major Pottinger: Jellalabad, May* 10, 1842. *Published Papers.* Lord Ellenborough was unwilling that any money should be paid for the release of the captives; but was inclined to exchange Dost Mahomed and his family for the prisoners in the hands of the Sirdar. "Undoubtedly," he wrote, "on the 26th of April, you remained authorised, by the instructions of the 24th of February, to give money on the public account for the release of individual prisoners; and if, previously to the receipt of my letter of the 25th of April, you should have concluded a negotiation for the release of any individual prisoners on that condition, the Governor-General would feel himself under the necessity of sanctioning any payment of money to which you may have then pledged yourself. After the receipt of that letter, you will, of course, in any future negotiation, have adhered to the instructions contained in it. It cannot but be a subject of much regret that you should have considered it to be necessary, under any circumstances, to have had any communication whatever of a diplomatic nature with Mahomed Akbar Khan, in whom it must be impossible for any one to place any trust."—[*Published Papers.*] Akbar Khan, at this time, seems almost to have considered the release of his father and family as hopeless; and Pollock did not think he was authorised to propose an exchange of prisoners; for although, on the 24th of February, Lord Auckland suggested that he "might speak of the release of Dost Mahomed as an event which might not be altogether impossible," he did not know how far such a measure might be sanctioned by Lord Ellenborough. Moreover, Pollock believed that the exchange had only been authorised in the event of his being able to treat for the release of the whole of the British prisoners; and they were not all in the hands of Akbar Khan.

visits of the British officer to Jellalabad had not been without their uses. Mackenzie had been the bearer of much information of the deepest interest, and had placed many valuable documents in the hands of General Pollock. The General had laid before him a string of questions relative to the causes and progress of the insurrection at Caubul, the answers to which, in the existing state of information even in the best-informed quarters, threw a flood of light upon many dark points of recent history. And whilst in official places many important revelations were made, all through the general camp there transpired, in time, from the same source, much that was eagerly sought, eagerly discussed when found, and eagerly transmitted to every cantonment in India, where the fate of the captives in the hands of Akbar Khan was a matter of the liveliest concernment, and a source of the most painful alarm.*

* The questions were—1st. "What were the terms negotiated by Sir W. Macnaghten with the rebels? 2nd. What alteration was made by Major Pottinger? 3rd. What does Major Pottinger allude to when he talks of breach of faith? 4th. What were the manner and causes of Sir W. Macnaghten's murder?" I have found the information conveyed in Captain Mackenzie's answers of some use in the course of my narrative.

CHAPTER IV.

[January—April: 1842.]

The Captivity—Surrender of the Married Families—Their Journey to Tezeen—Proceed to Tugree—Interviews between Pottinger and Akbar Khan—Removal to Budeeabad—Prison Life—Removal to Zanda—Death of General Elphinstone.

FEW were the letters which Mackenzie brought from his fellow-captives to their friends at Jellalabad. There may have been state reasons for the secrecy which enveloped his movements; but to all parties the disappointment was great. Every one at Jellalabad was eager for intelligence regarding the incidents which had befallen the little band of prisoners, and for particulars of all the daily environments of their captive state. All through the camp ran eager inquiries; and little by little the much-coveted information began to radiate from the General's tent, and to diffuse itself in more remote quarters. What was then told in mere outline may here be given more in detail.

It was on the 9th of January that the married families were made over to the protection of Mahomed Akbar Khan. The following day was spent by them in a small fort, where they found Pottinger, Lawrence, and Mackenzie, who had been surrendered as hostages at

Boot-Khak. Rude as was the accommodation, and untempting as was the fare, that were here offered them, after the miseries and privations of the retreat through the snowy passes, the "small dark hovels" in which they were crowded together were a very palace, and the "greasy palao" in which they dipped their fingers was regal fare. They slept that night on the bare ground—but there was a roof between them and the open sky; and they thought little of the smoke, which almost suffocated them, whilst in the enjoyment of the reviving warmth of a wood fire.*

On the morning of the 11th, through scenes of unexampled horror, the party of captives were conducted to the Tezeen fort. The road was strewn with the stark bodies of the mangled dead. Here and there little groups of wretched camp-followers, starving, frost-bitten, many of them in a state of gibbering idiotcy were to be seen cowering in the snow; or solitary men, perhaps wounded and naked, were creeping out of their hiding-places, in an extremity of mortal suffering and fear. The sickening smell of death rose from the bloody corpses through which our English ladies guided their horses, striving not to tread upon the bodies,† or in their camel-panniers jolted and stumbled over the obstructing carrion. Happy were they all, when, about the hour of evening prayer, that dreadful journey was at an end, and the fort of Tezeen appeared in sight. There they were hospitably received—and there an-

* On that day Akbar Khan sought an interview with Lady Macnaghten. Painful as such a meeting must have been, the bereaved widow was not in a position to refuse to see her husband's murderer. He spoke very kindly to her; and as she sate in silent sorrow before him, declared that he would give his right arm that the deed which he so much regretted might be undone.

† "The sight was dreadful; the smell of the blood sickening; and the corpses lay so thick it was impossible to look from them, as it required care to guide my horse so as not to tread upon the bodies." — [*Lady Sale's Journal.*]

other captive was added to their number. Lieutenant Melville, of the 54th Native Infantry, who had been wounded on the retreat, and whose wounds had been bound up by the hand of Akbar Khan himself, was waiting their arrival in the fort.*

On the following day they were carried to Seh-Baba; and the same dreadful scenes of carnage sickened them as they went along. On the march another prisoner, and a welcome one, was added to the party—one whom the sick and wounded had much wanted—a medical officer, Dr. Macgrath.† On the 13th, partly over remote mountain paths, so precipitous that the camels could scarcely keep their footing, and partly along the bloody track of our slaughtered army, the captive band were escorted to Jugdulluck. Here three ragged tents had been pitched for their reception. Here they found General Elphinstone, Brigadier Shelton, and Captain Johnson, who had been claimed as hostages by Akbar Khan; and here they learnt that all the soldiers and camp-followers who had left Caubul, with the exception of this little handful of prisoners, had, in all probability, been annihilated on the march.‡

* "The column passed on, and I had not been there five minutes ere a horseman rode up, who had accompanied Captain Skinner from his interview with the Sirdar, and offered me a 'nan' (a native loaf) for a rupee. This I wanted not; but I bought and gave it to a poor European struggling on. I then offered the man seven rupees (being all I had) if he would mount me before him, and take me to the Sirdar. This he agreed to do, and placing me before him on his saddle, he proceeded. About a quarter of a mile in rear of the baggage we met the Sirdar and his followers, who received me most kindly. He laid me down on a bank, and with his own hands dressed my wounds, by placing on them burnt lint to stanch the blood. He then mounted me behind a follower, and having put a turban on my head, and given me a posteen, made me proceed by his side."—[*Lieut. Melville's Narrative.*]

† "Mr. Macgrath had several narrow escapes; and when surrounded by Ghilzye footmen with their long knives drawn, owed his life in a great measure to an Afghan horseman, who recognised him as having shown some little kindness to some of his sick friends at Caubul."—[*Lady Sale's Journal.*]

‡ "Every attention," says Captain Johnson, in his journal, "which circumstances admitted of, had been paid to the ladies and gentlemen; nor had they met with the slightest annoyance on the road."

Next morning they resumed their journey—the General, the Brigadier, and Captain Johnson, accompanied by Akbar Khan, bringing up the rear. A more rugged and difficult road had seldom been travelled over. The ascents and descents were seemingly impracticable; it made the travellers giddy to look at them. The road was "one continuation of rocks and stones, over which the camels with the greatest difficulty scrambled" with their burdens.* At night they bivouacked on the banks of the Punshuhur river. There were no tents, no shelter of any kind for the ladies. So they rolled themselves up in their warmest garments, laid their heads upon their saddles, and composed themselves, as best they could, to sleep.

Early in the morning of the 15th of January they crossed the deep and rapid fords of the Punshuhur river.

* *Captain Johnson's Journal.* The writer adds: "At the commencement of the defile, and for some considerable distance, passed two or three hundreds of our poor miserable Hindostanees, who had escaped up this unfrequented road from the massacre of the 12th. They had not a rag to cover them, and were all more or less frost-bitten, wounded, or starving. The poor wretches were huddled together in thirties and forties, so as to impart to each other a little animal heat, as other warmth was denied them by the barren, inhospitable wilderness around them. We afterwards learnt that scarcely one of these poor wretches escaped from the defile in which they had taken shelter; and that, driven to the extremes of hunger, some of them had, for a few short hours, sustained life by feeding on their dead comrades. The wind was blowing bitterly cold at our bivouac. No shelter of any kind for the ladies of our party during the whole night. Happiness is comparative; and truly fortunate did General Elphinstone, Brigadier Shelton, and myself consider ourselves when one of our Afghan attendants told us to accompany him inside a miserable cow-shed, which on our first entrance was so blackened with the dense smoke from a good blazing fire in the centre of the hut, that we could see none of the objects around us, until we had stretched ourselves at length on the floor, and consequently out of the influence of the smoke, when we perceived our companions to be three or four half-starved Hindostanees, who had accompanied our party. Our attendant wished to eject them; but we too truly sympathised with their sufferings to permit such an act of tyranny. We shortly afterwards got an invitation from Mahomed Akbar to join him and his party to dinner inside the fort. The room of our reception was not much better than that we had left. We had, however, a capital dinner, some cups of good tea, and a luxurious rest for the night, the room having been heated with a good blazing fire and lots of smoke, with no outlet for either, except the door and a small hole in the roof."—[*MS.*]

The passage was not accomplished without difficulty and danger; but the active kindness of the Afghan Sirdars availed to escort the party over in safety.* A bitterly cold wind was blowing as they passed; and a few followers and cattle were lost. Proceeding then in a north-easterly direction, they made their way over a barren, inhospitable country, where neither grass nor water was to be seen, into the fertile valley of Lughman; and halted in the vicinity of the Tugree fort. The following day was the Sabbath. A day's halt had been determined upon; and it fell, by a happy accident, on the Christian's day of rest. A Bible and Prayer-book had been "picked up on the field at Boot-Khak;" and the service of the Church of England was read to the little band of prisoners. It is easy to imagine with what deep emotion they must have joined in the prayer beseeching the Almighty to have mercy "upon all prisoners and captives."

On the morning of the 17th they were again upon the move.† Tugree is only thirty miles distant from

* Captain Johnson says in his journal, "Both Mahomed Akbar and his chiefs were most attentive in escorting over in safety the ladies and their children and wounded Europeans." There is other testimony to the same effect: "Many of the ladies, being mounted on ponies, were obliged to dismount and ride astride on the chargers of their Afghan acquaintance, to avoid getting wet. Nothing could exceed the politeness and attention of Mahomed Akbar on this occasion, who manifested the greatest anxiety until all had crossed over in safety."—[*Eyre's Rough Notes of Imprisonment in Afghanistan.*] "The chiefs gave us every assistance. Mahomed Akbar Khan carried Mrs. Waller over behind him on his own horse. One rode by me to keep my horse's head well up the stream. The Afghans made great exertions to save both men and animals struggling in the water."—[*Lady Sale's Journal.*]

† "*Jan.* 17, 1842.—Early in the morning we were, to our surprise, told to prepare for a march higher up the valley, and further removed from Jellalabad, from which place Tugree is about thirty miles distant. All our hopes, which we had entertained hitherto of being escorted to Jellalabad, are now blighted, and we see plainly that we are nothing more nor less than prisoners, until such time as General Sale shall evacuate Jellalabad, or Dost Mahomed Khan be permitted by our government to return to the country. Started at nine, and arrived at Budeeabad, almost at the top of the valley, and close to the first range of hills towards Kafiristan. It

Jellalabad; and up to this time a faint hope had been encouraged by the captives that they were to be escorted to that place. But now an order came for them "to prepare for a march higher up the valley," and in a different direction. It was now found that their destination was the fort of Budeeabad. This was to be their resting-place. It had been recently erected; and was the property of Mahomed Shah Khan, the father-in-law of the Sirdar. Five rooms, composing two sides of an inner square, or citadel, were allotted to the British prisoners. The buildings were "intended for the chief and his favourite wife,"* and it may therefore be presumed that they afforded the best accommodation in the place. The party consisted of nine ladies, twenty gentlemen, and fourteen children. Seventeen European soldiers, two European women and a child, were located in another part of the fort.

On that night of the 17th of January Pottinger and Akbar Khan were in close and earnest conversation. The Sirdar entered on the subject of his father's release; and asked the English officer if he would guarantee an interchange of prisoners and the evacuation of Jellalabad. Pottinger could only answer that he was a prisoner and powerless; and could give no promises with any certainty of their being performed. But he undertook to write to Macgregor on the subject; and to urge him to lay the wishes of the Sirdar before the Supreme Government.† It appeared to Pottinger that

belongs to Mahomed Shah Khan, is nearly new, and has a deep ditch and *fausse-braie* all round it. Our abode consists of five rooms on two sides of a small square. This space is to accommodate nine ladies, twenty gentlemen, and fourteen children, and in the Tei-Khana are seventeen European soldiers and three European women—all prisoners."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative of his Captivity. MS.*]

* *Lady Sale's Journal.*

† "Last night, Mahomed Akbar and I had a long conversation. He was very anxious for the release of his father, and made many promises in his name if we would release him. I pointed out that at least two months must elapse before we could in any

no more expedient course could be adopted than that involving a general interchange of prisoners and the restoration of the country to Dost Mahomed Khan.

Ostensibly for the purpose of proceeding southward for the reduction of Jellalabad, Akbar Khan took his departure on the following day; and the captives began to settle down into the monotony of prison-life. In this place they continued to reside for nearly three months. The incidents of captivity, during this period, were not many, or very memorable. Here for the first time, after the lapse of a fortnight, they were able to change their clothes.* Clean linen was very scarce; and the nice sensibilities of delicate English ladies were outraged by the appearance of nauseous vermin. The food that was served out to them was not of the most luxurious description. It consisted of rice, mutton, and thick cakes of unleavened dough, prepared by the Afghan cooks in a manner little relished by English palates.† Captain Lawrence acted as the steward of the captive party, and divided the supplies, whether they were the daily food of the prisoners, or parcels

way have the instructions of government regarding the release of the Ameer. I can see no objection to the release of the Ameer, unless government intends making an example of the city of Caubul. Our release and that of the hostages at Caubul appears to depend upon his release. His family's release requires that of the women here. I wish for these last something could be done; but I fear not. You must use your influence. They tell me we shall be forwarded to Peshawur if you evacuate Jellalabad; and the Sirdar begs me that I write you on the subject. I have explained that I have no authority now, and said that I cannot promise anything of the sort. I hope government will see nothing prejudicial to its interests to release the Dost and family."—[*Major Pottinger to Major Macgregor: Lughman, January* 18, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

* *January* 19.—Changed my clothes for the first time since leaving Caubul, January 6, and was fortunate enough to have a clean shirt. My feet had become so swollen that I could not again put on my boots when once pulled off. My eyes still very sore from the effects of the snow on the march."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative of his Captivity. MS.*]

† Subsequently the materials were served out to the prisoners and dressed by their own Hindostanee servants.

of clothes, money,* and other equally acceptable presents sent them either by their Afghan captors or their friends at Jellalabad.

There was nothing very painful in their captivity. They were not suffered to wander far from their prison-house; but within its walls they found both occupation and amusement, and the time passed at Budeeabad is not now, in the retrospect, the saddest of their lives. They had among them a few books; some had been brought for sale by natives of the country, who had picked them up on the road traversed by the army on its retreat; others had been forwarded by friends at Jellalabad. Now and then a stray newspaper came in from that place. It is hard to say how greedily its contents were devoured, and how eagerly they were discussed. Sometimes letters were received from below; there was a good deal of cypher-correspondence between the prisoners and Sale's garrison,† and many long letters were written to friends in India or in England, to be despatched when opportunity might offer. Then there were amongst them two or three packs of old playing cards—dirty and limp, but not the less serviceable for these conventional defects. Some rude backgammon and drafts boards had been constructed for prison service; and there was quite enough elasticity of spirits left

* "*January* 29.—The Sirdar and Sooltan Jan came to see us. Made a bet with the latter of 1000 rupees that Dost Mahomed Khan, the ex-Ameer, will be released by the 30th of January, and will return to Afghanistan. The former gave 1000 rupees to be distributed among us for the purpose of purchasing sugar and other little luxuries. My share is fifty rupees; which sum is very acceptable, as I have not had a *pice* about me since leaving Caubul."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative. MS.*]

† It was dangerous to send military or political news in the ordinary form of epistolary correspondence. So the officers at Jellalabad hit upon the expedient of dotting off letters in old newspapers, so as to form words and sentences—"an easy mode of carrying on secret correspondence not likely to be detected by an Asiatic." These dotted letters communicated to the prisoners the tidings of Wild's repulse in the Khybur Pass—the despatch of General Pollock to Peshawur—and the arrival of Dr. Brydon at Jellalabad.

among the captives to render them not disinclined for more active and boisterous sports. They played at "hop-skotch;" they played at "blind-man's buff." A favourite game among them was the latter; and when some ten or fifteen healthy and cheerful little boys and girls joined in the sport, the mirth ran fast and furious. A Christmas party in old England seldom sees madder gambols than these—seldom has the heart's laughter risen more freely from a band of merrier children than those who romped with their elders in prison at Budeeabad.

The Sabbaths were alway kept holy. Every Sunday saw the little party of Christian prisoners assembled for the worship of their God. Sometimes in the open air, sometimes in tents, in huts, or any other place available for the purpose, Sunday after Sunday, the Church Service was read to as devout a band of worshippers as ever assembled to render thanks to the Almighty and to implore the continuance of His mercies. Nor were these observances lost upon their guards. Wild and savage as were their keepers, they seemed to respect the Christian's day of rest. There was more decorum in their demeanour, more courtesy in their manner, than on the working-days of the week. An atmosphere of peace and rest seemed to envelop them on that sacred day.

On the 23rd of January, Akbar Khan, accompanied by Sooltan Jan, returned to Budeeabad. The object of his visit was to induce Pottinger to write to Macgregor at Jellalabad, stating the terms on which the Sirdar was willing to treat with the British for the release of the prisoners. The letter was duly written;* but Pottinger

* It ran in the following words: "Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan has been with us to-day; and from what I can learn, it seems that Shah Soojah has entirely thrown us overboard, and is about to proceed to open war with us; and the following appears to be the grounds on which he wishes to treat. The agreement he wishes us to enter into is, that if Shah Soojah, or any of Shah Soojah's sons in enmity to the English may send an army to attack Jellalabad, it will thus become evident that the

repeated that he had no hope of the surrender of Jellalabad; and added, that he advised the Sirdar not to attack it lest a war should be commenced of which it was difficult to see the end. Pottinger believed that the Sirdar was sincere in his expressions of a desire to establish friendly relations with the British. "But," he added, "he has been brought up in the midst of treachery, and does not know how to trust; and I regret that our own conduct in this country has put our government's faith on a par with themselves. Our defeat, though sufficiently galling to a soldier, really loses its sting when the taunts of our broken promises, which we know to be true, are thrown in our teeth by men who know the truth only by name."*

King is the enemy of the English; and the English will treat him as such — and then Sirdar Mahomed Akbar Khan will be considered the friend of the English, who will act according to his wishes with respect to this country, and will release the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan with all his family, and send them to this country with all honour and respect, and will restore him to his government, in the same manner as they took it from him to give it to Shah Soojah; but will leave to the Ameer and Sirdar Mahomed Khan the full control of the people and government; and if any enemy attack the government thus established, the British Government will aid it with either money or an army, and the friends of the one government will be the friends of the other. The agreement which the Sirdar will enter into is this, that he will hereafter be the friend of the English; but that at present, to prevent himself being abused by his people, he must proceed to close the Khybur Pass against the approach of the English army; but he will not attempt to attack Jellalabad before the arrival of Shah Soojah's son and army; and after their arrival he will use every endeavour to secretly aid the garrison until the arrival of his father and family."—[*Major Pottinger to Major Macgregor: Budeeabad, January* 23, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

* *Major Pottinger to Major Macgregor: Budeeabad, January* 30, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.* From Major Pottinger's letters written about this time, his real opinion of the conduct of Akbar Khan can only be extracted by ascertaining the circumstances under which the different letters were written—some of them having been written at the request of the Sirdar himself. There are two letters of January 23, one of an official tendency, quoted above—the other of a more private and more genuine character, in which the writer says: "He" (Akbar Khan) "sent out the day before yesterday a Persian letter for me to send to you in English; I wrote a letter telling you the meaning, which he sent back to-day, and requesting me to give him an exact copy of his own. I have done so it is true; but I fancy his humanity was only a sham, and every sinew was strained to destroy our poor fellows. He has, however, treated us personally

About the middle of the month of February the captive party was increased by the arrival of Major Griffiths and Captain Souter; and a few days afterwards, the same terrific earthquake which had shaken down the ramparts of Jellalabad made the walls of their prison-house reel and totter, and levelled a portion of the fort with the dust.* For many days lesser shocks of earthquake kept the people in a continued state of alarm. The prisoners slept in the open court-yard, which was filled with their beds; and all kinds of rude awnings were thrown up to secure a little privacy. The cold was intense, and the heavy dews saturated the bedding like rain. No lives were sacrificed within the fort by this great convulsion of nature; but narrow was

well, and very much so."—[*MS. Correspondence.*] "The despatch of these private letters was discovered by the Sirdar, who is said to have disarmed all the prisoners in consequence of this discovery."—[*Eyre.*]

* "*February* 19.—At about eleven we were visited by the most fearful earthquake within the memory of any man in this country. The day was beautifully clear, and nothing indicated the approach of such a visitation. Most of us were inside our rooms, when we heard a heavy rumbling noise, as of thousands of heavy carriages. This was immediately succeeded by a heaving of the earth, which caused a rocking of the walls, and made us all rush out into the court-yard, which we had no sooner entered than the shock, which had ceased for an instant, again came on with a hundred-fold violence. The high massive walls, by which we were surrounded, heaved to and fro most fearfully, whilst we, for security, huddled together as closely as we possibly could in the centre of the square, where there was a deep wood cellar. All of a sudden there was a frightful crash around us; and the earth heaved up and down to such a degree that we could scarcely stand. The crash was succeeded by a dense cloud of dust, which, for five or six seconds, prevented our seeing the amount of injury done. The walls of the wood cellar fell in. The earth around us was giving way; and we were afraid to move to the right or left, as it would bring us within range of the walls which were falling on both sides of us. The shock had now expended itself. The dust cleared away. And we then saw that our out-houses and the roof of one of our sleeping-rooms tumbled in. The upper parts of the walls were down, and those portions which still remained were either thrown out of their perpendicular or had large rents in them. God grant we may never again experience such a visitation. On the shock ceasing, we went outside the fort, and frightful was the devastation. The whole valley was one cloud of dust. Almost every part had been either wholly or partially destroyed—and great was the loss of life. Even mountains did not escape; and fearful were the crashes of huge rocks, as they were precipitated with awful violence to the plains below. We had shocks at least a dozen times during the day—but none of so alarming a nature as the first."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative of his Captivity. MS.*]

the escape both of Lady Sale and General Elphinstone. The former was on the house-top when the shock commenced; and had scarcely time to secure a footing on a safer spot when the roof fell in with a crash. The poor old General was bed-ridden. His sufferings had been every day increasing. He had been wounded on the retreat. His constitutional infirmities had been aggravated both by the external hardships to which he had been subjected, and the corroding anxieties which had preyed upon his mind. It was plain to all that his end was approaching. But he bore his accumulated sufferings with heroic fortitude; and the warmest sympathies of his fellow-captives were with him. Unable to bestir himself, when the walls of the fort were shaken by the earthquake, he was for a little time in imminent peril; but a soldier of the 44th, named Moore, who had acted as the General's personal attendant, rushed into the room and carried off the attenuated old man in his arms. "The poor General," says Eyre, who records this incident, "was greatly beloved by the soldiery, of whom there were few who would not have acted in a similar manner to save his life."

The month of March passed quietly over the heads of the captives. There was little to mark the monotony of prison-life. Good and bad tidings came in by turns. All sorts of rumours were in circulation, and all were volubly discussed. About the middle of the month, the Nazir, or steward, in charge of the prisoners, announced that Mahomed Shah Khan was willing to release them all for two lakhs of rupees. The proposition was made to Captain Johnson, who convened a meeting of the gentlemen. The offer was a tempting one, and it might have been accepted; but Pottinger protested against it. He was unwilling to aid the enemy with money without the express sanction of his government. So the question was referred to Captain Macgregor—and in the

mean while the perils which beset their position began to thicken around them.* Akbar Khan about this time was wounded by the accidental discharge of a matchlock in the hands of one of his attendants; and it was generally believed throughout the country that Macgregor had bribed the man to assassinate the Sirdar. Had the wound proved mortal, there was at least a possibility of all the prisoners being massacred in revenge.†

April came;‡ and at the end of the first week arrived the glorious tidings of Sale's victory over Akbar Khan on the plain of Jellalabad. Somewhat confusedly

* *March.*—In this month nothing of any consequence occurred, except that up to the 20th instant not a day even passed without one or more shocks of earthquake. About the 18th I received a message from the Nazir in charge of us that Mahomed Shah Khan would release the whole of us for two lakhs of rupees. Made this known to the gentlemen. Had a meeting, at which most of us, or in fact all, agreed, with exception of Major Pottinger—who was averse to our aiding and abetting the enemy with money for our ransom—that Macgregor should be written to, in order to ascertain if government would authorise the payment of the sum. I wrote to Burn, asking him to make known to Macgregor the offer that had been made to me. Received for reply that we might remain satisfied government would not begrudge any sum for our ransom. Nothing further has, however, been done."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative. MS.*]

† "About the middle of this month Mahomed Akbar Khan, while mounting his horse, was wounded in the arm by a musket-ball by one of his own servants, who was immediately seized and burnt alive. It is ten thousand pities the man had not taken a surer aim, although, on the report reaching us, we were told that all our lives would have been sacrificed if the Sirdar had been killed. And it is suspected even now—and all we can say will not convince the people to the contrary — that Macgregor did offer a reward for the assassination of the Sirdar."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative of his Captivity. MS. Records.*]

‡ The 1st of April was not forgotten. It is a curious proof of the irrepressible love of practical joking which clings to our countrymen in all places and in all situations, that the prisoners in Afghanistan, on the 1st of April, turned their misfortunes into food for a joke. Captain Johnson says: "*April* 1, 1842. Was awakened early by M—— telling me a letter had been received by L—— from Macgregor at Jellalabad, informing him that our ransom had been effected for three and a half lakhs of rupees, and that we were to start in five or six days. Was up in an instant—off to L——; and heard the story confirmed by him. The report spread through the whole fort, among our servants as well as the Europeans, in less than a minute. All was intense delight; when, on its being a little sobered down, to my horror, I was told that the story was all fudge. I was half mad with rage at being made such an April fool of, on a subject which, of all others in our situation, should have been the last for any of our party to have expended his wit upon."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative of his Captivity. MS.*]

was the story told at first. It was said that the Sirdar had been killed in the action; and that Mahomed Shah Khan had also fallen. It was a day of intense excitement—of painful speculation and suspense. Some thought that Sale would push on to their rescue—others, that the Sirdar, if alive, would condemn them to death in revenge for his discomfiture; or that, if he had fallen, they would be massacred by their guards.* Another day—and another of doubt and anxiety followed. The captives watched, with deep and fearful interest, the deportment of their keepers, who were seen grouping together and conversing in low mysterious whispers. "A frightful stillness appeared to prevail." † Then came terrible rumours to the effect that the captives were

* "*April* 7.—Whilst sitting with the Nazir who has charge of us, at about half-past one, a man came in great haste and whispered something in his ear. Without saying a word, he instantly armed himself *cap-à-pie*, and went out of the fort. All was surmise. In two or three hours a report reached us of the total defeat of Mahomed Akbar Khan's army this morning at Jellalabad. Some said the Sirdar was killed—others, that Mahomed Shah Khan had shared the same fate—whilst a third party gave out that they had both fled with the greatest precipitation towards Caubul. Of the authenticity of the rumoured defeat no one doubted. Now began surmises as to the result of General Sale's victory to ourselves. Would he push on to our release? Fondly did we hope so! Or would the Sirdar and Mahomed Shah Khan, if alive, avenge themselves in our blood for the ruin of all their hopes at Jellalabad? Or, should they both be killed, might not our guard, who were devotedly attached to Mahomed Shah Khan, butcher us in revenge for his death? We were perfectly defenceless. All our swords and pistols had long been taken away from us. Our suspense was great."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative. MS.*]

† "*April* 9.—The whole of this day and yesterday passed in the greatest suspense. Reports reached us to-day that the Sirdar and Mahomed Shah Khan had arrived at the fort of the latter, about two miles distant from us. The rout of the Afghan army appears to have been perfect, and we hear that they have lost all their guns, camp-equipage, and private property. All our guard appear very mysterious — group together — and talk in whispers. The inhabitants of the fort have removed their property and left their homes. Towards the afternoon, several of our guard, with whom we had been in the habit of conversing, and who had always been kind to us, on our asking them what would become of us, would shake their heads and say, 'You are in the hands of God.' A frightful stillness appeared to prevail. By degrees we began to hear fearful rumours that we were all to be massacred at sunset. Whether these first originated in the imaginations of some of our party, or in those of the Afghans, I cannot say — but knowing the revengeful temper of those in whose hands we were, nothing appeared to us more probable; and our anxiety and suspense increased as the day wore on. At

to be massacred at sunset. They had been disarmed; they had neither swords nor pistols—no means of resistance were within their reach. They could only submit to be slaughtered like sheep in the shambles. But at sunset their fears were dissipated. Mahomed Shah Khan arrived with a large party of followers. He went among the prisoners with frank cordiality—civilly shook hands with them all—and then sate down and entered into conversation with them. It was necessary, he said, that they should be removed from Budeeabad; and that they should commence their march on the following morning. Not a hint fell from him regarding their future destination, and none were inclined to question him. He slept that night in the fort; and the prisoners began to make preparations for the morrow's march. This was no difficult matter. "All my worldly goods," wrote Captain Johnson, "might be stowed away in a towel."

Morning dawned; and Mahomed Shah Khan busied himself in the work of plunder.* There was still some valuable property clinging to the unhappy captives. They who had nothing else had good horses. Lady Macnaghten had jewels and rich shawls. The Ghilzye chief helped himself freely. Then, utterly ignorant of

about sunset a report was brought in that Mahomed Shah Khan was on his way to visit us. Even this was a relief to us, as we knew that what would happen to us must take place shortly. In about ten minutes he arrived with a large party of his followers. On coming up to us, our alarms were at an end as regarded our lives, as he regarded us civilly, and shook hands with the whole of us. We all sate down together. He entered slightly into the defeat of the day before yesterday, and told us that we must be in readiness to leave Budeeabad in the morning, without, however, giving us any hint as to our destination; nor had any of us inclination to ask questions of him. His will is law to us. After sitting for some time he wished us 'Good evening,' and withdrew. He slept in the fort that night, and we were busy making preparations for the morrow's march. These, however, were shortly at an end. All my worldly goods and chattels might be stowed away in a towel or a handkerchief." —[*Captain Johnson's Narrative of his Captivity. MS.*]

* "*April* 10*th*.—Up at daylight; had a cup of tea and was ready for

the direction in which they were to proceed, the anxious captives started for their new prison-house. Four camels, with litters, were assigned to the ladies and such of the gentlemen as sickness prevented from mounting the ponies which had been parcelled out amongst them. A guard of fifty Afghans, horse and foot, escorted the little band of prisoners on their mysterious march. The European soldiers were left behind.

They had not proceeded many miles, when two or three horsemen galloped up, and the party of captives were suddenly ordered to halt. Tidings had come, it was said, to the effect that Pollock had been beaten back in the Khybur Pass, with the loss of his guns, his treasure, and half his force. Confident of the truth of this atrocious story, the Afghans of the guard broke out into loud exultation, and the English officers, reluctant as they were to believe it, were overborne at last by the confidence of their escort and compelled to credit the distressing news. False as was the report, it was not ineffective. The prisoners were carried back to Budeeabad. With heavy hearts and sad countenances they returned to their old prison-house, thinking of the new

the march. Took out my saddle to put on my horse; found that some rascal had stolen my stirrups. This was soon rectified by a piece of rope. As I was about saddling my horse, which was a good Hissar-stud animal, Mahomed Shah Khan sent a man to tell me that this was to be his property, and that he would furnish me with some other beast, as none of us were to be permitted to ride horses for fear of making our escape. . . . In the mean time, Mahomed Shah Khan, having heard that Lady Macnaghten was possessed of a great number of magnificent shawls and valuable jewels, which she had been so lucky as to have saved up to this time, went inside and coolly demanded her, without sending any previous message, to open her boxes. These were all very soon ransacked; and shawls and jewels to the amount of near two lakhs of rupees were taken possession of by this chief of freebooters—politely telling her ladyship that she might retain one or two shawls and any particular jewel for which she might have more value than another. Many of the little things were also taken possession of by a young whelp—the worthy son of so worthy a sire. Remonstrance was useless. About 9 A.M. we started; but still without the slightest knowledge of where we were going."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative of his Captivity. MS.*]

disasters which had overtaken their unhappy country. But their hearts were soon reanimated, and their faces soon brightened up, by the news which greeted them at Budeeabad. Pollock had not been beaten back; but had forced the Khybur Pass, and was marching triumphantly upon Jellalabad. Again, therefore, the captive party were ordered to resume their interrupted march; and on the following morning again they started.

Proceeding for about ten miles, "through a bleak and barren country," they came upon a patch of cultivated ground—which smiled up in the faces of the prisoners like an oasis in the desert.* Crossing the river, they overtook Akbar Khan, sitting in a palanquin, his arm in a sling, looking pale, haggard, and dejected, as one whose fortunes were not on the ascendant. They saluted the Sirdar, passed on, and halted at a short distance from him. The bivouac was a comfortless one. Strictly guarded and insufficiently sheltered, they passed the night in dreary discomfort. Rain fell, and under the scanty tents there was not room for the bedding of the captives. The next day was one of equal misery—there was scarcely any food either for man or beast. On the morning of the 13th a distressing rumour was current among them. It was said that the married families were to be carried off in one direction, and the other captives in another. The scarcity was so great—it was so difficult to subsist them all on one spot—that it was necessary to divide the party. This was not to be submitted to without an effort to obtain the recision of the obnoxious order. Lawrence went to the Sirdar, and implored him to suffer them all to remain together and to share the same fate. The Sirdar relented; and they all resumed their march together.

* *Captain Johnson's Narrative. MS.*

Their route lay over barren hills and through narrow stony valleys. Every now and then little patches of cultivation sparkled up in the arid waste. There was little or no food to be obtained. A few almonds and raisins, or other dried fruits, sufficed to appease the hunger of the captives, whilst their horses were reduced to skeletons.* The heat was intense. The burning sun scorched the faces of the European travellers, and peeled off the white skin. The journey was a long and painful one, up a steep ascent almost along the whole line of march. The prisoners knew not whither they were going; and it seemed that Akbar Khan did not know where to take them. Some of the captives were suffering severely. The bad roads and the vicissitudes of the climate, for heavy rains followed the parching sun, tried them as in a furnace. General Elphinstone was dying. Lady Macnaghten and Lady Sale were sick. When Akbar Khan was made aware of the latter fact, he took compassion on the English ladies. He was still weak, and suffering from the effects of his wound; but he gave up the palanquin, or litter in which he had been carried, for their use; and rode on horseback to the end of the march.

This was on the 19th of April. On the evening of that day the prisoners reached Tezeen, and were conducted to a fort belonging to a petty Ghilzye chief, in which were all the wives and women of Mahomed Shah Khan. There they remained, poorly accommodated and scantily fed, until the 22nd, when, with the exception of General Elphinstone and two or three other invalids,

* "I fell in on the line of march," writes Captain Johnson, "with some Afghan or other who knew me in former days at Caubul, or who were in public employ under me, who were very liberal in offering to me sometimes a piece of bread, and at others some almonds and raisins; and all, without exception, that I come across are civil and courteous, and seem really to sympathise with our misfortunes."—[*MS. Narrative.*]

they were all carried off in the direction of the hills, up a gradual ascent of many thousands of feet, to a place called Zanda. There they halted for some weeks, and in the mean while Captain Mackenzie was despatched to Pollock's camp at Jellalabad; and General Elphinstone died.

By his fellow-captives his dissolution had long been anticipated, and was now hardly deplored. Death brought him a merciful release from an accumulation of mortal sufferings. Incessant pain of body and anguish of mind had long been his portion. He felt acutely the humiliating position into which it had pleased Providence to cast him, and neither hoped nor wished to live to face his countrymen in the provinces of Hindostan. They who watched beside the poor old man, during the painful close of his life, bear testimony, in touching language, to the Christian fortitude with which he bore his sufferings, and the Christian charity with which he spoke of others, under all the burdens which pressed upon him.* The hardships to which he had been subjected on the march from one prison-house to another had, perhaps, accelerated the crisis which was hanging over him; but he had long been passing away to his rest, and they, who loved him most, scarcely desired to arrest the progress of the maladies which were so surely destroying him. He left on record a statement of all the circumstances of our disasters—a statement which I have freely quoted in a

* "It is due no less to the memory of the dead than to the large circle of living friends and relatives, who, I feel assured, will mourn his loss, that I should record him to the very last moment of his being. He exhibited a measure of Christian benevolence, patience, and high-souled fortitude, which gained him the affectionate regard and affectionate esteem of all who witnessed his prolonged sufferings and his dying struggles, and who regarded him as the victim less of his own faults than of the errors of others, and the unfathomable designs of a mysterious Providence, by whom the means are always adapted to the end."—[*Eyre.*] See also Pottinger's evidence; quoted, *ante*, pages 179-180, note.

preceding part of my narrative—but even with this statement in his hand, he could not have faced his countrymen without bringing down upon himself a verdict of condemnation. After all that has been written of his deficiencies at Caubul, it may seem a startling inconsistency to say that he was a brave and high-minded gentleman. He was so esteemed before, in an evil hour for his own and his country's reputation, he was ordered to carry his infirmities across the Indus; and in spite of all the humiliating circumstances of our discomfiture at Caubul, posterity may so esteem him. Not upon him, but upon those who are responsible for his appointment to high military command at such a time and in such a place—firstly, upon those who sent him to India; secondly, and chiefly, upon those who sent him to Afghanistan—must we fix the shame of this great miscarriage. When he consented to leave the quiet enjoyment of an honoured old age at home to carry his good fame and his broken constitution to a distant Indian Presidency, he committed a fatal error, for which he made terrible atonement. But there are few who will not pity rather than condemn the man, who found himself suddenly, with all his weakness upon him, in a sea of difficulty which demanded almost superhuman strength to buffet through it. In these pages he has appeared only as the military leader—as one who, in the hour of danger, was tried and found wanting. His fine social qualities cannot be accepted as a set-off to his military deficiencies. It is not to be pleaded in answer to the charge of having sacrificed an army at Caubul, that he was an agreeable gentleman in private life, that he was always ready with an anecdote and told it well, and that it was very hard not to love him. But now that it has been recorded how the soldier became the captive, and how the captive passed away to

his rest, these things may be set down with a kindly hand upon the last page which bears his name; and it may be permitted to us, for a little space, to forget the deficiencies of the soldier whilst we sympathise with the sufferings of the man.*

* General Elphinstone's remains were sent by Akbar Khan, for interment, to Jellalabad. The General's faithful servant, Moore, accompanied the body. "I have the honour to inform you," wrote Pottinger to Pollock, on the 26th of April, "that Mahomed Akbar Khan yesterday despatched to you the body of the late Major-General Elphinstone. It was, however, intercepted by a party of the Ghilzyes, under the supposition that the Prince in Caubul had sent it, the party made prisoners, and the European servant, who had been allowed to accompany it, wounded. The savages, however, on hearing that Mahomed Akbar Khan had sent it, deputed one of their number to learn the truth. The Sirdar is much grieved at the accident, and now sends a party, with private Moore, the General's servant, to replace the corpse and forward it on. The Sirdar at present is unable to release the two servants from the hostility of the intermediate clans; but he promises to do so as soon as a person may arrive sufficiently powerful to protect them."—[*Major Pottinger to General Pollock: Castle of Afzool Khan, Tezeen, April* 26, 1842. *MS. Records.*] The General's remains subsequently reached Jellalabad, and were interred with military honours.

CHAPTER V.

[December: 1841—June: 1842.]

Stoddart and Conolly—Intelligence of the Caubul Outbreak—Arrest of the English Officers—Their sufferings in Prison—Conolly's Letters and Journals—Death of the Prisoners.

THERE is a painful episode in this epic of the Afghan war, which perhaps can be introduced in no place more fitly than in this. Whilst the prisoners, who surrendered themselves on the march between Caubul and Jellalabad, were suffering such hardships only as were inseparable from their position in a rude and inhospitable country, and the hostages at Caubul were under the protection of a benevolent and high-minded Afghan nobleman, two enlightened and chivalrous British officers were enduring unparalleled sufferings in the dungeons of an Oosbeg tyrant, far beyond the snowy mountains of the Hindoo-Koosh. Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly were being devoured by vermin in a cheerless prison in the city of Bokhara.

It was in the middle of the month of December, 1841, that intelligence reached Bokhara to the effect that all Caubul and the surrounding country had risen against Shah Soojah and his Feringhee allies, that Sir Alex-

ander Burnes had been killed, and the British troops beaten in battle. A few days before, an answer had been received to a letter addressed by the Ameer to the Queen of England. The answer was written by the Foreign Secretary, and it referred the King to the Government of India. This indignity—for so he regarded it—was still rankling in his mind, when tidings of the Caubul outbreak reached Bokhara. The Ameer now sent for the English officers—asked them many questions—said that he would release Colonel Stoddart but detain Captain Conolly; and finally, after pondering the matter for a few days, condemned them both to imprisonment in the house of the Topshee-Bashee, or chief artilleryman of Bokhara.*

Here their condition became every day more deplorable. They were not allowed a change of raiment, and the clothes rotted on their backs. Nauseous vermin preyed upon their bodies, and they tore the irritated flesh with their nails. They were not denied either a sufficiency of food or firing; but water leaked through the roof of the miserable room in which they were confined. Cold and fever racked them grievously; but they comforted one another with Christian consolation, and they prayed together to the Christian's God.

In this wretched prison-house, though strictly guarded,

* "The Ameer was very much enraged at finding that the Queen had not answered his letter; but had referred Colonel Stoddart to the Indian Government, for all matters connected with Bokhara. About five days after this, intelligence was received that Sir Alexander Burnes had been murdered at Caubul. On the receipt of this intelligence a servant of the Ameer was sent to call the two gentlemen to his presence. The Ameer asked Colonel Stoddart which road he could now take, even supposing he (the Ameer) was willing to release him. The Colonel said he could go either by Russia or Persia. The Ameer said he would release him in seven or eight days, and keep Captain Conolly. A few days afterwards the English gentlemen were sent for to the palace and confined."—[*Statement of Shah Mahomed, Populzye, one of Captain Conolly's attendants. MS. Records.*] This part of the statement is entirely confirmed by that of Saleh Mahomed, Akhondzadeh, as taken by Colonel Sheil.

they were not so closely watched that Conolly could not contrive to spend many an hour chronicling, in small characters upon Russian paper, all the incidents of captive life, and drawing up, for the information of his government, elaborate memoranda on the politics of Central Asia. In spite of all difficulties of transmission, many of these notes and memoranda found their way from Bokhara to Caubul; and, surviving all the chances of destruction to which the convulsed state of Afghanistan necessarily exposed them, were conveyed in safety to the British camp, and are now lying before me.* In no way could the sufferings which the Bokhara captives endured be set forth so truthfully as in extracts from such of Conolly's letters and journals as have fortunately been preserved.

The English officers must have been thrown into prison about the 17th of December. At the end of that month, or on the first day of the new year, Allahdad Khan, the Caubul envoy, was brought in to share their captivity.† "The Topshee-Bashee, on leaving Allahdad Khan with us," wrote Conolly in his journal, "made over to me a superfluous *posteen*‡ belonging to my friend, which enabled me to throw aside the stinking garment given by the Meer [ ]§; this and his allowing Allahdad Khan to keep the rest of his clothes, looked as if the Ameer had somewhat relented, as the Topshee-Bashee would not have dared to show us so much kindness without leave." But these hopes were

* Some of these papers, written closely on every side, had been cut into three pieces, and apparently sent by as many messengers.

† Allahdad Khan, the Afghan envoy, who accompanied Captain Conolly, had been permitted to take his departure from Bokhara, but was afterwards brought back and confined. He remained for some days in the same apartment with Stoddart and Conolly, but was subsequently removed to other quarters. The servants of the latter officer were also thrown into prison—some of them into the well, or log-house, in which Stoddart had been incarcerated.

‡ An Afghan over-coat.

§ Obscure in *MS.*

delusive. The Ameer had not relented. Day after day passed, and their sufferings increased.

All through the month of January little change took place in the condition of the captives. On the last day of the month, wrote Conolly, "a Mehrum came to desire that we would minutely describe the city and castle of Caubul, and also give an account of Heraut. Allahdad Khan drew a plan of the first place; Stoddart was named as the one who best knew the second; but the Mehrum did not take his account of it. We next day learnt that he had been sent to the Akhondzadeh,* who had drawn a large plan of his native city." As February wore on, other encouraging signs of the Ameer's desire to treat the prisoners with greater kindness presented themselves. On the 9th of February another gleam of hope burst in upon them. The incident is thus touchingly described in Conolly's journal:

February 9 [1842].—Moolla Nasir came to ask if we had seen the Peacock throne of India. As every lettered Asiatic should know that Nadir Shah carried that throne away to Persia, and Moolla Nasir's manner was pointedly kind, we judged that the question he had been sent to ask was a pretence, and that the Ameer desired an opening for a return to proper treatment of us. Stoddart, therefore, gave him this, by speaking of his position here as British agent, and expressing regret that he had not been able to relieve the Huzrut's mind from the doubts which he seemed to entertain of the English Government's friendship. We showed the sad state of our clothes (Stoddart had been obliged to put aside his shirt in consequence of the roof's having leaked over him the night before), and expressed hope that the Ameer would soon improve our condition; but we both spoke cheerfully, that the King might not think we entertained resentment for his treatment of us.†

* Saleh Mahomed, the Akhondzadeh, made a similar statement to Colonel Sheil. I see no reason to doubt the statements of this man, which are confirmed in many particulars by the accounts of other witnesses.

† *Arthur Conolly's MS. Journal.*

A Russian Mission was then at Bokhara, under the charge of Colonel Bontenoff, who seems to have been in higher favour than the English gentlemen; and to have greatly pitied their condition.* On the 15th of February the prisoners despatched a letter to them by the hands of one of their dependents, known as Long Joseph, whose exploits are thus recorded:

February 15.—This day Long Joseph gallantly darted into our room, and carried off a note which we had written for Colonel Bontenoff, to inform him of our situation.

February 16.—Long Joseph having won a servant of the Topshee-Bashee's, conveyed to us a note from the gaoler, and sent it to him; Stoddart writing to government through Sir J. M'Neill.

All the symptoms of a favorable change in the state of the Ameer's feelings proved delusive. Day after day passed, and the prisoners still remained in the same unhappy condition; at last, at the end of February, Conolly wrote:

We hoped from Moolla Nasir's visit, and that of the page, who brought my thermometer, that the Ameer was relenting, but nothing has since occurred to favour this idea; on the contrary, the chief would appear to find pleasure in his servant's accounts of our discomfort, which may be imagined from the fact that we have now been seventy-one days and nights without means of changing or washing our linen, which is hanging in filthy tatters from our persons. The Topshee-Bashee, who looks in upon us every seven or eight days, replies to our entreaties for an improvement in this respect, that our state must be well known to the Huzrut, whose mind retains thought of the greatest and least matters, and that nothing can be said to his Majesty about us till he opens the subject. The Topshee-Bashee has, I believe, been as kind to us as he has dared to be. We have had quite enough firing and food throughout the cold season we have passed in his house,

* Colonel Stoddart had interchanged visits with them before Conolly's arrival. Shah Mahomed says: "There was an ambassador at this time from the Russian Government who came twice to see the English gentlemen, who also visited him."—[*MS. Records.*]

and continue, thank God! in good health. We sometimes think, from the Ameer's keeping back Said's and the Akhondzadeh's packets, that he must have received the Governor-General's communication, and that he is acting big in irritation at not having been answered from the English throne; but it is impossible to form certain conclusions from his conduct, for it is very often influenced by caprice, which is not very far from madness. We hope that all is well in Afghanistan, and that, soon as the Hindoo-Koosh roads become open, the Ameer will receive some communication which will induce him to properly treat or dismiss us. We beg that government will convey its sentiments to the Ameer in Persian, as he will not take our word for what is written in English any longer than it suits him, and also that no allusion may be made to the above details, for if the King knew that we were able to send intelligence he might treat us worse, and perhaps kill everybody about us. The Russians propose to go about No-roz. We kept Colonel Bontenoff informed of our proceedings up to the date of our seizure, and if he should reach Europe ere our release he may be able to enlarge this abstract, which is necessarily very imperfect.

In the second week of March, Conolly's sufferings broke out openly in the shape of cold and fever. Enfeebled and irritated by disease, he then began to despond. It seemed to him that he was in the toils of death; and in a high state of excitement, after many sleepless nights, he wrote to his brother, John Conolly, then also a prisoner in the hands of a Mussulman enemy, the following touching letter:

From our Prison in the Bokhara Citadel,
11th March, 1842.

MY DEAR JOHN,

This will probably be my last note hence, so I dedicate it to you, who now, alas! stand next to me. We both dedicate everything we feel warmest to William, whom may God bless in all belonging to him, for his long and untiring brotherly affection to us all! Send my best love to Henry and to all our dear sisters.

This is the eighty-third day that we have been denied the means of getting a change of linen from the rags and vermin

that cover us; and yesterday, when we begged for an amendment in this respect, the Topshee-Bashee, who had before come occasionally as our host to speak encouragingly, set his face like a flint to our request, showing that he was merely a vane to the withering wind of his heartless master, and could not help us thus, so that we need not ask him to do so. This, at first, astonished and defeated us; we had viewed the Ameer's conduct as perhaps dictated by mad caprice; but now, looking back upon the whole, we saw instead that it had been just the deliberate malice of a demon, questioning and raising our hopes, and ascertaining our condition, only to see how our hearts were going on in the process of breaking. I did not think to shed one warm tear among such cold-blooded men, but yesterday evening, as I looked upon Stoddart's half-naked and nail-lacerated body, conceiving that I was the special object of the king's hatred because of my having come to him after visiting Khiva and Kokund, and told him that the British Government was too great to stir up secret enmity against any of its enemies, I wept on entreating one of our keepers, the gunner's brother, to have conveyed to the chief my humble request that he would direct his anger upon me, and not further destroy by it my poor brother Stoddart, who had suffered so much and so meekly here for three years. My earnest words were answered by a "Don't cry and distress yourself;" he also could do nothing. So we turned and kissed each other, and prayed together, and then said, in the words of the Kokunders, "*My-bish*!"* Let him do as he likes! he is a demon, but God is stronger than the devil himself, and can certainly release us from the hands of this fiend, whose heart he has perhaps hardened to work out great ends by it; and we have risen again from bed with hearts comforted, as if an angel had spoken to them, resolved, please God, to wear our English honesty and dignity to the last, within all the filth and misery that this monster may try to degrade us with.

We hope that, though the Ameer should now dismiss us with gold clothing, the British and Afghan Governments will treat him as an enemy; and this out of no feeling of revenge. He treacherously caused Stoddart to invite me here on his own Imayut-Nameh; and after Stoddart had given him a translation of a letter from Lord Palmerston, containing nothing but friendly

* Obscure in *MS.*

assurances, which he could have verified, with our entire consent, at the Russian embassy, he pent us both up here, because we would not pay him as a kidnapper for our release, to die by slow rot, if it should appear that he might venture at last to put us altogether out of the way. We hope and pray that God may forgive him his sins in the next world; but we also trust that some human power will soon put him down from his oppressive throne at this capital, whence emanates the law by which the Khivans harry and desolate the roads and homes of the Persians. He wishes every soul to crouch before him, and not breathe God's air freely without his leave, nor dare to be happy or at ease. For instance (and we are at the fountain-head of police report), a poor wretch, confined without food for three days and nights in the Bug House, an infernal hole used for severe imprisonment, said incautiously, on being taken out, that he was alive and well. "He is, is he?" said the Ameer, on the report; "then put him in for three days and nights more." Again, the other night fifty-six grooms assembled at a house outside the city, to make merry on pilau and tea, with money liberally given by one of the Oosbeg men, Rahman Kool Tohsaba, to his head-groom, who acted as master of the feast: they were convicted of having got together, so all that the police-master could seize received seventy-five blows each on the back with a heavy thorn-stick; and because one man uncomplainingly bore his punishment, which was inflicted on all before the King, he had him hoisted for seventy-five more, saying, "He must have been struck softly." "But what was the crime in this innocent meeting of poor grooms?" we asked our gaolers. "Who knows?—he is a king, and gave the order." The master of the entertainment stood with his dagger against some thirty policemen, till he was felled by a stone thrown at his head, to let all who could escape; for this heavier offence he was condemned to be thrown from a part of the citadel wall, which gives a culprit a chance of escape with only the fracture of a limb, because it has a slope: he threatened to pull down with him any who should approach the brink to throw him off, and, leaping boldly down, came to the ground with whole bones, and lives, let us hope, for many a happy meeting yet with his friends in this now oppressed city. This is how the Ameer would treat such ambassadors as he dares insult, who do not bend reverently enough before him; but the days for such despotism are passing

quick, and he must himself be made to go down before the strong spirit of Western civilisation. Stoddart has asked me to put on paper my notions as to the measures that should now be adopted for the settlement and independent happiness of the Central Asian states;—here they are, briefly and freely; those of a man born and bred, thank God! in Protestant England, who has seen Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan, and all the three Oosbeg States.

Turn out the horrible Wuzeer Yar Mahomed Khan, who has sold 12,000 men, women, and children, since he obliged the Persians to retire from Herat, and buy out Kamran's family from that principality. Kamran himself forfeited all his kingly right here by his letter to the Khan Huzrut of Khiva, which the latter chief gave me in return for my frank communication to him, and which I sent to Sir William Macnaghten. Thus will be gained the only point from which the Afghan nation can lend its weight to the preservation of peace and the advancement of civilisation in Toorkistan, protect its weakest subjects from being stolen or sold away, and properly guard its own and India's frontier. Next, let Pottinger come in attendance upon Shah Soojah's heir-apparent, Shah-zadah Timour, with a few thousand select Afghan horsemen of both the tribes, half Douranee and half Ghilzye, to blow down the gate of the citadel, which unjustly imprisoned us, against the rights of all nations, except those the Oosbegs profess. The Ameer scornfully says that the Afghans and English are one people; let him feel that they really are so in a good cause. I really do believe that if Shah-zadah Timour were to return, after such a proceeding, to assume the actual exercise of government at his father's capital, taking back with him all real Afghans now enslaved in Toorkistan, whose orthodoxy, according to the Soonees, is unquestionable, and who might easily be collected for a friendly offering, the Afghans would so thoroughly like him and understand us, that every English and Indian soldier might be withdrawn to Hindostan.

Let the Shah-i-Shah of Persia at the same time write these few words to the Court of the faithful at Bokhara, sending copies of his letter by friendly and high ambassadors to Khiva and Kokund: "I want all my enslaved subjects who are not willing to remain in Bokhara, and I am now coming, in reliance upon the only God of justice, to free them, and to destroy the law of THY Mooftehed,

by which people who pray towards the same Kebla are sold as cattle." Let Mahomed Shah lithograph this, and send a copy to be stuck up at every mosque where his authority or influence can reach, in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tartary. This writing will tell the Ameer that his kingdom has been weighed and found wanting; it will do much to soften and liberalise Mahomedan feeling wherever it is read; and if the Persian nation are informed that it comes to them recommended by English sympathy, they will dismiss all irritation of mind that was caused by our checking their military career at Herat.

I feel confident that this great and most necessary measure of Persian emancipation may be effected at once without shedding one drop of blood. I never uttered a word of hostility against the Ameer, either at Khiva or Kokund; but now I am authorised to show how I thought the rulers of these states, who both hate him, may be made to end or lessen their own foolish enmity by his removing from between them. Let the Shah of Persia send a firman to Syud Mahomed Zahed, Kurruck Kojeh at Kokund, whom he knows, saying—"Tell the Khan Huzrut, of Kokund, who I am happy to find does not deal in my people, that I am about to liberate all those oppressed men and women who are unwillingly detained as slaves in Bokhara. I don't want that country; and if you will send Lushker Begglerbiggee, or Mahomed Shereff Atalik, with the Kokund army about the same time to Samarcand, my prime minister shall make it over to him by treaty, as the capital of Mawarulneh. I shall give up Merve to the Khan Huzrut of Khiva to be made the capital of Kharasm, on condition of his doing all he can to restore and content my unfortunate people, whom his tribes have carried off during my wars in other directions."

The best Oosbeg troops are mere rubbish as opponents to Persian regulars and cannon, and they all know it. Allah Kouli Khan is the best and most sensible man in his country, and he will remain quiet while Mahomed Shah comes against Bokhara, if Shakespear can be empowered to tell him that this is a reform which must be effected, and which Persia is determined now to effect, with the commerce of England and Russia. Shakespear can mediate between the Khan Huzrut and Mohamed Shah for the gentle emancipation of those who may wish to return home in the next four or five years, or to settle in the fine waste land of Merve;

and perhaps Mahomed Shah may give to Allah Kouli Khan the very large colony of [ ]*, now settled here, who really yet long for the home of their fathers: this, and my securing to the Kokan frontier up the Oxus to Balkh, perhaps leaving the khan of it his easy tributary, would make him agree to all that the Afghans need for the formation of their frontier from Persian Khorassan to the Oxus.

England and Russia may then agree about immutable frontiers for Persia, Afghanistan, Mawarulneh, and Kharasm, in the spirit which becomes two of the first European nations in the year 1842 of Jesus Christ, the God incarnate of all peace and wisdom. May this pure and peaceable religion be soon extended all over the world!

ARTHUR CONOLLY.

March 12th.

I beg that fifty tillas may be given to Jooma Bai, the servant who will convey this to Long Joseph. (Let the utmost caution be used always in mentioning their names while this Ameer lives or reigns.) As for Long Joseph, I don't know what reward to propose for him. He has risked his life for us in the most gallant manner, as few men would, except for a brother, and he is a noble fellow. I feel sure that government will forgive me for not being able to make an account of my stewardship during my Toorkish mission, and that it will use every exertion to get free and to reward all who have suffered with me, but remained alive.

Allahdad Khan had some 400 tillas in cash when he was brought back, besides his baggage and horses. Akhondzadeh Saleh Mohamed has served too well to make it necessary for me to recommend him. I trust that God has preserved his life. Stoddart and I will comfort each other in every way till we die, when may our brotherhood be renewed in heaven through Jesus Christ our Saviour! Send this assurance to all our friends, and do you, my dear John, stand in this faith. It is the only thing that can enable a man to bear up against the trials of this life, and lead him to the noblest state of existence in the next. Farewell—farewell! I shall send this to be forwarded, if news reaches Stoddart's faithful man Ibraheem of our death, through Jooma Bai and Long Joseph.†

* Obscure in *MS.*

† *MS. Correspondence of A. Conolly.*

On the 22nd of March, Conolly again wrote, full of affectionate solicitude for the sufferings of his friends, but little mindful of his own:

After sending a page with my thermometer on the 15th ult. (February), to ask how much cold it indicated, as detailed in my last letter, the Ameer took no notice of us till the 13th of this month, when he sent the gold chronometer which I had given him, to show that its chain was broken, and to ask if we could repair it; a pretence, the Topshee-Bashee said, to ascertain what state we were in. We had both become ill, a few days before, from a sudden cold change of weather, and the discomfort of filthy clothing; and I, who had given in most to the sickness, owing to anxiety of mind regarding the many persons whom I had been the means of bringing into the Ameer's tyrannous hands, was lying weak in bed with fever when the last page came. The Topshee-Bashee, who for some time spoke encouragingly about changing our clothes, had by this time caused us plainly to understand that he neither dared himself to amend our position in this respect, nor even to represent it to the Ameer. He now tried to save us by telling the page that I had been confined to my bed eight days, and by remarking upon the wretched state of our apparel after eighty-five days and nights' wear. I showed the Mehrum that Stoddart had been obliged to cast away all his under-clothing, and was suffering much from cold on the chest. I experienced hope that the Ameer would take some pity upon us, and especially upon such of my late travelling companions and people as might be suffering under his displeasure. The page said that he would make a representation if the Huzrut questioned him; and he afterwards told the Topshee-Bashee that, on the Ameer's doing so, he had stated that the King's last-come slave, Kan-Ali (Conolly), had been very ill for eight or nine days; to which the Huzrut had replied, "May he not die (or, I suppose, he won't die) for the three or four days that remain till his going." We thought from this that the Ameer proposed to send us away with the Russians, who were said to be preparing to depart after the *No-roz*. Nothing else has since transpired regarding ourselves; but through the indefatigable Long Joseph we have learnt the following items of intelligence about our friends.*

* The men formerly in Dr. Gerrard's service, enslaved fifteen years ago, whom I had ransomed at Khiva by order of Government.

On the 13th inst., Ibraheem wrote: "With regard to Caubul be quite at ease; 30,000 people (rebels?) have been slaughtered there." Allahdad Khan, the Akhonzadah, Eusoff Khan (Augustin), the Jemadar, Meer Akhor, with Bolund Khan, Kurreen Khan, and Gool Mahomed, had been released; for which we sincerely thanked God. Their sufferings, poor fellows, in that horrible dungeon, must have been great. . . .

On the 23rd, we were made further happy by the verbal intelligence of Long Joseph that Allahdad Khan and the rest of our people had been released.

On the 24th, he again recorded that a ray of hope had broken into his dreary dungeon:

24th.—This forenoon, the Topshee-Bashee coming to see us, said, with a cheerful manner, "'Sewonchee'—Reward me for glad tidings. I represented your great want of clothes, and proposed to buy shirts and trousers for you from the bazaar, but the Huzrut said, 'They don't wear bazaar clothes; in three or four days I'll give them dresses of honour and dismiss them.' And the Huzrut asked Meerza Juneid which road would be the best one for you to travel by, saying, 'They cannot now go in that direction' (apparently meaning Caubul). Meerza Juneid replied, that the route by Persia would now be the best. After which the Ameer spoke graciously about you. He said that Kan-Ali was a well-informed person, that the Meerza represented that he had conversed very little with Kan-Ali, but that Stoddart, of whom he had seen much, was a man instructed upon all matters." We doubted the Topshee-Bashee's having dared to make a representation of himself regarding us. And the old guardian mentioned afterwards that Meerza Juneid had come to his brother's office. Probably desiring to know whether I was better or worse in health since the 13th, the Ameer sent Meerza Juneid, in his capacity of physician, to make inquiries in this matter.

A few days afterwards, remembering how he had written, under the excitement, almost the delirium of fever, a desponding letter to John Conolly, he wrote more cheerfully to his brother, begging him, if the *letter reached* its destination, not to be dispirited by

it, for that both he and Stoddart were now in good health:

Bokhara Citadel, 28th March, 1842.

MY DEAR JOHN,

We have been comforted by intelligence that the Ameer has released Allahdad Khan and all my people from the gaol into which he so unjustly and cruelly confined them. . . . . The Ameer has lately been talking, we hear, of sending us away, and though we do not set much store by his words, we think it possible he may give us to the Russian Mission, who are about to depart. . . . . I wrote you a longish letter on the 11th of this month, when I was in a high state of excitement, from fever and several nights of sleepless anxiety. The burden of it was an entreaty to the last effect regarding my poor people, and a hope that the British Government would seize the opportunity which the Ameer's faithlessness had given them to come forward with Persia to put him down, and give his country to Kharasm and Kokund, on condition of the entire suppression of the Persian and Afghan slave trade in Toorkistan. If that paper (which I shall endeavour to recover) should reach you, compress its words into this purport and destroy it, reserving my last good wishes for the friends to whom I addressed them, thinking that I might not live much longer. I am now, thank God, almost well in health again, and the news regarding our people has set my mind at rest. Stoddart, also, who was suffering awhile from severe cold, is, I rejoice to say, convalescent. We are both in a very uncomfortable state, as you may imagine, having been ninety-nine days and nights without a change of clothes; but we are together. Stoddart is such a friend as a man would desire to have in adversity, and our searchers having missed the little Prayer-book which George Macgregor gave us, (tell him) we are able to read and pray, as well as to converse together. God bless you, my dear John. Send my love to everybody, and believe me,

Yours, ever most affectionately,

ARTHUR CONOLLY.*

To J. B. Conolly, Esq., Caubul.

* *MS. Correspondence.* — Arthur Conolly was painfully anxious to remove from the minds of his friends the impression which might have been produced upon them by his letter of the 11th of March. Again he wrote in his journal-letter: "I take this opportunity of explaining that my

The passages omitted from this letter relate almost entirely to the services and the pay of Conolly's attendants. There is nothing more remarkable in his letters and journals, written at this time, than his tender regard for others, and his forgetfulness of self. Not only did he grieve for the sufferings of his friend, and endeavour, by putting him forward as the real representative of the British Government, to obtain Stoddart's release, or at least a mitigation of the severity of his confinement, but he exhibited the tenderest solicitude for the welfare of all the servants who had accompanied him to Bokhara, and in the midst of his own affliction, even on the bed of sickness and in the near prospect of death, thought of nothing more earnestly than the future welfare of his poor dependents.* On the 5th of April he wrote in his journal:

April 5.—When I came here, Stoddart did his utmost to put me forward; but now, as long as the Ameer detains him, I shall

letter of the 11th of March was written when I was very ill with fever. Thinking that he might forcibly be sent away from me on the departure of the Russians (as they brought a request for his dismissal), or that we might be otherwise separated, Stoddart had begged me to give him a memorandum of my opinions regarding the policy to be pursued towards these states; and I wrote off a hasty summary of these notions, which were running in my head, with many things that I was anxious to say about my unfortunate servants, and to my friends, when under excitement, which must have made my expressions very wild and incoherent. I hoped that the paper containing them remained in the hands of Long Joseph; but he, misunderstanding our instructions, instead of keeping it, gave it to Eusofee-i-Roomee (Augustin), who, apparently, went off at once with it to Caubul. When I got better I drew up for Stoddart the memorandum which he had asked for, and which he now decides on forwarding. It is written in a more calm and less indignant tone than the letter aforesaid, but allowance must be made for the brevity and freedom of the propositions, for we were so liable to be interrupted and discovered, that I could only pen my opinions by snatches, and paper is a scarce article with us."— [*Arthur Conolly's MS. Journal.*]

* General Pollock exerted himself to obtain an adjustment of the claims of Captain Conolly's servants; and he succeeded. The letter which was written in reply to Pollock's application shows in what light Lord Ellenborough regarded Conolly's mission: "With reference," wrote the Chief Secretary, "to your letter of the 23rd ultimo, on the subject of the remuneration applied for, on behalf of the servants attached to the mission of

refer to him as the accredited British agent, every communication on business that the Ameer may make to me, whether we should be together or separated. He well knows all the people here, and the dignity of our government is safe in his hands.

We have heard that the Russians are about to depart, and that they are to take their enslaved people with them; but we cannot get at the truth of the statement. Report also says that the Ameer will march with his army seven or eight days hence. There is no doubt that he is preparing for an early move; but though Takkind and Kokund are named as his points of attack, it is not certain that he will go eastward. This is the 107th day of our confinement, without change of clothes; but the weather having become warmer, we can do without the garments that most harboured the vermin that we found so distressing, and we are both now, thank God! quite well. We trust that our friends will be informed of our well-being. We have desired all our servants, except Ibraheem (who remains behind to keep up correspondence), to return to their homes as soon as their strength enables them to travel, begging them to make their way anyhow, and to rest assured that everything due will be made up to them on their reaching Caubul. . . . . Allahdad Khan behaved very firmly in refusing to allow that he was the servant of a Feringhee servant, as the Ameer wished him to do, and did justice both to the dignity of his royal master and to the policy of the British Government in Afghanistan. I beg that his conduct may be

Lieutenant A. Conolly to Kokund, I am directed to inform you that the Governor-General has no knowledge of Lieutenant A. Conolly's mission to Kokund having been authorised. On the contrary, his Lordship was informed, by the late President of the Board of Control, that Lieutenant A. Conolly was expressly instructed by him not to go to Kokund; and, in all probability, he owes all his misfortunes to his direct transgression of that instruction. The servants entertained by him, however, are not responsible for the indiscretion of their master. They were in the service of an officer apparently employed on a public mission by his government, and the Governor-General is prepared to consider their position favorably. His Lordship, therefore, authorises the disbursement of the sums stated in the papers attached to your letter, under reply to be due to these several persons; but the sums so paid on account of wages accruing to these several persons, after they left Khiva (after deducting therefrom the amount of wages which would have become due during a direct march to Caubul) will be made a charge against Lieutenant A. Conolly, who will be required to refund the amount, as well as all sums which may have been drawn on account of such an unauthorised extension of his mission."—[*Mr. Maddock to General Pollock: Simlah, Nov. 3, 1842. MS. Records.*]

mentioned to Shah Soojah, and I trust that all his losses will be made up to him; but if the preparation of the account is left to him, he will make it a very large one, and part of the settlement may perhaps be deferred till it is decided whether or no the Ameer is to be called upon for repayment.

When our last packet was despatched we deemed it not impossible, from the Ameer's expressions, which had been reported to us, that his Majesty designed to send us away with the Russian Mission. Our keepers rather inclined to the idea that Huzrut would dismiss us about the same time by the route of Persia; and the Topshee-Bashee's old brother talked seriously about performing a pilgrimage to the holy city of Meshid in our company.

These hopes were most delusive. As time advanced, the prospects of restoration to liberty became more and more remote. About the middle of the month of April the Russian Mission took its departure; and the Ameer set out from Bokhara at the head of a grand military expedition against the state of Kokund. On the 13th of April, Conolly wrote in his journal:

April 13.—We heard that the Russians had been dismissed with presents of honour, that the Khodiyar Beg Karawool Beggee, ranking as captain or commander of 100, had been attached to Colonel Boutenoff as the Ameer's envoy to St. Petersburgh, and that the Huzrut had promised to promote him to the grade of Tok-Suba, commander of 1000, privileged to bear a cow-tail banner, on his return after the performance of good service. The Ameer's own arrangements were said to be completed, and the direction of it certainly to the eastward. An envoy from Kokund, who arrived two days ago, was not received, but was told to go about his own business wherever he listed. Our informant mentioned at the same time that the last envoy from Khiva had been dismissed a fortnight before with extraordinary honour, all his servants getting dresses. We now also learned that the heir of the Koondooz chief had sent an envoy to the Ameer, who had ordered one of his officers, a Khojeh, styled Salam Aghassi, to accompany that agent to Koondooz on his return. It was thought, we were told, that the Khojeh of

Balkh would endeavour to take Koondooz on Meer Morad's death, and the heir may, in this apprehension, have been alert to put himself under the Ameer's protection. This morning the Ameer showed the Topshee-Bashee an especial mark of favour by sending him a loaf of refined sugar from the palace; towards evening his Majesty rode four miles to a place of pilgrimage, and on his return at night had the Topshee-Bashee up to give him some orders.

The narrative then proceeds:

Early next morning (the 14th) the Ameer marched out to the sound of his palace kettle-drums and trumpets, leaving us in the filthy clothes which we had worn for 115 days and nights. We said to the Gunner's old brother, when he mentioned the Ameer's having departed, "Then the Meshid caravan apparently stands fast." "No," was his reply; "please God it will go soon. I asked the Topshee-Bashee last night if nothing had been settled about you, and he replied, 'When the Russians get out a march or so, the Dustan Kanchee will make a petition about them, and they will be dismissed.'" The old man also remarked, probably from what he had heard his brother say, that the Ameer had expressed himself to the effect that he knew the Russian Elchee was led to get us in order to make a boast of having procured our release, which made it seem as though Colonel Boutenoff had been endeavouring to obtain our dismissal. Our old keeper persisted for some days in assuring us of his belief that our immediate dismissal was designed, and on the 18th said that he was going down into the city to seek out my Dewan Beggee, Eusoff Khan (Augustin), to set his mind at ease about us; he returned, saying that he had been referred from place to place without finding Eusoff Khan, or any of our people, but that one Meer Hyder and another shopkeeper of his acquaintance had assured him that they were all in the town, and that four or five of them were in the habit of coming occasionally at night to a certain quarter to hear books read. We had thought the Gunners might have received orders to collect some of our people in order to our respectable dismissal; but knowing that all our men, except Ibraheem, had left Bokhara, we concluded that the Topshee-Bashee had made use of his old brother to deceive us, in order to keep us hopeful and quiet for

another period, as he said nothing about changing our clothes, and kept himself quite aloof from us, which he would hardly have done had he believed what he reported in the Ameer's name.

Just before the Ameer's departure, we heard that a British Elchee had arrived at Merve on his way hither. We could get no further accounts of the said Elchee, but judged that it might be Shakespear on his way to Khiva . . . . . [MS. defaced] . . . . . From the 4th to the 7th of May the palace drums and trumpets were continually sounding for intelligence that Kokund had been taken after a faint endeavour at resistance under the famed Kokund general, Guda Bai; that the latter had been taken prisoner, and that the rebellious town had been given up to plunder, &c.

Then follows much of Bokhara politics, the manuscript being greatly defaced—and after this, some passages of personal narrative, the chronicle of which extends up to the 24th of May—the latest date under which I have been able to discover anything in the hand-writing of Arthur Conolly:

We had expressed to our old guardian a wish to get some money from Meshed, with which to reward him for his kindness, (and to get) him privately to buy (us) a few necessaries in the event of our further detention, and, liking the idea, he, on the 19th instant (May), brought secretly to see us his son-in-law Budub, employed as a caravan-bashee between Bokhara and the Holy City, who agreed to act as agent in the business after another week. Enquiring the news from Budub, we heard that Kamran was said to be confined in Herat by Yar Mahomed Khan—that the English remained as before at Candahar and Caubul—and that four Elchees, English, Russian, Persian, and Turkish, had gone together to Khiva, each displaying his national flag, and told the Khan Huzrut that he had the choice of quietly giving up plundering and slave-dealing, or of meeting the Shah of Persia, who had assembled a large army for the redress of his people.

* * * * * *

Our old friend now informed us, on the authority of his Afghan

acquaintance, Meer Hyder, that all our people had left Bokhara on hearing that they had been inquired about. . . . Possibly the Ameer really did mean to send us away at the time of his marching, but deferred to do so on hearing that we had no servants left here, or from one of his incalculable caprices. I had noted, in a detailed report of our proceedings after leaving Kokund, which when we were seized I was waiting the Ameer's permission to despatch by a courier to Caubul, an expression which the Naib heard his Majesty had uttered in his camp after my arrival, to the effect that he would give the English a few rubs more, and then be friends with them again. Though we were not sure that the Ameer had so spoken, the plan seems one likely to be entertained by an ignorant and weak man, anxious to give an imposing impression of his greatness and confidence; and to it I partly attributed the ungraciousness of my public reception in camp, though I was the Naib's honoured guest; the failure of the Huzrut to recover the horses and the property of my servants which had been plundered at his outposts, when bringing letters to him, and the hauteur with which, at the first joint reception of Stoddart and myself here, he caused it to be signified to us that as in old times there had been friendship between the Mussulmans and infidels, there existed no objection to the establishment of friendly relations between the states of Bokhara and England; but that the Huzrut desired to know whether we (the English) had been travellers over all Toorkistan to spy the land with a view to take it, as we had taken Caubul, or for other purposes; and wished all our designs to be unveiled, in order that if they were friendly they might become apparent, and that if hostile, they might still be known. The Government of India, knowing what communications it has sent to Bokhara, will be able to judge the Ameer's conduct better than we are.

On the 19th (May) the Topshee-Bashee paid us a visit of a few moments, after keeping away for two months. He mentioned that a man with a name like Noor Mohumnud had come three or four days before from Persia, bringing a load of things for Stoddart, of which the Dustan Kanchee had forwarded a list to the Ameer—probably the articles which should have accompanied Lord Palmerston's letter. The Huzrut, the Topshee-Bashee said, would doubtless, on his return, be gracious to us, and give us fine robes of honour, and treat us even better than before.

About sunset on the 23rd, as Stoddart and myself were pacing up and down a small court of twenty feet long, which encloses our prison, one of the citadel doorkeepers came and desired us both to sit down in a corner; we complied, wondering what would follow, and presently saw heads peering at us from the adjoining roofs, when we understood that the Ameer's heir, a youth of seventeen, had taken this way of getting a sight of the Feringhee Elchees. We must have given him but a poor impression in the remains of our clothes, and with heads and beards uncombed for more than five months.

On the 23rd, Jooma Bai was accosted by a man named Makhzoom, known to Stoddart, who gave him a token, and a note written in such bad grammar as scarcely to be understood, in which he said one Juleb arrived lately from Khiva, mentioned that he saw Pottinger Sahib there, and another person named Moosa having come, bringing a letter from Pottinger Sahib, who, he says, is at Khiva, with the Elchee of Mahomed Shah.

Authentic history here terminates. Beyond this all is doubt and conjecture. On the 28th of May, Stoddart despatched an official letter to the Indian Government,* which was forwarded with Conolly's journals; and at this point we lose altogether the track of the footprints which the Bokhara captives have left on the great desert of time. That they perished miserably is certain. "No change has taken place in our treatment," wrote Stoddart—it is the last sentence penned in the Bokhara prison which seems to have reached its des-

* An abstract of this letter was forwarded by another route, and it reached John Conolly at Caubul on the 4th of July. In this letter, Stoddart reports the success of the Ameer at Kokund. "The Ameer," he wrote, "entered Kokund on the 11th of May, and gave it up to pillage—destroyed its rulers—unpeopled its capital, and is now on his return, having distributed the different governments among his own Bokharan chiefs. He is become master of immense treasure, and will now probably march against Khiva, which, unless saved by some demonstration from Persia or Afghanistan, must fall in August or September, after a short campaign." With reference to the efforts of the Russian Mission, he says: "The Russian Mission left this towards the end of April. I feel convinced that Colonel Boutenoff's kind desire to procure our release failed solely in consequence of the unreasonableness of the Ameer."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

tination—"though hopes, so long proved to be deceitful, are held out to us on the return of the chief." But the Ameer, glutted with conquest, returned from the Kokund expedition, and ordered them out to death. They died by the hands of the public executioner. But the precise period of their death is not with certainty to be ascertained.

There is but scanty evidence to enable us to determine the point. That which is most credible is the evidence of one Saleh Mahomed, a youth whom Major Todd despatched from Herat to join Captain Conolly's suite. His story is, that in the month of June, 1842, Stoddart and Conolly were executed by order of the Ameer; that he derived his information from one of the executioners; and that he saw their graves. On the 17th of June, it is related, they were taken out of their prison, and, in the presence of an assembled multitude, led into a small square. Their hands were bound together before them. Their graves were dug before their eyes. Stoddart was first marked for death. He cried aloud against the tyranny of the Ameer; and his head was cut off with a knife. Conolly was then offered his life, on condition that he would adopt the Mussulman faith. But he indignantly rejected the proposal. "Stoddart," he said, "became a Mussulman, and yet you kill him: I am prepared to die." And then Arthur Conolly, full of faith in the merits of his Redeemer, stretched forth his neck, and died.*

* General Pollock officially reported Captain Conolly's death, from Caubul, in a letter dated September 30; but he added: "The only authority for the death of this very intelligent officer is conveyed in a Persian letter from a native of Caubul, who writes from Bokhara to Moollah Ahmed Khan, of this city, saying, 'Tell Moostafah (Captain A. C.'s servant) that his uncle, whom he left here sick, saying he was a great traveller and had visited Kokund, was taken very ill, and though we gave him medicine and did all in our power, it was of no avail. It was the will of God that he should die.' Moostafah and Moollah Ahmed Khan are both of opinion that Captain A. Conolly is the person alluded to, and as the

There is nothing more painful than this in all the history of the Central-Asian war. It would be unjust to encourage a belief in the reader's mind that efforts were not made to compass the liberation of Colonel Stoddart. From the time when Major Pottinger first received at Herat intimation of his friend's captivity, and wrote to the Ameer a protest against the outrage he had committed, to a date long subsequent to the deaths of Stoddart and Conolly, continual efforts were made, both from the side of India and of England, to accomplish this great object. Todd did all that he could do from Herat; Abbott and Shakespear did all that they could do from Khiva; Macnaghten did all that he could do from Caubul; Lord Auckland did all that he could do from Calcutta. From London, Lord Palmerston directed our ambassadors at St. Petersburgh and Constantinople to obtain the agency of the Courts at which they were resident; and both the Sultan and Count Nesselrode wrote urgent letters to Bokhara in behalf of the British prisoners.* But when all this is related, it still appears that more regard might have been shown for Stoddart's position, and that if there had been greater promptitude

letter proceeds to say that the effects of the deceased are at Bokhara, and can be sent when required; and as Moostafah had no uncle, to whom could the description apply? I fear there can be no reason to doubt the death of the above-named officer. Colonel Stoddart is, from native report, said to be alive, and still in confinement."—[*MS. Records.*]

This is mere conjecture; and by no means tallies with the more credible account of the execution of the two prisoners. On the 3rd of November, 1842, the Supreme Government assumed that Conolly was still alive. [See letter from Mr. Maddock quoted *ante*, page 518, note.] But the home authorities adopted Saleh Mahomed's story, and struck Stoddart's name out of the army list, from the 17th of June, 1842. I believe this really to have been the date of their deaths. Major Rawlinson, on the morning of the 16th of September, 1842, met one of Stoddart's servants near Caubul, and the man, whom he knew, informed him that he had come direct from Bokhara, having started immediately after the execution of his master.—[*MS. Notes.*] The reader may consult the works of Captain Grover and Dr. Wolff.

* See the *Edinburgh Review, July*, 1845, for an account of these efforts. The paper derives additional value from the assignment of its authorship to Sir John M'Neill.

in answering the references made by him to the home authorities, he might have taken advantage of a favorable change in the feelings of the Ameer, and of his own circumstances, to take his departure from Bokhara. Certain it is that Stoddart felt acutely the culpable indifference to his fate displayed by the British Government. As far back as the July of the preceding year he had written:

News from me you will not expect, nor have I the least word of interest to offer you, except that I am waiting the replies of government, before I am finally released and take my departure. Nothing can be more slack than the time and means taken to provide me with those replies, and my disgust perfectly negatives any attempt to write a commonly agreeable note. My last news from Caubul, dated June 6, says that poor Todd is there awaiting, if possible, a mitigation of his sentence. Conolly is not yet here from Kokan, nor have my messengers to him yet returned. They conveyed the orders from Caubul, and an invitation from the Ameer, to return by this route.*

* *Colonel Stoddart to Major Rawlinson: Bokhara, July* 7, 1841. *MS. Correspondence.* It may be gathered from this letter that Stoddart had no intention of awaiting Conolly's arrival at Bokhara; and that Conolly proceeded thither under orders from Caubul, and an invitation from the Ameer. An attempt has been made to control, in some measure, the flood of sympathy which sets in so strongly towards Arthur Conolly, by asserting that he was not authorised to proceed even as far as Kokund, and that he therefore brought his misfortunes down upon his own head. But I have before me the strongest proof that Conolly *was* authorised by the Supreme Government to proceed to Kokund, and to use his best endeavours to obtain the liberation of Colonel Stoddart. In a letter, an official copy of which is now before me, the Chief Secretary writes to the Envoy and Minister: "As in the present aspect of affairs it does not seem necessary to continue the restriction which had at first been imposed, his Lordship in Council authorises you to permit Captain Conolly to proceed from Khiva to Kokund, if he should think it expedient, and if he finds that he can do so without exciting serious distrust and jealousy at the former place. In his personal intercourse with the Khan of Kokund, he will be guided by the instructions which have been issued, prescribing the purport of his written communications. Captain Conolly may, in such a journey, find increased means of using an useful influence at Bokhara for the release of Colonel Stoddart; and his Lordship in Council need not add, that he would wish every such means to be employed with the utmost earnestness and diligence for that purpose."—[*Mr. Maddock to Sir W. Macnaghten: Dec.* 28, 1840. *MS. Records.*]

On the 28th of February, 1842, he wrote again, as a kind of endorsement to one of Conolly's letters:

TO THE SECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT IN INDIA.

SIR,

The Governor-General in Council will be informed by the accompanying abstract how far my position here [*and that of Captain Conolly*] has been sacrificed.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient, humble servant,
CHARLES STODDART.

The words within brackets were erased—most probably by Conolly.*

But Stoddart, though he may have resented the injustice of sacrificing him to no purpose, was ready to become a sacrifice if, by so being, he could promote the interests of his country. "I beg sincerely," he wrote on the 5th of April, "that no one will regret any sacrifice of me, for it is nothing at all. It may yet not be requisite—but if it be, I regard the probable result, from the action of government in doing justice to others, and bringing all these countries to reasonable conduct, as fully compensating a much greater sacrifice than that of so humble an individual as I am."† If anything could increase the sorrow with which we contemplate the fate of this brave man, it would be the perusal of such noble sentences as these.

It was under a high and chivalrous sense of duty to his government that Colonel Stoddart continued to face the dangers of his position at Bokhara, after he might have escaped from them; and it was under an equally

* Two other notes were written by the prisoners on the back of this paper: one to Miss Stoddart at Norwich, and the other to John Conolly at Caubul. "Don't believe all you hear or may hear," wrote Stoddart. "Keep all friends informed of my health, and don't let them be disturbed by rumours," wrote Conolly.

† *MS. Correspondence.*

strong sense of duty that Captain Conolly made his way to the inhospitable city. To describe them officially as "innocent travellers," was clearly a misapplication of language; and yet, when on the famous 1st of October, 1842, Lord Ellenborough addressed the following letter to the Ameer of Bokhara, he so described them both:

Simlah, October 1st, 1842.

A.C.

The Queen of England, my royal mistress, has sanctioned my coming to India, to conduct its government, and direct its armies.

On my arrival I found that great disasters had befallen those armies, and much injury had been inflicted on my countrymen and the people of India by the treacherous Afghans, under Mahomed Akbar Khan.

In forty days from the time when I directed the British armies, reinforced from India, to move forward, three great victories have been gained over the Afghans; the city and citadel of Ghuznee have been destroyed, and now the Balla Hissar of Caubul is in my power.

Thus, by God's aid, have I afflicted with merited punishment the murderers of their own king and of a British minister. In this I have avenged the cause of all sovereigns and of all nations.

The wife and family of Mahomed Akbar Khan are prisoners, and my soldiers are now conducting them to the sea.

Thus are the wicked punished, even in their wives and families.

I hear that you, too, have gained great successes, at which I rejoice, if you had just ground of complaint against your enemy.

It is in the midst of successes that clemency most becomes the conqueror, and gives to him an extent of permanent fame which often does not attend on victory.

I was informed, when I reached India, that you detained in confinement two Englishmen, supposing them to have entertained designs against you. This must have been your reason, for no prince detains an innocent traveller.

I am informed that they are innocent travellers. As individuals they could not entertain designs against you; and I know they

were not employed by their government in such designs, for their government is friendly to you.

Send them away towards Persia. It will redound to your honour. They shall never return to give you offence, but be sent back to their own country.

Do this as you wish to have my friendship.

ELLENBOBOUGH.*

So manifest a repudiation of the official character of these two officers was not right; and it has been said, by one whose zeal and enthusiasm overlaid his judgment and discretion, but who is still entitled to honourable mention for his generous exertions in a hopeless cause,† that this very letter, in all likelihood, caused the execution of the prisoners. To describe them as travellers was, it is said, to proclaim them as spies. But the letter, however dangerous in itself, was at least harmless in its results. Before it was even written, the "innocent travellers" had gone to a land where the tyranny of princes could not reach them—where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.‡

* *MS. Correspondence.*

† Captain Grover.

‡ The extracts from Captain Conolly's letters and journals in this chapter are all made from the originals, and have, in some places, been deciphered with much difficulty, the manuscript, written in very minute characters, being greatly defaced by damp and attrition. The perusal of the article in the *Edinburgh Review*, mentioned in a former note, enables me to supply the *hiatus* at page 504, the party there spoken of being the Meer Shub, or Master of the Police. At page 507, the name of the Russian colonel, Boutenoff, or Bouteneiff, is incorrectly printed Bontenoff.

CHAPTER VI.

[April—July: 1842.]

Affairs at Caubul—Elevation of Futteh Jung—Opposition of the Barukzyes—Arrival of Akbar Khan—His Policy—Attack on the Balla Hissar—Its Capture—Conduct of Akbar Khan—Barukzye Strife—Defeat of Zemaun Khan—Situation of the Hostages and Prisoners.

On the death of Shah Soojah there commenced in Caubul a civil war. The whole city was thrown into convulsion. Futteh Jung, the second son of the murdered Shah, was proclaimed King. He was a man of weak understanding and infamous character; but he was believed to be friendly to the British Government, and he both hated and feared the Barukzyes. In himself a mere cypher, he could have done nothing to resist the encroachments of that powerful tribe; but Ameen-oollah Khan threw all the weight of his influence into the scales in favour of the Prince, and for some time they seemed equally balanced. The Naib cared nothing for the Prince; but he scented the royal treasures, and where the money lay the thickest, there was sure to be Ameen-oollah Khan.

In such troublous times as he had now fallen upon, the Prince had little taste for royalty. He remembered the fate of his father; and shrunk from the perilous excitement in which he was now about to be plunged.

Weak, too, as he was, he had sagacity enough to perceive that British power was again on the ascendant, and that whatever might be the result of the internecine strife which was now convulsing the capital, the supremacy of the British would be speedily re-established. It was expedient, therefore, he thought, to exert himself to the utmost, to obtain the favorable consideration of his old Feringhee allies; so he despatched the following letter to Captain Macgregor at Jellalabad, pleading both for himself and the memory of his murdered father:

HIGH IN PLACE,

The astounding event of the Shah's murder will be known to you. These treacherous tyrants, how tyrannical has been their act! If the Shah had not been united to the interests of the English, and had not attended and acted according to their advice, why should he have met with such an end, and why was he with them until the last, save that he hoped for their co-operation? They placed that ungrateful man, the Nizam-oo-dowlah (Oosman Khan), in power, and, by their acting according to his advice, matters came to such a pass. The Shah was aware of the treachery and disaffection of these persons, and how much soever he warned the English of this, it was of no use. It was because the Shah looked upon himself and the English as one, and attended to their pleasure, that the revolution took place; but this is known to you. The people, high and low, having sealed the Koran, sent their deputies with it to the Shah, stating that, if the Shah would forsake the English and ally himself to Islam, they would acknowledge him as their King. The Shah replied: "They and I are one; I am not separated from them." These bastards united and proclaimed the Shah an infidel. The Shah told the English to leave the cantonments and enter the Balla Hissar. The English did not consent to this. The Shah then endeavoured to conciliate the rebels, and night and day took oaths with them, with the view of carrying out the plans of the English. After the English left the cantonments, the people tendered to the Shah their submission, and endeavoured to persuade the King to attack Jellalabad. The Shah, by a thousand

devices, managed for two and a half months to put them off, in order that the British reinforcements might reach you. All the money that the Shah possessed he gave to the people. The people gave out that as the Shah would not go to Jellalabad, it was evident that he was friendly to the (British) infidels; he and they were one. The Shah felt embarrassed. He said to his confidential servants: "If I go to Jellalabad, lakhs of people would collect, and I should be unable to control them, and if by this time the British reinforcements had not arrived, it would be bad for the cause." The King, not knowing that the reinforcements had arrived, agreed to leave the city, but determined not to reach Jellalabad for twenty days—500,000 registered troops—and if he saw that it was to their advantage, he would join the British. On the 22nd Suffur (5th of April), the Shah's murder took place; on the 23rd Suffur, the Populzye nobles, and Ameen-oollah Khan, Loghuree, placed me on the throne. Even as the Shah was the friend and well-wisher of the English, so am I the friend and well-wisher of the English. On account of this friendship the King sacrificed his life and property. Had he accepted the friendship of the Mussulmans, the Shah would neither have been proclaimed an infidel, nor have thus met with his death from the hands of the Barukzyes. I am not pleased at having been placed on the throne by these people. If God places me on the throne, and if this country is again in the possession of the British, and they support me on the throne and in getting my revenge from these tyrants who killed the Shah, then I shall be pleased. The Shah sacrificed his life and property on account of the English, and now it is for them to uphold the reputation of his family. If in a few days your army does not arrive at Caubul, they will carry off the Shah's family. Write speedily, and tell me what I am to do, and what the family of the Shah is to do. It is necessary that the British should arrive soon. The death of the Shah has caused disunion among the chiefs. It is necessary that your army, with a large army of the Sikhs (God willing), should advance. When I was first placed on the throne, the people were considering the death of the Barukzyes, but on hearing that your army had arrived at Jellalabad, and that Mahomed Akbar had been defeated, the people agreed to suspend hostilities among us, and endeavoured to induce me to attack Jellalabad. Up to the present time this

is what they are striving to effect, but I tell them, that if they will in the first place avenge the Shah's death, then I'll go to Jellalabad. But I am powerless, and shall anxiously expect a letter from you. Tell me how to act. To defeat this people is at present very easy, for great is their disunion. Start soon for Caubul.*

The Prince had been proclaimed King by Ameen-oollah Khan and the Populyzes; but the Barukzyes refused to recognise him. Again they set up the Newab Zemaun Khan, and openly defied the Suddozye power. Soon the two contending parties broke out into open hostilities. Ameen-oollah Khan and his puppet were the first to draw the sword. On the 1st of May there was fighting from house to house—the whole city was in commotion. On the following day, success began to declare itself on the side of the Barukzyes. Ameen-oollah Khan made a false move, and disastrously overreached himself. Believing that the act would dishearten the Barukzyes, he seized the person of Meer Hadjee, the chief Moollah. But very different was the real from the anticipated effect of this outrage. Nearly all the townspeople, before neutral, rose to avenge this insult offered to their High Priest. The Kohistanees joined them. The Hadjee was released. But popular indignation ran high against Ameen-oollah Khan. His house was burnt. His property was plundered. His servants were seized. Compelled to seek safety in flight, he flung himself into the Balla Hissar.

T he Prince made a show of welcoming him, but secretly declared that he would willingly surrender him and his Populzye associates to the British, if Pollock would advance upon Caubul—that one of his main objects, indeed, in opening the gates to them was to have

* *MS. Records.*

the rebels more securely in his power.* The Naib knew that his position was a dangerous one, and declared that he would throw himself on the mercy of the British and take his chance of being hanged. There was a more unrelenting enemy beyond the walls of the Balla Hissar. The Barukzyes were eager to destroy him.

The contest now raged furiously. The guns of the Balla Hissar were opened upon the city. Multitudes of the townspeople fled in dismay. There were 5000 men in the citadel; there was no lack of provisions. The money was all in the hands of the Prince; and he disbursed it freely to his adherents. But the Barukzyes were miserably poor. They could only raise money by the sale of jewels and the exaction of fines; and the Kohistanees and others who flocked to their standard envied the fortunate followers of the more opulent Prince.†

It was not likely that Akbar Khan would regard with unconcern these proceedings at the capital. He was awaiting the return of Captain Mackenzie from Jellalabad, when intelligence of the disturbed state of affairs at Caubul was brought to him. Determining first, however, to learn the result of the mission to General Pollock's camp, he resolved to set out for the scene of

* On the 5th of May, Mohun Lal wrote: "The Prince (Futteh Jung) is very, very anxious that the General should march to Caubul; he appears now involved in difficulties, and undoubtedly is friendly to our government. He says he would not allow Ameen-oollah and the Populzye rebels to come into the palace, the evening they were obliged to leave the city, but by allowing them to come in, he entertained two objects. Firstly, to employ their services against the enemies of both states (the Barukzyes, who murdered the Envoy and also his father, the King, placed by the English Government on the throne) till the arrival of General Pollock. Secondly, he may keep them quietly in his possession, and catch them as rebels, when you approach."—[*MS. Records.*]

† "The Prince," said Mohun Lal, "is of course very liberal to those that espouse his cause, while the Barukzyes pay very little by selling jewels and finery. The Kohistanees or disciples of Meer Hadjee are towards the Barukzyes; but they groan to receive money lesser than those who are with the Prince."—[*MS. Records.*]

strife, and to take one or two of the English officers with him. Mackenzie returned on the 3rd of May, and was immediately despatched by the Sirdar on a second mission to Jellalabad, whilst Akbar Khan, taking Pottinger and Troup with him, set out on the following day for the capital.

Arrived at Caubul, he played his game with some address. Sedulously giving currency to the intelligence that he had been in treaty with General Pollock, who was said to have recognised his authority, he enhanced his own importance in the eyes of his countrymen, and sowed disappointment among the adherents of the royal party. Many who had before been neutral, now, believing that the British were on amicable terms with the Sirdar, openly espoused his cause. Khan Shereen Khan and the Kuzzilbashes had hitherto remained inactive; but feeling the importance of their coadjutancy, Akbar Khan made strenuous efforts to obtain it, and gained at last a promise of support.* From day to day there was continual strife and much fighting. The advantage was for the most part on the side of the Barukzyes. The Prince had thrown up some outworks round the Balla Hissar; but partly owing to the weakness and partly to the treachery of the guards, they had been carried by the enemy.† Pottinger witnessed some

* "Khan Shereen Khan," wrote Mohun Lal, on the 9th of May, "came last night to me and said, that the Barukzyes press upon him to side with them to oppose the Prince; and if he does agree he is sure he will be ruined. He says he is going to send his wives to some of the country forts, and then either go into the Balla Hissar or wait upon you at Jellalabad; and then he thinks that the whole of the Persians will follow him."—And again, on May 10th: "Yesterday, about noon, . . . Mahomed Akbar Khan came in person to Khan Shereen Khan, and persuaded him, after a long talk, to side with him to oppose the Prince towards Bence Hissar. When Mahomed Zemaun Khan heard this he got jealous, and sent a message to Khan Shereen Khan, if he did no go himself or send his son to assist Soojah-ool-Dowlah, as the Newab had requested him, he had better not go, with Mahomed Akbar too. The latter at last succeeded."—[*MS. Records.*]

† "When Mahomed Akbar," wrote Mohun Lal, "appeared in the field

of these engagements, and wrote of them as most contemptible affairs.

It soon became only too probable that the Balla Hissar itself would fall before the Barukzyes. The energy and vigour of Akbar Khan and his confederates greatly exceeded that of the wretched Prince and his few interested supporters. Fearful of this, Futteh Jung continued to write pressing letters to the British authorities at Jellalabad, urging them to push on to his relief, and Mohun Lal gave cogency to the request by setting forth the probability of the Balla Hissar falling into the hands of the Barukzyes, and the strength which that party would derive, not only from the occupation of such a commanding position, but from the possession of the royal treasures. Like his father, however, the Prince continued to declare that his money was failing, and to request the British to supply him with funds to carry on the war. But more than all he clamoured for the advance of the British army. On the 11th of May he wrote to Captain Macgregor:

The reason of the present contest is this. I wished to excite a dispute between the Barukzyes and the other wicked men, with a view that they should have no leisure even to touch their own heads, and thus the English army may reach here unmolested. To effect this cause, whatever gold and silver I had has been paid to the people, with the object of securing the interests of the British.* Now I have very little cash remaining in the treasury—enough only to support me for some ten or

opposite the first or distant fort, Abdul Salem became traitor, and waited on Mahomed Akbar, who gave him a horse and desired him to go to his village. Upon this the people of the Prince, who were stationed in the forts between the fort of Abdul Salem and Balla Hissar, became disheartened and cowardly, obliged to desert the forts without fighting, and fly to the Balla Hissar. Mahomed Akbar's people followed the fugitives to the very gates of the Balla Hissar, and possessed the gun of the Prince. Mahomed Akbar had taken Major Pottinger also with him to the fight." —[*MS. Records.*]

* "In consequence of establishing the British harmony."—[*Mohun Lal's Translation.*]

fifteen days more. After that period, without assistance from the British, I shall be reduced to the greatest difficulty. The men of the world are the disciples and worshippers of money. If you will not raise the victorious standard of the British troops quickly, or do not send me reinforcements within a few days, all the people will desert me on account of not having money, and the Barukzyes will then have the upper-hand over me.

If the Barukzyes establish their power, serious evil is to be apprehended; and the household of the British ally (Shah Soojah) will be destroyed. After this there will be nothing in store for us but repentance and disgrace. It is as clear to all people as the sun, that I am soliciting the assistance of the friends and nations of my late father. In delaying this object many dangers may arise, and much harm may befall the needy. In such a crisis as this, all objects will be easily gained; and the affairs which are now reduced to a state of disorder will, without much difficulty, be brought into order again.

If you are delaying your march on account of supplies of grain, you need not care for this. If it pleases God that I should recover my authority, there will be thousands of "Khurwars" (measures of ten maunds) of grain, as well as plenty of fodder for the horses.

I have heard that the Bombay forces have reached Candahar, and also marched thence to this quarter. It would be highly desirable, if the victorious army of Calcutta should possess this country before the arrival of the Bombay forces, that it should show the world that your arms alone have gained the victory. Although the army of both sides belongs to the same government, I write thus because I wish you well.*

On the day after this letter was written, three holy men presented themselves before the Prince, with overtures of peace from the Sirdar. They set forth that whatever oaths Futteh Jung might desire the Barukzye chief to swear to him, would be solemnly sworn on the Koran. "Of what avail are oaths," asked the Prince; and sending for several Korans from another apartment, showed the *Syuds* how they were covered

* *MS. Records.*

with the seals of the Barukzye, the Douranee, the Caubullee, the Persian, and the Kohistanee chiefs. "This," added the Prince, "is God's holy book, in which all the faithful believe. Look at these seals and the oaths of fidelity written upon the margin, declaring that the enemies of the royal family are the enemies of Mahomed—and yet the Barukzyes have murdered the King, my father. If there be any other Koran sent from Heaven, let the Barukzyes swear solemnly upon it—this has been tried too often, and too often found wanting." The Syuds were then dismissed. Nothing was done towards a satisfactory arrangement. So Mahomed Shah Khan was sent to conduct the negotiations with the Suddozye Prince.

What were the proposals made to the Prince, and in what light he regarded them, may be gathered from the letter which, on the following day, he addressed to Captain Macgregor:

The circumstances of this quarter are as follows. Since the arrival of Mahomed Akbar Khan, the Barukzyes at the head of the Ghilzyes, Caubullees, and the Kohistanees, attacked the trenches I had built out at a distance. Some of them were taken by the enemy on account of the weakness of my guards, and others in consequence of the treachery of my people. All the trenches round the Balla Hissar have fallen into the hands of the enemy, and we are now in a perfect siege. Yesterday, Mahomed Shah Khan, Ghilzye, came to treat with Ameen-oollah Khan into the Balla Hissar, and the result of their negotiation, after solemn oaths, was as follows:—That I should be acknowledged as King —Mahomed Akbar Khan as Minister of State—and that Ameen-oollah Khan should hold the situation of Deputy ("Naib") under the minister. After this, Mahomed Shah Khan was brought to my presence, and I was obliged to give him a "Khelat;" but agreeably to the advice of my well-wishers, I deferred giving my acquiescence to the result of their negotiation for two or three days to come.

They have made four proposals to me,—Firstly, that I should allow Mahomed Akbar Khan to be my minister, and Ameen-

oollah Khan his deputy. They are then both to raise an army and to go and fight with the English forces coming up to Caubul. Secondly, they will stand neutral, if I like; but I must prepare to go and oppose the British troops. Thirdly, if I am powerful, I must get ready to wage war with the Barukzyes. Fourthly, that I should take the whole family of the late King, and go wherever I like to go with them.

It appears that Ameen-oollah Khan, on account of our weakness, has consented to their proposals, and has therefore gone out of the Balla Hissar to have a conference with Mahomed Akbar Khan. These proposals have perplexed me greatly, and I am lost in speculation. If I were to appoint Mahomed Akbar Khan my minister, he would raise a force to oppose the English, and I should be forced to give up my artillery to him, which will be a dangerous business. In case of my refusal, the family of the late martyr (King) will be outraged.

My anxiety for your departure from Jellalabad for Caubul appears thoroughly useless. It is now forty days since your victorious army has passed up through Khybur, and you have not yet left Jellalabad. I endeavoured to excite a dispute among the rebels, with the view that the English army should reach here without opposition. Although I have successively sent letters through Mohun Lal, asking you to advance immediately to this side, but no symptoms of the kind have yet appeared. In such delay dangerous evils are to be apprehended.

It is a long time that I have deputed and entrusted Meerza Ameen-oollah with my verbal messages to you; but no answer has yet reached me about it. You should quickly reply to my letters, as well as the messages I have sent you by him, and also let me know the day of your march, as I am now in much perplexity. If there be any hope of your immediate advance, I will undergo every hardship to defend the Balla Hissar, and engage the rebels in fight. In case of any more delay the object will be lost, and an easy end will be obtained with the utmost difficulty hereafter. What can I write you more than this?*

Feeling himself utterly powerless to resist the demands of the Barukzyes, for all his principal supporters were deserting him, the Prince now placed himself in

* *MS. Records.*

the hands of Ameen-oollah Khan, who went out to a conference with Mahomed Shah Khan, which mutual distrust nearly strangled in the womb, and consented to the first of these propositions.* Futteh Jung was to be

* With reference to these negotiations, Mohun Lal writes, on the 13th of May: "Mahomed Shah Khan came out and stopped near the tomb, at a distance from the gate of the Balla Hissar, called Shah Shahdeed. He sent a message to Ameen-oollah that he wanted to speak, and begged he would come out to meet him. To this an answer was sent, that if Mahomed Shah would come close to the gate, Ameen-oollah would receive him there. Mahomed Shah, apprehending treachery, declined going too near the gate; and upon this Ameen-oollah sent his son as a hostage for the safety of Mahomed Shah; but he did not retain the hostage, but advanced with a few men to meet Ameen-oollah. They sate and had a secret conference, which lasted some time; after which, Mahomed Shah Khan went to Mahomed Akbar. After two hours he returned to Ameen-oollah, who conducted him to the presence of Futteh Jung in the Balla Hissar. He said to the Prince, that Mahomed Akbar begged him not to raise disputes amongst the Mussulmans at a time when all the followers of Mahomed ought to unite against the infidels. If he were a friend of the Mussulman cause he should embrace one or other of four propositions. (The terms stated agree with those in the Shah-zadah's letter.) Agreeably to the advice of Ameen-oollah, the Prince was obliged to give his consent to the first proposal. On this he gave a very handsome Khelat to Mahomed Shah Khan, who returned to Mahomed Akbar. This morning Mahomed Zemaun Khan, hearing of the negotiations, asked who was Mahomed Akbar Khan that he should enter into agreements with the Prince without his permission. Having said this, he ordered the guns to open upon the palace. Upon this Mahomed Akbar sent word to the gunners, that if they fired any more their ears should be cut off. He also begged the Newab not to do anything of the kind until he received his final advice. Ameen-oollah has now gone to the camp of Mahomed Akbar, who received him with much cordiality. . . . . The Prince has sent me a message that he agreed to the first proposal on being deserted by all his people. If he had not done so, Ameen-oollah Khan would have seized him and given Akbar Khan possession of the Balla Hissar; but he says, that when Akbar asks for money from him to pay and raise the forces against us, he will put off the payment from day to day, saying that he has no money. . . . . He has sent out all the Populzyes, saying that he does not trust any one. He has now the protection only of a few Arabs of the Balla Hissar and 1500 Indians. He has no courage—otherwise no one could take the Balla Hissar. Mahomed Akbar has acknowledged the supremacy of the Prince only because he is cunning; and his object is to arrest the internal disputes for the present, get hold of the Prince, and possess himself of his money, guns, &c., under the mask of friendship; and if unsuccessful in this design, he will undoubtedly get the money and all the military stores to fight with us, which is his fervent desire. Ameen-oollah went over to Akbar, because he found that all the Douranees and his followers were traitors, and had gone over to the Barukzyes, notwithstanding they got from him thousands of gold mohurs. He thought, that having

the nominal occupant of the throne. Akbar Khan was to be minister; and Ameen-oollah Khan, his Naib, or deputy. It was the object of the Sirdar to arrest the internal dissensions which were so weakening the great national and religious cause, to obtain possession of all the available money and munitions, and then to carry on the war with new vigour against the infidels.

But Mahomed Zemaun Khan was the recognised chief of the Barukzye party; and he now asked on what authority the Sirdar ventured without his sanction to make peace with the Suddozyes. There appeared to be every chance of an open rupture between them; and scarcely had Akbar Khan concluded his negotiations with the Prince, then the Newab made a hostile demonstration, attacked the Balla Hissar, but was beaten back with much slaughter. It was, however, currently reported that a secret understanding existed between the two Barukzye chiefs, whose common object it was to obtain possession of the Balla Hissar. Two or three days afterwards they were, outwardly, again united. An attempt had been made to lure the Prince to an interview with Akbar Khan beyond the walls of the Balla Hissar. The Arabs in the garrison, who remained true to the royal family, dissuaded the Prince from exposing himself to the treachery of the Sirdar; mutual distrust soon

made himself the enemy of the British and of the Barukzyes, he would make peace with Akbar, and so shelter himself under the wings of the Sirdar. The people say that the Barukzyes will seize Ameen-oollah; but others say that Akbar is too wise to allow this step to be taken, as he will find the Naib serviceable in the present crisis. . . . . Mahomed Akbar intends to get Captain Conolly, &c., into his possession. Since Akbar Khan came here, all the chiefs have gone over to him, some in fear, and others with the hope that we shall be driven out by him, and that he will become the master of the country. Mahomed Zemaun Khan is deserted by a great many people, and Mahomed Akbar joined by them. There is a dispute expected between him and Mahomed Akbar, who says that the English will not march for Caubul from Jellalabad for two months to come."—[*MS. Records.*]

engendered a rupture between them; and it was plain, that if some arrangement could not be promptly made between the Prince and the Barukzyes, through the agency of the Kuzzilbash chief, the Balla Hissar, the treasure, and the guns, would speedily fall into the hands of Akbar Khan and his confederates.

The Barukzyes now laid siege, with redoubled vigour, to the Balla Hissar. The Prince was well-nigh deserted.* He called upon Oosman Khan, Shah Soojah's old minister, to aid him, but upon some frivolous pretext he declined to league himself with so perilous a cause. It was assiduously given out that the Prince was holding the Balla Hissar only for the Feringhees; and, as the national feeling became stronger and stronger against him, if it had not been for the strength of the place itself, he would hardly have been able to hold it for a day against the Barukzyes. But the fortress held out, in spite of the weakness of the Prince and the garrison; and so at last the Barukzyes began to undermine the works. "Last night," wrote Futteh Jung to General Pollock, at the beginning of June, "they made an assault; now they have made mines in every direction. My affairs are in a very critical state. . . . If you do not come quickly, the Balla Hissar and the throne will be lost, and you will be a sufferer. At this time I am at my last gasp. More-

* According, however, to our English notions, the contest was very far from a vigorous one. John Conolly wrote from Caubul: "The contending parties continue to amuse themselves with firing long shots with their guns and jezails, and the Balla Boorj is attacked—that is, fired at for three or four hours by one or two thousand men every third night or so."—[*MS. Correspondence.*] Conolly says, in the same letter: "There is an anecdote here, that three Feringhees arrived at the Balla Hissar in disguise, and that on hearing this the Barukzyes withdrew their outposts to a considerable distance." In another letter (May 26) he says: "The Prince holds out still in the citadel. The Barukzyes have been battering at the Upper Boorj, and firing into the Balla Hissar. According to our ideas, their efforts have been almost harmless; but the garrison, I fear, have become alarmed, and would be glad to see relief."—[*MS. Records.*]

over, there is nothing in the magazine.* Now is the crisis."†

On the 7th of June the Balla Hissar fell into the hands of the Barukzyes. On the preceding day, after an ineffectual attempt at negotiation, Akbar Khan had issued orders for the springing of the mine. But it had not been carried sufficiently far to damage the works.‡ The explosion killed a large number of the besiegers; whilst the storming party was driven back by the garrison with considerable loss. The troops of the Shahzadah are said to have "behaved very nobly, and like heroes, to have defeated the assault." Mohun Lal reported, but with some exaggeration, that not less than 1000 of the followers of Akbar Khan fell upon this day.

But the elation of the garrison was but short-lived. On the following day the Barukzyes brought up some heavy ordnance and began to cannonade the Balla Hissar. The defenders then lost heart. The Hindostanee and Arab fighting men, who composed the bulk of the Prince's followers, began to tremble for the safety of their families, and to call upon Futteh Jung to enter into some accommodation with their assailants. Thus deserted by his garrison, who declared that they would open the gates to the enemy if the Prince did not sub-

* The Prince had no powder. Mohun Lal, however, contrived to procure some aid to convey it to the Balla Hissar, through the agency of the Kuzzilbash chiefs.

† On the 5th of June, Mohun Lal wrote to Sir R. Shakespear, Pollock's military secretary: "If you will not march immediately, or in four days, to Gundamuck, you will lose all your prisoners, and the Barukzyes will possess the riches of the late Shah, as well as the Balla Hissar and the artillery." — [*MS. Records.*] John Conolly's letters, written about this time, contain the same urgent exhortations to advance, as the only means of saving the Balla Hissar and the prisoners.

‡ The mine was altogether the merest bug-bear. It frightened the Prince and the garrison; but Mohun Lal assured the former that it could not by any possibility do him any harm, as it had not been properly dug, nor run sufficiently far under the works to damage them, even if the strength of the masonry were not such as to bid defiance to the attempt.

mit, he had nothing to do but to abandon the defence, and to suffer the Barukzyes to enter the Balla Hissar.

With many professions of fidelity and demonstrations of respect, Akbar Khan presented himself before the Prince, declared that he had the prosperity of the royal family at heart, and that he himself was merely the servant of the Suddozyes. Futteh Jung offered him money; but he declined it—offered him a dress of honour, but he meekly refused to wear it. He wanted nothing, he said, but the prosperity of the Prince, and he could not wear the dress of honour until he had adjusted all his differences with Mahomed Zemaun Khan. But these differences were not very easily to be adjusted. The Newab was unwilling to recognise the sovereignty of Futteh Jung; and was jealous of the rising power of the Sirdar. Meeting after meeting was held, and many attempts were made to reconcile the conflicting interests of the two Barukzye leaders. It was urged, on the one side, that if Futteh Jung were acknowledged as the nominal ruler of Afghanistan, all his wealth would be in the power of the chiefs, and that the war might then be waged against the infidels with every chance of success. But, on the other hand, it was asked by the friends of Zemaun Khan—and Meer Hadjee, the High Priest, adopted the same views—since during the lifetime of Shah Soojah the Newab had been chosen King by the chiefs and accepted by the nation, why should they now revert to the old Suddozye sovereignty, which the country had so emphatically repudiated?*

* *Correspondence of Mohun Lal. MS. Records.* Futteh Jung continued to write to the British authorities that he had little or no money; and that if the British did not advance, the royal family would be ruined and disgraced. "It is well known to you," he wrote to General Pollock, "that Mahomed Akbar has made peace, with the view to derive wealth from me; but I know that I have none. If I could sell everything that I possess, I should not be able to raise a lakh of rupees."

As time advanced, the difficulties in the way of a reconciliation between the two parties seemed to thicken. The Newab declared that he was King—that Akbar Khan might hold the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan army, but that Oosman Khan was to be the Wuzeer.* In the mean while, the Sirdar was gaining over the Kohistanee chiefs, and preparing himself for the inevitable conflict. But the Kuzzilbashes now refused to league themselves with Akbar Khan, and talked of joining the British on their advance. There was no prospect of a reconciliation of the differences between the two Barukzye chiefs. The old Newab bitterly deplored the strife which seemed likely soon to plunge the city again into the miseries of war, and openly prayed that God might send General Pollock quickly, so that he and Akbar might fly from Caubul before they had caused bloodshed among the people by the violent arbitrement of their disputes.

Equally did Akbar Khan claim credit for his forbearance. On the 21st of June, after many fruitless

* The Newab had little money; but the most valuable jewels of Shah Soojah were in his possession. The Shah was wont to carry them about with him in a bag; and he had them in his possession at the time of his murder. "Mahomed Zemaun Khan," wrote Mohun Lal to Sir Richmond Shakespear, "has got hold of the most valuable jewels of the late King, who, report said, had them thrown into a ditch when Soojah-ood-Dowlah murdered him. This was seen by an Afghan at a distance, who after some days went to the place and took out the small bag of jewels, which he, being ignorant of their worth, sold them for 600 rupees. This was reported to the Newab, who imprisoned the bidders and got all the jewels from them. The bankers say that they are worth 50 lakhs of rupees, but here are no men to purchase them."—[*MS. Records.*] Akbar Khan had contrived to extract a considerable sum of money from the Prince. On the 17th of June, Mohun Lal reported that the Sirdar had received a lakh and a half of rupees from the royal treasury. On the 18th, John Conolly wrote that the Sirdar had drawn two lakhs, adding: "He has taken an inventory of all the property and treasure in the citadel; and has his own men there." "It will be a great consolation to us all," he wrote in conclusion, "if you will tell us that no negotiations beyond the ransom of the prisoners will ever be entered into with Akbar. He is certainly the most uncompromising villain that ever lived."—[*Lieut. Conolly to Capt. Macgregor: Caubul, June* 18, 1842. *MS. Records.*]

attempts at an amicable adjustment of affairs, the two factions came into open collision. A battle was fought; and, "after an insignificant fight of two or three hours' duration," the Newab was defeated. He and his sons were taken. His house was plundered. The leading chiefs of his party were seized and subjected to every conceivable insult. The victory, indeed, was complete; but it was mainly achieved by the money which had been pillaged from the treasury of the Prince. Some of the most influential men of the Newab's party were bribed over to desert him; and he found, when it was too late, that he was betrayed.*

* "The reason of the overthrow of the Newab is the disaffection of some of the most influential men of his party—the chief one being Oosman Khan, who was bought over with 1000 gold mohurs. The Pultans also went over, and our host (Meer Hadjee) was bribed with 4000 gold mohurs, and during the fight his brother, Mahomed Dost, took an active part against the Newab. Poor old Zemaun Khan was a dupe throughout to Hotshur's (Akbar Khan's) perfidy, and a victim to misplaced confidence."—[*Lieutenant John Conolly to Captain Macgregor: Caubul, June* 23, 1842. *MS. Records.*]

Akbar Khan's own account of the affair, and of his subsequent treatment of Zemaun Khan, is on record in the following letter to the Shinwarree chiefs: "Up to the day of writing this, the 17th of Jamadi-ul-aroal (26th July), all is well here with me. As it was an object of paramount importance that in the contest with the race of misguided infidels the whole of the numbers of the true faith should be united together, and the attainment and perfecting of this object appeared indispensable, therefore did the whole of the devoted followers of the true faith consent to choose me as their head, and to place themselves under my command. All the tribes and leaders of the Douranees, Ghilzyes, and Kuzzilbashes and Kakulees and Kohistanees, have submitted to me, and I have placed on the throne the King, high in power, majestic as Alexander, ambitious as Kai-Khusro, Shah-zadah Futteh Jung, son of the late King, and caused the Khutha to be read and coin to be struck in his name, redoubted as that of Faridoon. Newab Mahomed Zemaun Khan, having in some respects opposed himself to my views and interfered with me, at length came to an open rupture, and commenced hostilities against me. After several of my people had been killed and wounded, then, and not till then, I, of necessity, gave the order to them to retaliate. In two hours the engagement was at an end; and all order being destroyed among the troops of the Newab, they were dispersed. His guns and magazines, stores and horses, and regiments and jezailchees, and other appendages of power which he had newly prepared, all fell into my possession. As the Newab was a part and parcel of myself—not wishing to reduce him to a state of poverty and want—I, on the same day, restored to him all his horses: the rest of his property I kept possession of. Since then, all the leaders of the different

The Prince was throned on the 29th of June. But he exercised no regal power. The Sirdar, who conferred upon him the title of sovereign mainly to conciliate the Populzyes, began rapidly to strip him of his wealth, and to reduce him to a mere pageant and a name.* After possessing himself of all the tangible property upon which he could lay his hands, he called in all the secretaries and managers of the royal household, and compelled

tribes have acknowledged my authority, and I firmly trust that all my future undertakings will in like manner be crowned with success, and that the object nearest the hearts of me and you, and all the race of Islam—viz., the extermination, root and branch, of the detested race of infidels, may be without difficulty accomplished. Set your mind perfectly at rest on this subject, and do not entertain any misgivings, and gird up your loins for action, and be ready with the fear-inspiring and punishment-inflicting Ghazees, and use your utmost exertions and efforts to close the Khybur road and intercept their dawk communications, that their messengers may not pass to and fro, and that no grain may reach them from any quarter; for this is the real way to defeat this misguided and detested race,—this is the real battle of martyrdom which you must fight: therefore consider this injunction as of the very first importance. In a short time, by the favour of God the Almighty, and the assistance of the founders of our religion, this humble servant of God, with a terror-inspiring army from this country, and an artillery thundering and flashing fire, and with jezailchees threatening like Mars, and with artillerymen like Saturn, and Ghazees, who march hand-in-hand with victory, will set out for your direction: and if it be the will of God, will soon clear the surface of that country, sweeping from it the rubbish from the bodies of the enemies of our religion. Meanwhile it behoves you, in anticipation of the arrival of the exalted standards, the emblems of victory, to spare no exertions to stir up the strife of religion, and send me constantly news of your welfare, and of the movements of the vile infidels, that according to your information I may take measures to counteract them. Futteh Mahomed, the son of Saadat Khan, is here, and will shortly leave me to join you with the Ghazees."—[*MS. Records.*]

* "The Prince was seated on the throne on the 29th. Akbar constituted himself prime minister of all Afghans. The Hindostanee dependents on the Prince had been previously removed from the Balla Hissar, and none but his immediate attendants were allowed to remain—the garrison being composed of Akbar's own soldiers. The remnant of the royal jewels, treasure, and property, even to a few silver cooking utensils, had been also made over to Akbar. It was Akbar's intention to have deposed the Prince; and several meetings were convened to discuss the question. The resolution to crown the Prince was sudden, and suggested by an idea that the Populzyes who had connected themselves with Timour at Candahar might be induced to recognise the present arrangements in a preference to a Suddozye King under British auspices."—[*Lieut. J. B. Conolly to Sir Richmond Shakespear: July* 1, 1842. *MS. Records.*]

them to give an account of their stewardship. He had taken up his residence in the Balla Hissar; was digging a ditch around the place; and laying in military stores. He then began to endeavour to compass the possession of all the hostages and captives, and to secure them against the chance of rescue by confining them in the Balla Hissar.

The situation of the English gentlemen at Caubul, who had resided so securely under the protection of the good Newab, now became more critical.* On the death of Shah Soojah the Caubullees had called upon Zemaun Khan to deliver them up to Meer Hadjee, the High Priest. The Newab had long resisted the demand. But the clamour of the people had drowned his prayers. His tears and intercessions were fruitless. At last he surrendered them to the Hadjee, imploring him to treat

* All the circumstances attending their surrender ought to be related. The incident is thus feelingly chronicled by Captain Johnson: "Two days after the death of Shah Soojah, the people of Caubul demanded that our hostages, who had been left under charge of Mahomed Zemaun Khan, should be given up to the care of the son of the late High Priest, Meer Hadjee. The former noble-hearted gentleman, than whom no father could have behaved more tenderly to his children, begged and entreated with tears that the separation should not take place—adding that he was willing to give up his own family to the popular will, but not the English gentlemen who had been entrusted to his care, and who were his honoured guests—that he would, if the people so willed it, make over to them his own son, with his sword round his neck, and his turban for a winding-sheet, to be dealt with according to their pleasure; but that force alone should deprive him of the society of his friends. When all entreaties failed, he hoped to work upon the feelings of the party at the conference by telling them that their chief and his own sister and relations were in the hands of the British Government, and that vengeance would assuredly be dealt upon them if the English gentlemen sustained the slightest injury. On this, a grey-bearded old gentleman told him and the rest that they might make their minds perfectly easy as regarded the Afghan prisoners in India, as it was contrary to the uses of Englishmen to hurt a hair of the heads of their captives. The clamour of the people prevailed over all that the Newab could urge, and with many a bitter feeling did this amiable man make over the hostages to Meer Hadjee, with prayers and entreaties to the latter that he would behave kindly to them; and at the same time he sent with them to the latter's house all the females of his family, as the surest means of their protection; for however excited a Mussulman population may be, it is seldom or ever that they violate a harem."—[*Captain Johnson's MS. Journal.*]

them with kindness, and sending at the same time the ladies of his family to the priest's house that they might, in some sort, be a protection to the British captives. Under the guardianship of Meer Hadjee, Conolly and his associates remained until the beginning of July. By this time Akbar Khan was dominant in Caubul. He had determined to gain possession of the persons of the whole of the English hostages and prisoners in Afghanistan, and he now began to importune Meer Hadjee to send them to the Balla Hissar. Day after day he went, on this errand, to the High Priest's house; but for some time his importunities were fruitless.* At last, he tried the effect of money. The avarice of Meer Hadjee was notorious. Akbar Khan had bought him over to his cause; and now he bethought himself of buying the prisoners. He did not bid high for them. It appears that Akbar Khan offered 4000 rupees for the persons of the hostages, and that the offer was accepted.

* The letters of Mohun Lal, written at this time, show the efforts that were made to obtain possession of the hostages, and the amount of resistance offered: "Mahomed Akbar is going every day to Meer Hadjee, that he should give up Lieutenant Conolly, &c., and not oppose him, when he may send the prisoners to Toorkistan. If you have never written to Meer Hadjee, write to him now, and say that he is chief priest of Caubul, &c., and it is therefore expected that he will keep all our prisoners by him."—[*Mohun Lal to Sir Richmond Shakespear: June* 26, 1842. *MS. Records.*] "Gholam Mahomed Khan, Mooktean, has sent me a message through his son, Tej Mahomed, that he advised Meer Hadjee not to give Lieut. Conolly, &c., to Akbar; and he hopes that I have approved of his services. I replied, that he will be rewarded and made the minister of the country, if he keeps his word, and, being assisted by Meer Hadjee, prevents the removal of our prisoners, if Akbar may intend to send them to any quarter. He sent me answer, as long as he and Meer Hadjee live, our prisoners shall not be removed."—[*Mohun Lal to Sir R. Shakespear: June* 30, 1842. *MS. Records.*] "Mahomed Akbar sent the scoundrel Meerza Imaum Vourdee to Meer Hadjee, with the message that the Balla Hissar is safer than the city for the residence of Lieutenant Conolly, &c.; and he therefore hopes Meer Hadjee will send them to him. Meer Hadjee agreed to the proposal, and sent the officers into the Balla Hissar with the view that Akbar should not suspect that the reports of his stopping the prisoners is true, and thus to oppose him for few officers, he may hazard the chance of securing the whole of them before the time is arrived to perform his service on behalf of the prisoners."—[*Mohun Lal to Sir R. Shakespear: July* 8, 1842. *MS. Records.*] Mohun Lal says nothing about the money.

The hostages were now conveyed to the Balla Hissar, where they remained under the immediate custody of Akbar Khan. Mohun Lal, who had been rendering good service to the British Government, by keeping the authorities at Jellalabad continually supplied with information relative to the events which were passing at Caubul, was seized by the Sirdar and tortured. The Moonshee had been residing in the house of the Kuzzilbash chief, Khan Shereen Khan; but now, early in July, Akbar Khan, having first seized the person of the host, contrived to obtain possession of the guest; and immediately began to extort money from him by the cruel agency of physical torture. It was not until General Pollock wrote an urgent letter to Akbar Khan, that the unhappy Moonshee was relieved from this terrible persecution.*

In the mean while, the British prisoners, who had been in custody at Budeeabad, were in a fort in the neighbourhood of Caubul. When last I spoke of them they were halting in the valley of Zandah, where they were detained for about the space of a month. On the 22nd of May they received orders to march on the following day for Caubul. The road lay along the track of the

* Mohun Lal's own account of his sufferings is worth quoting: "I have the honour to address you, for the information of Major-General Pollock, C.B., that Akbar Khan, on the night of the 11th inst. (July), put me in charge of Moollah Sald, Atchekzye, in whose house I was forced to lay down, and a couch placed over me, on which the people jumped, and are beating me with sticks in a very unmerciful manner. Akbar wants 30,000 rupees from me—says, otherwise, that he will pull out my eyes. All my body has been severely beaten. I cannot promise anything without government's order, but see myself destroyed. . . All my feet is wounded by bastinadoing."—[*Mohun Lal to Sir R. Shakespear: July* 14, 1842. *MS. Records.*] "I suffer very much. Sometimes I am pinioned and a heavy stone is placed on my back, whilst the red pepper is burnt before my nose and eyes. Sometimes I am bastinadoed. In short, I suffer every conceivable agony. He wants 30,000 rupees, out of which he has hitherto got 12,000, after using me very rudely. The remainder, if not paid in the course of ten days, he says he will pull out my eyes, and burn my body with a hot iron."—[*Mohun Lal to Sir R. Shakespear: July* 17. *MS. Records.*]

slaughtered army, and the putrid corpses sickened the captives as they went. About three miles from Caubul, on the banks of the Loghur river, is the fort of Ali Mahomed, a chief of Kuzzilbash connexions. Here they were lodged in the apartments recently occupied by the ladies of the chief's family*—the best and most commodious quarters which the prisoners had yet enjoyed.

In Ali Mahomed's fort the prisoners led a life of comparative freedom. They had a spacious garden in which to exercise themselves. They had the use alike of the walks and of the fruits. They were suffered to bathe in the river. They were permitted to visit, and to receive visits from, their friends in the Balla Hissar. Many of them had the means of borrowing money from the Caubullees; and were able to purchase many luxuries which they had not enjoyed at Budeeabad. Letters and papers from Jellalabad, from the provinces of India, and from old England, were brought to them without interruption. They had much to think about and much to discuss. Intelligence from Jellalabad and intelligence from Caubul came, in some shape, every day. Life was but little wearisome; there was abundant occupation for the mind, and abundant exercise for the body. And if it had not been that many of the party fell sick, and that ever and anon there reached them rumours of the intentions of Akbar Khan to carry them off to Toorkistan, they would have enjoyed as much happiness as prison-life can possibly yield.

* They were turned out of the fort, indeed, to make room for the prisoners, to the infinite annoyance of the unhappy chief, who made every possible excuse for not receiving them, but was overruled by Akbar Khan, who obtained admittance for them, in the first instance, on the plea that he only required accommodation for the night, and then urged that the fort would suit them better than any other place in the neighbourhood. It was altogether a most unfortunate occurrence for Ali Mahomed, as, subsequently, on the advance of the British, the fort was levelled with the ground, and the garden destroyed.

BOOK VIII.

[June—December: 1842.]

CHAPTER I.

[June—September: 1842.]

The Advance from Jellalabad—Instructions of Lord Ellenborough—The Question of Responsibility—Employment of the Troops at Jellalabad—Operations in the Shinwarree Valley—Negotiations for the Release of the Prisoners—The Advance—Mammoo Khail—Jugdulluck—Tezeen—Occupation of Caubul.

THE summer months passed away, and still left General Pollock at Jellalabad and General Nott at Candahar. Whether it were the intention of the Governor-General that they should advance upon Caubul, or fall back at once upon Peshawur and Quettah, was a problem of very difficult solution. Such data as were afforded them by the letters of Lord Ellenborough and his secretaries sufficed only to plunge them into a state of still deeper bewilderment and mystification. Every fresh letter seemed to render the obscurity more obscure. The Governor-General's instructions to Pollock and Nott at this time resembled nothing so much as those given to children in the "game of contraries"—to hold fast when they are ordered to let go, and to let go when

they are ordered to hold fast. Lord Ellenborough was, in effect, perpetually telling the generals that when he suggested to them to go forward it was their business to come back.

It is probable that Lord Ellenborough himself had no very clear perception, at this time, of the course which he purposed to pursue. He had made up his mind, he said, to save India in spite of every man in it who ought to give him support;* but it seemed to be his idea to save India rather by withdrawing all our troops within the Sutlej, than by striking a decisive blow for the re-establishment of our military supremacy in Afghanistan. It was his opinion that the danger of our position at that time arose from the absence of so large a body of troops from the provinces of Hindostan; and that we might better afford to leave our external injuries unredressed, than weaken our means of defence in India itself for the purpose of redressing them. Viewing the matter in this light, Lord Ellenborough thought less of redeeming the military character of the British nation than of bringing back the troops to Hindostan; and he would have brought them back without an effort at such redemption, if the almost universal voice, not only of the chief civil and military officers, but of the Anglo-Indian community at large,

* "I attach much weight," wrote Lord Ellenborough at the end of May, "to what Major Sleeman says of the disposition of the Mahomedans; but I am surprised that it has not occurred to him and to others, that whatever may be the disposition of the Mahomedans, it is the absence, not the presence of our troops, of whom more than three-fourths are Hindoos, that alone can lead the Mahomedans to act against us. The danger is in the position of the army, almost without communication with India, too far off to return quickly at any season, unable from the season to return now, without adequate supplies of food or carriage. This is the danger which all the great statesmen in India would perpetuate if they could, and while they maintain it, destroy the confidence of the Sepoy and ruin our finances. *If I save this country, I shall save it in spite of every man in it who ought to give me support, but I will save it in spite of them all.*" —[*MS. Correspondence.*]

had not been lifted up against so inglorious and degrading a concession. The opinions and desires of Pollock and Nott—of Robertson and Clerk—of Rawlinson, Outram, Macgregor, Mackeson, and others, who were eager for a forward movement, and little inclined to conceal their genuine sentiments under a cloak of official reserve—how little soever Lord Ellenborough may have been disposed outwardly to acknowledge their influence—were not without their effect. Public opinion he professed to despise. The judgments of the Press he pretended to hold in such absolute contempt, that he lived in habitual ignorance of all that emanated from it; but it is believed that this disregard of public opinion was rather a profession than a fact, and that Lord Ellenborough was shaken in his determination to bring back the armies to the provinces by the clamour that, from one end of India to the other, was raised against the obnoxious measure of withdrawal. He had by this time, too, received information from England that an inglorious retirement from the scene of our late humiliation, and the abandonment of all the brave men, tender women, and innocent children, in the hands of the Afghans, would be viewed with no satisfaction either by his old ministerial colleagues, or by the people of Great Britain. Many powerful external influences, therefore, roused him to a sense of the necessity of doing something in advance; but the "withdrawal policy" was emphatically his own, and he was resolute to preserve the shadow of it if he could not maintain the substance.

In this conjuncture, he betook himself to an expedient unparalleled, perhaps, in the political history of the world. He instigated Pollock and Nott to advance, but insisted that they should regard the forward movement solely in the light of a retirement from Afghanistan.

No change had come over the views of Lord Ellenborough, but a change had come over the meaning of certain words of the English language. The Governor-General had resolutely maintained that the true policy of the English Government was to bring back our armies to the provinces of India, and that nothing would justify him in pushing them forward merely for the re-establishment of our military reputation. But he found it necessary to yield to the pressure from without, and to push the armies of Pollock and Nott further into the heart of the Afghan dominions. To preserve his own consistency, and at the same time to protect himself against the measureless indignation of the communities both of India and of England, was an effort of genius beyond the reach of ordinary statesmen. But it was not beyond the grasp of Lord Ellenborough. How long he may have been engaged on the solution of the difficulty before him History cannot determine. But on the 4th of July it was finally accomplished. On that day Lord Ellenborough, who had entirely discarded the official mediation of the Commander-in-Chief,* despatched two letters to General Pollock and

* It was not until the 27th of August that the Commander-in-Chief was informed, by a letter from General Pollock, of the instructions sent to General Nott on the 4th of July. How entirely the Governor-General had set aside the authority of the Commander-in-Chief, and what Sir Jasper Nicolls thought both of Lord Ellenborough's conduct and of the advance on Caubul, may be gathered from the following extracts from his journal:

"*June* 6.—To my astonishment, Lord E., in consequence of General Pollock's complaints of want of carriage, has consented to his remaining beyond the Khybur till October, though he quotes the Duke of Wellington's dictum, that an army which cannot be moved as you will is no army at all. He will thus have an unhealthy, difficult pass behind him for four or five months, and possibly involve us in another campaign. These changes are dreadful. I wish that I had nothing to do with them."

"*June* 30.—The Secret Committee review the proceedings of government, from December to February last, not with asperity, but with decided disapprobation of the uncertain policy of that time, and the contradictory resolutions and orders which were then passed. This is very well deserved, for it was then, in November or December, that government ought to have decided to leave the country or to resume our full control over it."

"*August* 8.—The wants of General

two to General Nott. In these letters he set forth that his opinions had undergone no change since he had declared the withdrawal of the British armies to the provinces to be the primal object of government; but he suggested that perhaps General Nott might feel disposed to retire from Candahar to the provinces of India by the route of Ghuznee, Caubul, and Jellalabad;* and that perhaps General Pollock might feel disposed to assist the retreat of the Candahar force by moving forward upon Caubul.

It has been seen, that on the 1st of June Lord Ellenborough had granted General Pollock a constructive permission to remain at Jellalabad until the month of October; and that General Pollock had determined to turn this permission to the best account.† The mind of

Pollock's army are put down at 6½ lakhs *per mensem*, and we are just going to send 20 to clear him off—the last, I believe and hope, which we shall send to be buried in the Punjab and Afghanistan. Twenty-one lakhs he had before."

"*August* 15.—General Nott has fixed on the 2nd of this month for leaving Candahar, and in two divisions—the Bombay troops by Quettah and Sukkur—the Bengal column by Dehra Ismael Khan. This is quite new to me, and may be either ordered by the General or suggested by Lord E."

"*August* 20.—This order as to retiring by Dehra Ismael Khan appears the effect of impulse. Its neglect of me I forgive, though a manifest slight; but I do not find that he has ordered the necessary supplies to be collected for the retreat through the Sikh territory, which is, in parts near that place, almost a desert."

"*August* 24.—The 3rd Dragoons, and another troop of horse artillery, are about to join Sir R. Sale at Futtehabad. Can the General be now organising an advance on Caubul? Is he commanded to do so? Can he effect it? Is he to encamp at Gundamuck till Nott's attack on Ghuznee (if that take place)? It is curious that I should have to ask myself these questions; but so it is. I am wholly ignorant of the intended movements of either. Lord Ellenborough means to surprise friend and foe equally."

"*August* 27.—*To-day* I find, by a despatch from General Pollock, that General Nott has decided on returning to the provinces, *viâ* Ghuznee and Caubul. Lord E., by letter dated 4th of July, gave him a choice as to the line by which to withdraw, and he has chosen this—certainly the noblest and the worthiest; but whether it will release our prisoners and add to our fame, I cannot venture to predict. Lord E.'s want of decent attention to my position is inexcusable."—[*Sir Jasper Nicolls' MS. Journal.*]

* Some readers, not having maps before them, will better understand the nature of this retirement if I liken it to the case of a man wishing to retire from Reigate to London, and taking Dover and Canterbury in his way.

† See *ante*, page 474.

the statesman was running on retirement; the mind of the soldier on advance. The great obstacle either to retirement or to advance had been the scarcity of carriage. But in the early summer months every exertion had been made by the authorities in Upper India to procure carriage for the use of the armies in Afghanistan. Lord Ellenborough had exerted himself to obtain cattle; Mr. Robertson, the able and energetic Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, had exerted himself to obtain cattle.* The Governor-General threw his heart into the work, because he was eager to bring back the armies to Hindostan; the Lieutenant-Governor threw his heart into the work, because he was eager to push them on to Caubul. So it happened, that before the end of June, there was a sufficiency of cattle at General Pollock's disposal to enable him to do something; and he reported to government that his means of movement were such that he was able to make a demonstration in the neighbourhood of Jellalabad. Upon this, Lord Ellenborough wrote to him on the 4th of July that he was rejoiced to hear the General was able to do something; but that he (the General) must, on no account, think that any change had come over the opinions of government, which still inclined resolutely towards the withdrawal of the army at the earliest moment consistent with the health and efficiency of the troops.†

* The services rendered by Mr. Robertson to his country, at this time, have never been adequately acknowledged, except by General Pollock himself, who never lost an opportunity of expressing his gratitude for the assistance he had derived from the exertions of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces. Mr. Robertson, aware of the difficulty of collecting camels in sufficient number for the purposes of the army, ordered letters to be addressed to the principal collectors in Upper India, calling upon them to purchase as many ponies and mules as they could get together in their several districts. And it was in no small measure owing to these exertions that Pollock was at length enabled to advance.

† "It has given great satisfaction to the Governor-General to learn, from your letter of the 14th ult., that you have sufficient means of move-

On this same 4th of July the Governor-General wrote twice to General Nott—once through his secretary and once with his own hand. He sent the General a copy of his instructions to Pollock, impressing upon him that all his views were in favour of a prompt withdrawal; and he addressed to him a long inconclusive letter, instructing him to withdraw from Afghanistan, but telling him, at the same time, that the line of withdrawal was to be left to his own choice. He might retire by going backward, by Quettah and Sukkur, or he might retire by going forward, by Ghuznee, Caubul, and Jellalabad. But whichever line he might take, he was never to lose sight for a moment of the fact that Lord Ellenborough had decreed that he should retire, and that retire he must.*

It was fortunate for Lord Ellenborough and for the country that he had to deal at this time with men who thought more of the honour of Great Britain than of their own safety; and who did not shrink from responsibility, if, by incurring it, they had a reasonable chance

ment to be enabled to act on the suggestions contained in my letter of the 1st ultimo (June). You will not have mistaken the object of that letter, which was merely to suggest that, as far as your means of movement allowed, you should make your strength felt by the enemy during the period of your necessary detention in the valley of the Caubul river. No change has from the first taken place in the Governor-General's views of the expediency of withdrawing your army at the earliest period consistent with the health and efficiency of the troops, that is, as is now understood, in the beginning of October."—[*Mr. Maddock to General Pollock: July* 4, 1842. *Published Papers.*]

* "Nothing has occurred to induce me to change my first opinion, that the measure, commanded by considerations of political and military prudence, is to bring back the armies now in Afghanistan at the earliest period at which their retirement can be effected consistently with the health and efficiency of the troops, into positions wherein they may have easy and certain communications with India; and to this extent the instructions you have received remain unaltered. But the improved position of your army, with sufficient means of carriage for as large a force as it is necessary to move in Afghanistan, induces me now to leave to your option the line by which you shall withdraw your troops from that country."—[*Mr. Maddock to General Nott: July* 4, 1842. *Published Papers.*]

of conferring great and lasting benefits upon the government which they served, and the nation which they represented. But Lord Ellenborough's instructions to the Generals were so worded—whether by accident or by design I do not presume to determine—as to cast upon them all the onus of failure, and to confer upon the Governor-General, or at least to divide with him, all the honour of success. One thing at least is certain, the letter of the 4th of July, addressed to General Nott, and signed by the Chief Secretary, ought not to have been written. It is either from first to last a masterpiece of Jesuitical cunning, or it indicates a feebleness of will—an infirmity of purpose—discreditable to the character of a statesman entrusted with the welfare and the honour of one of the greatest empires in the world.*

* It is right that the most important passages of this letter to General Nott should be here quoted. "But the improved position," wrote Lord Ellenborough, after cautioning him (see *ante*, page 557, note) against believing any change had come over the Governor-General's opinions "of your army, with sufficient means of carriage for as large as it is necessary to move in Afghanistan, induces me now to leave to your option the line by which you shall withdraw your troops to that country. I must desire, however, that in forming your decision upon this most important question, you will attend to the following considerations:—In the direction of Quettah and Sukkur there is no enemy to oppose you; at each place, occupied by detachments, you will find provisions, and probably as you descend the passes you will have increased means of carriage; the operation is one admitting of no doubt as to its success. If you determine upon moving upon Ghuznee, Caubul, and Jellalabad, you will require further transport of provisions—a much larger amount of carriage; and you will be practically without communications from the time of your leaving Candahar. Dependent entirely upon the courage of your army, and upon your own ability in directing it, I should not have any doubt as to the success of the operations; but whether you will be able to obtain provisions for your troops during the whole month, and forage for your animals, may be a matter of reasonable doubt. Yet upon this your success will turn. You must remember that it was not the superior courage of the Afghans, but want and the inclemency of the season, which led to the destruction of the army at Caubul; and you would feel as I do, that the loss of another army, from whatever cause it might arise, might be fatal to our government in India. I do not undervalue the aid which our government in India would receive from the successful execution by your army of a march through Ghuznee and Caubul over the scene of our late disasters. I know all the effect it would have upon the minds of our soldiers, of our allies, of our enemies in Asia, and of our countrymen and all foreign nations in Europe. It is an object of just

But, whatever may have been the amount of responsibility cast upon the two Generals, neither Pollock nor Nott shrunk from it. They cheerfully took up the burden and placed it on their own shoulders.* They had obtained now all that they wanted. They had no doubt of the ability of their troops to carry everything before them. Cattle had been supplied, or were being supplied, sufficient for all their movements. It was only necessary that they should act in concert with each other—that they should so combine their operations as to reach the capital at the same time, and strike the last blow together. But it was no easy thing in those days to carry on a correspondence between Jellalabad and Candahar; and it was long before Pollock received an answer to his letters. Five messengers were despatched in succession to Nott's camp;† but it was not before the middle of August that Pollock could assure himself of his brother-general's intentions to advance upon Caubul at all.‡

ambition which no one more than myself would rejoice to see effected; but I see that failure in the attempt is certain and irretrievable ruin; and I would endeavour to inspire you with the necessary caution, and make you feel that, great as are the objects to be attained by success, the risk is great also."—[*Lord Ellenborough to General Nott: July* 4, 1842. *Published Papers.*]

* "If I have not," wrote Pollock, "lived long enough to judge of the propriety of an act for which I alone am responsible, the sooner I resign the command as unfit the better. I assure you that I feel the full benefit of being unshackled and allowed to judge for myself."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

† A letter, too, was sent by Captain Troup to Akbar Khan with a request that he would forward it to Nott. A few harmless lines were written in ink; and much important matter in rice-water, to be brought out by the application of iodine. The employment of Akbar Khan himself, as the medium of communication between the two Generals, who were contemplating his destruction, is not one of the least amusing incidents of the war.

‡ Pollock was afraid that Nott would have commenced his retreat before the receipt of the despatch of July 4. "My movement will of course depend," he wrote in a confidential letter to Mr. Robertson on the 10th of August, "on General Nott's ability to meet me. Our late accounts from that quarter are not favorable. They say that General Nott is bent on retiring, and I very much fear that he will have made several marches to the rear before

In the mean while, neither General had been wholly inactive. At Jellalabad, Pollock had been making a demonstration against some hostile tribes, and carrying on negotiations for the release of the British prisoners. The Governor-General had several times, in rather obscure language, suggested to Pollock that it might be desirable to strike a blow at some one somewhere in the neighbourhood of Jellalabad; and now the General sent out Monteith into the Shinwarree valley to read a lesson to the tribes who had possessed themselves of the property plundered from our army, and who held in their hands one of our captured guns. These things were to be now demanded from the tribes, or to be wrested from them at the point of the bayonet. In the middle of June, Monteith descended into the valley, with a brigade of European and Native troops, and a sufficiency of guns for his purpose. The troops, so long held in restraint, were now all fire and impetuosity. The first sight, in the village of Ali-Boghan, of some property that had belonged to our slaughtered army, maddened them past control.* They began at once to fire the houses and to plunder the inhabitants. But Monteith and Macgregor interfered for their protection. The plundered property

the government despatch can reach him. . . . . I ought by this time to have heard from General Nott, in reply to my letter by the first of the five messengers. If he is not coming on, my negotiations for the prisoners will be a very simple affair; but it must ever be a subject of regret that he should so hastily retire, and at such a time, while he commands an army in every respect efficient, and amounting to about 15,000 men."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

* It was reported in camp, and subsequently set forth in the local journals, that some women had been violated by our soldiery. "But," says Captain Macgregor, "I made the strictest inquiry into the matter, both from the Afghan chiefs who were with me, and from the inhabitants of the village, but could not trace in the slightest degree any just foundation for the report in question. Had there been any, it would doubtless have formed a subject of great grievance to the people, who are so very jealous of the honour of their women."—[*Captain Macgregor's Report on the Operations in the Shinwarree districts. MS. Records.*]

was restored. Even the money that had been taken was made over again to the inhabitants.

The report of the violence that had been committed at Ali-Boghan spread like wild-fire through the valley. The people believed that the British troops were about to fire all the villages; so they began at once to remove their property, and to fly in every direction from their homes. Macgregor exerted himself to restore confidence among them, by explaining the real designs of his government; and the people began to return to their dwellings. But, although indiscriminate plunder and destruction were not the objects of the expedition, the brigade had been sent out to do certain work, and it soon became evident that it could not be done without inflicting some injury upon the people. The captured gun and the plundered property were to be recovered. It was known that two of the principal chiefs of a place called Goolai were in possession of a portion of the treasure that had fallen into the hands of our enemies. It was known, too, that the captured gun was at Deh-Surruk. It was determined, therefore, that the brigade should move against these two places.

On the morning of the 20th of June, Monteith moved upon Goolai. "It presented all the appearance of a flourishing little settlement. Several of the forts were extensive and in good repair. They were shaded by clusters of mulberry and willow trees. Flowing water passed close to the forts, and served to irrigate the neighbouring fields of cotton, rice, and jewaree. The summer harvest had just been collected, and was stocked outside the fort in its unwinnowed state. The inhabitants had evidently only time to escape with their portable property before the troops reached Goolai. In fact, our visit was most timely. Three or four days'

delay would have enabled them to carry off their grain."*

Monteith pitched his camp on some rising ground near the village, and demanded the restitution of the plundered treasure. On the following day evasive answers were received; there was no prospect of obtaining, by peaceful negotiation, the concession that was demanded from the chiefs. So the work of destruction commenced. Their forts and houses were destroyed. Their walls were blown up. Their beautiful trees were ringed and left to perish.† The retribution was complete.

The work of destruction went on for some days. In the mean while the captured gun had been given up,

* *Captain Macgregor's Report. MS. Records.*

† There was no need to cut them down. It was sufficient to cut deep rings through the bark to the heart of the tree; for they seldom survived the operation. There is something in this so repugnant to our civilised and Christian ideas of righteous retribution, that it is only just that I should give in this place the explanation of an act, perpetrated, indeed, upon other occasions, in the words of an officer equally gallant and humane. "All the injury," said Captain Macgregor, "that we could do to their forts and houses could, with facility, in a short time be repaired by them. From their proximity to the hills, they could always obtain timber in abundance; and where water is plentiful they could rebuild easily the bastions we might blow up; and therefore a greater degree of punishment than this seemed to be necessary, and was completely within our power, if we destroyed their trees—a measure which seems barbarous to a civilised mind; but in no other way can the Afghans be made to feel equally the weight of our power, for they delight in the shade of their trees. They are to be seen under them in groups, during the summer, all day long, talking, reading, weaving, and sleeping. Even women and children seek the shade of their trees. The Afghan mountaineer is not tangible to us in any other way. He removes his herds, flocks, and property to the hills on the shortest notice; and flies before our troops to places where he is inaccessible to them. The Goolai people, moreover, were deserving of no mercy. The amount of treasure they had plundered (viz., 18,000 or 20,000 rupees) was considerable. They had been very pertinacious in attacking Captain Ferris' cantonment; and equally so, subsequently, our troops at Jellalabad. Therefore the Brigadier determined at once to commence the work of destruction, desired that neither fort, house, tree, grain, nor *boosa* should be spared to them. This assuredly was the best plan for preventing the necessity of harsh measures in future. Working parties from the brigade were accordingly appointed for this purpose."—[*Captain Macgregor's Report. MS. Records.*]

and the people of Deh-Surruk were willing to restore the treasure which they had taken; but could not easily recover it from the real possessors. However, after some difficulty, upwards of 10,000 rupees, besides other property, were recovered from the Shinwarrees. A large quantity of grain, timber, boosa, and other requisites was appropriated at Goolai; and it was supposed that the declared objects of the expedition had now been fully accomplished.

But the Shinwarrees had not been thoroughly coerced. They had always been a refractory people—unwilling to pay revenue either to Barukzye chief or Suddozye Prince. It was thought advisable, therefore, to read them a lesson. So Monteith made a progress through the valley, applied the fire-brand to their forts, and shot them down in their places of refuge. "At one time the interiors of five-and-thirty forts were in a blaze along the valley."* At a place named Mazeena the tribes made some show of resistance; but the steady gallantry of her Majesty's 31st Regiment and of their Sepoy comrades was not to be withstood; the shells from Abbot's howitzers were irresistible; and so Monteith effectually beat down the opposition of the Shinwarrees. This was on the 26th of July. On the 3rd of August the brigade returned to Jellalabad. From the 17th of June to this date, "both men and cattle had entirely subsisted on the resources of the country." "The cattle especially," added Captain Macgregor, concluding his report, "will be found to have greatly improved in condition while employed on this service. Indeed, in whatever way it may be viewed, it will be found that the expedition has been highly beneficial to British interests."

Whilst Monteith was carrying on these operations in

* *Report of Brigadier Monteith: July* 27, 1842. *Published Papers.*

the Shinwarree valley, Pollock was carrying on negotiations for the release of the British prisoners. On the 10th of July, Captain Troup, accompanied by a native gentleman, named Hadjee Buktear, had been despatched to General Pollock's camp; but had brought back no satisfactory intelligence to encourage and animate the Sirdar.* The fact is, that Pollock had by this time begun to see his way to Caubul. Lord Ellenborough and Mr. Robertson had exerted themselves most successfully to supply him with carriage. He was eager to plant the British standard on the Balla Hissar, and was unwilling to hamper himself with any negotiations which might impede or delay his advance. It was thought by some in Pollock's camp that the Sirdar was not sincere in his overtures, and that his real object was to gain time. But Pollock was equally anxious to gain time. The emissaries were not dismissed in a hurry; and when they returned at last to Caubul they carried back only a verbal message, and that message contained a demand for all the guns and trophies in the possession of the enemy.† It was expected that another reference would be made to Jellalabad; and that in the mean

* "It is impossible," wrote General Pollock, "to guess how this mission may succeed, because, in dealing with Afghans, you deal with treachery and deceit; but appearances are as fair as they can be for the release of the prisoners. Captain Troup says that if it had depended on Mahomed Akbar alone, some of the ladies would have been sent with him; but Mahomed Shah appears to be a bitter enemy of ours—much more so than I had reason to suppose. The man who has come with Captain Troup was selected in opposition to the wish of Mahomed Akbar, who wished to send Dost Mahomed Khan, a brother of Mahomed Shah. Dost Mahomed was objected to by the chiefs as being too bigoted to his own party, whereas Hadjee Buktear Khan was considered neutral. He is a Candahar man—has been at Bombay and others of our settlements, and is better acquainted with the European character than the other."—[*Jellalabad, July* 15. *MS. Correspondence.*]

† "Captain Troup," wrote General Pollock, "is still here. I am glad that, in proposing terms, I insisted on having the guns, for I think there is almost a certainty of an objection being made to that, in which case, of course, I can back out. . . . On this occasion I have written nothing."—[*Jellalabad, July* 18. *MS. Correspondence.*]

while Pollock would be supplied with the means of rescuing the prisoners more majestically than by such negotiations. He had received so many assurances from influential men at the capital that the Caubullees would not suffer Akbar Khan to carry off the prisoners to Toorkistan, that he believed the advance of his army would tend more surely to their release than any diplomatic measure which he could possibly adopt.

But Akbar Khan held a different opinion. When Troup returned to Caubul, the Sirdar summoned him and Pottinger to an interview, declared that he was not satisfied with Pollock's verbal message, and candidly asked their advice. Pottinger replied, that the best advice he could offer was, that Akbar Khan should immediately send down the whole of the prisoners to Pollock's camp at Jellalabad, as a proof of his sincerity and good feeling. If there were any delay, he added, the negotiations would be broken off, and the army would advance. To this the Sirdar replied, that without a written promise from General Pollock to withdraw his troops from Afghanistan the prisoners would not be sent to his camp; and that they might at once banish the thought of a forcible release of the prisoners on the advance of the British army, for that as soon as intelligence should reach him of our troops having arrived at Charbagh, he would send them all off to Toorkistan—scattering them about by twos and threes among the different chiefs—and come down himself with his fighting men to dispute the progress of the advancing army.

To Pollock, this appeared a mere idle threat. He still clung to the belief that there was a party in Caubul able and willing* to prevent the departure of the pri-

* "I have reason to believe that there is a strong party at Caubul which has determined not to allow the removal of our prisoners; and I

soners; and when Troup, accompanied by Lawrence, came down again to Jellalabad, he found the General still less inclined than before to promise to withdraw his army. He had, indeed, already moved a brigade forward to Futtehabad—two marches in advance of his old position; and all that he could now promise was, that he would not advance beyond that point before the expiration of a certain number of days.* The negotiations had, by this time, become the merest sham. It was obvious that Pollock could not proceed with them to a successful issue without encumbering himself with conditions which would have hung as a mill-stone round the neck of a military commander, eager to drive his battalions into the heart of the enemy's country. The Governor-General wrote to him that "all military operations must proceed, as if no negotiations were on foot;" but Akbar Khan had rendered this impossible, by demanding, as a condition of the delivery of the prisoners, that all the British troops should withdraw from Afghanistan.†

also believe that the Wullee of Kooloom has written refusing to receive Mahomed Akbar if accompanied by the prisoners."—[*General Pollock to Government.*]

* "I don't know how my last message will be received at Caubul. Mahomed Akbar will be annoyed. My address is to Futteh Jung; and since I have sent the reply I have moved up the brigade. I told Captain Troup that I should not move up the brigade beyond Futtehabad for a certain number of days, in the expectation of hearing further from Caubul, and that I expect the ladies will be sent. The negotiation is carried on in the name of Futteh Jung, but Akbar Khan is the mainspring. The chief, and almost the only point he seemed to care about was, that I should sign a declaration that I would leave the country directly the prisoners arrived. To this I objected. I was then requested to state any date—but this I also declined." — [*General Pollock to Mr. Robertson: August* 10, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*] Sale commanded the advanced brigade at Futtehabad. "I have my camp in two lines," he wrote a few days afterwards to Pollock, "the cavalry facing the river, and rear to the water—the front of our encampment an open stony plain—*a good place for a fight.* The left of our line rests on a small hill that commands a view all round." —[*MS. Correspondence.*]

† The Governor-General, however, seems to have considered it not wholly improbable that the contemplated military movement upon Caubul would be suspended by the favorable conclusion of the negotiations with the enemy; and actually

Weary of these protracted negotiations, Pollock was now eager to advance upon Caubul. He was only waiting the arrival of specific information from Candahar relative to the movements of his brother-general. "As I have offered to meet him," he wrote to a friend in high place, "he will find some difficulty in resisting the *glorious* temptation; but if he does resist, he is not the man I take him for."* The glorious temptation was not resisted. The two Generals were worthy of each other. Nott had determined to retire to India by Ghuznee, Caubul, and Jellalabad; and in the middle of the month of August, a messenger, long expected and most welcome, brought the cheering intelligence into Pollock's camp.†

On the 20th of August, Pollock began to move from Jellalabad. On that day the advanced guard under the General himself reached Sultanpore, on its way to Gundamuck. At the latter place he intended to assemble the whole of the troops which he had selected to accompany him to the capital‡—in all, about 8000

authorised Pollock to exercise his discretion in ordering Nott to retire by Quettah, even though the march upon Ghuznee and Caubul had been commenced.—[*Lord Ellenborough to General Pollock: July* 29, 1842.] Subsequently the Governor-General seemed to awaken to a sense of the extraordinary character of this suggestion, for he wrote to General Pollock to say that he "could hardly imagine the existence of circumstances which could justify the diversion of Major-General Nott's army from the route of Ghuznee and of Caubul, when his intention of marching by that route shall have been once clearly indicated." — [*Lord Ellenborough to General Pollock: August* 26, 1842.]

* *MS. Correspondence.*

† Nott's letter was despatched on the 27th of July. It comprised but a few lines:—

"Candahar, July 27, 1842.

"My DEAR GENERAL,—You will have received a copy of a letter from the Governor-General under date the 4th instant, to my address, giving me the option of retiring a part of my force to India *viâ* Caubul and Jellalabad. I have determined to take that route, and will write to you fully on the subject as soon as I have arranged for carriage and supplies.—Yours truly, W. NOTT."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

‡ The force consisted of the 3rd Dragoons; the 1st Native Cavalry; a squadron of the 5th and of the 10th ditto, with the head-quarters; 600 Sowars of the 3rd Irregular Cavalry; her Majesty's 31st Regiment; the 33rd Regiment of Native

men. On the 23rd, Pollock, with the advance, reached Gundamuck. About two miles from that place lies the village of Mammoo Khail. Two hostile chiefs with a strong body of the Ooloos were occupying this position.* Pollock at once determined to dislodge them; and ordered up from Sale's camp in the rear Broadfoot's sappers and a squadron of dragoons. On the following morning the brigade advanced, and the enemy began to retire. Then, dividing his infantry into two columns, with a wing of her Majesty's 9th Foot at the head of each, Pollock entered the village. The enemy had abandoned their positions there, and at another village, called Koochlee Khail; but they rallied and returned to occupy a range of heights within musket-shot of the latter place, and from these commanding eminences they kept up, for some time, a hot fire from their jezails. But Colonel Taylor attacked them on one side; Broadfoot, with his sappers, on the other.† The heights were carried. The forts and villages were taken, and the enemy dispersed. The chiefs fled to Caubul with a few followers. Mammoo Khail and Koochlee Khail

Infantry; the whole of Sir Robert Sale's and of Colonel Tulloch's brigades; with seventeen guns, a company of Sappers and Miners, and a regiment of Bildars (Pioneers) under Mr. Mackeson. A small force was left (chiefly for want of carriage) at Gundamuck, and the rest remained in garrison at Jellalabad.

* The enemy had been collecting there for some days; and Sale, who was encamped at Futtehabad, received intelligence of their movements, which he forwarded to the General. "I desired Broadfoot," he wrote, "to send in a man to Shakespear, who said he had come from Mammoo Khail, and that the Urzbegee was collecting fighting men, and sending away their women and children."—[*General Sale to General Pollock: August* 14, 1842. *MS.*] "From what I can learn, the Kogranees are assembling and are preventing supplies from being brought into our camp. Mammoo Khail appears to be their head-quarters. If allowed to remain unmolested, they may become troublesome. If it suited your views to move forward to Gundamuck, we should then, I think, command the resources of the valley."—[*General Sale to General Pollock: August* 16, 1842. *MS.*]

† In this affair we lost seven men killed, and about fifty wounded. Among the latter were four officers, Major Huish (26th Native Infantry), Captain Edwards (9th Foot), Captain Tait (Irregular Cavalry), Ensign Robertson (37th Native Infantry).

were destroyed by fire; and the fruit-trees were cut down.*

Having accomplished this, Pollock returned to Gundamuck. The attack on Mammoo Khail, which is not on the road to Caubul, was a diversion rendered necessary by the appearance of the enemy in that direction. But the General had yet to assemble his entire force, to assure himself of the sufficiency of his supplies, and to make all the necessary arrangements for his advance upon the capital. The delight with which the announcement of the intended advance upon Caubul had been received throughout the general camp is not to be described. The question of advance or withdrawal had been for months eagerly discussed. Every symptom had been watched with the closest interest—every report had been canvassed with wondering curiosity. Acting under instructions from the Supreme Government, Pollock had kept all his intended movements a close secret. It was not, indeed, until the middle of August that even Sir Robert Sale knew that the force would advance upon Caubul; and then he was so wild with excitement that he could scarcely write a note to the General to express his unbounded delight.†

* With regard to the destruction committed at Mammoo Khail, it is right that General Pollock's own account should be given. "At Mammoo Khail, I know most positively that no Afghan was killed except in fair fighting. The families had, I believe, gone the day before the place was taken. I cannot say when, or by whom, the adjoining houses were set fire to. I passed through with the right column in pursuit of the enemy, and did not return till the afternoon, when I had determined to encamp there. On my return I found Brigadier Tulloch with his column (the left) occupying the gardens. The fort and adjacent houses were still burning. On the return of the whole of the troops, it was necessary, for their security, to take advantage of the gardens surrounded by walls, and the men were accordingly encamped there. The destruction of the vines was a necessary consequence, as any one must know who has seen how grapes were cultivated in Afghanistan. There were very few trees cut down, but the bark of a number of them was taken for about two or three inches." —[*General Pollock to the Adjutant-General: Dinapore, April* 18, 1843. *MS. Records.*] See *Appendix* at the end of the volume for the letter entire.

† "Hurrah!" he wrote; "this is good news. *All* here are prepared to

There were now no longer any doubts regarding the forward movement of the force. Officers and men were eager to push on to Caubul; and willing to advance lightly equipped, leaving behind them all the baggage that was not absolutely necessary to their efficiency. The 13th Light Infantry, ever ready to set an example to their comrades, sent back a considerable portion of their baggage to Jellalabad, and prepared to march with only a single change of linen. The officers of the regiment were content to congregate, three or four together, in small hill tents; and Broadfoot, at all times a pattern of chivalrous zeal, offered to take on his sappers without any tents at all.*

Full of hope and courage the troops moved up, by brigades, to Gundamuck. Making all his arrangements for the march, and waiting intelligence from Nott,† Pollock remained at that place until the 7th of September. Supplies were pouring freely into camp. The rich orchards and fruit-gardens of the surrounding country yielded their luscious produce; and our officers were writing to their friends that they were "luxuriating quietly on the most delicious fruits and supplies of all kind." The neighbouring chiefs were coming in and making submission to the English General. It was plain that already the tidings of our advance were striking terror into the hearts of the chiefs and people of Afghanistan.

meet your wishes to march as light as possible. *I* take no carriage from the Commissariat; and our officers are doubling up *four* in a small hill tent, and are sending all to the rear that they can dispense with. . . . *I am so excited that I can scarce write.*" —[*General Sale to General Pollock: Futtehabad, August* 16, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

* *General Sale to General Pollock: Aug.* 18, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*

† Pollock had received no later intelligence from Nott's camp than that contained in the brief letter of July 27, though he had despatched ten messengers to the westward. It was not until midnight of the 6th—7th of September that letters from Nott's camp were received by Pollock at Gundamuck.

It was on the 1st day of September, when Pollock was awaiting at Gundamuck the assembling of his brigades, that an Afghan, of forlorn aspect, in soiled and tattered clothes, rode upon a wretched pony, attended by three followers, into the British camp. Two officers of the general staff, Burn and Mayne, met the stranger as he approached, and recognised him. They knew him to be Futteh Jung. They knew him to be the man who, a day or two before, had borne the title of King of Caubul. The fugitive was kindly received and conducted to the General's tent. A salute was fired in his honour. Accommodation was provided for him in the British camp, and everything that could conduce to his comfort was freely granted to the unfortunate Prince.

For some time, Futteh Jung had been a wretched puppet at the Caubul Court. He had been but a King of straw. The merest shadow of royalty had been suffered to cling to him. Akbar Khan, for his own uses, held the imbecile Prince firmly in his hands; and every day tightened his grasp. He stripped him of all his power; he stripped him of all his wealth. He threatened—he overawed him. He compelled him to attach his seal, or his signature,* to papers resigning all authority into the hands of the Wuzeer, and signifying his assent to everything that might be originated or sanctioned by him.† Deeming that the unscrupulous

* To many of his letters to General Pollock, Futteh Jung signed his name in English characters.

† Akbar Khan compelled the Prince to write to Pollock: "I have given to Sirdar Mahomed Akbar the full and entire management of all my property and affairs of every description, and have resigned to him in perpetuity full power to judge and settle all questions on all points. Whatever arrangement he may make with the English Government I agree to confirm, and no alteration shall be made." And again: "The arrangements which have been made with Captain Troup and Hadjee Buktear have been all approved of by me. I have delegated all powers over my country and wealth to the Wuzeer, Mahomed Akbar Khan, Barukzye!" But the Prince took the first opportunity to write privately to the General: "My friend, it will have been evident to you that in this matter I have been compelled to act thus. I

tyranny of Akbar Khan would soon manifest itself in the murder of the whole royal family, the Prince directed his thoughts towards the expediency of flight, and determined to claim the hospitality of the British General. But Akbar Khan suspected his intentions, and flung him into close confinement in the Balla Hissar. Cutting a hole through the roof of his prison, he effected his escape, and fled to the quarters of the Kuzzilbashes, where he remained for some days concealed. It was reported that he had been murdered. But he was now fixed in his resolution to seek the protection of the British Government; and was soon upon his way to Jellalabad. With some difficulty, often fired upon as he went, he made his way through the passes; and at last, on the 1st of September, rode into Pollock's camp.

On the morning of the 7th of September, General Pollock, with the first division of his army, under the immediate command of Sir Robert Sale, moved from Gundamuck,* in progress to the capital. The second division, under General M'Caskill, marched on the fol-

did not even know that Captain Troup and Hadjee Buktear had been sent, and I had not the slightest knowledge of the proposals made by them. Captain Troup is well aware of this, since we had never met, nor had any of my confidential people been employed between us."—[*Futteh Jung to General Pollock: Translation. July* 21, 1842. *MS. Records.*] The letter was evidently written in a state of painful alarm. It concludes with the words: "You must be very careful not to let it be known that I have written to you; since, should these villains hear of it, they would put me and my family to death." In reply to this letter Pollock expressed his surprise that, "notwithstanding his Majesty's friendship, the good-will of the chiefs, and the unanimity of the people at Caubul, still they cannot prevent the treachery of one man from causing dissension between the two governments, and that they are unable to show their good-will to us by releasing our prisoners." To this, on the 1st of August, Futteh Jung replied: "You express surprise at my many well-wishers not being able to find a remedy for one evil-disposed person. You write: 'If this could be effected, a great object would be obtained.' Eminent in rank! You write truly. But in a religious war, a father cannot trust his son—a son, his father."

* A squadron of the 5th Light Cavalry; a squadron, and the headquarters of the 10th Light Cavalry; the left wings of the 33rd and 60th N.I., with two guns of the 3rd troop 2nd brigade of Horse Artillery, were left at Gundamuck.

lowing day. A party of the Sikh contingent, under Captain Lawrence, accompanied this division. The regiments had been sent up to Jellalabad in June, and had been encamped on the opposite side of the river. They were the old Mussulman corps who had behaved so infamously on the other side of the Khybur, but who now had been talked over by Gholab Singh into something like propriety of demeanour.* They behaved at least as well as the British General expected, and when Lawrence sought permission for a party of 500 men, horse and foot, to accompany, under his directions, Pollock's army to Caubul, the General was but little inclined to refuse the request. So a party of 300 horse and 200 foot marched, under Lawrence, with M'Caskill's division; and the remainder occupied positions at Neemlah and Gundamuck.

On the 8th of September, as the first division of Pollock's army approached the hills which commanded the road through the Jugdulluck Pass, he found that their summits were occupied by the enemy. Large bodies of Ghilzyes, under different chieftains, each with a distinguishing standard, were clustering on the heights. "The hills they occupied formed an amphitheatre inclining towards the left of the road, on which the troops were halted whilst the guns opened, and the enemy were thus enabled on this point to fire into the column, a deep ravine preventing any contact with them."† The practice of the guns was excellent; but the Ghilzye warriors stood their ground. The shells from our howitzers burst amongst them; but still they held their posts. Still they poured in a hot fire from their jezails.

* They, however, diverted themselves with a little internal mutiny—rising up against the Sikh general, Gholab Singh Povindea, and burning his tent. The poor old man, in an extremity of terror, sought refuge under Pollock's skirts.

† *General Pollock's Report.*

So Pollock sent his infantry to the attack; and gallantly they ascended the heights. On one side, Broadfoot, ever in advance, led up his little band of sappers. On the other, Taylor, with the 9th Foot, ascended the hills, where the enemy, horse and foot, were posted behind a ruined fort. In the centre, Wilkinson, with the 13th, pushed up the ascent towards the key of the enemy's position. All went forward with impetuous gallantry; and as they clomb the hill-sides and seized the Ghilzye standards, up went an animated and enthusiastic cheer from the British stormers. It was plain that their heart was in the work, and that nothing could turn them back. The flower of the Ghilzye tribes were there, under many of their most renowned chieftains, and they looked down upon the scene of their recent sanguinary triumphs. But they had now to deal with other men, under other leaders. The loud clear cry of the British infantry struck a panic into their souls. They turned and fled before our bayonets. Then galloped Lock~~yer~~ward with his dragoons after the enemy's horse; but the nature of the ground was against him, and they escaped the annihilation which otherwise would have been their fate.

But the battle was not yet over. A considerable body of the enemy had betaken themselves for safety to an apparently inaccessible height. On the summit of a mountain they planted their standards, and seemed to look down with defiance upon our troops. But Pollock was resolute not to leave, on that day, his work incomplete. He believed that where the enemy could post themselves his infantry could attack them. So, under cover of Abbot's and Backhouse's guns, Broadfoot and Wilkinson again led up their men, and stormed that precipitous height. "Seldom have soldiers had a more

arduous task to perform, and never was an undertaking of the kind surpassed in execution."* The Ghilzyes looked down upon them with astonishment and dismay. They saw at once the temper of our men, and they shrunk from the encounter. Our stormers pushed on, and the Ghilzye standards were lowered. The enemy fled in confusion; and left the stronghold, from which they had looked down in the insolence of mistaken security, to be occupied by British troops.

The victory was complete. It was mainly achieved, under Pollock's able directions, by the brave men of the old Jellalabad garrison. Sale himself, who was never far off when there was likely to be hard fighting, led up the heights in front of his old regiment, and was wounded in the affray. The loss upon our side was trifling. Nothing could have told more plainly than such a victory as this how little formidable in reality were the best Ghilzye fighting men in their most inaccessible strongholds, when opposed to British infantry under the eye of a capable commander. The Ghilzye butchers were now seen flying like sheep before the comrades of the men whom a few months before they had slaughtered in these very shambles at Jugdulluck.

The first division alone of Pollock's army was engaged with the enemy at Jugdulluck.† The second division passed on, much molested by the enemy, and often compelled to fight its way against large bodies of Ghilzye footmen. On the 11th of September they joined the advance in the neighbourhood of Tezeen. The exertions of a forced march had fatigued M'Caskill's cattle; so Pollock determined to devote the 12th to a halt. Before the day had closed it was evident that

* *General Pollock's Report.*

† For an account of the operations of the second division of Pollock's army, see Lieutenant Greenwood's "Narrative of the late Victorious Campaign in Afghanistan, under General Pollock."

the enemy were close at hand, and that we were on the eve of a great struggle. Akbar Khan had been true to his word. He had despatched the bulk of the English prisoners to the Hindoo-Koosh, and was now preparing to meet our army. On the 6th of September he had moved his camp to Begramee—distant some six miles from the Balla Hissar—and there sent for Captain Troup.* The English officer repaired to the camp of the Sirdar, who summoned a meeting of the principal chiefs. The Newab Zemaun Khan, Jubbar Khan, Ameen-oollah Khan, Mahomed Shah Khan, and other chief people of the empire attended the council. Troup was not permitted to be present at the conference; but he soon learnt its result. He was required immediately to proceed to Gundamuck on a mission to Pollock's camp. The chiefs had determined to endeavour to conciliate the British General. They were willing to agree to any terms he might please to dictate, if he would only consent to stay the advance of his army upon the capital.

Troup declared his willingness to proceed on the mission. But he had no hope, he said, of its success. The time for negotiation had passed. Nothing could now stay the progress of Pollock's army but the entire destruction of the force. But so urgently did the Sirdar press his request on the British officer, that Troup could not refuse his assent to the proposal. He made his preparations for the journey, and then returned to the Afghan camp. There, in the presence of Akbar Khan and Mahomed Shah Khan, he again set forth the use-

* Captains Troup and Bygrave, when the other prisoners were sent to Bameean, had been taken by Akbar Khan to the Balla Hissar—but had subsequently been permitted to remove themselves to Ali Mahomed's force, where Captain and Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Trevor, with their children, had been left, on account of sickness, under charge of Dr. Campbell.

lessness of the mission, and prevailed with them to forego it.*

There was nothing now left for the Sirdar but to appeal to the God of battles, and bring all the force that he could muster to oppose the progress of Pollock's army through the passes. He now moved down to Boodkhak, and from that place summoned Troup and Bygrave to his camp. It appeared to him that the English officers might render him essential service in the negotiation of terms, if the tide of victory turned against him. On the morning of the 11th they entered his camp at Boodkhak. That evening he summoned them to his presence, and was for some time in earnest consultation with them. He declared that he had no wish to oppose the progress of the British army, but that he had compromised himself too far to recede, and that the people would not hear of submission. The English officers assured him that his defeat was certain; and that opposition to our advance would only occasion an useless expenditure of life. "I know," said the Sirdar, "that I have everything to lose; but it is too late to recede." He declared that he was indifferent as to the result. The issue of the contest was in the hands of God, and it little mattered to him who was the victor.

On the following morning he sent for Troup, and announced that he and Bygrave must accompany him to Koord-Caubul. Arrived at that place, intelligence of the intended halt of Pollock's army at Tezeen reached the Sirdar. The Afghan chiefs had intended to make their last decisive stand at Koord-Caubul; but the halt of the advancing army seemed to indicate indecision,

* They required Troup, however, to write a letter to General Pollock making known Akbar Khan's wishes, and inclosing one from the Sirdar himself. The letters were sent, but the messengers returned some days afterwards, declaring that they had not been able to penetrate the British camp.—[*Captain Troup to General Pollock. MS. Correspondence.*]

and it was rumoured that difficulties had arisen to obstruct the progress of the force. On this, he at once determined to move on to Tezeen; and sent to Troup to announce his intentions.* The English officer sought and obtained permission to return to Ali Mahomed's fort; and Akbar Khan went forward to do battle with the British.†

On the 13th the two forces met. Great were the advantages of the ground to the Afghan levies. The valley of Tezeen is commanded on all sides by lofty hills; and the chiefs had posted their jezailchees on every available height. Indeed, on that morning of the 13th of September, Pollock's camp was encircled by the enemy; and it was plain that every effort had been made to turn the natural defences of the country to the best possible account. There was a hard day's work before Pollock's army; but never were a finer body of troops in finer condition, or more eager for the work before them. All arms had now a chance of distinguishing themselves—the cavalry on the plain, the infantry on the hills, and the artillery everywhere. Fortunately the enemy's horse entered the valley, attracted by the hope of plundering our baggage. The opportunity so eagerly desired by the dragoons was now at hand. The British squadrons were let loose upon the Afghan horsemen. The Native cavalry followed. There was a brilliant and successful charge. The enemy turned and fled; but the sabres of the dragoons fell heavily upon them; and many were cut up in the flight.

The infantry were not less successful. Gallantly they ascended the heights on either side of the pass, and

* Bygrave had before gone on to Tezeen with Sir-Bolund Khan.

† *Captain Troup to General Pollock. MS. Correspondence. See Appendix.*

gallantly the Afghans advanced to meet them. The stormers of the 13th Light Infantry clomb the hills on the right; the 9th and 31st on the left; and as they went, hotly and thickly upon them poured the iron rain from the Afghan jezails. But never, ~~for a moment,~~ beneath the terrible fire that greeted them, as they pushed up the hill-side, did these intrepid soldiers waver for a moment. They knew that their muskets were no match for the Afghan jezails. The enemy, indeed, seemed to deride them. So, having reached the hill-top, they fixed their bayonets, and charged with a loud hurrah. The cold steel took no denial. Down went the Afghan marksmen before the English bayonets; the foremost men stood to be pierced, and the rest, awed by the fall of their comrades, and the desperate resolution of the British troops, fled down the hill in confusion. The strength of the Afghan force was broken; but the work of our fighting men was not done. All through the day a desultory warfare was kept up along the ridges of these tremendous hills. The Afghans occupying the highest ground, fired down upon our infantry, hiding themselves when they could behind the rocks, and shrinking now from a closer contest. Never did British troops display a higher courage in action, or a more resolute perseverance. Nobly did the Native Sepoy vie with the European soldier; and nowhere was there a finer sight than where Broadfoot with his sappers clambered up the steepest ascents under the hottest fire, and drove before them the stalwart Afghans—giants beside the little Goorkhas who pressed so bravely upon them. Many gallant feats were done that day; and many an Afghan warrior died the hero's death on his native hills, cheered by the thought that he was winning Paradise by such martyrdom. Desperate was the effort to keep back the invaders from clearing the heights of the Huft-

Kotul; but the British troops, on that day, would have borne down even stouter opposition. The Huft-Kotul was mounted; and three cheers burst from the victors as they reached the summit of that stupendous ascent.

A more decisive victory was never gained. The Afghan chiefs had brought out their best fighting men against us. They had done their best to turn the difficulties of the country to good account against the strangers. Their people were at home in these tremendous defiles; whilst few of our troops had ever seen them—few were accustomed to the kind of warfare which now alone could avail. There was everything to stir into intense action all the energies of the Barukzye chief and his followers. They were fighting in defence of their hearths and altars; the very existence of the nation was at stake. It was the last hope of saving the capital from the grasp of an avenging army. But with everything to stimulate and everything to aid him, Akbar Khan could offer no effectual resistance to the advance of Pollock's retributory force. The Afghans were fairly beaten on their own ground, and in their own peculiar style of warfare. It has been often said that our troops were maddened by the sight of the skeletons of their fallen comrades, and that they were carried onward by the irrepressible energy of revenge. It is true, that all along the line of country, from Gundamuck to Koord-Caubul, there rose up before the eyes of our advancing countrymen hideous evidences of the great January massacre—enough to kindle the fiercest passions in the hearts of the meekest men. But I believe that, if no such ghastly spectacles had lain in the path of the advancing army, the forward feeling would have glowed as strongly in the breasts of every soldier of Pollock's force.

The struggle was now at an end. Akbar Khan saw that the game was up, and that it was useless to attempt

to bring together the scattered fragments of his routed army. Taking Captain Bygrave with him as the companion of his flight, he fled to the Ghorebund valley. The fighting men, who had opposed us at Tezeen, were now in disordered masses, hurrying homewards along their mountain paths, and seeking safety in places remote from the track of the avenging army, whilst Pollock marched onwards with his regiments in orderly array,* and on the 15th of September encamped on the Caubul race-course.†

* Nothing could have been better than the conduct of the troops throughout the whole of these operations. "I think no officer," wrote Pollock, in a private letter, on the 23rd of September, "could possibly have had finer regiments under his command than I have, and to them do I owe all my success, which, as far as I am able to judge, has been so far complete. I hope the Governor-General may think so, and I shall be satisfied." In this letter, the difficulties with which Pollock had to contend, from the scarcity of cattle, are thus detailed. "I have had," he wrote, "great difficulties to contend against even to the last, from the great want of carriage-cattle. At Gundamuck, after my first engagement with the enemy, I found myself so reduced in cattle, that, to enable me to take on only fourteen days' supplies, I was obliged to leave at that place two horse-artillery guns, two squadrons of cavalry, and two wings of Native infantry; and yet with all this, all the camp-followers, public and private, were compelled to carry eight days' supplies. The fighting men carried three. The 1st Cavalry carried eight days' supplies on their horses. The rest of the cavalry carried three or four days'. In this way we were enabled to move. . . . . The night before I left Gundamuck, I received an official letter and a survey report, setting forth that the whole of the camels of one regiment were unserviceable, and that they could not get up even without their loads. This was rather provoking, for I have only three Native regiments with me. My answer was short. 'Tell the commanding officer, that if his regiment can't march, he will relieve the two wings ordered to remain behind, and who are willing to go forward on any terms.' The regiment marched, and I heard no more about their camels. After our last engagement with the enemy (it was a severe struggle) we had 160 killed and wounded; and again carriage was in requisition. The spare horses of the cavalry were had recourse to; and I lent my own riding-horse to one poor fellow."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

† It should have been mentioned, in the note ‡ to page 567, that during the advance of Pollock's army on Caubul, a detachment of troops was posted at Dakha (on the Peshawur side of Jellalabad) as well as at Gundamuck and Jellalabad.

CHAPTER II.

[May—September: 1842.]

The Advance from Candahar—The Relief of Kelat-i-Ghilzye—Reappearance of Aktur Khan—General Action with the Douranees—Surrender of Sufder Jung—The Evacuation of Candahar—Disaster near Mookoor—The Battle of Goaine—The Recapture of Ghuznee—Flight of Shumshoodeen Khan—Arrival at Caubul.

WHILST the force under General Pollock was fighting its way from Jellalabad to Caubul, and carrying everything before it, the Candahar division, under General Nott, was making a victorious march upon the same point along the countries to the westward.

But it is necessary that, before I trace its progress to the capital, the circumstances which preceded the evacuation of Candahar should be briefly narrated. It has been stated that, in obedience to the instructions contained in the government letters of the 19th of April, a brigade under Colonel Wymer had been despatched to Khelat-i-Ghilzye to rescue the garrison there beleaguered, and to destroy the defences of the place. On the 19th of May, Wymer's force left Candahar. It seems that the Ghilzyes had obtained information of the intended movement, and determined to anticipate the attempted relief by making a desperate, and, as they

believed, decisive assault upon the place. Accordingly they prepared a number of scaling ladders, practised escalading, and, in the dim twilight of early morning on the 21st of May, advanced in two heavy columns, each 2000 strong, to the attack. Ascending the mound where the slope was easiest, they placed their scaling ladders against the walls, and gallantly mounted to the assault. Three times they ascended to the crest of the works, and three times they were nobly repulsed by Craigie and his men. The heavy showers of grape and musket-shot which the garrison poured in upon them did not deter those desperate assailants—they went on again and again to the attack, and were bayoneted on the parapets. For more than an hour this desperate struggle lasted; and then the assailants, whose impetuous courage had been overmatched by the steady gallantry of Craigie's garrison, gave way and abandoned the assault. The failure was dearly purchased. More than a hundred dead bodies were found at the foot of the works; and it was computed that the entire loss of the enemy did not fall short of five hundred men. Not a man of the British garrison was killed.

Before sunset the Ghilzyes had dispersed. Colonel Wymer, when he reached Khelat-i-Ghilzye, had nothing to do but quietly to withdraw the garrison, and to destroy the works of the place. It was believed that the measure, as indicating the intentions of the British Government to withdraw from Afghanistan, would create considerable sensation throughout the country, and greatly embolden the enemy. But the Afghans seemed rather to wonder why we had not extricated the garrison of Khelat-i-Ghilzye before, and did not associate it with any ideas of the general policy to be pursued by the British.

But before Wymer had returned from the northward, the Douranees had again made trial of their strength

in the field, and had again been signally beaten. Aktur Khan, the Zemindawer chief, who throughout the preceding year had been keeping the western districts of Afghanistan in a state of continual turmoil, and who had more than once given battle to our troops, was now again in the field against us. He had, since his return from Herat, whither he had betaken himself for safety, watched the progress of events without openly committing himself, and had hitherto shown little disposition to link himself with the Douranee cause. Indeed, at the beginning of May he had made overtures to the British authorities, and offered, if they would confirm him in the government of Zemindawer, to attack the Douranee camp.* As the month advanced, his conduct became more and more mysterious.† He was in constant communication with the Douranee chiefs, and yet at the same time he was professing the strongest friendship for the British Government, and offering to break up the Douranee camp. But before the expiration of the month he threw off the mask, joined his brother-chiefs with a considerable body of fighting men, and

* "*May* 8.—I received letters from Aktur Khan, and from our people at Ghirisk. The former maintains his tone of friendliness, and promises to send away Sydul Khan from Zemindawer. He also offers to attack the Douranee camp, if we will let bygones be bygones, and confirm him in the government of Zemindawer. He evidently does not think it for his interests at present to join the almost desperate Douranee cause; but still I cannot believe that he would, for our sakes, commit himself openly with his brother-chiefs."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

† "Aktur Khan's proceedings have throughout, and indeed still wear an appearance of mystery. He has been, ever since his return from Herat, in active communication with the Douranees, but he has at the same time been sending, without any solicitation on our part, repeated messages to us, professing friendship, and proposing to break up the Ghazee camp. He is known to be personally ambitious, and most disinclined, therefore, to act in subordination to the other Douranee chiefs. He has also an old grudge against Meerza Ahmed, and we have thus thought it possible that he might be sincere to us, his natural enemies, and false to the Douranees, his natural friends. After playing fast and loose for some two months, he has at length actually joined the Douranee camp."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal: May* 25, 1842.]

took the command of the van-guard of the Douranee force.

It was obvious now that we were on the eve of another conflict. The Ghazees moved down on the Urghundab, and made arrangements to concentrate their troops in the neighbourhood of Baba-Wullee. It seemed probable that they would be able to raise the neighbouring tribes against us; and bring into the field a body of 4000 or 5000 men. Weakened by the absence of Wymer's brigade, and remembering the danger to which the city had been exposed when he last moved out to attack the Douranee camp, Nott determined to halt the detachment which he was about to despatch to the Kojuck to bring up the carriage which had been assembled for the withdrawal of his force. The enemy had chosen their time wisely and well. They believed that, in the absence of some of his best regiments, and nearly the whole of his cavalry force, Nott would be little able to hold Candahar and to do battle with the Douranee force in the open field. So they neared the city; and on the 29th of May seemed to invite the contest.

Aktur Khan had drawn into his hands the chief control of the force. What were his designs, at this time, it is not easy to determine. On the 27th he had again made overtures to the British authorities, offering to seize Meerza Ahmed, and to do his best to dissolve the Douranee force. At all events, if he could not accomplish this, he would, he said, on the first attack of the British, draw off his own followers, and then, taking advantage of their discomfiture, fall on their rear and plunder their baggage. But these offers were thrown away upon Nott and Rawlinson. They had no faith in the man.

Early on the morning of the 29th of May the enemy began to appear in the neighbourhood of Candahar—

hovering about the cantonments, and carrying off our baggage-cattle. As the day advanced, their numbers increased; but it was still believed by the General that they were only reconnoitring our position, and that they would not then give battle to our troops. Under this impression, Colonel Stacy, with two regiments of infantry and four guns, had been sent out to sweep away the intruders. It happened that his movements deceived the enemy. Believing at one time that he was retreating, the Ghazees pushed forward and occupied some rocky heights to the west of our cantonments, from which they opened a distant fire on our line. These movements were seen from the city.* It was obvious that the enemy were determined to bring on an engagement. So Nott sent out the 41st Queen's and eight guns; and an hour after mid-day mounted his horse and rode out to take the command of his troops. Rawlinson went with him.

Covered by the fire of the guns, the light companies were now ordered to storm the heights. The work was done rapidly and well. Standing out in bold relief against the sky, the forms of our stormers were soon seen upon the ridge of the hills; and as the enemy were driven down, Chamberlaine's Horse swept round amongst them and cut them up with heavy slaughter. Rawlinson then took the Parsewan Horse to clear the hillocks, to the right, of the detached bodies of the enemy which still clung to them, and Tait, with his Horse, was sent to support him. The Parsewan Horse charged gallantly;

* "The view from the look-out in the city," wrote Rawlinson in his journal, "was now very fine. The hillocks on the right were crowned with masses of horsemen, numbering apparently about 1500—a crowd of footmen occupied the rocky heights in front of our line and beyond, the shoulder of the Peer-Paee-Mal hill was covered with human beings thick as a flight of locusts, bodies of horse continually debouching round the shoulder and pushing on to join their comrades on the right."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

but the ground was difficult, and the enemy fled towards the mouth of the Baba-Wullee Pass. Rawlinson pushed on in hot pursuit; but turning off to follow a party of the enemy's horse, who seemed to have missed the outlet, well-nigh cut down or captured Mahomed Atta himself, who was afterwards known to have been at the head of them.

The rout of the enemy was complete.* But the movements of our troops were too slow to turn it to good account. The Ghazees made for the Baba-Wullee Pass. They had barricaded this pass with stones, and they had thrown up a strong breast-work in another direction, intending them as defences to lie between the British position and their own. But now, instead of finding these works in their front, they found them in their rear. They had not intended that the battle should be fought so near to the walls of Candahar. It was their design to take up a position within these defences; but, emboldened by the stories of the scouts, who had reported that we were too weak to operate beyond the walls, they had determined to pitch their camp in the vicinity of the cantonment and to invest Candahar. Had our guns been pushed on with sufficient activity, the enemy would have found the barricade which they had erected for their defence a terrible obstruction on their retreat. But the

* Nott, in his public despatches, was always somewhat chary of his praise, but in his private letters he delighted to dwell upon the achievements of his Sepoy regiments. Writing to Hammersley about this affair of the 29th of May, he said: "You will hear enough of our affair of the 29th with the enemy. The troops behaved well, and I am really surprised that our loss was so trifling; but I have remarked that the Afghans fire high. Our Sepoys are noble fellows—1000 are fully equal to 5000 Afghans or more. A detail of the 1st Cavalry, under Chamberlaine, behaved very well indeed. The enemy had 8000 men in position and 2000 in reserve. We had 1500 of all arms in the field. The enemy have broken up. I expect Wymer back in a day or two, when I will drive the rebels out of the Candahar district. How I should like to go to Caubul! It is wonderful that the people in Hindostan should be so panic-struck; and they seem to believe that our Sepoys cannot stand the Afghans. Now I am quite sure, and should like to try it to-morrow, that 5000 Bengal Sepoys would lick 25,000 Afghans."—[*General Nott to Lieut. Hammersley: June* 2, 1842. *MS. Correspondence.*]

greater number of them effected their escape; and Nott, contented with his victory, drew off his troops.*

On the following day Stacy went out with a brigade, and Rawlinson took the Parsewan Horse to the banks of the river. The enemy's horse had not wholly disappeared; and it was believed that they might again be drawn into another skirmish. But they were not inclined for more fighting. As our skirmishers advanced, they fell back and crossed the river. The chiefs held a council of war, and the day was spent in stormy debate. But when the shades of evening fell upon them, they had matured no plan of operations. They broke up without a decision. Again they met on the following day. One plan and then another was discussed. Some proposed that they should proceed to Caubul. Some that they should assemble in Zemindawer. Others recommended that they should hold their ground upon the Urghundab; but the greater number were of opinion that it would be more expedient to move off to the northern district, and there await the issue of events at the capital. Many of them sent into the British camp to ask for terms; and it was obvious that, although the suspicion of our approaching departure kept up considerable excitement throughout the country, the Douranees had now arrived at the inevitable conclusion that it was useless any longer to contend with us in the field.†

* It is said that the widow of Akrum Khan, who was executed at Candahar in the preceding autumn, was in the field, riding her husband's charger, and bearing a Ghazee standard. Lieutenant Rattray writes: "As the enemy drew near, a white object was observed in the centre of their front ranks, which seemed the rallying-point for the Ghazees, chieftains, moollahs, kettle-drums, and standard-bearers. This proved to be no less a personage than the slaughtered widow of the heroic Akrum Khan. Throwing aside her timid nature with her 'Boorkha,' she had left the sacred privacy of the Zenana for the foremost rank in the battle-field, had bestrode her husband's charger, and with his standard in her hand had assembled the tribes."

† *Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.* It appears that early in June the enemy's suspicions of our intended

In the mean while, Prince Sufder Jung was waiting a favorable opportunity to cast himself upon the mercy of his enemies. On the day after the action of the 29th of May, he had received a letter from his brother, Futteh Jung, at Caubul, urging him to throw himself upon the protection of the British; and the young Prince, weary of the peril-laden life he had been leading, and seeing clearly the hopelessness of the cause to which he had attached himself, determined to follow the advice of his brother. So, on the following day, he despatched a messenger with a note to Rawlinson, informing him that he was on the point of mounting his horse to ride into the British camp. But before the British officer's answer reached him, Meerza Ahmed and the chiefs discovered his intentions, and carried him off with them across the river. His resolution, however, was not to be shaken. The chiefs made him a close prisoner, and openly denounced him as a traitor. But he continued to make overtures to Rawlinson, and at last effected his escape. On the 18th of June a letter was brought into the British camp, announcing that he had forsaken the Douranees, and had made a night-journey to Baba-Wullee. Rawlinson reported the circumstance to Nott, and the General consented to receive the submission of the boy.* So, on

withdrawal were confirmed in a curious manner, and that they seemed then to think of terms. Rawlinson says: "It appears that when the entire party of the Douranee chiefs were on the point of dissolution, a Hindostanee deserter joined the camp from the town, saying that he and his comrades had received letters from India, stating positively that orders had been sent up for our retirement. The man, in fact, explained in detail all our plans—the abandonment and destruction of Khelat—the march of the brigade to bring up camels from Quettah—and he even asserted that we were preparing to destroy the four corner bastions of the city and the gateways, and that we should leave in a month hence. This decided the chiefs on dropping their offers of accommodation, and holding on until events became more developed."

* It is to be borne in mind that the supreme political authority had been vested by the Indian Government in the General. Nott, however, was not inclined to interfere in the political management of affairs, and Rawlinson continued to conduct them very much as he had done before the order was issued; but he

the morning of the 19th, the British political chief rode out with a party of Parsewan Horse to the mouth of the Baba-Wullee Pass, and, through a crowd of excited gazers, who lined the thoroughfares from the cantonments to the city, brought the Prince into Candahar.*

No easy part was that which Rawlinson was now called upon to play. The conflicting claims and interests of the two Princes greatly distracted and perplexed him. Justice and policy appeared to be at variance with each other. Timour was a well-intentioned man; his fidelity had never been questioned. He was the eldest son of Shah Soojah, and his claims to the throne of Caubul were more valid, therefore, than those of either of his brothers. But he was utterly without influence. Convinced that he could never make his way with the chiefs or people of Afghanistan, the British authorities were unwilling to support his pretensions. Even for the governorship of Candahar they held him to be incompetent; and now that Sufder Jung had returned to his allegiance, they desired, on the earliest fitting opportunity, to place the administration in his

referred all important questions to the General, who, for the most part, deferred to the opinions of his more experienced political associate.

* "*June* 19.—I went out this morning at daylight with the Parsewan Horse and Tait's Cavalry to the Baba-Wullee Pass. Met Sufder Jung, and brought him back with me to the town. The curiosity evinced by the Candaharees on the occasion was something quite extraordinary — in general, a profound apathy prevails on all these matters, but to-day, to my surprise, the entire population thronged out to see the spectacle, and from the cantonments to the city the road was lined with crowds of gazers. I think this unwonted interest is to be attributed, however, to the excitement produced by the recent disturbances rather than to any popular admiration for the individual. I found Sufder Jung considerably improved; but in the first bustle of reception I could not satisfy myself of his real views and feelings. I took him to breakfast with Prince Timour, where I understand a somewhat singular scene occurred between the brothers. The only feeling they possess in common is, that British support is necessary to protect them from the Barukzyes — on all other points they are diametrically opposed. The General insisted on Sufder Jung's followers being disarmed, which, of course, was anything but agreeable to the boy, though he did not venture to offer any objection."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

hands. The Candahar force was under orders to return to Hindostan, and the best means of disposing of Prince Timour was by the quiet removal of his Highness to the British provinces. This was not yet to be openly announced to the Prince, for it was expedient that the measure of withdrawal should not be publicly declared; but Rawlinson hoped, that when the time came, he would be able to persuade Timour to accompany the army to India, and to leave Sufder Jung in possession of Candahar. In the mean while, both Princes were uneasy and dissatisfied. Jealous of his younger brother, Timour protested against his being permitted to mediate for the Douranee chiefs, or to interfere with the Candahar Government; whilst Sufder Jung was continually complaining of the incertitude of his position, and importuning Rawlinson to come to some definite explanation with him.*

So Rawlinson determined to temporise. Putting off from day to day the adjustment of these differences, he trusted to the chapter of accidents, and ere long found something written down in his favour. Before the end of June, it was announced at Candahar that Futteh Jung had been overcome by the Barukzyes at Caubul, and that he was in effect a mere prisoner in their hands. The intelligence, as regarded British interests in general, was supposed to be unfavorable; but it went far to diminish the difficulties which the presence of the two Princes at Candahar arrayed against the British authorities. "Whilst Futteh Jung's star was on the ascendant," wrote Rawlinson in his journal, "it was equally difficult to manage Timour and Sufder Jung; but now they both feel that they are entirely dependent upon us for support, and are disposed, in consequence, to lay aside their private jealousies."

* *Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*

The three first weeks of July passed away; and Nott was preparing for his retirement from Afghanistan. Major Clarkson had, at the end of June, brought up the convoy of camels from Quettah. The supply of carriage and provisions for the movement of the army had now reached its necessary amount. Everything was in train for withdrawal, when the Governor-General's letter of the 4th of July was put into Nott's hands. He saw at once the weight of responsibility that it threw upon him; but he did not shrink from assuming the burden. Cheerfully taking it up, he wrote to the Governor-General on the 26th of July: "Having well considered the subject of your Lordship's letter of the 4th instant; having looked at the difficulties in every point of view, and reflected on the advantages which would attend a successful accomplishment of such a move, and the moral influence it would have throughout Asia, I have come to a determination to retire a portion of the army under my command *viâ* Ghuznee and Caubul."

The Candahar force was now to be divided. A portion of it was to be sent to Quettah and Sukkur under General England; and the remainder, under General Nott, was to "retire" to India by the route of Ghuznee, Caubul, and Jellalabad. The heavy guns and six pieces of the Shah's artillery were to be sent down with England's column, and with it were to be despatched the Bombay Infantry, two companies of Bengal Artillery, three regiments of the late Shah's force, and some details of Irregular Horse. Nott would not part with one of those beautiful Sepoy regiments which had fought so well for him ever since he had commanded the Candahar division; nor could he think of suffering the 40th Queen's to be disunited from their old comrades. But of the 41st Queen's he wrote to Lord Ellenborough: "I certainly could have wished to have taken her

Majesty's 41st Regiment with me, knowing the great consequence of the adventurous march before me. But when I look to Sindh, and to the want of confidence in our brave troops shown by certain officers, I must give up that wish, however desirable, to ensure the safety of the division which I am not to accompany." But he subsequently changed his mind, and took the 41st with him. Two or three days passed; some slight preparations betokening departure were made; the old and unserviceable guns were destroyed; the repairs which were going on, on the works, were arrested; and then it was publicly announced that the force was to hold itself in readiness to return to India. But by what route it was to retire was still a secret. Speculation was busy throughout the garrison. There were all sorts of rumours and conjectures, and then it was declared that Nott's column was to make its way across the country by the route of Dehra Ismael Khan. It soon, however, was obvious that this was nothing more than a report, which might have its uses, and the heart of every soldier in Nott's division soon beat with chivalrous emotion at the thought, that the General under whom they had so long and so gloriously served was about to lead them on to the re-conquest of Afghanistan.*

And now again came up for adjustment, rather than for consideration, the question of the disposal of the Princes. Timour was eager to proceed with the British force to Caubul, and hoped to be placed upon the throne by

* "The particular object to be gained by adopting this latter route it was difficult to divine, and the generally-received impression among the officers—perhaps because the one most desired—was that our General was to lead us on to Caubul, and that the mention of Dehra Ismael Khan was merely to throw dust in the eyes of the natives. Indeed, it was afterwards accounted for, whether justly or not, by this fact, that if the Lohaunies, upon whom we were dependent for a large proportion of our camels, had had an idea that our intention was to have marched on Ghuznee and Caubul, they would have declined accompanying our army."—[*Neill's Recollections.*]

his old supporters. His fidelity at least deserved our support—but something else was required to induce the British authorities to identify themselves with the interests of the Prince. It was fortunate for Rawlinson that at this time the decision was not left in his hands. On the 29th of July letters were received from the Governor-General, emphatically expressing his opinion of the inexpediency of permitting the Prince to accompany the army in the direction of Caubul, or even of permitting him to remain at Candahar. His presence at Caubul, it was said, might greatly embarrass our proceedings there; and though it would be advantageous for us that he should establish his independent authority at Candahar, there seemed so little likelihood of his being able to maintain his position after the departure of the British troops, that, on the whole, it was the most expedient course that he should accompany that portion of the force which was to proceed by the way of Sindh to the provinces of India. The communication of these resolutions to the Shaz-zadah was a painful duty; and when Rawlinson announced them, they produced an explosion very foreign to the passive nature of the apathetic Prince.*

On the 7th of August the British force evacuated Candahar. There were no demonstrations of ill-will on the part of the inhabitants. No acts of licentiousness were committed by the soldiery.† The movement was

* "*July* 29.—I duly communicated these instructions to Prince Timour in the evening, and the interview was as disagreeable a one as I ever went through. His Royal Highness had previously made up his mind that he was to accompany the force to Caubul, and on our withdrawal that he would be left by us on the throne. The sudden change in all his views which my communication involved, roused him for once from his natural insensibility, and he spoke his mind pretty plainly."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

† "*Aug.* 7.—We have this evening evacuated Candahar in the most regular and orderly manner conceivable. There has been no indication of ill-will on the part of the citizens, no disposition on the part of the Sepoys to indulge in military license.

effected in the most orderly and peaceable manner. The soldiers and the citizens were seen embracing each other.* Before night closed upon the scene, Prince Timour moved out of the citadel, and Sufder Jung remained in possession of Candahar.

On the following day, completing their Commissariat arrangements, Nott and England remained in camp under the city walls. Many of the most influential people of the new government waited upon Rawlinson, seeking his advice. On the 9th, Nott commenced his march to the northward, and England prepared to move in the opposite direction. The latter was dissatisfied with the components of his force. He applied to Nott for an European regiment to accompany him, and received in reply an indignant rebuke.

From Candahar to Mookoor the progress of Nott's division was easy and uneventful. But few traces of the recent excitement were discernible along the line of march. The villages seemed wonderfully tranquil. The villagers brought in their supplies more freely than our officers had ever ventured to expect. Every precaution was taken by the General to prevent the commission by his troops of acts of lawless depredation. He declared, that if any soldier were caught in the act of plundering, or returning with plunder in his possession, he would hang the offender, and remove the officer to whose regiment he might belong from the command of his corps.

On the 27th of August the force arrived at Mookoor.

Instead of the tumult, the confusion, the general excitement to which I used to look forward as inseparable from our evacuation of the capital of a province where so many conflicting interests prevail, and where a large part of the military population has been for so long a time arrayed in arms against us, I have been agreeably disappointed in finding a profound tranquillity, and every appearance of a mutually good understanding."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

* *General Nott to the Adjutant-General.*

Up to this point—a distance of 160 miles—not a shot had been fired. But there were symptoms now of more active work for our troops. Some days before their arrival at Mookoor, Shumshoodeen Khan had moved out of Ghuznee with a party of 500 horse and two guns, to collect revenue in the adjacent country. He was ignorant at that time of our advance; but when the tidings reached him, he prepared at once to contest the progress of the British force; threw all his energies into the work of raising the country between Ghuznee and Mookoor; and made arrangements "for all the chiefs to rendezvous at the latter place, and fight us at the source of the Turnuck."*

But the British force approached Mookoor; and Shumshoodeen Khan was not ready to receive them. The chiefs had not come to the rendezvous. His preparations were not completed. He had fallen back to the vicinity of Oba, and there the chiefs were flocking to his standard. But, as Nott advanced that sultry morning through a thick haze upon Mookoor, it was plain to him that he was in an enemy's country. The villages were deserted. Supplies were not brought into his camp. He was compelled to send his cavalry out to forage. It was plain, too, that the enemy had wisely chosen the ground on which they had determined to give us battle. There was no more defensible position on the whole line of country from Candahar to Caubul than that at the source of the Turnuck, which Shumshoodeen Khan had selected as his point of defence.†

* *Major Rawlinson to Major Outram: Ghuznee, Sept. 7. MS. Correspondence.*

† "We accordingly marched on unmolested to our encamping-ground, and as we passed the source of the Turnuck, with the precipitous hill on our left, and the strong grounds intersected with bogs and canals, and supported by forts upon our right, every one acknowledged that there was no better defensible position on the entire road from Candahar to Caubul."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

The next day was an eventful one. On the morning of the 28th of August the force advanced from Mookoor. The rear-guard had scarcely moved from their encamping-ground when the enemy came down upon them. Nott ordered out his irregular cavalry,* who cut up some fifty of the enemy's footmen; and, but for an interposing ravine, would have destroyed the whole. Without further molestation the force reached its halting-ground and encamped. It was known that Shumshoodeen was somewhere in the neighbourhood; but through the thick haze which enveloped the camp, it was impossible to determine his position. The camels went out to graze. The grass-cutters went out to obtain forage for their horses. Everything was going on in camp after the wonted fashion, when, an hour before noon, a report came in that Delamain's grass-cutters were being cut to pieces by the enemy. Delamain waited for no orders—never paused to inquire into the truth of the story that was brought to him†—but at once ordered his troopers into their saddles, and rode out, with all the disposable cavalry, in search of an imaginary foe.

He soon found that it was a false alarm. His grass-cutters were not in the hands of the enemy. But he went on to reconnoitre, and about three miles from camp came up with a party of the enemy's footmen on the plain. Some twenty of them were cut down by our troopers, and the remainder put to confusion and flight. Delamain went after them in hot pursuit, and coming to the foot of a range of hills, turned the shoulder of one of them, and found that the heights were crowned, in considerable strength, by the enemy's jezailchees, who opened upon him a galling fire. He was falling

* Captain Christie commanded.

† He appears to have reported the movement to Nott, but the report never reached the General.

back, in orderly retreat, when a body of the enemy's Horse, about 150 strong, showed themselves on the ridge of a hill, flaunting a white standard. Delamain at once determined to attack them. A squadron of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry charged up the hill; but a hot fire from a party of jezailchees, who suddenly appeared on their flanks, saluted them as they advanced; and then the enemy's Horse poured down upon them with tremendous effect. Captain Reeves was shot near the foot of the hill. Captain Bury and Lieutenant Mackenzie gained the ridge; but fell beneath the sabres of the Afghan horsemen. The troopers now seeing their officers fall, borne down by the weight of the Afghan Horse, and suffering severely from the fire of the jezailchees, turned and fled down the hill. Their companions at the foot of the hill caught the contagion from them. The panic spread, and the whole body of British Horse were soon in disastrous flight. Riding each other down in wild confusion, they were not easily reduced to order. The loss among them had been severe. Two officers were killed, and three wounded; and fifty-six of our men had been killed or disabled in the fight.

In the mean while, exaggerated stories of the disaster had spread throughout Nott's camp. Messenger after messenger had come to the General, and reported that the enemy were in immense force, and that Delamain and his cavalry had been annihilated.* Twice he sent

* "The General first learnt of what was going on about two o'clock, when an orderly came back from Captain Delamain reporting that no enemy was in sight, and asking for orders. The General immediately ordered the troops back. Shortly afterwards Lieutenant Brett galloped in, saying that about 2000 of the enemy had appeared in front of Captain Delamain, and were too strongly posted on some rising ground to be attacked. The General again ordered the troops back. A third orderly came galloping in, to say the cavalry were engaged; and very shortly afterwards other men came from the field, declaring our Horse to be annihilated. The General now went out with all the troops, for the enemy's force was reported to be above 7000, and we expected them to be flushed with

out instructions for the troops to return to camp. At last it was reported to him that the enemy were 7000 strong, and that Delamain, if not already destroyed, was in imminent peril. So Nott took out his army and moved against the enemy—expecting to find them flushed with success and eager for a general action. But when they came upon the ground, it was found that the enemy had moved off. Their videttes alone were to be seen on the peaks of the hills.

But there was still work to be done. From some fortified villages in the neighbourhood of the field of action it was said that shots had been fired. The General marched upon them. In an attitude of abject submission the villagers came out and prayed for quarter. Nott granted the boon. But a company of the 40th Queen's was sent in to search the houses, where it was believed some plunder would be found. From the matchlocks of some Ghazees shots were fired as our soldiers entered the place. The result of the misdeed was terrible. The place was given up to carnage. The women and children were spared; but the men were indiscriminately butchered.* Not less than a hundred of

their success. The horse artillery reached first, and Leslie took the command. We came up shortly afterwards, and found the cavalry still in a body, but having evidently suffered a defeat."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

* "The General now turned down to some forts, from which some shots were reported to have been fired. The villagers all came out with Korans and ropes round their necks, praying for quarter. The General granted quarter, but sent in the light company of the 40th to search the houses. A shot was fired from some Ghazee in the place, and orders were then given for an indiscriminate massacre. The women and children were spared, but I suppose 100 of the villagers were butchered. I do not think the men were to blame—had they supposed themselves committed, they would have fled to the hills before the troops moved out, but no doubt there were *Ghazees* in the place, desperate men who had no wish to save their own lives, provided they could destroy an infidel, and to the infatuation of these few men were the others sacrificed. Five Commissariat camels were found inside, so that parties in the fort had certainly been plundering; and as we approached the place, I remarked a Moollah from one of the Boorjes, evidently haranguing the people and urging them to die as Ghazees. It has been a most unsatisfactory business altogether, and a few more such affairs will compromise us seriously." —[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

the villagers were massacred for the offences of a few men.

Whilst the General was thus employed, the cavalry, which had sustained so mortifying a defeat, were endeavouring, with the aid of the horse artillery and some infantry details, to rescue the bodies of their dead. The corpses were brought off; and then the entire force returned to camp. That evening the two European officers* received Christian burial. The wounded officers recovered.

"This was a bad beginning," wrote Rawlinson to Outram, "but we have amply redeemed it since." On the 30th of August the Candahar division was again engaged with the enemy; and with better success. On the preceding day, Shumshoodeen Khan had sent round the heads of the officers who had fallen in the action of the 28th,† and, greatly exaggerating the victory he had gained, endeavoured to raise the people against the infidels whom he had beaten so gloriously in the field. On that day considerable reinforcements joined him. He was seen on the hills to the right of Nott's camp, with four or five thousand men, and it was believed that he would attack our troops in the course of the morrow's march. The morrow came. Nott marched to Ghoaine. Shumshoodeen Khan moved parallel to him, and took up his position again on the hills to the right of the British camp. As every hour was increasing his numbers, he desired to postpone the inevitable collision. On the afternoon of the 30th

* Reeves and Bury—"Reeves was shot. Bury was cut down. Mackenzie received a severe sabre-wound in the elbow-joint of his right arm. . . . Ravenscroft had been shot before the charge; but the wound turns out not to be dangerous. Malet had a very narrow escape. His hunting-cap (round which a shawl was wound) saved him, but he was slightly wounded in the face. Christie was ridden over in the confusion and lost his horse, but was remounted by one of his Native officers and saved."—[*Major Rawlinson to Major Outram: Ghuznee, September 7, 1842. MS. Records.*]

† He declared that one of them was Nott's.

he is said to have mustered not less than 10,000 men.*

Not far from the ground on which Nott halted on that morning, was a fort held by the enemy which he determined to attack. But the day was sultry. The troops were exhausted by their march. So the General pitched his camp at once, and giving his troops a few hours to recruit and refresh themselves, postponed the attack to the afternoon. At three o'clock the General went out with the 40th Queen's, the 16th and 38th Native Infantry Regiments, all his cavalry details, Anderson's troop of Horse Artillery, two guns of Blood's battery, and two eighteen-pounders. The ground between our camp and the fort was difficult. Some time elapsed before the guns could be brought up to breaching distance. And, when at last they opened upon the fort, they made so little impression, that Shumshoodeen was persuaded by his chiefs not to shrink any longer from a general action with a force whose cavalry had been already beaten in the field, and whose artillery now seemed so little formidable. So, scattering his horsemen on both sides so as to outflank us, Shumshoodeen moved down with the main body of his infantry and his guns; and, planting the latter on the nearest height, opened a rapid and well-directed fire on the British columns.† Then Nott drew off his troops from the attack of the fort, and advanced in column to the right, flanked by Anderson's guns and Christie's Horse, upon the main body of Shumshoodeen's fighting men. On this the enemy crowded upon the other flank, keeping up a smart fire both from their guns and jezails; so Nott "changed front to the left, deployed, threw out skirmishers, and

* *Major Rawlinson to Major Outram: September 7, 1842. MS. Correspondence.*]

† Fired, however, from a height, the balls never ricocheted, and did little mischief.

advanced in line, supported by the guns."* For some time, the enemy seemed inclined to engage us, and kept up a sharp fire from their guns and jezails; but when our troops came to the charge, and pushed on with a loud and cheerful hurrah, they turned and fled before us. One of their guns broke down and was immediately captured. Christie, with his Horse, went off in pursuit of the other, sabred the drivers, and carried off the piece. Shumshoodeen's tents, magazines, and stores were found scattered about the plain. The chief himself fled to Ghuznee; and the tribes who had joined his standard now dispersed to their homes.

Nott halted upon his ground during the following day, and on the 1st of September resumed his march. On the 5th he was before Ghuznee. The day was spent in desultory fighting. Shumshoodeen, who had been reinforced from Caubul by Sultan Jan, occupied with a strong body of horse and foot some heights to the north-east of the fortress. The gay attire and fine chargers of the chiefs made them conspicuous even at a distance.† The gardens, the ravines, and water-courses were filled with jezailchees; and the city seemed to be swarming with men. Before encamping his force, Nott determined to clear the heights; and gallantly the work was done. Our troops ascended in noble style, and drove the enemy before them until every point was gained.‡ In the mean time the camp had been pitched. Two infantry regiments and two guns were left out to occupy the heights, and the remainder of the troops were then withdrawn.

Scarcely, however, had the troops entered their camp, when the great Ghuznee gun, the "Zubbur Jung," began to open upon it. It was plain that Nott had

* *Major Rawlinson to Major Outram: Sept. 7, 1842. MS. Records.*

† *Colonel Stacy's Narrative.*

‡ *General Nott's Official Despatch.*

taken up a position too near to the enemy's works. Fourteen shots were thrown into our camp without doing any mischief; but the warning was not thrown away. The tents were struck, and the camp was moved to another position, in the vicinity of the village of Roza.* The movement was not without danger;† but the enemy wanted spirit to turn it to good account—and in their new position our troops were secure.‡

Before sunset the firing had ceased. Sanders, the engineer, a man of rare talent, now began to make his arrangements for the siege of Ghuznee. It was not believed that the defence would be conducted with much vigour. The fort was very poorly manned. It was obvious that Shumshoodeen had trusted more to external operations. The tribes who had been summoned for the defence of the city had already begun to lose heart. When they saw our engineers at work busily constructing their batteries, they called upon Shumshoodeen to come within the walls, and take his share of the dangers of the siege. Vainly he represented that his cavalry

* "The extensive village or town of Roza is situated about two miles from Ghuznee, and is lovely to behold. When this city was taken by the force under my command, Roza was full of inhabitants—men, women, and children. My troops were encamped close to its walls. Its gardens and its houses were full of property; its barns and farmyards were well stored; its orchards were loaded with fruit; its vineyards bent beneath a rich and ripe vintage; the property taken from our murdered soldiers of the Ghuznee garrison was seen piled in its dwellings. . . . Four days the victorious Candahar army remained encamped close to this village, with all these temptations before it, and at its mercy; but not a particle of anything was taken from the Afghans. The fruit brought for sale was paid for at a rate far above its value. No man nor living thing was injured."—[*General Nott to the Adjutant-General: Lucknow, April* 4, 1843.]

† "An active and spirited enemy might have annoyed us exceedingly during this movement; but the Afghans appeared to have lost all heart from the affair of the morning, and a little cavalry skirmishing was all that occurred."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

‡ "The enemy appear to have been unable to traverse their big gun sufficiently to bring it to bear on our new position; and I suspect, also, they must have expended their shot, for the last two rounds which were fired as we were changing ground, and which fell short, were old shells of ours filled with earth."—[*Ibid.*]

were of greater service beyond the walls—vainly he set forth that as there was no barley in the city his horses could not be fed. They had made up their minds to evacuate the place; and when night closed in upon them, they moved out quietly by the water-gate of the city, and betook themselves to the hills. Seeing now that all was over, Shumshoodeen mounted his horse, and with a small party of followers set off for Caubul.

The engineers worked busily throughout the night; but as the batteries took shape under their hands, the stillness within the walls of Ghuznee aroused their suspicions. So at early dawn, with a party of some twenty men, North, the engineer, went down to reconnoitre; and finding the water-gate open, and the city apparently abandoned, sent intelligence to the party on the hill, and the 16th Regiment, which had remained out to protect the working parties, was marched down to occupy the place. They found it almost deserted. A few Hindoos and some Sepoys of the unfortunate 27th Regiment were the only occupants of Ghuznee.* And when, at early dawn, the officers of Nott's camp looked through their telescopes towards the citadel, they plainly saw our Sepoys on the ramparts. Soon the British flag was waving from the highest tower, and Shumshoodeen's artillery, worked by his enemies, was roaring out a royal salute in honour of their triumph. The General and his staff rode out from camp to inspect the place, and to make arrangements for its destruction. They found the city a mass of ruins; and in the houses which had been occupied by the officers of Palmer's garrison, many sorrowful mementoes of the sufferings they had endured, written or scratched on the walls. The citadel was in good repair, and every one who inspected it marvelled how it happened that Palmer had yielded it up, and

* Colonel Palmer and the other British officers had been carried to Caubul.

trusted himself and his men to the honour of his treacherous opponents.*

And now began the work of destruction. The artillery officers burst the enemy's guns, and the engineers ran mines and exploded them, under different parts of the works. After this, the town and citadel were fired. The wood-work soon ignited, and all through the night the flames of the burning fortress lit up the sky.

But there was something else now to be done. At the village of Roza, in the vicinity of Ghuznee, is the tomb of Sultan Mahmoud. A peculiar odour of sanctity is exhaled from that shrine. The priests, in whose guardianship it is held, have their traditions concerning it, in which the spurious greatly prevails. Its boasted antiquity is not supported by any credible evidence; and when Major Rawlinson carried to the examination of the inscriptions on the tomb all that profound knowledge and acute penetration which have since attained for him, in the Eastern and in the Western world, so wide a celebrity as the first of Oriental antiquarians, he had at once detected unmistakeable proofs of their belonging to a more recent period than the Moollahs had claimed for them.†. Still the shrine was a venerable

* The engineer officers fathomed the great well in the citadel, and found fifty-one feet of water in it. The bottom of the well is believed to be below the level of the river, so that it could not be drained. The fear of a failure of water ought not, therefore, to have driven Palmer to surrender. He might easily have secured the possession of the well by running a covered way from it, and protecting it with his guns.

† "I visited Roza in the evening, took another copy of the Cufic inscription upon Mahmoud's tomb, and had a long conversation with the Moollahs of the shrine. They assert that the tomb was constructed in its present state immediately after Mahmoud's death; that it remained intact during the Ghuzneevide and Ghooride dynasties, but that when Ghenghiz Khan, in his pursuit of Jellaladeen, threatened Ghuznee, the inhabitants heaped the tomb over with earth and ruins to preserve it from desecration, and deserted the place. They further pretend that the tomb thus remained buried until the time of Sultan Abdool Rizak, the grandson or great-grandson of Timour, to whom the spot was revealed in a vision, and who

one, and by the priesthood of Afghanistan held in no common esteem. The famous sandal-wood gates of Somnauth, which Mahmoud had carried off from their home in Guzerat, were deposited at the conqueror's tomb. Such at least had long been the popular faith; and among the priesthood and the people of Afghanistan, no one doubted that the trophies were genuine. It was reserved for European scepticism to cast discredit upon the reality of the sacred relics.

But, whether genuine or spurious, upon these gates Lord Ellenborough had fixed his desires. What he knew about them, where he had read of them, or by whom his attention was drawn to them, History cannot determine. It is sufficient that on the 4th of July, when the Governor-General wrote to General Nott, authorising him to "retire" to the provinces of India, by the route of Ghuznee, Caubul, and Jellalabad, he inserted in this memorable letter a paragraph instructing the General to despoil the tomb of Sultan Mahmoud. "You will bring away," he wrote, "from the tomb of Mahmoud of Ghuznee, his club, which hangs over it, and you

excavated and repaired the place, and dedicated to it rich endowments of lands. The endowments remained, they say, till the time of Nadir, when they were resumed by the government, and since that time the establishment at the tomb has been dependent for support upon a few gardens attached to the village, and on the voluntary offerings of devotees. The Moollahs uphold that the gates are really those of Somnauth, and that the inscriptions on the tomb date from the time of the son of Mahmoud; but this I hold to be morally impossible, for although the Cufic may possibly be of the form used in that age (which, however, I doubt), the inscription in the Nuskh character on the reverse of the sarcophagus, which details the precise date of the Sultan's death, is obviously of a much later age. From many circumstances, I feel positively certain that the tomb does not boast a higher antiquity than that of Sultan Abdool Rizak, who built the present walls of Ghuznee, and who is himself buried in a rude mausoleum on the outskirts of the village of Roza. The gates, therefore, are certainly not those of Somnauth; but it is of course the interest of the Moollahs to keep up the delusion, and to affect for the spot the odour both of sandal and sanctity. I was much struck by the crowds of pilgrims, Mussulman officers in our ranks, who thronged the tomb during my visit there to make the *Ziarut*."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

will bring away the gates of his tomb, which are the gates of the Temple of Somnauth." So, on the 8th of September, under Sanders's superintendence, the gates of Mahmoud's tomb were carried off, as tenderly as they could perform the duty, by a party of English soldiers. The Moollahs wept bitterly. But the shrine was not otherwise profaned; and the excitement which the spoliation created scarcely extended beyond the holy circle of the priesthood.*

Onward went Nott with his trophies. On the 12th he was before Sydeabad, where Woodburn and his men had been decoyed and massacred. This fort was at once destroyed; and another was fired by the camp-followers.†

* Major Rawlinson's account of the removal of the gates is very interesting. "We moved our camp," he writes, "this morning from the west to the east of Roza, preparatory to fairly setting out on the march to Caubul; and during the day the measure was carried into effect of removing the gates of Mahmoud's tomb. The work was performed by Europeans, and all possible delicacy was observed in not desecrating the shrine further than was absolutely necessary. The guardians of the tomb, when they perceived our object, retired to one corner of the court and wept bitterly; and when the removal was effected, they again prostrated themselves before the shrine and uttered loud lamentations. Their only remark was: 'You are lords of the country, and can of course work your will on us; but why this sacrilege? Of what value can these old timbers be to you; while to us they are as the breath of our nostrils?' The reply was: 'The gates are the property of India—taken from it by one conqueror, they are restored to it by another. We leave the shrine undesecrated, and merely take our own.' The sensation is less than might have been expected; and no doubt the Moollahs, who have had the guardianship of the tomb for generations in their family, will be the chief sufferers by the measure. I doubt if the Afghan tribes lately risen from obscurity to power, and holding the country rather as conquerors than citizens, possess that feeling of unity with each other, and identity with the interests they are supposed to protect, to view the abduction of the gates as a material outrage. The act may be made use of by the priesthood to excite fanaticism against us; but if the Barukzye chiefs could only retain their darling plaything, power, they would care little about the gates of Somnauth. With Shah Soojah the case was different. As the representative of the Suddozye family, aiming at the reconsolidation of monarchical power, he could not but view the demand of Runjeet Singh for the gates as a national indignity, powerfully affecting his own personal and political interests. At present, religious excitement is alone to be apprehended from our carrying off these trophies. I call them trophies, although assured that they are spurious, for the belief in their genuineness is, politically considered, the same as if they really were so."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

† The enemy harassed our camp at night, firing on our picquets, and

On the following day the enemy crowned the hills on both flanks; but not until the 14th did they appear in sufficient numbers, or assume such an attitude, as to bring on a collision with our advancing troops. On that day, near Mydan, Nott attacked them on the heights. It seemed that Shumshoodeen and Sultan Jan had determined to make a last stand for the defence of the capital; but having hitherto gained so little advantage by meeting us in the open country, had resolved to try the effect of opposing us at the gorge of the hills stretching towards Mydan. Here they had thrown up breast-works. Nott, however, precipitated the engagement, and carried the contest to the heights.* All arms were now engaged. The day was a busy one. It was one of doubtful victory on either side. The heights were carried; but they were not held. And when night fell upon the contending hosts, and the moon again lit up the scene, it seemed that the work was not yet done. A busy night was looked for as the sequel of a busy day. But suddenly the exertions of the enemy slackened. News of the defeat of Akbar Khan at Tezeen had reached the camp of the chiefs. They seemed to have changed their tactics, and to have moved off to Urghundeh—a place a few miles nearer to the capital.

working us other annoyance. "I doubt the policy," wrote Rawlinson, "of our firing a few forts and going no further. It exasperates the Afghans without intimidating them. I believe that we should either have abstained altogether from retribution, or have carried fire and sword before us."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

* "The attack upon the heights and their subsequent abandonment," says Major Rawlinson "might have led to unpleasant consequences, had not the news of Akbar's defeat arrived just in time to prevent Shumshoodeen from availing himself of this advantage. We were all'most anxious to have gone straight on to Mydan, and to have attacked Shumshoodeen in his position, throwing the light companies along the heights to the left, which were already in our possession, the whole way down to the Mydan gorge; but the General would not stir beyond the place he had first marked out for his encampment, for fear of harassing the cattle."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

The position which Shumshoodeen had intended to take up, at the gorge of the Mydan Pass, was found, when Nott advanced on the following day, to have been abandoned. But the day was a busy one. The tribes were up along the line of march and harassed us severely with their jezails. The breaking down of one of our guns crippled our movements and gave some temporary advantage to the enemy. All arms of our force distinguished themselves. The practice of the guns was excellent. The infantry clomb the heights with their wonted gallantry; and the cavalry did good service. The result was all that could be wished, and to the Afghans the day was a disastrous one. The Mydanees, who had been actively engaged in the Caubul insurrection, and some of whom had now accompanied Sultan Jan in his march to the southward, and been engaged, under his standard, with the British troops at Ghuznee, now sent a deputation to the General claiming his protection. Nott dismissed them with an indignant rebuke. Little protection was there in store for them. The Sepoys and camp-followers began to fire their forts, and at sunset six-and-twenty of them might have been counted lighting up the evening sky.

The march was now nearly at an end. Passing Urghundeh on the 16th of September — the place where, in the autumn of 1839, Dost Mahomed had planted his guns, and determined to make a last stand against Sir John Keane's advancing army—Nott's division neared Caubul. On the 17th it had encamped at a distance of some four or five miles from the city. But the Jellalabad army had anticipated its arrival. Caubul was already in possession of the British. Pollock had planted the British ensign upon the heights of the Balla Hissar.

CHAPTER III.

[September—October: 1842.]

The Re-occupation of Caubul—Installation of Futteh Jung—The Recovery of the Prisoners—Their Arrival in Camp—The Expedition into the Kohistan—Destruction of the Great Bazaar—Depredations in the City—Accession of Shahpoor—Departure of the British Army.

On the 15th of September, Pollock's force had encamped on the Caubul race-course. It had encountered no opposition along the line of road from Bootkhak, and it was plain now that there was no enemy to be encountered at the capital. Akbar Khan had fled to Ghorebund, ready, if need be, to take flight across the Hindoo-Koosh. The other hostile chiefs were supposed to be in the Kohistan. Everything at Caubul betokened the panic engendered by the approach of our retributory arms.

On the day after his arrival, Pollock prepared formally to take possession of the Balla Hissar. A detachment of horse and foot, with a troop of horse artillery, was told off, to give effect to the ceremony. The British flag was to be hoisted on the highest point of the citadel, and the British guns were to roar forth a royal salute in honour of the re-occupation of the capital of Afghanistan.

All this was done—but, on that September morning,

there occurred coincidentally with it another event much controverted and much misunderstood. The wretched Prince Futteh Jung, who, two weeks before, had carried his tattered clothes and his bewildered brain to General Pollock's camp at Gundamuck, had now returned under the General's protection, to start again as a candidate for the throne from which he had been driven by the Barukzye Sirdar. It was not the policy of the British Government openly to interfere for the establishment of any government in Afghanistan, or to identify itself with any particular party or Prince. But both Pollock and Macgregor were of opinion, that so long as the British were to remain at Caubul, it would be desirable that a government of some kind should be established, if only to enable our armies more surely to obtain their supplies. Some sort of indirect assistance and protection was therefore extended to the Prince. The friendly chiefs were encouraged to give in their allegiance to him; and he was suffered to turn to his own uses the ceremony of the re-occupation of the Balla Hissar. He asked and obtained permission to accompany the British detachment; because, he said, treachery was to be apprehended if he proceeded to the palace without the support of his father's allies.

And so it happened, that when the British detachment moved from its ground towards the Balla Hissar, the Prince, attended by some of his principal adherents, fell in at the head of the procession. A portion of the town was traversed by the detachment on its way to the citadel. But, although the hideous sights of the last few days were still fresh in the memory of the troops, they resisted all temptation to violence and outrage. Not a man was hurt, or a house injured. In orderly procession they streamed into the citadel. The road to the point at which the colours were to be

hoisted ran by the palace gates. As a road for the passage of artillery, indeed, it terminated there. It was necessary that the General should halt the guns and troops in the vicinity of the palace. There was no point beyond, to which they could proceed. The Prince and his attendants entered the royal abode; and the British General, with some of his principal officers, were invited to appear at his installation. Pollock sate on a chair at the right of the throne, and M'Caskill at the left. Then was gone through the ceremony of appointing officers of state; and the British allies of the new King took their departure, and went about their own work. The General and his staff moved forward with the British colours, and planted them on the highest conspicuous point of the Balla Hissar. As the colours were raised the troops presented arms, the guns broke out into a royal salute, the band struck up the National Anthem, and three hearty cheers went up to announce that the vindication of our national honour was complete.

So far was the restoration of Futteh Jung to the throne of his fathers encouraged and aided by the British General. The Prince had been suffered to hang on to the skirts of Circumstance, and make the most of a favorable coincidence. But so careful was Pollock not to encourage in the breast of the Shah-zadah and his adherents any hope of more direct assistance from the British Government, that Macgregor was deputed to wait on Futteh Jung after the Durbar, and to enter into a definite explanation of our views. He was emphatically told that he was to look for no assistance, in men, money, or arms, from the British Government; and that therefore it behoved him to turn his own resources to the best account.* He was instructed, too, that the

* "As it appeared desirable that established between the camps as a direct communication should be soon as possible, I proposed to the Ge-

British authorities were unwilling to interfere in any way in the administration, and that it was necessary that he should immediately proceed unbiassed to the election of a minister. The choice lay between the Nizam-ood-dowlah and Gholam Mahomed Khan, Populzye. On the evening of the 18th a council was held, and the decision of the Prince and the chiefs was eventually in favour of the latter.

In the mean while, Pollock's mind was heavy with thoughts of the probable fate of the British prisoners. They had been carried off towards the regions of the Hindoo-Koosh, and were, perhaps, even now on the way to hopeless slavery in Toorkistan. Immediately on his arrival at Caubul, Pollock had despatched his mili-

neral, on arriving at Urghundeh, that I should ride in and see General Pollock. My offer was accepted, and I immediately put on an Afghan dress, and escorted by the Parsewans who had come out to the camp, rode in through the town to the race-course, where I found the Jellalabad force encamped. I experienced no sort of difficulty or inconvenience on the road, being generally taken for an Afghan. I now learnt from General Pollock that there were no fresh orders from Lord Ellenborough regarding the establishment of an Afghan Government; in fact, that he was prohibited from pledging the government to recognise any one, but that still, as Futteh Jung had thrown himself on our protection, and that as it was absolutely necessary something like a government should be established, in order to enable us to obtain supplies (the Jellalabad Commissariat being entirely exhausted) as well as to facilitate our subsequent departure, General Pollock had resolved to give Futteh Jung such indirect assistance as he was able. In this view he had recommended the Kuzzilbash and Douranee chiefs to tender their allegiance to him, and he had so far given him his countenance as to accompany him to the Balla Hissar in the morning, and even as the Shah elect took his seat on the throne to fire a royal salute, ostensibly for the remounting of the British colours on the citadel of Caubul, but of course, in the apprehension of the Afghans, as an honorary recognition by us of the new monarch's accession. I met Macgregor in my way to the camp, coming into the Balla Hissar with all the chiefs to make their salaam to Shah Futteh Jung as he is now called, and I now hear that Macgregor, who conducts all the political duties of General Pollock's camp, endeavoured, in a private audience which he had of his Majesty after the Durbar, to come to an explanation with him regarding our inability to support him with men, money, or arms, and the necessity, in consequence, of his relying entirely on his own resources. At first sight, it appears to me out of the question that Futteh Jung should be able to hold his own after our departure, and I see no great object even in making the attempt, but I cannot yet form a proper judgment." [*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

tary secretary, Sir Richmond Shakespear, with a party of 600 Kuzzilbash Horse,* to overtake the prisoners and their escort. But there was a possibility of this party being intercepted by the enemy. It was said that Sultan Jan was hovering about with some such mischievous intent. At all events, it was expedient to send a strong detachment of British troops to the support of Shakespear and his Kuzzilbashes. The service was one which any officer might have been proud to undertake. Pollock offered the honour of the undertaking to Nott and the Candahar division. But the offer was not accepted.

The two divisions of the British army were on opposite sides of Caubul. The first communication that had taken place between them was accomplished through the agency of Major Rawlinson. He had ridden in Afghan costume from Nott's camp at Urghundeh, and had joined Pollock's division on the morning of the 16th of September, shortly after the British colours had been planted on the Balla Hissar. On the following day Rawlinson returned to Nott's camp. Mayne, who had done such good service at Jellalabad, and who was now attached to Pollock's staff, rode with him, attended by a party of Irregular Horse. They bore a note from Pollock, suggesting that a brigade from the Candahar division should be detached towards Bameean, to assist the recovery of the prisoners. The Candahar force were pitching their camp at Char-Deh, when Rawlinson and Mayne reached them. Nott received the letter of his brother-general in no very genial mood of mind. He had already made up his mind on the subject. Twice before had the officers of his own force suggested to General Nott that the recovery of the prisoners

* Shakespear, with characteristic gallantry, had volunteered for this service. The Kuzzilbashes had tendered their services to Pollock.

would be facilitated by the despatch of a detachment from his division.* But he had always answered, that he believed the recovery of the prisoners to be a matter of indifference to Government, and that he did not consider it expedient to divide his force.

When, therefore, the proposal came to him in a more official shape from his brother-general—upon whom, as the senior officer, had now devolved the command of all the troops in Afghanistan—he received it as one on which he had no consideration to bestow, and determined at once, within the bounds of due subordination, to decline it. It would be well if there were nothing else to record. Unhappily, the temper of the Candahar General was such that the officer—one of the bravest and, for his years, the most distinguished in Afghanistan—who presented himself in Nott's camp, to bring back the General's answer, met with a welcome which may little have surprised, however much it may have pained, the officers of Nott's staff, but which, upon one accustomed in Sale's and Pollock's camps to the courtesies due to a soldier and a gentleman, burst like a loaded shell. Chafing under the thought of being recommended by his superior to do what his own better judgment suggested to him that he ought to have done unprompted, the Candahar General poured upon Mayne

* "*September* 14.—As we find that the prisoners have certainly been carried off to Bameean, and the Kuzzilbashes are disposed to assist us in their recovery, while General Pollock is not likely to encounter further opposition on his march upon Caubul, it was suggested to the General today that he should despatch a brigade from Urghundeh, where the Bameean road strikes off, to form a support for our party, assisted by the Hazarehs, to fall back upon. He would not, however, listen to this proposal, declaring that be had only one object in view, that of marching his force to India *viâ* Caubul, without turning to the right or left; and that he considered, from the tenor of all Lord Ellenborough's despatches, the recovery of the prisoners to be a matter of indifference to government."

"*September* 15.—It was again today urged upon the General to send a brigade to Bameean, or in that direction, to assist in the rescue of the prisoners, but he seems to have made up his mind that he will not separate his force unless positively ordered to do so by higher authority."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

and his escort all the vials of his wrath. What he said was heard by many, and is upon record. Mayne, stung by the insult put upon him by the veteran commander, refused to continue in his camp, and said he would await at the outlying picket the answer which he was commissioned to carry back to Pollock's tent.*

But when Nott entered his tent, and sate down to write a reply to his brother-general, he did not wholly forget the duties of a soldier to his superior in rank. He stated, in emphatic language, his reasons for protesting against the adoption of the course suggested to him; but at the same time declared his willingness to obey the orders of his superior officer. What these reasons were must be set forth in his own words:

MY DEAR GENERAL, Camp, September 17th, 1842.

I have been favoured with your note of this date, in which you express a wish that I should detach a brigade towards Bameean; before you decide on sending it, I would beg to state as follows:—

1st. The troops under my command have just made a long and very difficult march of upwards of 300 miles, and they have been continually marching about for the last six months, and most certainly require rest for a day or two—the same with my camels and other cattle. I lost twenty-nine camels yesterday, and expect to-day's report will be double that number.

2nd. I am getting short of supplies for Europeans and natives, and I can see but little probability of getting a quantity equal to my daily consumption at this place. I have little or no money.

3rd. I have so many sick and wounded that I fear I shall have the greatest inconvenience and difficulty in carrying them; and should any unnecessary operations add to their number, they must be left to perish. If I remain here many days I shall expect to lose half my cattle, which will render retirement very difficult.

4th. I sincerely think that sending a small detachment will and must be followed by deep disaster. No doubt Mahomed Akbar,

* *Statement of Lieut. Mayne.—MS. Correspondence of Officers on the Staff of General Nott.*—The only apologetic explanation of this which has yet reached me is to be found in the assertion, that Mayne's escort crowded on Nott's staff. Mayne posted his horsemen on the reverse flank, and it is his belief that they were not in the way of the staff.

Shumshoodeen, and the other chiefs, are uniting their forces, and I hourly expect to hear that Sir R. Shakespear is added to the number of British prisoners. In my last affair with Shumshoodeen and Sultan Jan, they had 12,000 men; and my information is that two days ago they set out for Bameean.

5th. After much experience in this country, my opinion is that, if the system of sending out detachments should be adopted, disaster and ruin will follow.

6th. After bringing to your notice, showing that my men require rest for a day or two, that my camels are dying fast, and that my supplies are nearly expended, you should order my force to be divided, I have nothing to do but implicitly to obey your orders; but, my dear General, I feel assured you will excuse me when I most respectfully venture to protest against it under the circumstances above noted. I could have wished to have stated this in person to you, but I have been so very unwell for the last two months that I am sure you will kindly excuse me.

Yours sincerely,

WM. NOTT.

On the following day, Nott having excused himself on the plea of ill health from visiting Pollock in his camp, Pollock, waving the distinction of his superior rank, called upon his brother-general. The conversation which ensued related mainly to the question of the despatch of the brigade in aid of the recovery of the British prisoners. Nott had made up his mind on the subject. He was not to be moved from his first position. There were few besides himself who considered the arguments which he advanced to be of the overwhelming and conclusive character which Nott himself believed them to be; and it was, at all events, sufciently clear, that as it was of primal importance on such a service to lose the least possible amount of time, it was desirable to detach a brigade from Nott's camp, in preference to one from Pollock's, if only because the former was some ten miles nearer to Bameean than the latter. Nott was inflexible. Government, he said, "had

* *MS. Correspondence.*

thrown the prisoners overboard"—why then should he rescue them? He would obey the orders of his superior officer, but only under protest. So Pollock returned to camp, and delegated to another officer the honourable service which Nott had emphatically declined. Sir Robert Sale was not likely to decline it. Though his own heroic wife had not been one of the captives, every feeling of the soldier and the man would have responded to the appeal.

So Sale took out with him a brigade from the Jellalabad army, and pushed on in pursuit of Shakespear and the Kuzzilbashes. But already had the release of the prisoners been effected. They had accomplished their own liberation. Sale met them with Shakespear and the Kuzzilbash escort on their way to Pollock's camp.

The story which they had to tell was this. On the afternoon of the 25th of August the prisoners,* who had already received a general intimation that they were to be carried off to Bameean, but who had still ventured to hope that some efforts might be made by the chiefs in our interests to release them, were warned by Captain Troup, who had just returned from an interview with the Sirdar, to prepare for the journey towards the Hindoo-Koosh. Soon after sunset a guard of three hundred men arrived to escort them. Their ponies, camels, and litters were brought, and an hour or two before midnight they started upon their dreary journey.

They were not suffered to sleep that night, nor the next; but still hurried towards the inhospitable regions of the Indian Caucasus. All the forts and villages by which they passed poured forth their inhabitants to stare, with wondering curiosity, at the Feringhee captives.†

* They had been joined by their fellow-captives from Ghuznee. See note at the end of the chapter.

† "*August* 28.—Every hamlet and fort we passed after daybreak poured forth its inhabitants to stare and wonder at the Feringhee prisoners. Not an uncivil word or gesture have I ever heard or seen in all our wanderings; but, on the contrary, many a

But none insulted them in their misfortunes. Often, indeed, by the rude inhabitants of the country through which they passed, were many looks, and words, and deeds of kindness freely bestowed upon them. Onwards, still in upward direction, they went, thousands of feet above the level of the sea. The days were painfully sultry, and the nights were bitterly cold. The alternations of climate told fearfully upon the constitutions of the European prisoners; and their sick increased in numbers. The soldiers and camp-followers, for whom no carriage was provided, dragged their infirm limbs wearily over the barren wastes and up the steep ascents of the Hindoo-Koosh, the officers giving up their horses to the ladies, for whom the camel panniers were no longer secure, toiled wearily after them up the rugged slopes.

On the 3rd of September they reached Bameean. Conducted to one wretched fort and then to another, they remonstrated against the noisome quarters to which it was proposed to consign them; and twice their importunities prevailed. But at last, on the 9th of September, the commandant of their escort ordered them to take up their abode in another fort, scarcely

sympathising word and look has been expressed, and especially by people who had previously any knowledge of us."—"*August* 29.—On passing the above fort (Mustapha Khan, Kuzzilbash), where Saleh Mahomed and I were the first to arrive, I was most agreeably surprised by the owner bringing out two or three large trays full of excellent cakes and sweetmeats, and begging I would distribute them among the ladies and children — expressing at the same time the most unfeigned sympathy for all of us. To people in our unfortunate situation, a civil word even is well appreciated, but such a mark of kindness as this worthy Persian showed us, is not easily forgotten. His very look bespoke him a man of generous and kindly feeling. Our little fellow-prisoners—both boys and girls—had such a feast as they have not had for many a day. On arriving at our bivouac, another Kuzzilbash, who had a fort close by, hearing from Ahmed Khan that I wanted to buy a horse, brought me one for sale. As I was, however, afraid of running out of funds, I told him my fears. His reply was, 'I know you, and I will be satisfied with your note of hand. I am a relation of Naib Sheriff Khan.' This was a mark of confidence I could not have expected in such dangerous times, when my life is not worth twenty-four hours' purchase. I did not take the animal."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative. MS.*]

less wretched than the others, and portioned out among them some small and comfortless apartments, so dark that they could scarcely see in them, and so filthy that they could write their names in the soot that covered the roof. But their residence in this place was but brief. They soon effected their escape.

The commander of the escort was one Saleh Mahomed. A soldier of fortune, who had visited many countries and served under many masters, he had been at one time a subadar in Captain Hopkins's regiment of infantry, and had deserted with his men to Dost Mahomed on the eve of the contest at Bameean. A good-humoured, loquacious, boasting man, he was never happier than when narrating his adventures to the English officers under his charge. Among them there was not one who better understood the Afghan character, or who had made more friends in the country, than Captain Johnson; and now, in a short time, between him and Saleh Mahomed an intimacy was established, which the former began to turn to the best account.* He rode with the commandant, listened to his stories; and soon began to throw out hints that a lakh of rupees and a pension in

* "The commandant of our guard appears very civil and inclined to oblige us in every possible way—at any rate he is so to me. I was quite delighted to hear him talk in such enthusiastic terms of my deceased and lamented friend Hopkins (his former commanding officer). On asking him why he deserted with his company to Dost Mahomed in September, 1840, his reply was, that he was disgusted with the abusive language used towards him by the European non-commissioned officers; and I do not doubt that this had a great effect in alienating him from our service, although certainly not the immediate cause of his desertion. Saleh Mahomed is a good-humoured, jolly fellow, and without any prejudices against us Kaffirs. He is a soldier of fortune, cares little whom he serves, has been to Bokhara, Yarkund, and was at the taking of Kokund a few months ago. Rode with him the whole march, and was much amused at his traveller's tales. He is the greatest hero in his own estimation I ever came across. There is no end to his feats of valour, to which I am a ready listener, for two reasons: *firstly*, that I am amused; *secondly*, that he is flattered by my being so good a listener—by which I hope to turn him to good account."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative of his Captivity. MS.*]

Hindostan might be found for him, if, instead of carrying off his prisoners to Bameean, he would conduct them in safety to the British camp. To Pottinger, who had hitherto been the chief negotiator on the part of the captives, Johnson would have now confided the delicate duty of inducing the deserter again to desert; but the task was declined, on the plea that the attempt was more likely to succeed in the hands of the latter, who seemed to have inspired a feeling of friendship in the breast of the commandant. Pottinger disliked the man; and the man seemed to dislike him. So Johnson began, with admirable tact and address, to work upon the cupidity of his friend.

On the 29th of August the suggestion was put forth, in a light and jesting manner; and not until he had convinced himself that there would be no danger in a more direct proposition, did Johnson suffer Saleh Mahomed to feel that he was thoroughly in earnest. The Afghan was in no hurry to commit himself. Days passed. The party reached Bameean; and no allusion was made to the subject; till one day—the 11th of September—Saleh Mahomed sent for Johnson, Pottinger, and Lawrence, and, in a private room of the fort, which had been appropriated to Lady Sale, produced a letter which he had just received from Akbar Khan. The Sirdar had instructed him to convey the prisoners to Kooloom, and to make them all over to the Wullee of that place. It seemed then that they were about to end their days in hopeless captivity among the Oosbegs. But the despair which fell upon them was but short-lived. Saleh Mahomed soon dispersed their fears by saying that one Syud Moorteza Shah, a Cashmeree, who, during the Caubul insurrection, had helped Johnson to collect grain from the villages, had arrived from Caubul, and brought a message from Mohun Lal to the effect, that if he would release the prisoners, General Pollock would ensure

him a life-pension of 1000 rupees a month, and make him a present of 20,000 rupees. "I know nothing of General Pollock," then said Saleh Mahomed, "but if you three gentlemen will swear by your Saviour to make good to me what Syud Moorteza Shah states that he is authorised to offer, I will deliver you over to your own people." The offer was at once accepted. With little delay an agreement was written out in Persian by Syud Moorteza Shah, and signed by Johnson, Pottinger, Lawrence, and Mackenzie.* It was a perilous game—for Saleh Mahomed had twice played the traitor before, and might assume the same character again. But the prize was too great and too tempting for them to hesitate even to risk their lives; so they flung themselves without hesitation into the hazardous plot.

Cheerfully did the prisoners now bind themselves to provide from their own resources, all according to their means, the money that was required to carry out the grand object of their liberation. The signatures of all the officers and ladies were obtained to the bond.† Saleh

* The words of the bond may be thus translated:—

"We gentlemen, Pottinger, Johnson, Mackenzie, and Lawrence, in the presence of God and Jesus Christ, do enter into the following agreement with Saleh Mahomed Khan:—Whenever Saleh Mahomed Khan shall free us from the power of Mahomed Akbar Khan, we agree to make him (Saleh Mahomed Khan) a present of 20,000 rupees, and to pay him monthly the sum of 1000 rupees; likewise to obtain for him the command of a regiment in the government service; and we attest that this agreement is not false; and should we have spoken falsely then will we acknowledge ourselves to be false men, even in the presence of Kings.

"E. POTTINGER, C. MACKENZIE,
"H. JOHNSON, G.ST.P. LAWRENCE."

—[*Translated from the counterpart of the Agreement given by Saleh Mahomed to Captain Johnson.*]

† The agreement is thus worded: "We, whose signatures are hereunto attached, do bind ourselves to pay into the hands of Major Pottinger and Captains Lawrence and Johnson, on condition of our release being effected by an arrangement with Saleh Mahomed Khan, such a number of months' pay and allowances as they shall demand from us—such pay and allowances to be rated by the scale at which we shall find ourselves entitled to draw from the date of our release from captivity. We, who are married, do further agree to pay the same amount for our wives and families as for ourselves. We, whose husbands are absent, do pledge ourselves in proportion to our husbands' allowances." The agreement is drawn up on half-a-sheet of fools-

Mahomed proved to be staunch and true. The conspiracy was wholly successful; and the conspirators soon grew bold in their success. The rebellion of Saleh Mahomed and his European allies was openly proclaimed to all the chiefs and people of Bameean and the surrounding country. A flag was hoisted on the fort which they occupied. They deposed the governor of the place, and appointed a more friendly chief in his stead. They levied contributions upon a party of Lohanee merchants, who were passing that way; and so supplied themselves with funds. And, to crown all, Major Pottinger began to issue proclamations, calling upon all the neighbouring chiefs to come in and make their salaam; he granted remissions of revenue; and all the decent clothes in the possession of the party were collected to bestow as *Khelats*.

But, in spite of the boldness of their outward bearing at this time, they were not without some apprehensions that their dominion might soon be broken down, and the lords of to-day reduced again to captives and slaves to-morrow. Some of the confederate chiefs might ere long appear at Bameean and overwhelm the rebellion of Saleh Mahomed. So the new rulers began to strengthen their position, and make preparations to stand a siege. They had promised their guards—in all some 250 men—four months' pay, as a gratuity, on reaching Caubul; and there was every reason to rely on their fidelity.* Commanded by European officers, it was believed that they would make a good show of resistance. So Pottinger and his

cap paper, in the hand-writing of Captain Johnson. The names of all the prisoners (officers and ladies) are attached to it; the first being that of Brigadier Shelton. There is a codicil to it, signed by Lady Macnaghten and Mrs. Sturt, in these words: "We, who are widows, do pledge ourselves to pay such sums as may bedemanded from us by Major Pottinger and Captains Lawrence and Johnson, in furtherance of the above scheme"—"In our prison at Bameean: 11th September, 1842."—[*MS. Records.*]

* The European soldiers at Bameean were so reduced by sickness as to be scarcely able to hold a musket. And they had lost all heart.

companions began to clear out the loopholes of the forts —to dig wells—to lay in provisions—and otherwise to provide against the probability of a siege. They were busily employed in this manner on the 15th of September, when a horseman was observed approaching from the Caubul side of the valley. Eager for intelligence from the capital, they left their work and gathered round him. He brought glad tidings. Akbar Khan had been defeated by General Pollock at Tezeen, and had fled no one knew whither. The aspect of affairs was now changed, indeed. The common voice of the prisoners—prisoners no longer—declared in favour of an immediate return to Caubul. It was decided that, on the following morning, they should set out for Pollock's camp.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 16th they set out on their journey. Sleeping that night, in the clear moonlight, on hard stony beds, they were awakened by the arrival of a friendly chief, who brought a letter from Sir Richmond Shakespear, stating that he was on his way to Bameean, with a party of 600 Kuzzilbash horse. This was cheering intelligence. At daybreak they were again astir, pushing on with increased rapidity, in a whirl of excitement, unconscious of hunger or fatigue. Their trials were now nearly at an end. They had heart enough to do and to suffer anything.

About three hours after noon on the 17th of September, a cloud of dust was observed to rise from the summit of a mountain-pass in their front. Presently a few straggling horsemen made their appearance, and, in a little time, the English officers could plainly see a body of cavalry winding down the pass. Great now was the excitement in our little party. The horsemen who were now approaching might be Shakespear and the Kuzzilbashes, or they might be a body of the enemy. It was well at least to prepare for their reception. Saleh

Mahomed's drums were beaten; all stragglers were called in; every man stood to his arms; a line was formed;* the muskets were loaded; and Saleh Mahomed seemed all eagerness to give the enemy a warm reception. But there was no enemy to be defeated. An English officer soon appeared galloping a-head of the horsemen. Shakespear had arrived with his Kuzzilbashes. He was soon in the midst of the prisoners, offering them his congratulations, receiving their thanks, and endeavouring to answer their thick-coming questions.

At daybreak on the following morning they pushed on again. Some better horses had been obtained from the Kuzzilbashes; and now they moved forward with increased rapidity. On the 20th, as two or three of the officers riding on a-head of the party were nearing Urghundeh, which was to be their halting-place, another cloud of dust was observed rising over the hills; and soon the welcome tidings reached them that a large body of British cavalry and infantry was approaching. This was the column which Pollock had sent out in support of the Kuzzilbash Horse—the column that Sale commanded. In a little time that intrepid veteran had embraced his wife and daughter; and the men of the 13th had offered their delighted congratulations to the loved ones of their old commander. A royal salute was fired. The prisoners were safe in Sale's camp. Their anxieties were at an end. The good Providence that had so long watched over the prisoner and the captive now crowned its mercies by delivering them into the hands of their friends. Dressed as they were in Afghan costume, their faces bronzed by much exposure, and rugged with beards

* "In order," says Captain Johnson, from whose Narrative these details are taken, "to show as imposing a front as possible, there was no rear rank."

and moustachios of many months' growth, it was not easy to recognise the liberated officers who now pushed forward to receive the congratulations of their friends. On that day they skirted the ground on which the Candahar force was posted, and out went officers, and soldiers, and camp-followers, eager and curious, to gaze at the released captives, and half-inclined to fall upon their guards.* On the 21st of September they passed through the city, on their way to Pollock's camp. They found the shops closed; the streets deserted; and paused, as they went along, before some melancholy memorials of the great outbreak which, a year before, had overwhelmed us with misery and disgrace.†

Great was the joy which the recovery of the prisoners diffused throughout the camps of Pollock and Nott; and great was the joy which it diffused throughout the provinces of India. Rightly judged Pollock that, if he returned to Hindostan without the brave men and tender women who had endured for so many months the pains and perils of captivity in a barbarous country, his countrymen would regard the victory as incomplete. Let him fight what battles, destroy what forts, and carry off what trophies he might, he would, without the liberation of the prisoners, be only half-a-conqueror after all. Pollock knew that his countrymen had not

* Seeing that Saleh Mahomed's men wore our English belts and pouches, the soldiers of Nott's division were disposed to fall upon them. It was intimated to the commandant that it would be expedient to remove them out of the way of danger.

† "On passing the corner of the street were I formerly lived, I could not forego the desire of looking on the ruins of a house in which I had passed a period of two years of happiness. Although I had expected to see the whole place unroofed, I was not prepared for such a scene of desolation. Not one brick was left standing on another in either my house or that of Sir Alexander Burnes (the adjoining one). They were nothing but a heap of dirt, covering the mouldering remains of our unfortunate people. A spot was pointed out to me in Sir Alexander's garden as that in which his body had been interred."—[*Captain Johnson's Narrative of his Captivity. MS.*]

"thrown the prisoners overboard." He had rescued them now from the hands of the enemy; that object of the war was obtained. There was little else, indeed, now to be done, except to leave upon Caubul some lasting mark of the just retribution of an outraged nation. It had been the declared wish of the Supreme Government that the army should leave behind it some decisive proofs of its power, without impeaching its humanity; and now Pollock prepared to carry, as best he could interpret them, those wishes into effect.

The interpretation, however, was not easy. Very different opinions obtained among the leading officers in the British camp relative to the amount of punishment that it now became the British General to inflict upon the Afghan capital. It is even now a moot question whether more or less ought to have been done; but it is seldom or never questioned whether, at this time, justice and expediency did not alike require that the inhabitants of Caubul and the neighbourhood should be protected against unauthorised acts of depredation and violence. Against the plunderings of soldiers and camp-followers Pollock had steadfastly set his face; but in the neighbourhood of Nott's camp much was done to destroy the confidence which Pollock was anxious to re-establish, and to alarm and irritate the chiefs whom he desired to conciliate.* After a few days the new minis-

* "*September* 19.—Our Sepoys and camp-followers, taking their cue, I fancy, from their officers, are very unruly, and commit extensive depredations on the lands and villages near our camp; and as the property thus plundered chiefly belongs to the Kuzzilbash chiefs, General Pollock, who relies mainly on these people for the consolidation of the new government, is subjected to great embarrassment. I have a sort of misgiving that Caubul will, after all, be destroyed. In the present state of feeling, any accidental quarrel would lead to a general rush upon the town, and the Sepoys once there, massacre and conflagration would assuredly follow. General Pollock, by proclamations of encouragement, has been endeavouring to persuade the Caubullees to return to their houses and re-open their shops; but, after all that has happened, it is difficult to persuade the townspeople that we do not aim at retribution, and the pro-

ter and Khan Shereen Khan determined to represent to Pollock, in a joint letter, the grievances of which they thought they were entitled to complain. The General at once forwarded a translation of the letter to Nott, who sent it back with his comments. The charges and the denials appear as they were forwarded to Pollock's camp:

Abstract Translation of a Letter from Gholam Mahomed Khan, the Wuzeer, and Khan Shereen Khan, the Kuzzilbash Chief, to the Address of General Pollock, C.B.	Remarks by General Nott.
A.C.	
On the 14th of Shah Bau (20th September) the inhabitants of Aushar and Chardeh were plundered by the Candahar force, and sustained loss of life and property (1): their women were not respected.	1. This is unfounded, with the exception of a few worthless articles, stolen by surwans and grass-cutters, and for which they were most severely punished.
In the village of Deh Dānā Causim, and in Zeibah Shewan Khan, and at Chardeh, two persons were killed (2). The Aus-	2. I never heard of two Afghans having been killed; but four Europeans unarmed, walk-

ceedings about our camp at Char Deh are anything but calculated to allay their suspicions; the city continues, therefore, more than half closed, and supplies are procurable with difficulty."

"*September* 20.—Our men have been plundering to-day as usual about the camp, and in some scuffle which took place at Deh Afshur, four of the Kuzzilbashes, with Khassim Khan, a chief, were slain by the Sepoys."

"*September* 21.—The fort of Mahomed Meerza, one of our worst enemies, was given up to plunder, and we did not even respect the property at Aliabad, which belongs to Gholam Mahomed Khan, the lately appointed minister. . . . . The townspeople had returned in small numbers to the town, and had re-opened their shops; but owing to the affair at Deh Afshur, I believe, a panic seized the people, and every one fled, believing that orders had been issued for a general massacre."

"*September* 22.—The depredations of the Sepoys and followers from this camp continue, notwithstanding all the efforts that are made to repress them. The Kuzzilbashes cannot help believing that we encourage these excesses, and in consequence they are not half satisfied of General Pollock's sincerity."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

harries are employed in your service, in the rescue of your prisoners: if their houses are plundered and their people (3) killed, all confidence among the people will at once be destroyed. If it is your intention that protection should be afforded to the people, and to avail yourself of our resources (4), redress should be granted under our promises of protection to the people returning to their homes.

We are satisfied that it is not your pleasure that the troops should behave in this manner (5).

To-day, the 15th of Shah Bau (21st September), the army which was appointed to destroy Meer Hajee's fort also destroyed the property belonging to people of the neighbourhood: these people should also have redress granted them (6).

If the English do not grant them redress, the ryots (7) will fly from their homes, and they will have no longer confidence in us.

Just now news has reached us that the Candahar force has encamped at Allaábád (8), which belongs to us, and where our families are lodged (9); the force has already plundered our grain and fruit (10).

ing at a little distance from camp, were killed by these monsters.

3. What people? The population of this valley had left it before my force had arrived, and have not been here since, with the exception of a few individuals.

4. Why are not these resources brought in when an extravagant price is offered for them?

5. This is a false assertion, for which the writer ought to be instantly punished: the troops have not behaved ill.

6. What this man means by this I know not; no army, no detachment was appointed by me to destroy a fort. I did hear that General Sale ordered one to be burnt, but whether he did so or no I do not know; but if he did, I dare say he had good reasons.

7. I repeat that there are no ryots in the villages. All men capable of bearing arms are with different chiefs, and there is no knowing the hour we may be attacked by them.

8. Yes, I have encamped, and I can but admire the extreme insolence of this man in presuming to object to it.

9. This is false; there are no families near the place.

10. This is false; with the exception of fruit in the immediate vicinity of camp.

If your friends suffer in this way, what may your enemies expect? (11). Those people who returned to the town are leaving it again.

Redress should be speedily granted, and Lamars should be stationed at each village for its protection (12).

11. We have not a friend in Afghanistan; and I know what our enemies ought to expect for their cruelty, treachery, and bloody murders.

12. What insolence in this man, whose hands are still red with the blood of our countrymen, to dictate how and where we are to place our troops!

I cannot conclude my remarks on this document without offering my opinion that the writer should be instantly seized and punished for sending such a grossly false and insolent statement.

W. NOTT, M.-Gen.

The writers of this letter were the new minister and Khan Shereen Khan, the chief of the Kuzzilbashes, who had done us such good service. The former had been anxious to pay his respects to the gallant commander of the Candahar division, and had waited upon him with a letter from Macgregor; but Nott had peremptorily refused to give him an audience. He believed it to be the desire of Lord Ellenborough that no Afghan Government should be recognised by the British authorities, and he was unwilling to favour any such recognition by receiving visits of ceremony from the functionaries appointed by the government that had been established at Caubul. As Pollock had not been equally nice upon this point, the refusal of his brother-general to extend his courtesies to the minister, could only have embarrassed our supreme authorities at Caubul, and attached suspicion to the sincerity of our proceedings. But Nott, at this time, was in no mood of mind to extend his courtesies either to Afghan or to British authorities. It

was his belief that even then the British army ought to have been on its way to Jellalabad. He had with him a sufficiency of supplies to carry him to the latter place; and was irritated at the thought that Pollock had come up to Caubul without provisions to carry him back.* If he had been in supreme authority at Caubul, he would have destroyed the Balla Hissar and the city of Caubul, and marched on with the least possible delay to Jellalabad. He placed his sentiments on record regarding the impolicy of the halt at Caubul—declared that he would be compelled to make military requisitions to rescue his troops from starvation; and denounced Futteh Jung and the new ministers as the enemies of the British. Nothing, indeed, as the following letter shows, could dissuade Nott that every Afghan in the country was not our bitter foe:

Camp near Caubul, 22nd September, 1842.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date, and to acquaint you that I conceive that General Pollock, C.B., must have received some erroneous information. No army ever moved with fewer instances of plunder than that under my command, and not an instance of irregularity has occurred without punishment being inflicted. The persons who had made this complaint ought to be made to prove the truth of what they say. I believe the enemy (I mean Futteh Jung's party and the rest of the people) are organising a system to bring our men to the same state of starvation to which General Elphinstone's army was reduced, in hopes of the same results.

While I think it my duty to state this, I must declare that I will not, to please a few Afghans, who have scarcely washed their hands from the blood of our countrymen, allow my army to be destroyed, and my country to be dishonoured. There is

* He asked Mayne, on the 17th, when that officer appeared in his camp, as mentioned at page 615, how many days' supplies General Pollock had with him? and when Mayne replied that he believed the General had about a week's supplies for his troops, "What business, then," asked Nott, "has General Pollock up at Caubul with only a week's supplies?" Mayne, of course, made no answer.

grain in the country, and I think it ought to be brought in immediately, the same being paid for.

General Pollock's order shall be proclaimed through my camp immediately, but I have not heard of a single act of plunder during the last twenty-four hours.

I have, &c.

W. NOTT, Major-General,
Commanding Field Forces.

To Captain Ponsonby,
Assistant Adjutant-General, Camp.

Pollock, however, was inclined to discriminate—to protect our friends and to punish our enemies. Whilst supplies were coming in but slowly to his camp, it seemed good to him that another blow should be struck at the hostile chiefs. It was reported to him that Ameen-oollah Khan was in the field at Istaliff, in the Koh-i-da-man, endeavouring to bring together the scattered fragments of the broken Barukzye force. It was believed to be the design of the chief to attack the British on their retirement from Caubul; and it was expedient, therefore, at once to break up his force, and to leave some mark of our just resentment on a part of the country which had poured forth so many of the insurgents who had risen against us in the preceding winter. A force taken from the two divisions of the British army was therefore despatched, under General M'Caskill, to Istaliff, to scatter the enemy there collected, and to destroy the place. It was thought, moreover, that Ameen-oollah Khan, dreading the advance of the retributory army, would endeavour to conciliate the British General, by delivering up to him the person of Mahomed Akbar Khan, if he could adroitly accomplish his seizure. The Sirdar had sent his family and his property into Turkistan; and was himself waiting the progress of events in the Ghorebund Pass, ready, it was said, to follow

his establishment across the hills, if the British troops pushed forward to overtake him.

The hostile chiefs were all now at the last gasp—all eager to conciliate the power that a few months before they had derided and defied. Already had Ameen-oollah Khan begun to make overtures to the British authorities—to declare that he had always at heart been their friend; but that he had been compelled to secure his own safety by siding with the Barukzyes. And now Akbar Khan, with the same object, sent into Pollock's camp a peace-offering, in the shape of the last remaining prisoner in his hands. Captain Bygrave was now restored to his friends. It might have been a feeling of generosity—for generous impulses often welled up in the breast of the Sirdar—or it might have been a mere stroke of policy, having reference solely to his own interests—or it might, and it probably was, a mixture of the two influences that prevailed upon him; but he would not any longer make war upon a single man, and upon one, too, whom he personally respected and esteemed with the respect and esteem due to a man of such fine qualities as Bygrave. So he sent the last remaining prisoner safely into Pollock's camp; and with him he sent a letter of conciliation, and an agent commissioned to treat for him. He was eager to enter into negotiations with the British. It was little likely that so weak a Prince as Futteh Jung would be able to maintain his regal authority in Afghanistan a day after the departure of the British; and it appeared to him not wholly improbable that, wishing to leave behind them a friendly power in Afghanistan, the British authorities might be induced to enter into a convention with him before their final departure from the country.

Even now was Futteh Jung himself beginning to acknowledge his utter inability to maintain himself in the

Balla Hissar after the striking of Pollock's camp. Pollock had refused to supply him with troops, money, or arms; and the Prince himself had closed the door of reconciliation with his old Barukzye enemies by destroying their houses and property. Among the houses thus destroyed, it is deplorable to have to state that the house of Mahomed Zemaun Khan was one—the very house in which the good old man, with real parental kindness, had so long and so faithfully protected the British hostages. The houses of Oosman Khan, Jubbar Khan, and others fell also. It was the policy of the Prince thus to compromise his supporters, and to prevent an alliance between them and the Barukzye party; but having done this, he felt that it was only by destroying the hostile chiefs that he could, in any way, maintain his position. He watched, therefore, with anxiety the issue of the expedition into the Kohistan, and deferred his ultimate decision until the return of M'Caskill's force.

M'Caskill was completely successful. He made a rapid march upon Istaliff, and took the enemy by surprise. The Afghan chiefs had collected in this place their treasure and their women. They had looked to it as to a place of refuge, secure from the assaults of the invading Feringhees. They had relied greatly on the strength of the place; and scarcely any defensive measures had been taken to repel the assaults of the enemy. When M'Caskill entered the gardens which surround the town, a panic seemed to have seized the people. They thought no longer of defence. Their first thought was to save their property and their women. Ameen-oollah Khan himself fled at the first onset. As our troops entered the town, the face of the mountain beyond was covered with laden baggage-cattle, whilst long lines of white-veiled women, striving to reach a place of

safety, streamed along the hill-side. What our troops had to do they did rapidly and well; but the fire of the enemy's jezails soon slackened when the 9th Foot, with Broadfoot's Sappers and the 26th N.I. dashed into the gardens where the Afghan marksmen had been posted. And as their gallantry, so their forbearance is to be commended. M'Caskill, respecting the honour of the women, would not suffer a pursuit; but many fell into the hands of our people in the town, and were safely delivered over to the keeping of the Kuzzilbashes. Two guns and much booty were taken; the town was fired; and then M'Caskill went on towards the hills, meeting no opposition on the way, destroyed Charekur, where the Goorkha regiment had been annihilated, and some other fortified places which had been among the strongholds of the enemy; and then returned triumphantly to Caubul.

On the 7th of October, M'Caskill's force rejoined the British camp. It was now necessary that immediate measures should be adopted for the withdrawal of the British troops from the capital of Afghanistan. Already had Pollock exceeded, but with a wise discretion, the time which the Supreme Government would have accorded to him. But there was yet work to be done. No lasting mark of our retributory visit to Caubul had yet been left upon the accursed city. Pollock had been unable to shape his measures, for the nature of the retribution to be inflicted was dependent upon the constitution of the new Afghan Government; and it was long uncertain what government the British General would leave behind him. Futteh Jung had been for some time trembling at the thought of the prospect before him. If M'Caskill had brought back Akbar Khan a prisoner, or had sent his head to the British camp, the new King might have summoned resolution to maintain

his seat on the throne. But he could never forget the treatment he had received from the Sirdar, or nerve himself again to meet the unscrupulous Barukzye.* So now he peremptorily declined to wear the crown which we would fain have kept a little longer on his head; and implored the British General to afford him the protection of his camp, and convey him to the provinces of India.

Willing to spare the city and the Balla Hissar for the sake of a friendly government, Pollock had despatched Shakespear to the Kuzzilbash camp, which was then in the Kohistan, to take counsel with Khan Shereen Khan, and the other chiefs of the Persian party. It seems that they had been sceptical of the intentions of the British General to evacuate the country; but Shakespear now announced that the departure of the army was at hand, and that it was necessary finally to determine upon the nature of the new government. In this con-

* "Shortly after my arrival at Caubul I despatched a force, under Major-General M'Caskill, to disperse the followers of Ameen-oollah Khan and Mahomed Akbar, and to endeavour to secure the person of the latter. Futteh Jung continued for several days in power, and appeared disposed to endeavour to retain it. The hope which then existed, that Mahomed Akbar Khan would fall into our hands, no doubt had great influence with him; but when this hope vanished, the representations of his female relations, and the remembrance of the gross treachery he had experienced from the chiefs on former occasions, appear to have alarmed him; and at length he announced to me his determination to accompany the British troops to Hindostan. At the same time I received a letter, a translation of which I have now the honour to forward, from Gholam Mahomed Khan (the minister) and Khan Shereen Khan, the chief of the Kuzzilbashes, on the part of several other chiefs, avowing their determination to support the brother of Futteh Jung (Shahpoor) on the throne of Caubul. It was long before I could convince the chiefs comprising this party that they could not hope for any assistance from the British Government, either in money or troops; but as they still persisted in urging me to allow the Prince Shahpoor to remain, and as he repeatedly assured me he was anxious to do so, I did not conceive myself authorised by my instructions to remove him forcibly from Caubul, and only stipulated that the British Government should not be supposed to have raised him to the throne. On the morning of the 12th instant, after the British troops had marched from Caubul, Prince Shahpoor was put on the throne, and the chiefs took the oaths of fidelity to him."—[*General Pollock to Lord Ellenborough: MS. Correspondence.*

juncture, the Kuzzilbashes, trembling for the safety of the city, and feeling that there was little hope of their being reconciled to the Barukzye party, laid their hands upon another puppet. There was a younger scion of the Suddozye House then at Caubul—the Prince Shahpoor. His mother was a high-born Populzye lady, and it was believed that his recognition would tend to conciliate the Douranees. Postponing, however, the final enunciation of their views until their return to Caubul, they now proposed that the young Prince should be set up in the place of his brother. At Caubul a general meeting of the chiefs was held. The voice of the assembly declared in favour of the elevation of Shahpoor. The Prince himself, a high-spirited boy, willingly accepted the crown that was offered to him, and the following declaration was then sent in to Pollock's camp:

From Wuzeer Gholam Mahomed Khan, Populzye; and Khan Shereen Khan, chief of the Kuzzilbashes, on the parts of all the chiefs at Caubul.

A.C.

Be it known to you, that since we, the Populzyes and the other Douranee tribes and the Kuzzilbash cannot exist under the Barukzyes; and as such a state of things is altogether out of the range of possibility; and moreover, since his Royal Highness Futteh Jung has decided on quitting the country; we agree and accept of the Prince Shahpoor as our King, and will obey him as our ruler. But we hope that you will, from this time, put a stop to the destruction of forts and other property, that the people may regain confidence and return to their own houses; and we also beg that Meer Soofaee Byanee, who is a prisoner in Charekur, be sent for and made over to us, that people may be induced to come in to us. And if you will make over to us any guns and ammunition, it will be a great assistance. For the rest, as long as we live we shall hope for the friendship of the British Government.*

Determined to make a last effort to obtain substantial

* *MS. Records.*

assistance from the British authorities, the chiefs now waited upon Pollock, and entreated him to leave some British troops behind him for the support of the new monarch. Pollock resolutely refused the request. They then asked him for money. This he also refused. Then came before them the painful subject of the "mark" that was to be left on Caubul. The chiefs pleaded for the city and for the Balla Hissar. Urgently they now set forth the necessity of a Suddozye Prince maintaining the appearance of royalty in the palace of his fathers —urgently they now set forth that the Arabs and Hindostanees, who in the hour of extremest peril had been so faithful to Futteh Jung, were all located in the Balla Hissar; and that the blow would fall with the greatest severity on those who were least deserving of punishment.* So Pollock consented to spare the Balla Hissar.

But it was still necessary that some mark of the retributory visit of the British should be left upon the offending city; so Pollock determined to destroy the great Bazaar. There the mutilated remains of the murdered Envoy had been exhibited to the insolent gaze of the Afghans; and there it was deemed fit that the retributory blow should fall. So, on the 9th of October, Abbott, the chief engineer with Pollock's force, received instructions from the General to destroy the Bazaar; but so anxious was Pollock not to extend the work of destruction, that he strictly enjoined the engineer to abstain from applying fire to the building, and even from the employment of gunpowder, that other parts of the city might not be damaged by his operations. At the same time, a strong detachment of British troops, under Colonel Richmond—one of the best and ablest officers of the force—was sent with the engineers, to protect the town from injury and the inhabitants from plunder and outrage.

* *Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*

But it was no easy task to destroy that great Bazaar simply by the work of men's hands. Abbott did his best to obey the instructions he had received from the General; but he was baffled by the massiveness of the buildings on which he had been sent to operate. It was necessary to employ a more powerful agent. On his own responsibility, therefore, he betook himself to the use of gunpowder. But the explosions damaged no other buildings than those which had authoritatively been marked for destruction. The operations against the great Bazaar lasted throughout the 9th and 10th of October. Every effort was made to save the city from further destruction; but all Richmond's protective measures were insufficient to control the impetuosity of the soldiers and camp-followers who poured themselves into the town.

That many excesses were then committed is not to be denied. The principal gates of the city were guarded; but there were many other points of ingress, and our people streamed into the streets of Caubul, applied the firebrand to the houses, and pillaged the shops. Guilty and innocent alike fell under the heavy hand of the lawless retribution which was now to descend upon the inhabitants of Caubul. Many unoffending Hindoos, who, lulled into a sense of delusive security by the outward re-establishment of a government, had returned to the city and re-opened their shops, were now disastrously ruined.* In the mad excitement of the hour, friend

* "On the 9th our engineers set to work to blow up and destroy the *Char Chutta*. The cry went forth that Caubul was given up to plunder. Both camps rushed into the city, and the consequence has been the almost total destruction of all parts of the town, except the Gholam Khana quarter and the Balla Hissar. . . . . Numbers of people (about 4000 or 5000) had returned to Caubul, relying on our promises of protection—rendered confident by the comparative immunity they had enjoyed during the early part of our sojourn here, and by the appearance, ostentatiously put forth, of an Afghan Government. They had many of them re-opened their shops. These people have been now reduced to utter ruin. Their goods have been plundered, and their houses burnt over their heads. The

and foe were stricken down by the same unsparing hand. Even the *Chundarwal*—where dwelt the friendly Kuzzilbashes—narrowly escaped destruction. Such excesses as were committed during the three last days of our occupation of Caubul must ever be deplored, as all human weakness and wickedness are to be deplored. But when we consider the amount of temptation and provocation—when we remember that the comrades of our soldiers and the brethren of our camp-followers had been foully butchered by thousands in the passes of Afghanistan—when everywhere tokens of our humiliation, and of the treachery and cruelty of the enemy, rose up before our people, stinging them past all endurance, and exasperating them beyond all control, we wonder less, that when the guilty city lay at their feet, they should not wholly have reined in their passions, than that, in such an hour, they should have given them so little head.

It was now time that the British army should depart. Nothing remained to be done. Any longer continuance at Caubul would only have aggravated the sufferings of the people and increased our own difficulties. So, on the 11th of October, orders were issued for the commencement of the march on the following day. The unhappy Prince, Futteh Jung, had claimed and sought permission to accompany Pollock's camp to India, and to seek an asylum in the Company's dominions. The old blind King, Zemaun Shah, after all the vicissitudes of his eventful life, was now about again to become an

Hindoos in particular, whose numbers amount to some 500 families, have lost everything they possess, and they will have to beg their way to India in rear of our columns. The Chundarwal has had a narrow escape. Safeguards have been placed at the different gates; but I doubt not if our parties of plunderers would not have forced an entrance had not the Gholam Khana stood to their arms, and showed and expressed a determination to defend their property to the last."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

exile, and to end his days in the same hospitable country. For the family of Shah Soojah protection also had been sought, and not refused; and now all these fragments of the great wreck of royalty—these miserable records of a most disastrous enterprise—were committed to the charge of one who had largely participated in its sufferings, but had happily escaped the ruin which had overwhelmed his comrades and his chief.* On the evening of the 11th of October they came out of the town, and found safety in Pollock's hospitable camp.† The British colours, which had floated over the Balla Hissar, were now lowered; the regiment which had been posted there was withdrawn; and every preparation was made for the departure of the British army.

On the following morning the two divisions commenced their march. Fearful that the Candahar division, if left in occupation of its old ground, whilst the head-quarters of the army were proceeding in advance, would commit many unauthorised excesses, Pollock had determined that the whole force should move on the same day. There was some inconvenience in this, for Nott's division came up before Pollock's had crossed the Loghur river; but to the cause of humanity it was, doubtless, great gain. The unfortunate Hindoos, who had been rendered destitute by the destruction of Ghuznee and the spoliation of Caubul had crowded into the British camps, hoping to obtain, in their utter misery, safe conduct to the provinces of India.‡ Pollock took

* Captain G. St. P. Lawrence, Sir W. Macnaghten's Military Secretary, who had been present at his murder, and had subsequently shared the perils of the captivity.

† "Futteh Jung had urged his people to set fire to the palace as he came out, observing that Shahpoor's rule would be a brief one, and that his own feelings revolted at the idea of the Suddozye seraglio falling to the lot of either Mahomed Akbar or the Ghilzyes. Some attempts were in consequence made at incendiarism, but the flames did not spread."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

‡ They seem to have been admitted by Pollock, but to have been expelled by Nott. "General Pollock's camp," wrote Rawlinson in his

with him what trophies he could, but he had not carriage for all the guns,* and even on the first day's march he was compelled to begin their destruction; whilst Nott, rejoicing in a letter from the Governor-General, who was in ecstasies about the gates of Somnauth, and in the notification of his appointment to the Residency of Lucknow, went off with those venerable relics, and turned his face towards the country from which they had been traditionally ravished.

And on that day, as Pollock was leaving Caubul, and Nott was striking his camp, the guns of the Balla Hissar roared forth a royal salute in honour of the accession of Prince Shahpoor—the *Fatiha* was read in his name, and the chiefs tendered their allegiance. It was, perhaps, a mere mockery; but it had saved the Balla Hissar.† So the new King was paraded about the streets of Caubul—only to be dethroned again before the British army had reached the provinces of India; and that army

journal, "is crowded with hangers-on, imperfectly provided with carriage or supplies, and he necessarily experiences much inconvenience in consequence. General Nott has positively refused to permit his force to be encumbered in the same way, and yesterday evening a general clearance of our camp took place, preparatory to the march. About 500 men were expelled from the Bazaar of the 16th Regiment alone, where they had taken refuge. Most of these people were the destitute Hindoos of Caubul and Ghuznee. They had hoped to have found means of returning to Hindostan with our column; but have been now obliged to go back to Caubul and bide their fate among the Afghans."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

* Pollock took forty-four guns and a large quantity of ordnance stores; but not the least of his trophies were a large number of miserable, mutilated natives of India, crippled by wounds or by the frost, who had escaped with their lives from the great wreck of Elphinstone's army. Pollock now provided them with carriage, appointed two officers to the charge of them, and conveyed them to Hindostan.

† Major Rawlinson says: "It is whispered that the recognition of Shahpoor on the part of the Gholam-Khana has been a mere *ruse* to save the Balla Hissar, and that the chiefs hope to make use of this successful manœuvre to propitiate Mahomed Akbar. The Kuzzilbash, however, if they do meditate anything of this sort, will assuredly overreach themselves, for if any *bonâ fide* Afghan Government succeeds in establishing itself at Caubul, the Gholam-Khana, after what has happened, will certainly be extirpated, root and branch."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

turned its back upon Afghanistan, not as of old, in the agony of humiliation and defeat, but in the flush of victory and triumph.*

* I have stated, at page 618, the Caubul prisoners, before their removal to Bameean, had been joined by their fellow-captives from Bameean. Some idea of the sufferings of the latter may be derived from the following passages of Lieutenant Crawford's Narrative: "Every little thing we had managed to secure, such as watches, penknives, money, &c., was taken from us, and we were strictly confined to a small room, eighteen feet by thirteen. In it there were ten of us. . . . When we lay down at night we exactly occupied the whole floor; and when we wanted to take a little exercise we were obliged to walk up and down (six paces) by turns. Few of us had a change of linen, and the consequence was we were soon swarming with vermin, the catching of which afforded us an hour's employment every morning. I wore my solitary shirt for five weeks, till it became literally black and rotten. . . . On the 7th of April we heard of Shah Soojah's death, and from that date the severities of our confinement were redoubled. They shut and darkened the solitary window from which we had hitherto derived light and air, and they also kept the door of our room constantly closed, so that the air we breathed became perfectly pestiferous. On the 21st of the month they tortured Colonel Palmer with a tent-peg and rope in such a manner that it is wonderful he ever recovered the use of his foot. I cannot in a letter explain the process of the torture, but we all witnessed it, and it was something on the principle of the Scotch boot described in 'Old Mortality.' . . . In the end of April our guards suddenly became particularly civil to us for a few days, and we found that they had a report of the advance of our troops. . . . On the 12th of May we were permitted to quit our prison-room, and walk on the terrace of the citadel for one hour. . . . Just at this period (June 15) one of our number, Lieutenant Davis, 27th N. I., had sickened with typhus fever. We had no medicines, no comforts for him, and he lay on the ground delirious, raving about home and his family, and every hour proving worse, till, on the 19th, death put an end to his sufferings. We read the burial service, and then made his body over to the guard to bury; but I am afraid they merely flung the poor fellow into a ditch outside the gate. On the following day we were removed to another building, where we had three or four rooms to ourselves, and a courtyard to walk about in. This was a delightful change. From this date the conduct of Shumshoodeen towards us improved greatly. . . . It was on the 19th of August, we had, as usual, wrapped ourselves up in our cloaks, and taken lodgings on the cold ground for the night, when the chief suddenly entered the yard, and told us we were to march immediately for Caubul; and sure enough in half an hour we found ourselves moving towards the capital. . . We went direct to Mahomed Akbar's quarters in the Balla Hissar, and from him we met with the kindest reception. He bade us be of good cheer, as our future comfort would be his care, and we should find ourselves treated like officers and gentlemen. . . . We found our countrymen living in what appeared to us a small paradise. They had comfortable quarters, servants, money, and no little baggage, and a beautiful garden to walk in." It ought to have been mentioned, when last I spoke of the Caubul prisoners, that one of their number, John Conolly, the last of the three brothers, died at Caubul on the 7th of August, deeply deplored by all who served with him in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER IV.

[October—December: 1842.]

Effect of the Victories—Lord Ellenborough at Simlah—The Manifesto of 1842—The Proclamation of the Gates—The Restoration of Dost Mahomed—The Gathering at Ferozepore—Reception of the Troops—The Courts-Martial.

NEVER was intelligence received in India with stronger and more universal feelings of delight than the intelligence of the victories of Pollock and Nott; and the happy recovery of the prisoners. There was one general shout of triumphant congratulation, caught up from station to station along the whole line of country from Sirhind to Tinnevelly. Suspense and anxiety now died away in the European breast; and, in the words of one of the ablest Indian statesmen, "it was a comfort again to be able to look a native in the face."*

* The late Colonel Sutherland. "It is, indeed," he wrote, "a comfort to be able to look a native in the face again with confidence; for although there was in reality no change that one could see in their bearing towards us in this region, yet one could not help feeling that we had fallen from our high position; and they would have felt this too, and in the end, perhaps, shown that they did, had not the noble resolution been taken of moving forward to retrieve our tarnished reputation. Now all is right. How easily achieved! And we stand on surer ground now in all quarters than we ever did at any former period of our Indian history." —[*MS. Correspondence.*]

To Lord Ellenborough the brilliant achievements of the two Generals were a source of unbounded gratification. Everything that he could have desired had been accomplished. Pollock and Nott, under his orders, had "retired" so adroitly from Afghanistan, that everybody believed they had advanced upon the capital of the country. The movement had produced, or was producing, a grand moral effect all over Hindostan. Again was there likely to be a season of universal repose. The excitement which had stirred the hearts of the native community was now passing away. All those vague hopes and longings which had sprung up, at the contemplation of our disasters, in Native States of doubtful friendliness and fidelity, were now stifled by the knowledge of our success. The Governor-General had threatened to save India in spite of every man in it who ought to give him support;* but it now seemed as though, in reality, Pollock and Nott had achieved the work of salvation, in spite of the Governor-General himself.

But Lord Ellenborough was not less delighted than if the work had been emphatically his own. He was at Simlah when the glad tidings of the re-occupation of Caubul reached him. He was at Simlah, and in the very house which had been the cradle of the great manifesto of 1838, out of which had come all our disasters. He was at Simlah; and the 1st of October was temptingly at hand. On the 1st of October, four years before, that manifesto had been issued. From Simlah, therefore, now, on the 1st of October, another manifesto was to be made to issue. The utter failure of Lord Auckland's policy in Afghanistan was to be proclaimed from the very room in which it had taken shape

* See letter, *ante*, page 552, *note*.

and consistency.* From this very room was to go forth to all the chiefs and people of India a proclamation, laying bare to the very core the gigantic errors which had been baptised in the blood of thousands, and shrouded in contumely and disgrace.

And thus ran the proclamation:

Secret Department, Simlah, the 1st of October, 1842.

The Government of India directed its army to pass the Indus in order to expel from Afghanistan a chief believed to be hostile to British interests, and to replace upon his throne a sovereign represented to be friendly to those interests, and popular with his former subjects.

The chief believed to be hostile became a prisoner, and the sovereign represented to be popular was replaced upon his throne; but, after events, which brought into question his fidelity to the government by which he was restored, he lost by the hands of an assassin the throne he had only held amidst insurrections, and his death was preceded and followed by still existing anarchy.

Disasters unparalleled in their extent, unless by the errors in which they originated, and by the treachery by which they were completed, have, in one short campaign, been avenged upon every scene of past misfortune; and repeated victories in the field, and the capture of the cities and citadels of Ghuznee and Caubul, have again attached the opinion of invincibility to the British arms.

The British arms in possession of Afghanistan will now be withdrawn to the Sutlej.

The Governor-General will leave it to the Afghans themselves

* "*October* 1.—The Governor-General brought me some papers to consult me upon. Among others, a proclamation announcing that we retire from Afghanistan, leaving to the Afghans the choice of their sovereign. It was on this day, four years ago, that Lord Auckland issued the proclamation announcing the grounds of his interference; and on the same day, *in the same room*, Lord Ellenborough signed his notification of altered intentions, in a clear, short, decided paper, which I much approve. He could not avoid avowing some of his predecessor's military errors; but he has not touched at any length on the political, further than that we lost our name and an army by neglect on the part of our agents."—[*Sir Jasper Nicolls' MS. Journal.*]

to create a government amidst the anarchy which is the consequence of their crimes.

To force a sovereign upon a reluctant people, would be as inconsistent with the policy as it is with the principles of the British Government, tending to place the arms and resources of that people at the disposal of the first invader, and to impose the burden of supporting a sovereign, without the prospect of benefit from his alliance.

The Governor-General will willingly recognise any government approved by the Afghans themselves, which shall appear desirous and capable of maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring states.

Content with the limits nature appears to have assigned to its empire, the Government of India will devote all its efforts to the establishment and maintenance of general peace, to the protection of the sovereigns and chiefs its allies, and to the prosperity and happiness of its own faithful subjects.

The rivers of the Punjaub and Indus, and the mountainous passes and the barbarous tribes of Afghanistan, will be placed between the British army and an enemy approaching from the West, if indeed such enemy there can be, and no longer between the army and its supplies.

The enormous expenditure required for the support of a large force, in a false military position, at a distance from its own frontier and its resources, will no longer arrest every measure for the improvement of the country and of the people.

The combined army of England and of India, superior in equipment, in discipline, in valour, and in the officers by whom it is commanded, to any force which can be opposed to it in Asia, will stand in unassailable strength upon its own soil, and for ever, under the blessing of Providence, preserve the glorious empire it has won, in security and in honour.

The Governor-General cannot fear the misconstruction of his motives in thus frankly announcing to surrounding states the pacific and conservative policy of his government.

Afghanistan and China have seen at once the forces at his disposal, and the effect with which they can be applied.

Sincerely attached to peace for the sake of the benefits it confers upon the people, the Governor-General is resolved that peace shall be observed, and will put forth the whole power of the

British Government to coerce the state by which it shall be infringed.

By order of the Right Honourable the Goveror-General of India.

T. H. MADDOCK,
Secretary to the Government of India, with the Governor-General.

It would have been well if Lord Ellenborough had resisted the puerile temptation to date this proclamation on the 1st of October. That it was written then is not to be doubted. But, though written, it was not issued.* The Governor-General was not prepared to issue it. There was no immediate necessity, indeed, for the preparation of such a notification as this. It might have been delayed for a few weeks without injury to the state; whilst, on the other hand, it could not have been delayed for a few days without great advantage to Lord Ellenborough. On the 1st of October, the Governor-General knew that the British ensign was floating over the Balla Hissar of Caubul; but he did not know that the British prisoners had been released from

* Lord Ellenborough's explanations on this subject are to be found in the following letter to General Pollock, which calls for no comment:

"Simlah, Oct. 12, 1842.

"GENERAL,—I enclose for your information a copy of a proclamation, signed by me here on the 1st of this month, but withheld from immediate publication, with the view to the having previously made and circulated to the Native Courts, and amongst the natives generally, a correct translation which might be the official document in the native language, and prevent any misrepresentation, or misapprehension of the intentions of the government. I further wished not to make known here the intention of withdrawing the army, until I knew that you had actually the prisoners in your hands, and had made arrangements for leaving Caubul. Your letter received here on the 5th removed every ground for withholding the publication of the proclamation, had the translation been prepared; but in consequence of the absence of Mr. Clerk on duty in the plains, no such translation had been made as I could fully rely upon.

"In the mean time, by a combination of accidents, and some irregularity in the transaction of business in the Secretary's office, the printed copies of the proclamation were, without my knowledge, or that of the Secretary himself, transmitted to the presidencies and the political officers generally. There is no object in your publishing the proclamation in your camp. Mr. Clerk returned last night, and the translation will hardly be ready for transmission before to-morrow.

"I have, &c. ELLENBOROUGH."
—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

captivity. Had he suppressed the inclination to write "*October* 1" at the head of his proclamation, he might have announced in it the attainment of all those objects which his countrymen had at heart, and fully declared that the war was at an end. But there were not wanting those who now commented bitterly on the fact that this proclamation was drawn up by the Governor-General of India whilst yet in ignorance of the fate of the prisoners. The delay of a few days would have placed him in possession of the intelligence, for which all India was looking with the deepest interest and anxiety; but the temptation of the "1st of October" was not to be resisted; and Lord Ellenborough sacrificed his character for humanity for the sake of a little dramatic effect.

Having drawn up this proclamation, and handed it over to the translators to be arrayed in Oriental costume, Lord Ellenborough began to take counsel with Sir Jasper Nicolls on the subject of the honorary distinctions to be conferred on the officers and men who had gained these great victories in Afghanistan; and to draft another proclamation to be issued to the Chiefs and Princes of India. This was the famous proclamation of the Gates. On the 5th of October he sent a rough draft of it to Sir Jasper Nicolls, inviting the comments of the Chief. Freely asked, they were freely given. What they were is not on record. The Governor-General took the comments of the Commander-in-Chief "in good part," and was not wholly impervious to the criticism of the veteran commander.* Subjected to a long and laborious incubation, this address to "all the Princes, chiefs, and people of India," was translated into the

* "*October 5.*—His Lordship sent me the draft of his letter to the Hindoo chiefs, relating to the gates of the Somnauth temple; and invited remarks on it, which I freely gave; and he took them in good part, adopting some of them."—[*Sir Jasper Nicolls' MS. Journal.*]

Hindee language, circulated among those to whom it especially appealed, and finally published in its English dress on the 16th of November.* It was by no means, therefore, an ebullition of impulse and enthusiasm on the part of the Governor-General, but the result of many weeks of thought and study, and, perhaps, much consultation with others. The Duke of Wellington called it a "Song of triumph." Thus rose the pæan, in its English dress:

From the Governor-General to all the Princes and Chiefs, and People of India.

MY BROTHERS AND MY FRIENDS,

Our victorious army bears the gates of the temple of Somnauth in triumph from Afghanistan, and the despoiled tomb of Sultan Mahomed looks upon the ruins of Ghuznee.

The insult of eight hundred years is at last avenged. The gates of the temple of Somnauth, so long the memorial of your humiliation, are become the proudest record of your national glory; the proof of your superiority in arms over the nations beyond the Indus.

To you, Princes and Chiefs of Sirhind, of Rajwarra, of Malwa, and of Guzerat, I shall commit this glorious trophy of successful war.

You will yourselves, with all honour, transmit the gates of sandal-wood through your respective territories to the restored temple of Somnauth.

The chiefs of Sirhind shall be informed at what time our victorious army will first deliver the gates of the temple into their guardianship, at the foot of the bridge of the Sutlej.

MY BROTHERS AND MY FRIENDS,

I have ever relied with confidence upon your attachment to the British Government. You see how worthy it proves itself of your love, when, regarding your honour as its own, it

* The Governor-General, when he first drafted the proclamation, only knew that Nott had reached Caubul with the gates. He may have thought it expedient to withhold the issue of it, lest by some untoward accident the gates might be lost on their journey through the passes of Afghanistan.

exerts the power of its arms to restore to you the gates of the temple of Somnauth, so long the memorial of your subjection to the Afghans.

For myself, identified with you in interest and in feeling, I regard with all your own enthusiasm the high achievements of that heroic army; reflecting alike immortal honour upon my native and upon my adopted country.

To preserve and to improve the happy union of our two countries, necessary as it is to the welfare of both, is the constant object of my thoughts. Upon that union depends the security of every ally, as well as of every subject of the British Government, from the miseries whereby, in former times, India was afflicted: through that alone has our army now waved its triumphant standards over the ruins of Ghuznee, and planted them upon the Balla Hissar of Caubul.

May that good Providence, which has hitherto so manifestly protected me, still extend to me its favour, that I may so use the power now entrusted to my hands, as to advance your prosperity and secure your happiness, by placing the union of our two countries upon foundations which may render it eternal.

ELLENBOROUGH.

No document that ever emanated from the bureau of a statesman has been overwhelmed with so much ridicule as this. It is still fresh in the recollection of men who dwelt in India at this time, how the authenticity of the proclamation was gravely doubted—how many, at first, declared their conviction that it was a newspaper satire upon the Napoleonic style of address which Lord Ellenborough had recently adopted; and how at last, when it came to be known—thoroughly known and understood that it was a genuine emanation from the "Political Department," with the right official stamp upon it, such a flood of ridicule and censure was let loose upon it as had never before descended upon an Indian state-paper. The folly of the thing was past all denial. It was a folly, too, of the most senseless kind, for it was calculated to please none and to offend many. It

was addressed to "all the Princes and Chiefs, and People of India." The "Brothers and Friends" thus grandiloquently apostrophised, were a mixed family of Mahomedans and Hindoos. Upon the Mahomedans it was an open and most intelligible outrage. To the Hindoos, the pompous offer of the polluted gates of Somnauth was little better than a covert insult. The temple to which it was to have been restored was in ruins, and the sacred ground trodden by Mahomedans. Looking at the effusion from the Oriental side, it was altogether a failure and an abortion.* Among Europeans, worldly men scouted the proclamation as a folly, and religious men denounced it as a crime. It was said to be both dangerous and profane. The question suggested by the latter epithet I do not purpose to discuss; but of the dangers of such a proclamation it may be said that they existed only in the imaginations of those who discerned them. It was altogether an event of no political importance. In Afghanistan, the rape of the Gates created little or no sensation. In India, the proclamation produced no excitement among the "brothers and friends" to whom it was addressed. The effect of the measure was personal to Lord Ellenborough himself. It damaged his reputation, and left the rest of the world as it was before.

But there was another proclamation published about this time—launched into the world, indeed, before the proclamation of the Gates, but of a somewhat later conception. The Afghan drama was now well-nigh played out. The Afghan policy of Lord Auckland had been publicly declared a failure, and the grounds on which it had been originated wholly a mistake. Everything, indeed, was to be reversed. The Tripartite treaty

* We have no word very fitly to represent the character of the affair. The French would have called it a *bêtise*. It was a *bêtise* of the first magnitude.

was at an end. Shah Soojah was dead. The people of Afghanistan had felt an obvious distaste for foreign interference, and had evinced it in a very unmistakeable manner. The Suddozye Princes had demonstrated the feebleness of the tenure by which they could hope to maintain possession of the throne. It was impossible wholly to revert to the state of things that had existed in 1838, for thousands of lives and millions of money had been buried in the passes of Afghanistan—and there was no earthly resurrection or restoration for them. But there was one victim of the war in Afghanistan for whom restoration was yet possible. The first victim of our national injustice was yet a prisoner in the hands of the British. The Governor-General had publicly announced, in his proclamation of the 1st of October, that Dost Mahomed was only "believed to be hostile to British interests," and that Shah Soojah was only "represented to be friendly to those interests, and popular with his own people." It was announced, too, in this proclamation, that the British Government had determined to leave the Afghans to form a government for themselves, and to recognise that government when formed. After such announcements as these, the retention of Dost Mahomed in captivity would have been confessedly inconsistent and unjust.

Ever since intelligence of the outbreak at Caubul had reached the provinces of Hindostan, Dost Mahomed had been watched with greater suspicion, and guarded with greater care. It was believed that he would place himself in communication with the leaders of the revolutionary party, and would make an effort to escape from the captivity which surrounded his lot. It does not appear, however, that he manifested any feelings of exultation at the thought of the calamities which had befallen his captors, or, in any way, desired to increase

the difficulties which surrounded them. On the other hand, he seemed willing, if not anxious, to impart to the British Government, through Captain Nicolson, such local information as he thought would be serviceable to them in the conjuncture which had arisen; and even offered suggestions tending to facilitate their re-invasion of his country. The vigilance with which he was guarded, and the consequent inconveniences to which he was subjected, seemed to cause him much vexation and annoyance. He always protested that he knew nothing of the secret history of the Caubul outbreak—that it was his belief the Suddozyes had instigated it, as no other family in Afghanistan, since the overthrow of the Barukzyes, had sufficient influence to initiate a great national movement. Any expression or intimation of a doubt of his honesty seemed to pain him. "Recollect," he said, on one occasion to Captain Nicolson, "that I have, from the first day I came in, been on your side, heart and soul. I swear by the most holy God, that since my submission I have not communicated with Caubul and its people, except through you. But it is possible that news may have reached my sister at Loodianah through her other brothers. I am your guest or your prisoner, whichever you please. I came to you in the hope of being in time employed by you; and I should say what is not true, if I denied still entertaining that hope; and I am ready to lay down my life in your service."* It may be doubted whether he entertained any hope, or any desire to regain the dominion he had lost. He had resigned himself submissively to his fate. If it seemed to be the will of God that he should return to Caubul, he was willing to retrace his steps to the Balla Hissar. But he was little inclined to take into his own

* *Memorandum by Captain Peter Nicolson of a Conversation with Dost Mahomed Khan: February* 13, 1842. *MS. Records.*

hands the shaping of his future destinies, and to win his way back to empire by violence or fraud.*

It has been seen that the Government of India, ever since the disastrous downfall of our efforts to prop up the Suddozye dynasty, had contemplated the possibility of restoring Dost Mahomed to the country from which we had expelled him. Lord Auckland had hinted at the restoration of the ex-Ameer as a measure to which, under certain circumstances, he would offer no opposition. He would gladly, indeed, have availed himself of the opportunity afforded, by a proposed interchange of prisoners, to render tardy justice to the man whom he had so palpably wronged. The subsequent progress of events had tended to render more and more obvious the propriety of this resolution. It was now plainer than ever that the retention of Dost Mahomed as a prisoner of state could no longer be justified, on the score either of political rectitude or expediency. So Lord Ellenborough did as it became him to do. He issued a proclamation, setting forth that when the "British army returning from Afghanistan shall have passed the Indus, all the Afghans now in the power of the British Government shall be permitted to return to their country." This was equally reasonable and just. But the proclamation was not without characteristic disfigurements, for the Governor-General, who had set his heart upon a grand pageant at Ferozepore, added a codicil, to the effect that the released Afghan Princes were to present themselves, before returning to their desolated country, at the

* He was candid enough too, at one time, to acknowledge that, after the expulsion of the British from Caubul, the only chance of establishing a settled government was through the agency of Shah Soojah. "The Ameer concluded," says Captain Nicolson, in the memorandum cited above, "by using an expression exactly the same as one Shah Soojah uses in his letter to Captain Macgregor. He said: "The people cannot now do without the King, for there is no one else could carry on the government."—[*MS. Records.*]

Durbar of the Governor-General in his camp at Ferozepore.

The popular feeling against this contemplated outrage was strong and universal. There was not a generous mind in the country which did not feel deeply the wrong that was to be done to these unfortunate Princes. But the Governor-General, in a better hour, conscious of error, consented to forego the pitiful delight of gracing his triumph with the presence of a dethroned monarch, whose national feelings were not so wholly extinguished by exile as to render his appearance at the Ferozepore festivities anything but a painful and humiliating trial. The order issued in thoughtlessness was revoked in good feeling, and Dost Mahomed returned to Afghanistan, without enduring this last crowning injury at the hands of the British Government.*

Quitting Simlah, the Governor-General moved down to the plains of Ferozepore. There an army, under the personal command of Sir Jasper Nicolls, was now assembled. It had been originally projected by Lord Auckland, at a time when it was believed that the presence of such an army on our north-western frontier would have a great moral effect upon the neighbouring states. It has been said, that when it did assemble, at the commencement of the cold season of 1842-1843, it was intended to answer no other purpose than that of a vast pageant; that the Governor-General had determined on celebrating the return of the victorious armies with all possible pomp; and that he looked forward, with childish delight and anxiety, to the magnificent *fête champêtre* of which he had appointed himself director-in-chief. It must be admitted that Lord Ellenborough took a somewhat undignified interest in the details of these puerilities; but the justice

* *Calcutta Review.*

of the assertion, that the army was kept together for no other purpose than that of presenting arms to the "Illustrious Garrison" of Jellalabad, and turning out for a grand field-day, may be reasonably disputed. The fidelity of the Sikhs had long been suspected. It was now considered by no means an impossible event, that the march of our army, worn, sick, and encumbered, through the Punjaub, would offer a temptation too strong to be resisted by the mutinous Sikh soldiery, whose real feeling had betrayed itself early in the year at Peshawur. Had the Governor-General felt secure in the reality of the formal alliance with the Punjaub, he might have dispersed the Army of Reserve when the Afghanistan force crossed the Attock. Such expositions of the military resources of a great nation are never wholly without profit in such troubled times; and as doubts, and not unreasonable doubts, of Sikh fidelity had arisen, it was sound policy to keep a force on the frontier until the returning troops had actually crossed the Sutlej.

On the 9th of December the Governor-General arrived at Ferozepore. The Army of Reserve was drawn out to receive him. A noble sight, it must have stirred the heart of one who loved to express his regret that circumstances had not made him a soldier. There was much work to be done; and he flung himself into it with characteristic energy, resolute to give the returning warriors an honourable reception, and to dazzle the eyes of all the native potentates who could be lured to the scene of triumph. Four years before there had been a grand gathering at the same place, when Runjeet Singh and Lord Auckland had exchanged courtesies, and the Army of the Indus had commenced its march for the invasion of the Douranee Empire. The war in Afghanistan had opened with a grand spectacle at Ferozepore;

and now, with due dramatic propriety, it was to close with a similar effect. The Maharajah of the Punjaub, with his ministers of state and his principal military chiefs, were invited to grace the festival.* The Princes of Sirhind, and other "brothers and friends," were asked to take part in the rejoicings. And everywhere from the neighbouring stations, under lordly encouragement, flocked our English ladies to Ferozepore—the wives and daughters of the returning warriors and of the officers there assembled—and everywhere was a flutter of excitement, such as had not been known in those regions for years.

Day after day, as Lord Ellenborough busied himself with his preparations for the reception of the victorious Generals, tidings reached him from their camps. There was nothing in this intelligence to dim the pleasure which was animating his Lordship's breast. Pollock had brought back his army with little loss through the formidable passes of Afghanistan, and was now making an uninterrupted march through the Punjaub. The withdrawal of the force had been looked forward to with some anxiety by many, who believed that the tribes would harass the rear of the retiring army, and work them grievous annoyance. But so completely had the strength of the Afghans been broken by continual defeat, that they scarcely made an effort to annoy the British columns on their line of march. Pollock wrote that he had not seen an enemy; but M'Caskill and Nott, who followed with the centre and the rear divisions, were not quite so fortunate: From Caubul to Jellala-

* Mr. Clerk was despatched to Lahore with an invitation from the Governor-General; and Shere Singh was inclined to accept it, but he was overruled in Durbar. The Crown Prince, Pertab Singh, and Dhyan Singh, the minister, were sent to represent the Maharajah at the Governor-General's Court.

bad, however, there was little to contend against, except some desultory night attacks on our baggage.* There was, indeed, no organised resistance.

The entire force assembled at Jellalabad; and halted there for a few days. Pollock had determined to destroy the defences of the place. It had been in contemplation to transfer Jellalabad to the government of the Sikhs; but the Durbar had been so slow to announce its acquiescence in the proposed arrangement, that when the acceptance of the offer was announced to General Pollock, he had already completed the work of destruction. When the British army was halting at Peshawur, the question of the transfer of Jellalabad to the Sikhs, as a *douceur* to ensure cordiality of co-operation with us, had been earnestly discussed;† but at that time the project had fallen to the ground. It was felt, that so long as Shah Soojah existed, and the Tripartite treaty had not been annulled, any design to dissever the Douranee Empire, and to invite the Sikhs to share in the partition, would be premature, both as regarded the justice and the expediency of the measure. But the death of Shah Soojah gave a new aspect to the state of affairs; and the British Government lost little time, after authentic intelligence of that event had been received, in communicating to Mr. Clerk its willingness that certain territories on the right bank of the Indus should pass into the possession of the Sikh Government or of the Jummoo Rajahs, with the permission of the Lahore Dur-

* A smart skirmish between Nott's division and the enemy, on the Huft-Kotul, may, perhaps, be considered as an exception. Colonel Stacy describes it as "a severe affair;" and Nott, who was not inclined to write lengthy despatches, or to exaggerate the importance of his engagements, thought it worthy of a brief despatch. In *Colonel Stacy's Narrative* and *Captain Neill's Recollections of Service*, the reader will find ample details of all the operations of the rear division. *Lieutenant Greenwood's Narrative* may also be consulted for some particulars of the movements of M'Caskill's division.

† See *ante*, book vi., chapter v.

bar; and it was intimated that the British Government would facilitate the accomplishment of this object by placing Jellalabad in the hands of the Sikhs. The offer was formally made; but, in the then uncertain position of affairs, prudently declined. It was not unreasonably urged by the Durbar, that until they were in possession of the ultimate intentions of the British with respect to Afghanistan, it would be hardly politic in the Sikhs to place themselves in a prominent position, or in any way to identify themselves with measures the future outturn of which they could as yet but dimly foresee. But it was believed, that as soon as ever our withdrawal from Afghanistan was fully determined upon, and about to be put in execution, the Sikhs, without further explanation, would be willing to take possession of Jellalabad. And they were so; but not having fully made up their minds upon the subject (probably from some mistrust of our intentions) until the British force had actually marched from Caubul, their acceptance of the offer came too late to save the place from destruction. General Pollock had, in accordance with instructions, destroyed the fortifications of Jellalabad before he received a communication from the government, intended, if possible, to arrest such proceedings, and ordering him to make over the place uninjured to our allies. It may be doubted whether either party very much regretted the accident.*

Having destroyed the defences of Jellalabad, Pollock pushed on to Peshawur. The Khybur Pass had now to be traversed again. The Afreedi Maliks offered to sell us a free passage; but Mackeson answered that Pollock would take one. The first division, under the General himself, who effectively crowned the heights as he advanced, passed through with only the loss of two

* *Calcutta Review.*

or three privates. M'Caskill was not equally successful. He had not taken the same precautions, and the Khyburees came down upon the rear-guard, under their old enemy, Brigadier Wild. Favoured by the darkness of night, they rushed among our people, and threw them into confusion. Two of our officers were killed,* and two of our guns were abandoned. But the only object of the Khyburees seems to have been plunder. They made no effort to carry off the guns.†

Altogether, the return march of the British troops was singularly peaceful and uneventful. If the same precautions to crown the heights along the line of march, as were systematically taken by Pollock, had been taken by M'Caskill and Nott, it may be doubted whether we should even have heard of the appearance of an enemy. The Afghans are famous plunderers, and they are habitually armed. When they saw their opportunity, they came down upon our baggage-laden columns, and molested us as best they could. But there was nothing like organised resistance; and, in all probability, if the

* Lieut. Christie, of the Artillery; and Ensign Nicolson, of the 30th Native Infantry.

† "It was a night attack of some plunderers to obtain baggage. There appears to have been sad confusion. The two officers were about that time killed. But the guns were not, I believe, even attempted to be carried off; otherwise we certainly never should have seen anything of them again, whereas, the next day, the mountain howitzer and carriage were found in *statu quo*, and the carriage of the three-pounder; and were brought in. I dare say the three-pounder was not far. It in all probability upset and parted from the carriage; but if an enemy (so usually termed) had made the attack, it is very improbable that either guns or carriage would have been left, for a very few men could carry gun, carriage, and all."—[*MS. Correspondence of General Pollock: Camp near Ali-Musjid, Nov.* 1, 1842.] Of this unfortunate business, another officer writes: "Night overtook our unfortunate 3rd Brigade. The enemy, emboldened by the darkness, came down upon them in strength. Some of our men were *cut off in the column.* Numbers of them were hit by stones, which were flying in all directions. The confusion must have been great. The Irregular Cavalry rode right over the infantry, knocking down several of the officers. Christie and his two mountain-guns were lost sight of in the dark, and are lost, himself killed. Young Nicolson, of the 30th, is killed. As to the number of men killed, nothing is yet known; but the whole of the Gholundauz that were with Christie are missing."—[*MS. Correspondence.*]

heights had been crowned by the second and the third divisions, as they were by the first, they would have achieved the march with comparative immunity. Not a shot was fired at Pollock between Caubul and Peshawur.*

The fortress of Ali-Musjid was destroyed, and the army then pushed on to Peshawur. Having partaken of Avitabile's magnificent hospitality, the victorious Generals commenced their march through the Punjaub. It was an uneventful, but a melancholy one. Sickness broke out in the returning army. There had always been a scarcity of carriage-cattle, and now the number of sick made it more severely felt. But all the inconveniences of the march were from within. The Sikhs wrought us no annoyance.

Whilst such were the tidings from the returning army which reached the Governor-General in the midst of his preparations, there came from Afghanistan intelligence of a more dubious and, at the same time, a less interesting character. Lord Ellenborough had left the Afghans to suffer the punishment due to their crimes; and it little mattered to him whether one party or another were dominant at Caubul. But the news which now reached him from the Afghan capital all went to show that the Suddozye Princes were utterly destitute of power and influence; and that the new government had not the means of supporting the youthful puppet upon the throne. The Wuzeer had sought to re-establish the supremacy of the Douranees, had hedged in the new King with Douranee influences, and by his exclusiveness given general offence. The downfall of the Suddozye

* Pollock, determined to give the robber tribes as little opportunity as possible of plundering his baggage, ordered that every camel that could not come on should be shot, and that his load, if it could not be brought on, should be immediately burnt.

Prince followed rapidly upon this.* Akbar Khan had been biding his time about the regions of the Hindoo-Koosh. He was in no hurry to return to Caubul. It was more prudent to leave the dissensions which were certain to arise at the capital to work out their own debilitating effects upon those in power, and pave the way for his triumphant return to the capital.

And so, after a time, there came into Ferozepore tidings, forwarded from Pollock's camp, to the effect that the Suddozye Prince, Shahpoor, had been expelled from the Balla Hissar, and had fled for safety to Peshawur. The poor boy had narrowly escaped with his life.

* One more glimpse at Afghan politics from Major Rawlinson's interesting journal, may be afforded before we finally close it: "A messenger arrived to-day from Caubul with letters from the Kuzzilbash party, inviting the Nizam-ood-Dowlah to return, as Gholam Mahomed Khan had already given offence by endeavouring to re-establish an exclusive Douranee influence round the puppet King. At present, Khan Shereen is, as far as real power is concerned, paramount, and he seems determined to carry things with a high hand, having given out that if Shahpoor lends himself to Douranee intrigue he will force him to abdicate in favour of another Prince. A strong Kuzzilbash detachment has at the same time been sent to Ghuznee under Mahomed Hussein Khan, to occupy that place, and in conjunction with the Hazarehs to hold in check any possible movement of Ghilzyes or Douranees from the Westward. Prince Hyder, with another party of the Gholam Khana, has gone to Bameean, and expects to secure the passes during the winter against the return of the Barukzyes. Mahomed Akbar's force, which remained for some time at Khanjan, is said to have completely dispersed, the Sirdar himself, with Ameen-oollah, having gone to Tash Noorghan, and the men having all returned to their homes at Caubul. Newab Zemaun Khan, Jubbar Khan, Oosman Khan, and Meer Hadjee, are said to be at Khooloom. The people of Caubul have nearly all returned to the city, and are busy reopening their houses against the winter. Many of the Kohistan chiefs, Gool Mahomed and Khoda Buksh, Ghilzyes, have also paid their respects to Shahpoor, and Ameen-oollah was expected shortly to return. Mahomed Akbar either really fears for his personal safety, now that a party with which accommodation is impossible has come into power, or he thinks it better policy to allow dissension to fructify in the capital before he makes his reappearance on the scene. The Dourances are in a large minority at Caubul, and must necessarily give way before the Gholam Khana, if Khan Shereen acts with any energy. I look to Candahar as their natural and necessary retreat, and no doubt at that place Suddozye royalty, supported by their influence, will continue to glimmer on, until Persia turns her attention to her eastern frontier, and pushes forward the Barukzye Sirdars to play a game for her. The Kuzzilbashes, at the same time, cannot expect to hold their ground at Caubul for any length of time."—[*Major Rawlinson's MS. Journal.*]

Akbar Khan had made a descent upon Caubul and carried everything before him. The Newab Zemaun Khan, it was said, had been made Governor of Jellalabad, Shumshoodeen of Ghuznee, Sultan Jan of Candahar; and in the mean while Dost Mahomed was making his way through the Punjaub to his old principality. "Everything," it was added, with bitter significance, "is reverting to the old state of things—as it was before we entered the country."

And now the heart of the Governor-General began to beat with expectation of the immediate arrival of the victorious armies. Everything was ready for their reception. The Army of Reserve was spread out over the great plain of Ferozepore. Triumphal arches had been erected. A temporary bridge had been thrown across the Sutlej. The elephants, no insignificant portion of the coming spectacle, had been gorgeously painted and decorated, and tricked out in their gayest trappings and caparisons; and as much of tinsel, and bamboo-work, and coloured cloth, as could give effect to the triumph, had been expended to grace the occasion. On the 17th of December, Sir Robert Sale crossed the Sutlej at the head of that gallant body of troops which had composed the garrison of Jellalabad. The Governor-General went forth to meet them. A street of two hundred and fifty elephants, more or less caparisoned, had been formed, and through this marched the heroes of Jellalabad—the 13th Light Infantry, Sale's own regiment, at the head of the column. The morning was dull and lowering—not a gleam of sunshine lighted up the festive scene; but there were sunny hearts and bright faces; and as the horse-artillery guns boomed forth their welcome, and the band of the Lancers struck up the ever-animating "Conquering Hero" tune, and each regiment in succession, as the column passed on, saluted their long ab-

sent comrades, the heart must have been a dull one that did not acknowledge that there is something of a bright side even to the picture of war.

On the 19th, General Pollock crossed the Sutlej; and on the 23rd, General Nott arrived, bringing with him the Gates of Somnauth.* Then there was feasting and festivity in the gigantic tents, hung with silken flags, on which, in polyglot emblazonments, were the names of the actions that had been fought; many complimentary effusions, in the shape of after-dinner harangues;† and in the mornings grand field-days, more or less, according to the "skyey influences." The year—a most eventful one—was closed with a grand military display. The plain was covered with British and Sikh troops, and in the presence of Pertaub Singh, the heir apparent of Lahore; Dhyan Singh, the minister; the Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief, and others of less note, some forty thousand men, with a hundred guns, were manœuvred on the great plain. On this grand tableau the curtain fell; and the year opportunely closed in gaiety and glitter—in prosperity and parade.

The Sepoy regiments having been feasted with their "favourite *mehtoys*" (sweetmeats), and the important event announced in a Government notification, the Army of Reserve was broken up; but not before the Governor-

* Lord Ellenborough had determined to bestow exclusive honours upon Sale's brigade; but Sir Jasper Nicolls desired to receive both Pollock and Nott with the same military distinctions. "I wished," he wrote in his journal, "to have one of the reserve divisions to receive each of the divisions as it came, but he (Lord Ellenborough) did not desire that the honours paid to the garrison should be extended to any other part of the army. This I regret, for they have all seen hard work, great exposure, and some arduous days of service." — [*Sir Jasper Nicolls' MS. Journal.*]

† The rejoicings, in the opinions of many, were very much marred by the prejudiced exclusiveness of the Governor-General, who seems to have set his face very strenuously against the political officers, no matter what their services. With all his admiration of the Illustrious Garrison, Lord Ellenborough slighted Macgregor, who was its very life and soul; and with all his appreciation of gallantry, he seemed unable to appreciate the services of Eldred Pottinger.

General, moved by that characteristic admiration of gallantry, which earned for him in India the title of the "Friend of the Army," had done all that lay in his power to reward the troops who had achieved such brilliant successes. The honours which he could not bestow he solicited from the Crown, on behalf of the brave men who had so fairly earned them; and the distribution of honorary distinctions which ensued gave almost universal satisfaction. It erred rather on the side of liberality; and, perhaps, there are some old soldiers, in the scantily-decorated Queen's army, who think that during the last few years, honours have been bestowed so profusely as to lower their real value, by showing how easily they are to be earned. But it is better to err on the side of liberality than of chariness—better even that the unworthy should be decorated, than that the worthy should pine in vain for distinction.*

But there was still something more to be done. The prisoners, towards whom the flood of sympathy had been setting in so strongly for many months, and whom the English in India now welcomed back with cordiality and delight, were not to be suffered all at once to sink into privacy and obscurity. Some of them were to be tried by courts-martial, or to be summoned before courts of inquiry, for abandoning their posts, going over to the enemy, or otherwise disgracing themselves. The courts sate, but they could not pronounce the officers arraigned before them guilty of any offence. Brigadier Shelton was acquitted. Colonel Palmer,† Captains Anderson, Boyd,

* Pollock and Nott received most deservedly the distinction of the Grand Cross of the Bath; and Lord Ellenborough, who was created an Earl, formally invested them at Agra, and delivered some flowing speeches upon the occasion. It may be mentioned here that the gates of Somnauth, that had been brought up from Ferozepore on a triumphal car, were deposited in the magazine of Agra.

† In confirming the acquittal of Colonel Palmer, Sir Jasper Nicolls wrote that "the circumstances under which Colonel Palmer surrendered Ghuznee to the Afghans, were such as he could neither control, alter, or alleviate."

Troup, and Waller, and Lieutenant Eyre, were honourably acquitted; and the court of inquiry, over which Mr. Clerk presided, must have risen from its investigation into the conduct of Major Pottinger with increased respect for the high soldierly qualities of the young officer who had beaten back the Persians at Herat, and protested against the capitulation of Caubul in the teeth of all the veterans of the force.

On the 20th of January 1843, Dost Mahomed arrived at Lahore, on his way to the frontier of Afghanistan, and was honourably received by the Sikh Durbar. The Suddoyze Princes and their families, to whose reception in the British provinces Lord Ellenborough had evinced an insuperable repugnance, found an asylum in the Sikh dominions; and British connexion with Afghanistan was now fairly at an end.

Little more remains to be said. The proclamations which were issued by the Supreme Government of India in the autumn of 1842, are in themselves the best commentaries on the War in Afghanistan. The Governor-General of 1842 passed sentence of condemnation upon the measures of the Governor-General of 1838. No failure so total and overwhelming as this is recorded in the page of history. No lesson so grand and impressive is to be found in all the annals of the world. Of the secondary causes which contributed to the utter prostration of an unholy policy, much, at different times, has been written in the course of this narrative; much more might now be written, in conclusion, of the mighty political and military errors which were baptised in the blood and tears of our unhappy countrymen. These errors are so patent—are so intelligible—they have been so often laid bare by the hand of the anatomist—and they have been so copiously illustrated in these volumes, that I do not now purpose to enlarge upon them be-

fore I lay down my pen. The secondary causes of the great failure were not badly summed up by the Commander-in-Chief, when, on the 24th of March, 1842, he wrote to the Governor-General:

The causes to which I ascribe our failure in Afghanistan are these:

1st. Making war with a peace establishment.

2nd. Making war without a safe base of operations.

3rd. Carrying our native army out of India into a strange and cold climate, where they and we were foreigners, and both considered as infidels.

4th. Invading a poor country, and one unequal to supply our wants, especially our large establishment of cattle.

5th. Giving undue power to political agents.

6th. Want of forethought and undue confidence in the Afghans on the part of Sir William Macnaghten.

7th. Placing our magazines, even our treasure, in indefensible places.

8th. Great military neglect and mismanagement after the outbreak.

But if none of these things had been in operation to defeat and frustrate our policy, it must still have broken down under the ruinous expenditure of public money which the armed occupation of Afghanistan entailed upon the Government of India. It is on record, by the admission of Lord Auckland himself, that when our friendly connexion with Afghanistan was brought suddenly to a violent and disastrous termination, it had cost the natives of India, whose stewards we are, more than eight millions of money.* To this are to be added the cost of the great calamity itself, and the expenses of the War of Retribution. All this enormous burden fell upon the revenues of India; and the country is still groaning under the weight.†

* *Lord Auckland's Finance Minute: February* 19, 1842.

† The bitter injustice of this need hardly be insisted upon. The charges

And what have we gained? What are the advantages to be summed up on the other side of the account? The expedition across the Indus was undertaken with the object of erecting in Afghanistan a barrier against encroachment from the West. The advance of the British army was designed to check the aggressions of Persia on the Afghan frontier, and to baffle Russian intrigues, by the substitution of a friendly for an unfriendly power, in the countries beyond the Indus. And now, after all this waste of blood and treasure, a Persian army is at Herat, and every town and village of Afghanistan is bristling with our enemies. Before the British army crossed the Indus, the English name was honoured in Afghanistan. Some dim traditions of the splendour of Mr. Elphinstone's Mission were all that the Afghans associated with their thoughts of the English nation; and now, in their place, are galling memories of the progress of a desolating army. The Afghans are an unforgiving race; and everywhere from Candahar to Caubul, and from Caubul to Peshawur, are traces of the injuries we have inflicted upon the tribes. There is scarcely a family in the country which has not the blood of kindred to revenge upon the accursed Feringhees. The door of reconciliation is closed against us; and if the hostility of the Afghans be an element of weakness, it is certain that we have contrived to secure it.

It has been said that the tendency of all these great movements in Central Asia has been to diminish the mutual jealousies and apprehensions of the British and the Muscovite powers, by revealing, in all their true proportions, the tremendous quicksands which lie waiting to

of the war, in spite of a feeble effort to shift a part of the burden upon the revenues of Great Britain, have all been defrayed from the Indian treasury. And yet it was a war neither initiated by the East India Company, nor at any stage approved of by that great body. The ministers of the Crown are mainly responsible for the invasion of Afghanistan, but the revenues of the East India Company have been compelled to bear the expense. It was adroitly designed, indeed, from the beginning, that the Company should bear the charges of the war.

engulph our armies in the inhospitable countries between the borders of the Russian and the Indian Empires. But although both states have learnt—the one from her Afghan, the other from her Khivan expedition—terrible lessons not to be forgotten, it may still be questioned whether the Cossack and the Sepoy are further apart than they were. The "macadamisation" of Sindh and the Punjaub has given England a forward position, which, advantageous as it is in itself, may have stimulated Russia to increased activity, whilst our awful disasters in Afghanistan have encouraged anew the aggressions of the Persian, and the intrigues of his Muscovite ally, by revealing the sources of our disinclination to entangle our armies again in its perilous defiles.

It needed but the announcement of the arrival of a Persian army at Herat to consummate the completeness of the failure. The very policy which ought to have been pursued in 1837—the policy which was recommended by Sir John M'Neill*—is that which now presents itself, but under what altered circumstances, for our adoption. If, instead of expelling Dost Mahomed from his principality, we had advanced him a little money to raise, and lent him a few officers to drill, an army, the Persians would not now be lining the walls of Herat. But, instead of strengthening the Afghans, we have weakened them. Instead of making them our friends, we have made them our implacable foes. The policy which we pursued was disastrous, because it was unjust. It was, in principle and in act, an unrighteous usurpation, and the curse of God was on it from the first. Our successes at the outset were a part of the curse. They lapped us in false security, and deluded us to our overthrow. This is the great lesson to be learnt from the contemplation of all the circumstances of the Afghan War. "The Lord God of recompenses shall surely requite."

* Ante, vol. i., page 293.

APPENDIX.

[Vol. II., Book V.]

SIR WM. MACNAGHTEN'S REPORT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CAUBUL OUTBREAK.

[*Found unfinished in the Envoy's desk after his death.*]

SIR,

1. It is with feelings of the deepest concern that I acquaint you, for the information of the Right Honourable the Governor-General in Council, of my having been compelled to consent to the abandonment of our position in this country.

2. The Major-General commanding in Afghanistan will doubtless detail the military disasters which have led to this direful necessity, and I shall have occasion, therefore, to touch upon them but briefly in the course of this narrative.

3. On the morning of the 2nd ult. I was informed that the town of Caubul was in a state of commotion, and shortly afterwards I received a note from Lieutenant-Colonel Sir A. Burnes, to the effect that his house was besieged, and begging for assistance. I immediately went to General Elphinstone, and suggested that Brigadier Shelton's force should proceed to the Balla Hissar, thence to operate as might seem expedient; that the remaining troops should be concentrated, the cantonment placed in a state of defence, and assistance, if possible, sent to Sir A. Burnes.

4. Before Brigadier Shelton could reach the Balla Hissar, the town had attained such a state of ferment that it was deemed impracticable to penetrate to Sir A. Burnes's residence, which was in the centre of the city. I also sent messages of assurance to his Majesty by my assistant (Captain Lawrence), but so great had become the excitement, that, by noon, the road between the cantonment and the city was hardly passable.

5. His Majesty, on first hearing of the insurrection, had sent out his son, Futteh Jung, and the Minister, with some of the household troops, to repress it; but this party was speedily repulsed with great slaughter, and in the mean time I grieve to state that Sir Alexander Burnes, his brother, Lieutenant C. Burnes, and Captain W. Broadfoot, had fallen victims to the fury of the mob.

6. From that time affairs grew generally worse. The enemy showed great judgment in their work of annoying us. They seized the strongest positions between the cantonment and the city, and, what was worse than all, they seized the fort, which contained all our stores and provisions. This step was well-nigh effecting our immediate destruction, and it is chiefly to it that I attribute our final discomfiture. We had only four or five days' supplies for the cantonment. The Balla Hissar, as well as the cantonment, was in a state of siege. We could not hope for provisions from thence, nor would the place have afforded us either food or shelter, and, in the opinion of the military authorities, to return thither would have been attended with ruin. A disastrous retreat seemed the only alternative, but this necessity was averted by the attack, on the 10th ult., of a neighbouring fort, which had intermediately furnished us with a scanty supply of provisions, but which subsequently espoused the cause of the rebels. The place was carried, after a desperate resistance. We lost in the operation no less than sixty men killed and wounded of her Majesty's 44th Regiment alone, but our immediate wants were supplied by the provisions found in the fort. I lament to add, that Colonel Mackrell, Captain M'Crae, and Captain Westmacott, fell on the occasion.

7. On the 6th ult. I received a hurried note from Major Pottinger, to the effect that he was closely besieged at Charekar, and unable to hold out for want of water. Major Pottinger himself, with Lieutenant Haughton, came into cantonments a day or two afterwards, having left the 4th Regiment in a disorganised state in the neighbourhood of Istaleff; but, melancholy to relate, that no authentic tidings of them have up to this day been received. There is every reason to believe that the entire corps (officers and men) have been annihilated. Captains Codrington and Rattray and Lieutenant Salisbury were killed before Major Pottinger left Charekar, and both he and Lieutenant Haughton were severely wounded.

8. I had written to Candahar and to Gundamuck for assistance

immediately on the occurrence of the outbreak, but General Sale's brigade had proceeded to Jellalabad, the whole country between this and that place being in a state of insurrection, and a return to Caubul being deemed impracticable. From Candahar, though I sent Cossids with pressing requisitions for assistance almost every day, I could gain no intelligence, the road being entirely occupied by the troops and emissaries of the rebels. We learnt from native reports that Ghuznee was invested by the enemy, and that Captain Woodburn, who was on his way to Caubul from Candahar, had been massacred, with a party of leave-of-absence men by whom he was accompanied, in a small fort on this side of Ghuznee.

9. We continued, up to the commencement of the present month, to derive a scanty supply, at great pecuniary sacrifices, from the neighbouring villages, but about that time the enemy's plans had become so well organised, that our supplies from this source were cut off. The rebels daily made their appearance in great force in the neighbourhood of the cantonment, and I lament to add that their operations were generally attended with success. The details will be communicated by the military authorities. In the midst of their successes Mahomed Akbar Khan arrived from Toorkistan, an event which gave new life to the efforts of the rebels.

10. In the mean time I had received so many distressful accounts from the General commanding of the state of our troops and cattle from want of provisions, and I had been so repeatedly apprised by him (for reasons which he will himself doubtless explain) of the hopelessness of further resistance, that, on the 24th ultimo, I deemed it my duty to address an official letter to him, a copy of which accompanies Appendix A.

The General's reply was dated the same day, a copy accompanies, as Appendix B.

11. Affairs had attained so desperate a state on the 8th instant, that I again addressed the General a letter, copy of which accompanies, as Appendix C., and a copy of the General's reply of the same date, signed by three of his principal officers, accompanies as Appendix D. On the next day I received another letter from the General, copy of which is sent as Appendix E.*

At my invitation, deputies were sent from the rebels, who came into cantonment on the 25th ultimo, I having in the mean time received overtures from them of a pacific nature, on the basis of our evacuating the country. I proposed to them the only terms

* *The letters here alluded to are printed in the body of the work.—Author.*

which, in my opinion, could be accepted with honour; but the temper of the rebels may best be understood when I mention that they returned me a letter of defiance the next morning, to the effect that, unless I consented to surrender our arms, and to abandon his Majesty to his fate, we must prepare for immediate hostilities. To this I replied, that we preferred death to dishonour, and that it would remain with a higher Power to decide between us.

12. I had subsequently a lengthened correspondence with Mahomed Oosman Khan, Barukzye, the most moderate and sensible man of the insurgents, and as on the 11th instant we had not one day's provisions left, I held a conference with the whole of the rebel chiefs. The day previous I had learnt from a letter from Colonel Palmer, at Ghuznee, that there was no hope of reinforcements from Candahar. I had repeatedly kept his Majesty informed of the desperate state of our affairs, and of the probability that we should be compelled to enter into some accommodation with the enemy.

13. The conference with the rebels took place about a mile from cantonments. I was attended by Captains Lawrence, Trevor, and Mackenzie, and there were present on the part of the rebels the heads nearly of all the chief tribes in the country. I had committed to paper certain propositions, to which I had reason to believe they would have no objection, and I read it to the meeting. A copy accompanies as Appendix F.* When I came to the second article, Mahomed Akbar interrupted me, and observed that we did not require supplies, as there was no impediment to our marching the next morning. I mention the above fact to show the impetuous disposition of this youth. He was reproved by the other chiefs, and he himself, except on this one occasion, behaved with courtesy, though evidently elevated by his sudden change of fortune.

15. The next day I was waited upon by a deputation from the chiefs, with a proposition that Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk should be left nominally as king—the Barukzye exercising the functions of minister; but this proposition, owing to the mutual jealousies of the parties concerned, as will appear in the sequel, fell to the ground.

16. From the foregoing review of occurrences, I trust it will be evident that I had no recourse left but that of negotiation; and I

* Given at page 123.—Author.

had ascertained beyond a doubt that the rebel chiefs were perfectly aware of our helpless situation, and that no terms short of our quitting Afghanistan would satisfy them.

17. The whole country, as far as we could learn, had risen in rebellion; our communications on all sides were cut off; almost every public officer, whether paid by ourselves or his Majesty, had declared for the new governor, and by far the greater number even of his Majesty's domestic servants had deserted him. We had been fighting for forty days against very superior numbers, under most disadvantageous circumstances, with a deplorable loss of valuable lives, and in a day or two we must have perished from hunger, to say nothing of the advanced season of the year, and the extreme cold, from the effects of which our native troops were suffering severely. I had been repeatedly apprised by the military authorities that nothing could be done with our troops; and I regret to add that desertions to the enemy were becoming of frequent occurrence amongst our troops. The terms I secured were the best obtainable, and the destruction of fifteen thousand human beings would little have benefited our country, whilst our government would have been almost compelled to avenge our fate, at whatever cost. We shall part with the Afghans as friends, and I feel satisfied that any government which may be established hereafter, will always be disposed to cultivate a good understanding with us.

18. A retreat without terms would have been impracticable. It is true that, by entering into terms, we are prevented from undertaking the conquest of the entire country, a measure which, from my knowledge of the views of government, I feel convinced would never be resorted to, even were the means at hand. But such a project in the present state of our Indian finances, and the requisitions for troops in various quarters, I knew could not be entertained. If the expense already incurred in such a case would have been intolerable . . . [*Sentence imperfect.*]

13. I would beg leave to refer to the whole tenor of my former correspondence for the causes which have produced this insurrection. Independently of the genius of the people, which is prone to rebellion, we, as conquerors and foreigners, of a different creed, were viewed with particular disfavour by the chiefs, whilst the acts of some of us were particularly calculated to excite the general jealousy of a sensitive nation. The haughty demeanour of his Majesty was not agreeable to the nobles, and, above all, the mea-

sures of economy to which it was found necessary to resort were particularly galling.

Throughout this rebellion I was in constant communication with the Shah, through my assistant, Lieutenant J. B. Conolly, who was in attendance on his Majesty in the Balla Hissar. On the 18th inst. it was agreed upon that our troops should evacuate the Balla Hissar, and return to the cantonments, while the Barukzyes should have a conference with his Majesty with a view to his retaining the nominal powers of sovereignty, they for their own security placing a guard of their own in the upper citadel. No sooner, however, had our troops left the Balla Hissar, than his Majesty, owing to some panic or misunderstanding, ordered the gate to be shut, and the proposed conference was thereby prevented. So offended were the Barukzyes, that they determined never to offer his Majesty the same terms again. In explanation of his conduct, his Majesty states that the party whom the Barukzyes desired to introduce was not that party which had been agreed upon.

His Majesty shut * * * *

True Copy.

(Signed) G. St. P. Lawrence, Capt.,
Mil. Sec., late Envoy and Minister.

[*MS. Records.*]

[Vol. II., Page 106.]

STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN MACKENZIE.

[Relative to the Circumstances preceding the Death of Sir W. Macnaghten.]

The proposition which induced the envoy (in opposition to his theretofore avowed principle and practice in refusing to meet Mahomed Akbar or any of the other Khans, save in a body) to grant the fatal interview to the Sirdar and his more immediate confederates, had emanated from the murderer himself, and had been conveyed to the envoy the night previously by Mahomed Sadig Khan, half brother of Akbar, by Surwar Khan Lohanee, who came into the cantonment in company with the late Captain Skinner, then released for the first time from the custody in which he had been retained, first by Ameen-oollah Khan, and latterly by Mahomed Akbar himself.

The Sirdar had acquainted Captain Skinner with the nature of his pretended wishes, as if in friendly conference, requesting him to act the part of chief ambassador, Captain Skinner's disapproval

of which in all probability saved his life for the time being; but he, Captain Skinner, was the only officer present during the eventful conference of the evening of the 22nd, and from him I subsequently derived the information which I now give of the nature of Mahomed Akbar's message. It was to this effect,—that he and his particular friends (to wit, the Ghilzyes) should either come over in a body into the cantonment, placing themselves under the orders of the envoy, or that, at a preconcerted signal, without giving warning to the other confederates, in concert with a body of British troops, take possession of the fort of Mahmood Khan; then seizing the person of Ameen-oollah Lohganee, whom for a pecuniary reward they proposed to murder; that the Sirdar should acknowledge Shah Soojah for his sovereign, his reward being the payment—a present bonus from the British Government—of thirty lakhs of rupees, and a stipend of four lakhs of rupees per annum for life; that the British troops should be allowed to remain unmolested, as if with the perfect concurrence and by the express wish of the so-formed Afghan Government, for a period of six months, at which time they were to evacuate the country as if by their own free will, thus carrying with them an untarnished reputation (the expression was "saving their *Purdah*"), and thus securing a favourable opportunity for the British home Government to negotiate a treaty favourable to the security of our Indian frontier with the cabinet of St. Petersburgh. Up to that date, viz., 22nd of December, Sir Wm. Macnaghten had, in spite of his conscientious fulfilment of his verbal engagements with the assembled Khawaneen (for no written treaty had theretofore been exchanged), been worn out by their utter falsehood and bad faith, their original demands having risen to a pitch of insolence and unreasonableness which amounted to open mockery—their conduct had in fact virtually released him from any obligation to adhere to any of his original propositions; and in despair, as a drowning man catches at straws, the troops having long before proved themselves utterly inadequate to his support, or in fact to their own protection, with immediate ruin and disgrace to himself and his country staring him in the face, he was in an evil moment induced to assent to the above proposals, with the exception of the *murder* of Ameen-oollah, from which (Captain S. assured me) he shrank with abhorrence and disgust, assuring the ambassadors that as a British functionary nothing would induce him to pay a price for blood. So far as it may be said that the

late Envoy allowed himself to be duped by a man of the notorio bad character of Mahomed Akbar Khan in all matters of g faith even among his treacherous countrymen, I can only say it is not only my firm belief, but that also of Captain Lawre and others who best knew Sir William, that two months of cessant fatigue of mind and body, and the load of care which during that time weighed him down, had at last completely hinged his strong mind. Contrary to his usual practice, he sulted none of those who had all along possessed his perfect fidence; his manner was flurried and agitated; and when, vious to leaving the cantonment on the morning of the 23rd having for the first time learnt his intentions, declared my viction "that it was a trap," he abruptly answered, "Leave to manage that; trust me for that." He also observed, I beli to Captains Trevor and Lawrence, while riding forth to the s of his murder, "Death is preferable to the life we are lea now."—[*Answer to Interrogatories put by Gen. Pollock. MS. cords.* I have given this statement, and the important evid contained in the next section of the Appendix, in place of letters referred to at page 181, note.]

[Vol. II., Page 106.]

[Instead of the letter from Mohun Lal alluded to at page 106, note, I giv following extracts from an elaborate article in the *Friend of India* (Seram newspaper), on the charges brought against Sir W. H. Macnaghten.]

"To crown the evidence of Sir William Macnaghten's n having been implicated in this alleged assassination of the chiefs, we have an acknowledgment under Mohun Lal's own si ture. When he was claiming remuneration for his services of Court of Directors, he delivered in the following document, w has been copied for us from a paper in his own handwriting.

Advanced to Abdool Aziz, who offered to kill Abdoollah Khan, by such means which the Envoy did not approve, therefore the balance 11,000 rupees was not paid	Rs. 4,000

"Thus it appears that while Mohun Lal told the Reviewer Sir William objected to pay the balance, because he had seen the heads; he told the Court of Directors that the bal was not paid because the Envoy did not approve of the m that had been used." * * * *

Major Colin Troup writes thus in a letter now before us:

"Akbar Khan never would allow Macnaghten's name to be mentioned before him but in terms of the greatest respect; and has in private, both to poor Pottinger and myself, over and over again regretted the deed, and stated that it never was premeditated; so far the contrary, that, having been accused by Ameen-oollah's party of being friendly to, and intriguing with the English, to disarm suspicion, he in open Durbar volunteered, if he was allowed time, to bring Macnaghten a prisoner into Ameen-oollah's house within eight days. This being agreed to, it was then that he planned the treacherous conference with Sir William; but, finding, after some delay, that he was not likely to accomplish his object, and fearing to meet his party if he failed in his boasted adventure, and hearing a cry that our troops were marching out of the cantonments to where he and Sir William were sitting, he, in a moment of desperation, out with his pistol and shot Sir William; but he always loudly declared that on the morning of the conference, when he came out to meet Sir William, he never for one moment contemplated doing him any harm whatever. I have all this written down, and can, if necessary, take my oath to what I have written, as coming from the mouth of Akbar Khan himself, and you are most welcome to make what use of it you please, in defence of the character of one of the brightest ornaments our country ever did, or ever will produce." . . . . .

We have the most abundant evidence that Sir William Macnaghten's character for integrity and good faith always stood equally high among the Afghans; and that when their chiefs were triumphant, and bitterly reproached the British prisoners for the wrongs their nation had inflicted on Afghanistan, the charge of encouraging assassination was never whispered for a moment. Lieutenant-Colonel Lawrence states: "During our lengthened imprisonment, I unhesitatingly affirm that not one of the prisoners ever heard Mahomed Akbar, or any of the chiefs, accuse Sir William of bribing men to assassinate them; and it is not likely they would have been silent, if they had so heavy a charge to bring forward. On the contrary, I, as well as others, have heard both Mahomed Akbar Khan and other chiefs express deep regret at the Envoy's untimely death, and much admiration of his character. Ameen-oollah Khan, when I was his prisoner, told me that Sir W. H. Macnaghten had offered a lakh of rupees for his head. Prisoner though I was, I denounced it in open Durbar as

an infamous lie, and never heard any more about it." Captain Colin Mackenzie writes: "If Sir William had ever instructed Mohun Lal or any other person to employ assassins for the removal of our treacherous and inveterate enemies, it would have been well known to the Afghans themselves, and they would not have failed to urge so plausible a ground of complaint against us, while we were captives in their hands, which they never did, although they constantly reproached us with every act of supposed injustice on the part of government, and with the private vices and improprieties of individuals." Captain W. Anderson, another of the prisoners, writes: "I never heard any Afghan accuse Sir W. H. Macnaghten of any acts for which any friend of his, or any Englishman, need feel ashamed. On the contrary, I always heard him spoken of with great respect, and frequently with admiration." Captain Warburton states: "I went into Caubul to the Newab's on the 28th, I think, of December, 1841. I remained in his house till we were forced out of it on the 12th of April following. During that time, no one was prevented seeing us. Our party consisted of J. Conolly, Airey, Walsh, Webb, Drummond, and myself (besides Haughton and Campbell, who joined us afterwards). We had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with most of the chiefs at Caubul, who remained after Akbar Khan had left. None of these people ever concealed their opinions regarding the acts of our government, or people. Ameen-oollah Khan, in particular, spoke at times very strongly, but neither from him, nor from any other, during the period of my residence, did I ever hear a word regarding the charge now brought forward against Sir William of having offered money for the assassination of the chiefs. I had sufficient opportunities of hearing something about the matter, if any such offer had been made."

[Vol. II., Page 271.]

SIR J. NICOLLS TO LORD FITZROY SOMERSET, K.C.B.

[On the Appointment of General Pollock to the Command of the Troops.]

My Lord,

I have the honour to acknowledge your Lordship's letter of the 13th of June, calling upon me for explanation on the subject of an appeal made to the General Commanding in Chief, by Major-General Sir Joseph Thackwell, in consequence of his not being permitted to accompany the regiment of which he is

senior Colonel, on service beyond the Indus—I beg you will apprise his Lordship, that, in addition to the rule quoted by Sir J. Thackwell, the special appointment of Major-General Pollock prohibited his employment in Afghanistan.

I shall explain the circumstances of that appointment.

In December, 1841, the Governor-General of India in Council instructed me to place Major-General Lumley, of the Company's army, in command of the reinforcements which passed through the Punjaub in January last; and, in addition to the command of the whole force in Afghanistan, it was his Lordship's intention to place in his hands the political control also.

Major-General Lumley's health was such as to preclude all hope, or even desire, that he should undertake so great a charge, and it became necessary that I should propose another officer for this important duty. Twice I laid before the Governor-General the name of Major-General Sir Edmund Williams; and as a Light Infantry officer he seemed most qualified to meet an enemy in a mountainous country: he was active, zealous, and in perfect health. In the command of a division he had shown a clear judgment, and given me satisfaction.

I need not inform Lord Hill that the management of the native army, or of small portions of it, is a matter, at times, of delicacy and difficulty. It will not do to distrust or disparage it, as Colonel Monson did. The Governor-General gave such an unwilling and discouraging reply to my second communication, that I clearly saw the whole onus of the appointment and of its consequences would be mine. This I would not undertake, and Major-General Pollock being near at hand, and honoured by Lord Auckland's confidence (as I know), I ordered him by dawk to join the 9th Foot and other corps. This done, Government was pleased to confer upon him the political powers intended for Major-General Lumley; without which Sir Edmund Williams would have had to act, not from himself, but according to requisitions made by the local political authorities—viz., Brevet-Captains Mackeson and M'Gregor. Upon the more abstract question of the Lieutenant-Colonelcy, it must be remarked that Sir Edmund Williams held that rank in the 9th Foot, which gave *him* no claim to go to Afghanistan, though some officious friend has since asserted it.

I had soon occasion to rejoice that Sir Edmund was not appointed to the command on my sole responsibility, for the four sepoy corps first sent, under Brigadier Wild, having been most

sadly mismanaged (*at the instance of the political authorities, against my instructions and earnest caution*), when Major-General Pollock arrived at Peshawur he found 1800 men of the four regiments in hospital; the sepoys declaring that they would not advance again through the Khybar Pass; the Sikh troops spreading alarm, and in all ways encouraging and screening their desertion, which was considerable. It was well that a cautious, cool officer of the Company's army should have to deal with them in such a temper, 363 miles from our frontier. General Pollock managed them exceedingly well, but he did not venture to enter the pass till April (two months and a half after Brigadier Wild's failure), when reinforced by the 3rd Dragoons, a regiment of cavalry, a troop of horse artillery, and other details. Lord Hill will at once perceive that the *morale* must have been low when *horse artillery and cavalry* were required to induce the General to advance, with confidence, through this formidable pass. Any precipitancy on the part of a general officer panting for fame might have had the worst effect. I must now return to Sir J. Thackwell's appeal. The General Order, quoted very ingenuously by the Major-General, contains a full and complete reply to his complaint. He was senior to Major-General Pollock, and his proceeding with the 3rd Dragoons would have interfered with a divisional command. He certainly did offer to serve under that officer, but I could not recommend the government to suffer him to do so, all such arrangements being in my opinion most faulty in principle, and, depending chiefly on good temper, dangerous. I have since called up Sir Joseph Thackwell to my head-quarters in order to command the cavalry, had it been necessary (as seemed possible) last winter to collect an army. The Major-General is in error when he states that I intended him to command an army of observation on the Sutlej: that post I retained for myself, aided by Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Arbuthnot. In November next it is proposed to collect an army of reserve in this vicinity, and Sir J. Thackwell will have the command of the cavalry. I cannot have the smallest objection to the Major-General's bringing himself to Lord Hill's notice as he has done, except the infraction of a rule in doing so direct. But if he had remembered that he commanded the cavalry of Lord Keane's army; had been twice named by me for similar duty; has long been a Brigadier commanding a division or station; he would have found little cause to complain of ill fortune or neglect. I

have known many of her Majesty's officers, Colonels and old Lieutenant-Colonels, to reside ten to fifteen years in India without having had any such opportunities of service and distinction, and further to command divisions without receiving the smallest remuneration.

I have the honour, &c.

(Signed) J. NICOLLS.

P.S.—I am happy to say that the Governor-General has displaced all the minor political agents in Afghanistan but one, and entrusted the power to the Generals Pollock and Nott.

J. N.

Simlah, 2nd Sept., 1842.

[*MS. Records.*]

[Vol. II., Book VIII.]

SIR GEORGE POLLOCK TO LORD ELLENBOROUGH.

[Touching the Destruction of Bazaar at Caubul, and the imputed Excesses of the Troops.]

April 2nd, 1843, Allahabad

MY LORD,

I have had the honour to receive your Lordship's letter, dated 23rd ultimo, intimating that disapprobation had been expressed at the destruction of the bazaar and mosque at Caubul, and of trees; also, that excesses have been imputed to the troops.

It is difficult to grapple with vague and anonymous accusations against the conduct of the troops. Many detailed statements in the newspapers were entirely unfounded, and were got up with the sole object of creating a sensation; but I confess that if individual and isolated instances of excess had occurred, I should not have been much surprised, composed, as all Indian armies are, of such a heterogeneous mass, comprising all classes and castes; more than two-thirds of whom are either public or private servants and adventurers, who, though nominally following some occupation useful to an army, proceed with it for the sole purpose of plundering when a favourable opportunity offers. Some excesses may, unknown to me, have been committed; but I will venture to assert that no troops ever conducted themselves with more forbearance under such unprecedented aggravations: perhaps no army was ever placed in a more trying situation.

During the whole course of their progress towards the capital they had ocular proofs of the treachery and brutality of a merciless enemy; but still I am unable to call to mind any wanton, deliberate act of inhumanity on the part of the troops; and cannot but regret that the culpable instances alluded to have not been specified, as I may possibly be suspected of suppressing facts. This, however, I beg to assure your Lordship I have no wish to do.

The feeling of the Hindoos against the Afghans was very naturally strong, in consequence of the latter having deprived the Hindoos of their caste whenever they came into their power; but no troops could feel otherwise than excited at the sight of the skeletons of their late brethren in arms, which still lie covering the road from Gundamuck to Caubul; and as if the more to rouse a spirit of revenge, the barricade at Jugdulluck was literally covered with skeletons.

What I have stated above will not be considered as justifying excesses on the part of a British army; but it may be admitted in extenuation of individual cases.

A few days previous to the march of the brigade under Brigadier Monteith, an European was murdered by the Afghans at Jellalabad. The destruction of Alli Boghan by some men under Brigadier Monteith's command, was caused by one of those sudden bursts of feeling which, being wholly unexpected, no precautions were deemed necessary; but it was a solitary instance, and occurred nearly as follows:—Some camp followers entered the village, and having found parts of the dress of some of our soldiers who had been massacred on the march from Caubul, a number of men proceeded to the village, which was eventually burnt, whether accidentally or intentionally is doubtful, so very soon was the mischief perpetrated, that the Brigadier was hardly aware of it till the place was in flames. He immediately took measures to prevent a recurrence of such scenes, and I wrote in strong terms on the subject. Subsequent to that event, during the whole time the Brigadier was detached, I heard of no more excesses. In the instance of Alli Boghan, after a most minute inquiry, I have reason to believe that not a man, woman, or child was injured, and I know the greater part of the property was returned to the head man of the village.

In subsequent engagements with the enemy at Mamookail, Jugdulluck, and Tezeen, I neither saw nor heard of any excesses.

A report was circulated that an European was burnt alive at Jugdulluck, and that two Afghans were burnt in like manner by our troops in revenge, the whole of which was an infamous fabrication.

I know of no instances of cruelty or excess at Istaliff; and the feeling of the army could not have been very prone thereto when about four or five hundred women and children were protected from insult and injury, and made over to their families after the engagement. If any excess has been committed which I have not noticed, I can only affirm that I recollect none; and I beg to add, that the praise bestowed on the troops on a late occasion by your Lordship for their "forbearance in victory," is, as far as I am able to judge, well merited; and I trust your Lordship will never have cause to alter your good opinion of their conduct.

On the subject of trees being destroyed, I am unable to call to recollection what occurred in Brigadier Monteith's detachment; and the only instance of their destruction, which came under my personal observation, was at Mamookail, where the ground was such that I was obliged to encamp the different regiments in the gardens surrounding the fort. Without this precaution I should have been subjecting the troops to constant annoyance, as the enemy would certainly have occupied them. The destruction of the vines and other small plants was almost a necessary consequence of our occupying Mamookail.

With regard to the destruction of the Caubul bazaar and mosque, it may possibly be supposed that with them was destroyed other property; but this was not the case.

The insult offered to the remains of the late Envoy was notorious to the whole of the chiefs and inhabitants of the city. They admitted that the mutilated body was dragged through the bazaar and treated by the populace with every indignity, and eventually hung there, that every Afghan in the city might witness the treatment of the remains of the representative of the British Government. The intended measure was communicated to the chiefs, who not only admitted the propriety of destroying a place where such scenes had transpired, but offered to, and did, accompany the party sent for its destruction. Those who resided at and near the bazaar had two days' previous notice to remove their property (which they did), and I am not aware of any instances of violence having occurred. It was not possible entirely

to prevent plundering; but during the time the engineer was employed in the destruction of the bazaar and mosque attached, both cavalry and infantry were on duty in the city to prevent any outrage.

I have the honour, &c.

GEO. POLLOCK.

[*MS. Records.*]

FROM GENERAL POLLOCK TO LORD ELLENBOROUGH.

Ghazeepore, 10th April, 1843.

MY LORD,

Since I had the honour to address your Lordship on the 2nd instant, in reply to your Lordship's letter dated the 23rd ultimo, it has occurred to me that I could not produce better proof of the forbearance of the troops under my command than by a reference to their conduct on the morning of the 16th of September last. I have already officially detailed the number of troops which accompanied me on the occasion of planting the colours on the Balla Hissar. It was deemed advisable on that occasion to go through a part of the city, and although the troops had arrived only the day before from a march which was abundantly calculated to irritate and exasperate them, they so fully and literally obeyed the orders I had previously given, that not a house or an individual was injured, either in going or returning from the Balla-Hissar. The destruction of the residence of Koda Bux, the chief of Teezeen, may perhaps have been considered an excess; I will therefore explain, that during the time the army remained in advance of Teezeen, the chief of that place was the cause of our communication being cut off. He was repeatedly warned what the consequences would be, when an opportunity offered, if he persisted in such a course; but I beg to add that the injury sustained by the chief in the destruction of his residence entailed no loss on others that I am aware of, as the injury done was confined almost entirely to the fortified dwelling. Forage was found there and brought to camp, but not an individual was injured.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

GEO. POLLOCK.

FROM GENERAL POLLOCK TO THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL.

Dinapore, 18th April, 1843.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 29th ult., which awaited my arrival here. I regret that I was not sooner in possession of your letter, as I fear this will be too late for the purpose required. Nearly all the information it is in my power to give is contained in the accompanying copies of letters which I have addressed to the Right Honourable the Governor-General in reply to a reference his Lordship was pleased to make to me. With respect to the extent of injury done by the brigade under Brigadier Monteith, I am unable to give any detailed account. The provisions, grain, &c., and materials for building, were taken from those of the inhabitants who were openly opposed to our troops; but in both cases the cost of things taken, were carried to the account of government. I have already, in my letters to his Lordship, stated that I am not aware of any Afghans having been killed when unresisting, or from any feeling of revenge on the part of the troops. Torabauz Khan, the chief of Lallpoora, and the governor of Jellalabad, accompanied the brigade to point out what property should be respected. With regard to the violation of women, I heard of no instance of the kind; and I am quite sure that Brigadier Monteath would have done his utmost to prevent such excesses. I have stated to his Lordship what occurred at Mamoo Kail, and I know most positively that no Afghan was killed on that occasion except in fair fighting. The families had, I believe, gone the day before the place was taken. I cannot say when or by whom the fort or adjoining houses were set fire to. I passed through with the right column in pursuit of the enemy, and did not return till the afternoon, when I had determined to encamp there. On my return I found Brigadier Tulloch with his column (the left) occupying the gardens. The fort and adjacent houses were still burning. On the return of the whole of the troops, it was necessary for their security to take advantage of the gardens surrounded by walls, and the men were accordingly encamped there. The destruction of the vines was a necessary consequence, as every one must know who has seen how grapes are cultivated

in Afghanistan. There were very few trees cut down, but the bark of a number of them was taken for about two or three inches. With reference to the third paragraph of your letter, I beg to state, that from the date of my arrival at Caubul on the 15th of September, the inhabitants commenced returning to their houses. They had assurances from me of protection, and, with the exception of the covered bazaar, I did my utmost to protect both the inhabitants and their dwellings from injury. I have already stated to his Lordship why I considered that particular spot (the bazaar) should suffer, and on the 9th of October the engineer commenced his operations. I believe I am quite justified in stating that no lives were lost; the private property had been removed, and I had both cavalry and infantry on duty in the city to prevent plundering. Some injury was no doubt sustained by the city, but the damage done even when we left it was partial and comparatively trivial. I consider it mere justice to the troops who proceeded under my command to Caubul, and who passed over scenes which were particularly calculated to cause great excitement among them, to state, that their conduct on proceeding to the Balla Hissar (passing through a part of the city) was quite unexceptionable, and the good effect resulting therefrom was immediately felt: confidence was restored; in proof of which I may state that supplies both of grain and forage were brought in abundantly, everything being paid for. I have no memorandum from which to quote the exact quantities of grain which came into camp, but my recollection of the quantities in round numbers is as follows:—The first day 500 maunds, second day 1000 maunds, third day 1600 maunds, fourth day 2000 maunds, fifth day 1000 maunds. The falling off of the supplies on the fifth day was the consequence, I was told, of some of the men of General Nott's force having plundered those who were bringing in supplies. I wrote to General Nott on the subject; but from that period the supplies never came in so freely as before, and I am sorry to add that many complaints were made. I have hitherto been silent on this subject, and should have continued so, for reasons which it is perhaps unnecessary to explain; but as the third paragraph of your letter calls for a more particular report than I have hitherto made, I reluctantly forward the accompanying documents, upon which it is unnecessary for me to make any comments.

I beg, however, to state distinctly, that until plundering commenced supplies of every description were abundant, and the people were fast returning to the city. In reply to that part of the third paragraph in which I am directed to state what injury I understood had been committed by the Candahar force after my march, I have merely to observe, that from all I had heard I thought it advisable that the whole force should move from Caubul the same day; and this precaution, I have reason to believe, prevented some excesses.

In reply to the fourth paragraph, I believe I may with great truth state that no Afghans were destroyed in cold blood, either before or after reaching Caubul. No women were either dishonoured or murdered, that I am aware of. With regard to the destruction of that particular part of the Caubul bazaar where the envoy's remains were treated with indignity, and brutally dragged through to be there dishonoured and spit upon by every Mussulman, I admit that I considered it the most suitable place in which to leave decided proofs of the power of the British army, without impeaching its humanity.

I have, as directed by you, forwarded a copy of this letter and the original documents to Colonel Stewart, for the information of the Governor-General.

I have the honour to be, Sir,&c. &c. &c.

GEO. POLLOCK.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT.

THE COURT OF DIRECTORS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF IINDA IN COUNCIL.

London, 2nd April, 1843.

The Secret Committee has communicated to us the letters noted below* relating to inquiries addressed by order of the Governor-General to the General Officers lately commanding in

* Extract letter from the Governor-General to the Secret Committee, No. 26, dated 6th April, 1843.

Letter from Major-General MacCaskil to Military Secretary to Government, 2nd April, 1843.

Letter to Adjutant-General Lumley, 2nd April, 1843, with enclosure.

Major-General Pollock to Lord Ellenborough, 2nd April, 1843.

Major-General Pollock to Lord Ellenborough, 16th April, 1843.

Major-General Nott to Military Secretary to Government of India, 4th April, 1843.

Major-General Nott to Adjutant-General Lumley, 4th April, 1843.

Afghanistan, on the subject of certain rumours of outrages alleged to have been perpetrated by the British toops, and conveying replies to those inquiries from Major-Generals Sir George Pollock, Sir William Nott,* and Sir John M'Caskill.

When these rumours were first brought to our knowledge, we deemed them to be great exaggerations, if not altogether unfounded; and we did not doubt that we should receive, in due course, full and exculpatory explanations as to what had actually taken place.

Whilst we regard the statements made by the three General Officers as generally satisfactory, we cannot avoid the expression of our regret that Sir William Nott should have been hurried, by the warmth of his feelings, into throwing on the government which he served the reflection contained in the last paragraph of that letter, and which was quite unnecessary to the vindication of his own character, and that of the troops under his command.

Neither can we do otherwise than notice with regret the publication of Sir William Nott's letter in an English newspaper. We have not the means of ascertaining how this irregularity occurred, but we must observe, that unauthorised disclosure of official correspondence on any subject is highly improper, and may lead to the greatest inconvenience.

We are, &c.

(Signed)	JOHN COTTON.	E. MACNAGHTEN.
	JOHN SHEPHERD.	W. H. C. PLOWDEN.
	W. ASTELL.	JOHN MASTERMAN.
	C. MILLS.	W. B. BAYLEY.
	J. LUSHINGTON.	HY. ALEXANDER.
	RUSSELL ELLIS.	M. T. SMITH.
	R. JENKINS.	

[*MS. Records.*]

* Sir W. Nott's letter is to be found in Captain M'Neill's narrative, in the *Quarterly Review* (July, 1845), and elsewhere.—*Author.*

THE END.

WHITING BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.